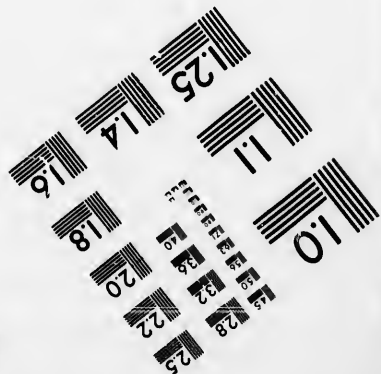
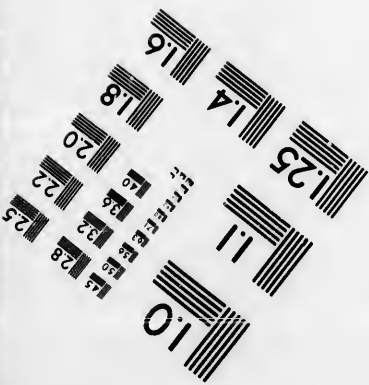
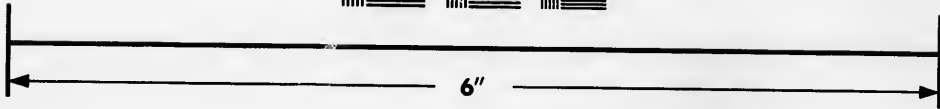
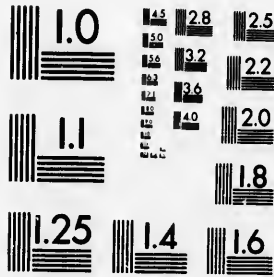


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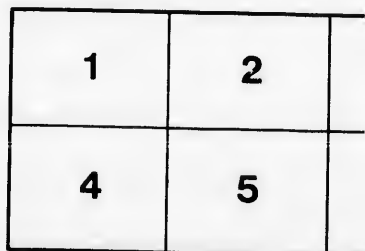
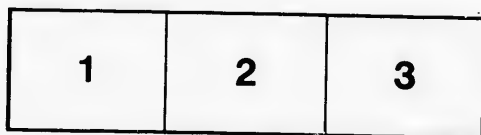
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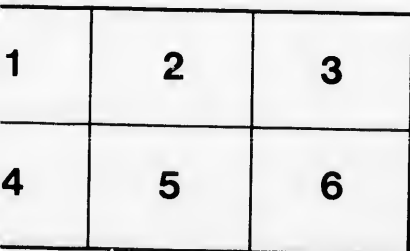
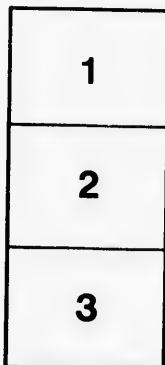
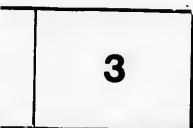
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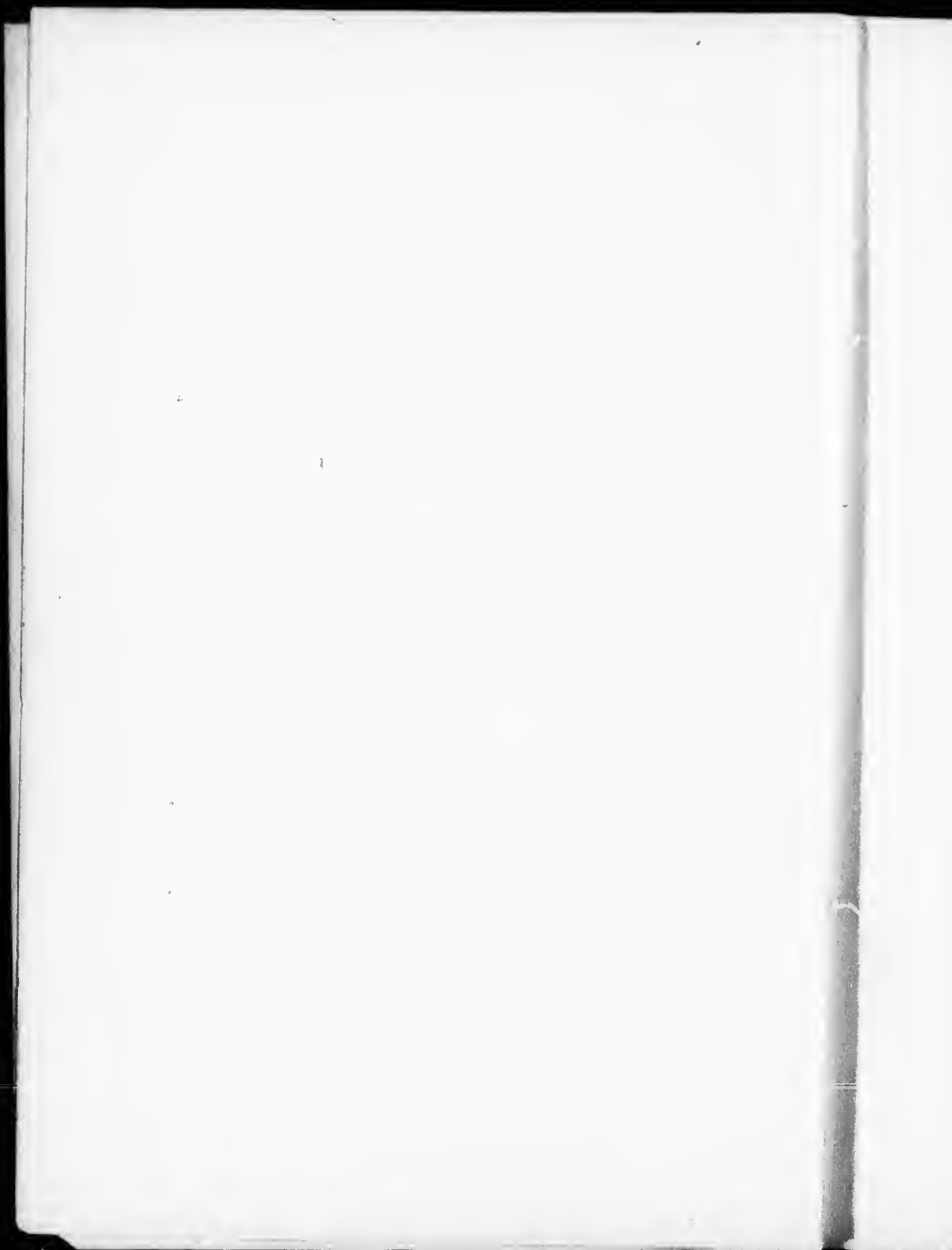


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YESTERDAY, TO-DAY,
AND FOR EVER.



YESTERDAY, TO-DAY,
AND FOR EVER:

A Poem, in Twelve Books,

By EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH, M.A.,

VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH, HAMPTON,

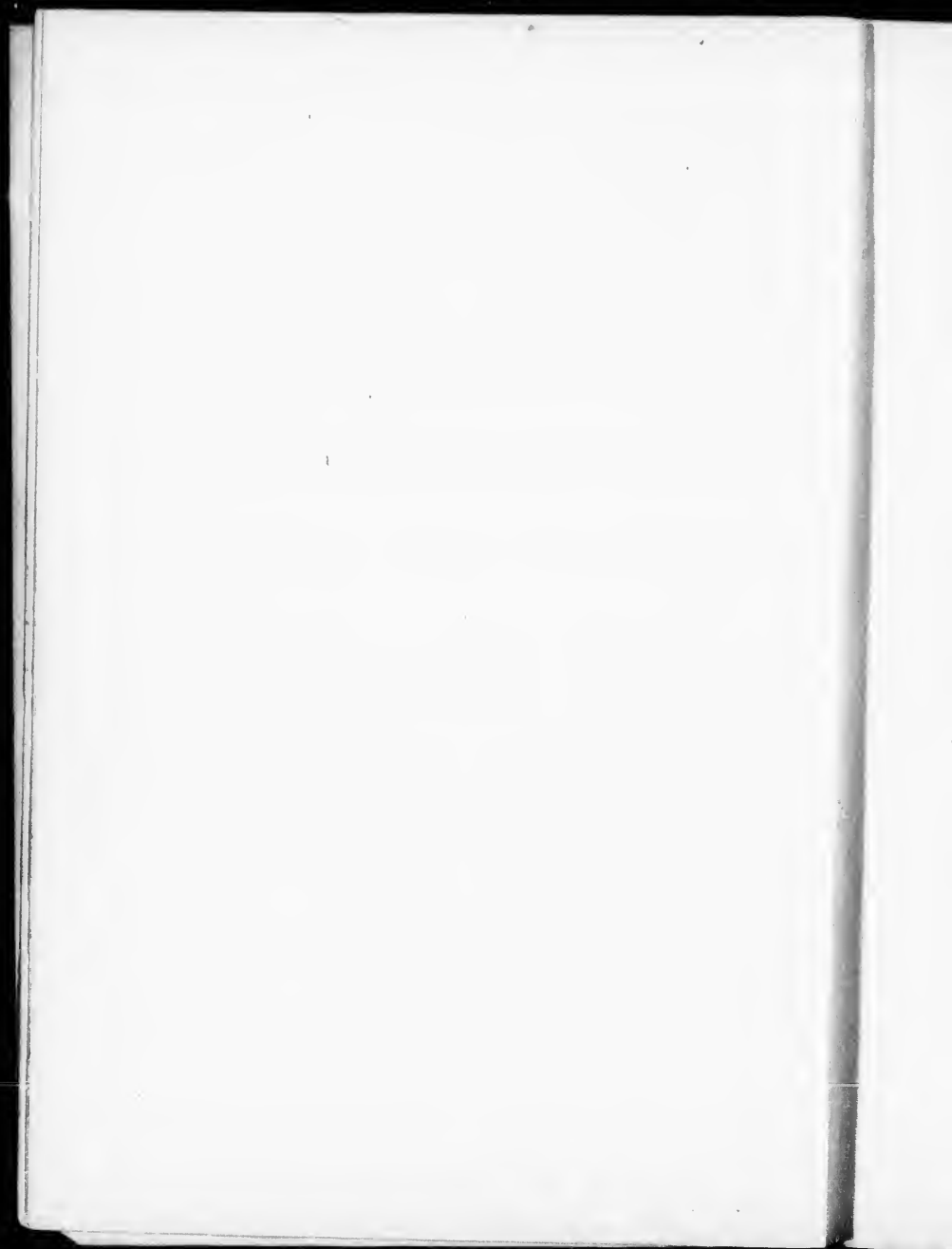
AUTHOR OF "THE TWO BROTHERS, AND OTHER POEMS," ETC.

Toronto:

ADAM STEVENSON AND CO.

1873.

[*New Edition.*]



Preface.

THE design of the following poem has been laid up in my heart for more than twenty years. Other claims, however, prevented me from seriously undertaking the work until little more than two years ago. But then the deep conviction that those solemn events, to which the latter books of my poem relate, were already beginning to cast their prophetic lights and shadows on the world, constrained me to make the attempt. If it may please God to awaken any minds to deeper thought on things unseen and eternal, by this humble effort to combine some of the pictorial teaching supplied by His most holy Word, it will be the answer to many prayers.

E. H. B.

HAMPSTEAD, LONDON,
September, 1866.

Note to the Third Edition.

The Author cannot allow a third, and now stereotyped, edition of this Poem to issue from the press without expressing his very grateful sense of the acceptance which this work has found in England and America. Assurances of the deep interest, which the thoughts suggested in these pages have kindled or confirmed in many hearts, have reached him from aged pilgrims at whose feet he would gladly sit and learn, from labourers who are bearing the burden and heat of the day, and from many sufferers and mourners in homes of sorrow and bereavement. The reaping has already far exceeded any toil of the sower, who can only pray that He, whose prerogative it is to multiply the seed sown, may graciously water it with the dew of His blessing.

January, 1869.

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3.

YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND
FOR EVER.

Book First.

THE SEER'S DEATH, AND DESCENT TO HADES.

THE last day of my earthly pilgrimage
Was closing ; and the end was peace : for, as
The sunset glory on the hills grew pale,
The burning fever left me—I was free
From pain—albeit my strength was ebbing fast.
And quickly' as dreams, though not confusedly,
The landscapes of my life before me rose,
From the first breath of dewy morn to that
Its sultry afternoon. Nor seem'd my past,
As often heretofore in retrospect,
A fragmentary discontinuous whole,
But one and indivisible,—a brief
Short journey, only steepest at the last.

10

Seven nights ago the message came for me.
The midnight chimes had struck : the echoes sank
Far in the distance, and the air grew still,—

B

A strange oppressive stillness. In the woods
 The leaves were motionless, and on the grass
 Unwavering the moonlight shadows slept,
 And I was communing with solitude, 20
 And listening to the silence; when I thought
 A voice, as of an angel, spake to me,
 "Thy time is come, prepare to meet thy God."
 'Twas gently spoken, yet a sudden chill
 Struck to my heart; for I was scarcely more
 Than midway on life's pathway, nor had thought
 For long years to lay down my pilgrim's staff,
 Unless the Bridegroom's voice were heard in heaven.
 And was I now already summon'd home?
 I ask'd, and half incredulously gazed 30
 Upon the crystal of that starlit sky,
 Until again within my spirit's depths
 I seem'd to hear that subtle spiritual voice,
 "Seven days, and thou shalt enter into rest."
 And then I knew it was no idle dream,
 I felt that One was standing by me, whom
 I saw not, and with trembling lips replied,
 "Thou calledst me, O Lord, and here am I."

That night I spent in prayer. The lamp that hung
 Suspended in my chamber slowly paled 40
 And flicker'd in its socket. But my soul
 Was lit up with a clearer purer light,
 The daybreak of a near eternity,
 Which cast its penetrating beams across
 The isthmus of my life, and fringed with gold

The mists of childhood, and reveal'd beyond
 The outline of the everlasting hills.
 'Twas more than half a jubilee of years
 Since first I knelt a suppliant at the throne
 Of mercy, and bewail'd my sins, and heard
 The voice of absolution, "Go in peace:"
 And daily since that birth-time of my soul
 Had I found shelter at the feet of Christ.
 But in the glory of that light, aware
 Of the immediate presence of my God,
 I saw myself, as I had never seen,
 Polluted and undone: and, clothed in shame,
 Awestruck, like Peter, cried aloud, "Depart
 From me, who am a sinful man, O Lord."
 But, as I raised my eye to read His will,
 I saw, as never hitherto, the cross
 Irradiated with celestial light,
 And love divine, unutterable, pour'd
 Around the form of Him who hung thereon.
 I gazed entranced, enraptured; and anew
 I wash'd the dark stains of my travelling dress
 White in the fountain of His blood; and then,
 Methought, He laid His hand upon my head,
 And whisper'd, "Go in peace, and sin no more."
 And the words seem'd to linger in the air,
 Whether an angel caught them up or not
 I know not, but they seem'd to float around me,
 "Sin no more, weary pilgrim, sin no more.
 No more at all for ever, sin no more."

50

60

70

And thus long hours of peace and prayer and praise
 Pass'd noiselessly, as gliding slumber; though
 That night was more to me than years of life,
 If life be measured, its true gauge, by love.
 I feasted upon love; I drank, I breathed
 Nothing but love. But when the morning came 80
 I knew no more what pass'd around me: earth
 Sank from my view, and yet I was not free
 To climb the heavens. As when the aeronaut,
 Borne sunward on his too adventurous ear,
 At length emerging from the seas of mist
 (Which circumfused long while about his path
 Clung darkling, but now roll in lucid waves
 Of clouds beneath him), hovers there a while,
 A stranger in that crystal atmosphere,
 Exiled from earth, and yet not wing'd for heaven: 90
 So in my fever dreams I seem'd to hang
 On the far confines of the world of sense,
 Unconscious of the lapse of day or night,
 If lonely or in loved society;
 But conscious of my spirit's fellowship
 With the Eternal Spirit. God was there:
 I knew it: I was with Him. And meanwhile
 His angel gently loosen'd all the cords
 Of my frail tabernacle, and the tent
 Flutter'd to every breeze. 100

Six days I lay
 In that strange borderland, so she, who watch'd
 Unwearied as an angel day and night

I.]

AND DESCENT TO HADES.

5

Beside my pillow, told me when I woke
 From the fruition of celestial love
 To drink in, like a thirsty traveller,
 The sweetness of her human love once more:—
 Never so sweet as now. They sin who deem
 There can be discord betwixt love and love.
 Six days had pass'd; and now the morning sun
 Bore through the open casement all the glow 110
 Of summer; more than six days out of seven
 Since that strange midnight summons:—so I knew
 My hours were number'd, and that I should see
 No other sunrise on this weary world;
 And gently said, intolerant of suspense,
 "My wife, my darling, I am going home;
 God wills it, darling,—going home to-night."
 Sorely I fear'd the first shock of my words
 Upon the tenderest of human hearts,
 A wife's, a mother's heart. But softly laying 120
 Her hand upon my burning brow, she said,
 "I know it all, beloved husband. God
 Hath spoken to me also, and hath given
 These brief hours to my wrestling prayers. Enough,
 To-morrow and all after-life for tears,
 To-day and all eternity for love."

And leaning then her ear close to my lips,
 Her soft cheek touching mine, we spoke or thought
 (A broken word was clue to many thoughts)
 Of things long past, and holy memories, 130
 That glow'd in sunlight through the mist of years,

Or cast their solemn shadow o'er the hills ;
 Those anniversaries, that sanctify
 So many Sabbaths in a pilgrim's life :
 The day that interlink'd her heart with mine,
 Our ramble through a laurel greenery,
 My soul full charged with its own feelings, nor
 Well able to restrain their passionate flow
 Into the waveless mirror of her love ;
 Not able long. The intervening years 140
 Of tried affection and of hope deferr'd ;
 And then the plucking of the tree of life,
 With its ambrosial fruitage and fresh flowers,
 Upon our bridal day. We took and ate
 And lived—God's smile upon us. Then our home,
 All fragrant with parental thoughtfulness,
 Close nestling by the village church, my charge ;
 Say rather ours : our lambs, our flock, our fold,
 For I was shepherd, and she shepherdess,
 And we, as one, were married to one spouse. 150
 Indissoluble bond ! names, faces, hearts
 Came back upon us fresh as yesterday :
 The precious seed not seldom sown with tears,
 The golden grain that ripen'd here and there,
 A wave-sheaf of our husbandry. And link'd
 With all the memories of pastoral life
 The birth-days of our children, those dear ties
 That bound us ever closer each to each,
 Us to our people, them and us to God.
 Nor births alone : for twice the gates of pearl 160
 Had open'd on their musical hinges, while

The angels ministrant had ta'en each time
 A little tender ewe-lamb from our arms,
 To nurture it, so Jesus will'd, in heaven.
 And then we spoke of other blessed dead,
 Akin to us by blood, akin by grace,
 And friends, and fellow-travellers, whose names
 Sprang to our eager lips spontaneously :
 Their forms that hour were present as when last
 We wrung their hands upon the shore of time. 170
 And ever the horizon grew more clear
 And wider as we gazed. Our little life
 Was interwoven with the universe
 Of God's eternal counsels. We were part
 Of the whole family in heaven and earth ;
 The many were in heaven, the few on earth ;
 Part of the mighty host whose foremost ranks
 Long since had cross'd the river, and had pitch'd
 Their tents upon the everlasting hills.
 How shrunken Jordan seem'd. 180

The day wore fast.

My wife look'd up. I saw her anxious eye
 Measuring the shadows more aslant, and read
 Her thought, and whisper'd, " Call them to us." Soon
 Our children cluster'd round my bed, Dear hearts,—
 The eldest only in the bloom of spring,
 The next in earliest prime of youth, the rest
 In order opening like forest flowers,
 A wreath of girls with brothers intertwined,
 Down to the rosebud in the nurse's arms.

They were but learners in the infant school 190
 Of sorrow, and were scarcely able yet
 To spell its simplest signs. But when they caught
 The meaning of their mother's words, and knew
 That I was going to leave them, one low sob
 Broke from them, like the sighing of the wind
 That frets the bosom of a silver lake
 Before a tempest. Each on the other look'd;
 And every lip trembled; and tears, hot tears,
 Gush'd forth, and quickly would have drench'd all eyes.
 But fearing their most innocent distress 200
 Would, like an irresistible tide, break down
 The barrier of their mother's holy calm,
 I raised my head upon the pillow, saying,

" Weep not, my children, that your father's work
 Is over, and his travelling days are done.
 For I am going to our happy home,
 Jerusalem the golden, of which we
 On Sabbath evenings have so often sung,
 And wish'd the weary interval away
 That lay betwixt us and its pearly gates. 210
 You must not weep for me. Nor for yourselves,
 Nor for your mother grieve too bitterly.
 The Father of the fatherless will be
 Your Father and your God. You know who says,
 ' I will not leave you orphans.' He will send
 The Blessed Comforter to comfort you,
 And soon will come and take you to Himself,
 That where He is there you may also be

I.]

AND DESCENT TO HADES.

9

In glory. And the time I know is short.
 The Bridegroom cometh quickly. Let your loins 220
 Be girded, and your lamps be trimm'd alway.
 Methinks your earthly sojourn will be closed,
 Not like your father's with the sleep of death,
 But by the archangel's clarion. Be it so:
 Or be it that ye walk the pilgrim's course
 To life's far bourn, the God of Israel
 Will shield you, and will give you bread to eat
 And raiment to put on, until you reach
 Your Father's house in peace.

“Come here, my child,

My firstborn, who hast ever been to me 230
 Thy mother's image, doubly blessed thus;
 Subdue thy grief that thou may'st solace hers,
 And with a daughter's heavenly art reflect
 Her former brightness on a widow's heart:
 I leave it thee thy charge. And thou, my boy,
 Son, brother, father, pastor thou must be,
 And with a thoughtfulness beyond thy years
 Enfold thy mother in thy filial love,
 As the leaves cluster round a shaken rose;
 And shade thy sisters and thy brothers, as 240
 A granite wall the flowers. Thy hour is come
 To take the banner of the cross: it was
 Thy sainted grandsire's once, and fearlessly
 He bore it in the thickest fight, and then
 Entrusted it to my unequal hands.

Now it is thine. I leave it thee to guard
And part from only with thy parting breath.

“Come near to me, my children. Let the hand,
That traced the cross upon your infant brow,
Rest on your heads once more: come hither, nurse, 250
Upon my babe, my tenderest blossom first,
God bless him: and the others, dear, dear lambs,
On each and all a father's blessing abide.
And Thou, Great Shepherd of the flock, look down
In mercy from Thy throne of heavenly grace
On those whom Thou hast given me. From Thy hand
I first received them, and to Thee again,
Thee only, I resign them. Let not one
Be wanting in the day Thou countest up
The jewels in Thy diadem of saints. 260
I ask not for the glories of the world,
I ask not freedom from its weariness
Of daily toil: but, O Lord Jesu Christ,
Let Thy omnipotent prayer prevail for them,
And keep them from the evil. In the hour
Of trial, when the subtle tempter's voice
Sounds like a seraph's, and no human friend
Is nigh, let my words live before Thee then,
And hide my lambs beneath Thy shadowing wings,
And keep them as the apple of Thine eye: 270
My prayers are ended, if Thy will be done
In them and by them: till at last we meet
Within the mansions of our Father's house,

A circle never to be sunder'd more,
No broken link, a family in heaven."

And now the sun had sunk behind the hills ;
The twilight deepen'd ; and the stars peep'd forth
Betwixt the drapery of silver clouds.
And the nurse understood the sign I gave,
And led the younger children from my room ;
And what with weeping and with weariness
It was not long before they slept. The rest
Silently praying lean'd against the foot
Of my low couch. Never a word they spoke,
But look'd their inexpressible love, till thoughts
Of luminous stars and large and loving eyes
Were strangely blended in a dream that came
Enamell'd with rich pictures of my life,
And floated like a golden mist away.

250

The time-piece striking nine recall'd me ; for
I felt the involuntary thrill it sent
Through my wife's heart, as kneeling by my side
She clung : and almost unawares my lips
Repeated words she loved in other days
Though long forgotten—" All thine own on earth,
Beloved, and in glory all thine own."
They open'd a deep fountain ; and her tears
Fell quick as rain upon my hand,—hot tears
On a cold hand,—so sluggishly my blood
Crept now. And I said, " Let the children read
Some of God's words." All others would have jarr'd

290

300

That night, but His are tender in their strength,
 And in their very tenderness are strong.
 And straightway, like a chime of evening bells
 Melodiously o'er broken waters borne,
 They read in a low voice most musical
 Some fragments of the book of life.

The first

Chose words she loved from David's pastoral,—
 "The Lord my Shepherd is; I shall not want:
 He leads me in green pastures, and beside
 Still waters; and restores my soul to tread
 For His name's sake the paths of righteousness.
 Yea, though I walk the shadowy vale of death,
 I fear not; Thou art with me; and Thy crook
 It comforts me. My table is prepared
 In presence of my enemies: my head
 Thou, Lord, anointest; and my cup o'erflows.
 Goodness and mercy shall attend my steps,
 And in Thy house I shall for ever dwell."

310

She ceased; and then another from the Psalmist
 Of him, who call'd his son "a stranger here,"
 Read, "Thou, O Lord, hast been our dwelling-place
 From age to age, the everlasting Thou,"
 Until he linger'd on the children's prayer,
 "O satisfy us early with Thy love
 That we may live rejoicing all our days."

320

Methinks, they hardly caught my low amen,

For almost without pause a gentle girl,
 With a voice tremulous for tears not shed,
 Repeated, for she knew them, the dear words 330
 Of Jesus on the night He was betray'd,
 "Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe
 In God . . ." nor ceased till she had pleaded all
 The eloquence of His High-priestly prayer.

And then my son began, "Now is Christ risen,
 The first-fruits of the dead who sleep in Him."
 The words burnt brightly' as beacon fires at night,
 Till as he utter'd "This corruptible
 Must put on incorruption, and this mortal 340
 Its immortality;" and ask'd in tones
 Where faith with feeling wrestled and prevail'd,
 "Where is thy sting, O Death? and where, O Grave,
 Thy victory?" we heard, but heeded not,
 The warning that another hour had pass'd,
 For our responsive hearts were echoing "Thanks
 To God who giveth us the victory!"
 And now for the last time the manna fell
 Around my pilgrim tent. My eldest child
 Turn'd with true instinct to our home, and read
 The vision of the new Jerusalem, 350
 The Bridal city, built of crystal gold
 And bright with jewels, whether real types
 Or rather typical realities.
 And, as she read, we often paused and spoke,
 Though but as children speak, of things unseen;
 Until the closing words, "His servants there

Shall serve Him; they shall see His face; His name
 Writ in their forehead. And they need no sun
 Or moon to shine upon them, for the Lord
 Doth lighten them with uncreated light, 360
 And they shall reign for ever and for ever."

Then there was silence: and my children knelt
 Around my bed—our latest family prayer.
 Listen—it is eleven striking. Then
 I whisper'd to my wife, "The time is short;
 I hear the Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come,'
 And Jesus answering, 'I come quickly.' Listen."
 And as she wiped the death-dews from my brow,
 She falter'd, "He is very near," and I
 Could only faintly say, "Amen, amen." 370
 And then my power of utterance was gone:
 I beckon'd and was speechless: I was more
 Than ankle deep in Jordan's icy stream.
 My children stood upon its utmost verge,
 Gazing imploringly, persuasively,
 While the words, "Dear, dear father," now and then
 Would drop, like dew, from their unconscious lips.
 My gentle wife, with love stronger than death,
 Was leaning over those cold gliding waves.
 I heard them speaking, but could make no sign; 380
 I saw them weeping, but could shed no tear;
 I felt their touch upon my flickering pulse,
 Their breath upon my cheek, but I could give
 No answering pressure to the fond hands press'd
 In mine. So rapidly the river-bed

Shelved downward, I had pass'd or almost pass'd
Beyond the interchange of loving signs
Into the very world of love itself.

The waters were about my knees; they wash'd
My loins; and still they deepen'd. Unawares
I saw, I listen'd—who is He who speaks?—

A Presence and a Voice. That Presence moved
Beside me like a cloud of glory; and
That Voice was like a silver trumpet, saying,
"Be of good comfort. It is I. Fear not."

And whether now the waters were less deep,
Or I was borne upon invisible arms,
I know not; but methought my mortal robes
Now only brush'd the smoothly gliding stream,
And like the edges of a sunset cloud

The beatific land before me lay.
One long last look behind me: gradually
The figures faded on the shore of time,
And, as the passing bell of midnight struck,
One sob, one effort, and my spirit was free.

They err who tell us, that the spirit uncloded,
And from its mortal tabernacle loosed,
Has neither lineament of countenance,
Nor limit of ethereal mould, nor form
Of spiritual substance. The Eternal Word,
Before He hung upon the Virgin's breasts,
Was wont to manifest Himself to men,
In visible similitude defined:
And, when on Calvary He gave up the ghost,

In that emancipated Spirit went forth,
 And preach'd glad tidings to the souls below.
 The angels are but spirits, a flame of fire,
 And subtle as the viewless winds of heaven ;
 Yet are they each to the other visible,
 And beautiful with those original forms
 That crown'd the morn of their nativity. 420
 Each has his several beauty. It is true
 The changes that diversify their state,
 Wrought with the speed of wishes at their will
 And pleasure who are pleased as pleases God,
 Are many as are the leaves and bloom and fruit
 That shed new lustre on the orange groves
 And vineyards of the south : but still remains
 Their angel ideality the same,
 As we confuse not orange-trees and vines. 430
 And so the spirit inbreathed in human flesh,
 By death divested of its mortal robes,
 Retains its individual character,
 Ay, and the very mould of its sojourn
 Within this earthly tabernacle. Face
 Answers to face, and limb to limb ; nor lacks
 The saint immediate investiture
 With saintly' apparel. Only then the mind
 Which struggles here beneath this fleshly veil,
 As the pure fire in a half polish'd gem— 440
 Ruby or amethyst or diamond—
 Imprison'd, when the veil is rent in twain,
 Beams as with solar radiance forth, and sheds
 Its glow o'er every motion, every look :

That which is born of spirit is spirit, and seems
 All ear, all eye, all feeling, and all heart ;—
 A crystal shrine of life.

And I was now

A spirit, new born into a spiritual world.
 Half dreaming, half awake, I lay awhile
 In an Elysium of repose : as glides 450
 A vessel long beset with boisterous winds
 Into some tranquil port, and all is still,
 Except the liquid rippling round the keel :
 So in a trance I lay. But gradually,
 As wakes an infant from its rosy sleep
 To find its mother keeping by its side
 Enamour'd vigil, dreaming I awoke,
 And slowly then bethought me whence I came
 And what I was, and ask'd instinctively 460
 "Where am I?" And a gentle voice, in tones
 More musically soft than those the wind
 Elicits from Æolian harp or lute,
 Made answer, "Brother, thou art by my side,
 By me thy guardian angel, who have watch'd
 Thy footsteps from the wicket gate of life,
 And now am here to tend thy pathway home."
 I turn'd to see who spake, and being turn'd
 I saw two overshadowing wings that veil'd
 The unknown speaker. Slowly they disclosed 470
 A form of light which seem'd to rest on them,
 So, to compare the things of earth and heaven,
 As rests the body of the bird, which men

Call for delight the bird of Paradise,
 Upon its waving feathers poised in air,
 Feathers, or rather clouds of golden down,
 With streamers thrown luxuriantly out
 In all the wantonness of winged wealth.
 Not otherwise behind that angel waved
 His pinions tremulous with starry light,
 Then droop'd close folded to his radiant side : 480
 But, folded or diffuse, with equal ease
 Buoyant he floated on the obedient air.
 The very sight was melody ; such grace
 Flow'd in his lightest motion. Save his wings
 The form was human in the spring of youth :
 I guess'd a warrior by the fiery sword
 Girt to his thigh ; and yet his flowing robes,
 White as if woven of the beams that fall
 On the untrodden snows, bespoke a priest ;
 And his mysterious crown, a king : but when 490
 Smiling he look'd on me, so much of love—
 Pure, holy, unimaginable love—
 In that one glance his spirit pour'd into mine ;
 Nor warrior then, nor priest, nor king he seem'd,
 But only brother.

And again he spoke,
 " Before you hills have caught the Eastern glow
 Will they expect us at heaven's golden gates.
 The road is long ; but swifter than the beams
 Of morning is the angelical convoy
 Sent for thy escort home. Myself thy guide : 500

And with me other two, who on their hands
 Shall bear thee as they bore blest Lazarus
 Into his father's bosom, ready stand,
 Waiting our summons. But, so pleas'es thee,
 Ere we set forth, rise brother, and look round
 Upon the battle-field where thou hast fought
 The fight of faith."

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Immediately I rose,
 My spiritual essence to my faintest will
 'Subservient, as is flame to wind, and gazed,
 Myself invisible, around. O sight 510
 Surpassing utterance, when the mists, that veil'd
 That borderland of heaven and earth and hell,
 Dispersed, or rather when my eyes became
 Used to the mysteries of things unseen!
 My dwelling had been situate beside
 The myriads of a vast metropolis:
 But now astonish'd I beheld, and lo!
 There were more spirits than men, more habitants
 Of the thin air than of the solid ground:
 The firmament was quick with life. As when 520
 The prophet's servant look'd from Dothan forth
 On Syria's thronging multitudes, and saw,
 His eyes being open'd at Elisha's prayer,
 Chariots of fire by fiery horses drawn,
 The squadrons of the sky around the seer
 Encamping. Thus in numbers numberless
 The hosts of darkness and of light appear'd
 Thronging the air. They were not ranged for fight,

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But mingled host with host, angels with men.
 Nor was it easy to discern the lost
 From the cœtet. There were no horned fiends 530
 As some have fabled, no gaunt skeletons
 Of naked horror; but the fallen wore,
 Even as the holy angels, robes of light;
 Nor did their ruin otherwise appear
 Than in dark passions, envy, and pride, and hate,
 Which like a brand upon their brow obscured
 The lustre of angelic loveliness.
 It was not open battle, might with might
 Contesting; but uninterrupted war 540
 Of heavenly faithfulness and hellish craft.
 By every saint a holy watcher stood;
 By some a company of blessed spirits;
 Each had their ministry assign'd. And oft
 From some superior chief the watchword pass'd,
 Or warnings came of stratagems foreseen,
 Or tidings from the court of glory sped
 From lip to lip more quickly than the thoughts
 Which men decypher from electric signs.
 Far off their armour gleam'd. On the other hand 550
 The spirits of darkness freely intermix'd
 With all; innumerable legions arm'd;
 And, baffled oft, to their respective lords
 The thrones and principalities of hell
 Repairing, better learn'd their cursed lore
 To win or storm the ramparts of the heart
 Except to treachery impregnable.
 Around some dwellings, thick as locust-swarms,

I saw them eluster. Flush'd with wine there pass'd
 A young man through the solitary streets— 560
 Not solitary to angelic eyes—
 Home to his father's house: a dark spirit waved
 A fascinating spell before his face:
 And straightway to those tents of wickedness
 He bent his easy steps; and, as he cross'd
 The threshold through the crowd invisible,
 I heard their fiendish laugh of triumph. Soon
 Another, on the call of charity,
 With haste that dimly-lighted pavement trod;
 And him the spirits malign assay'd to draw 570
 With the same sorcery: but an angel stoop'd
 And interposed his buckler, and the youth
 Went on unscathed, though mindless of his peril.
 A lonely garret drew my eye; for thence
 A flood of roseate brilliance stream'd afar,
 Such brilliance as a spirit alone may see:
 There on a bed of straw a sufferer lay
 Feeble, but strong in faith; and by her side
 Two of heaven's noblest principalities
 Kept watch: and to my look of marvel, why 580
 Such high pre-eminence was hers, my guide
 Made answer, "She is one whom Jesus loves."
 But now another sight attracted me:
 'Twas but a children's orphanage; but there,
 Say, is it Jacob's ladder once again
 Planted upon the earth? Such forms of light
 Were passing to and fro continually,
 So frequent was the intercourse with heaven.

It boots not further to declare what things
 I saw that hour; but wheresoe'er I look'd 590
 Methought there was an earnestness and awe
 Presaging coming erisis. As I gazed,
 Questions innumerable to my lips
 Rose as live waters to a fountain's brim.
 But I was mute with wonder; and my guide,
 Responding to my quick unspoken thoughts,
 Said, "Brother, I will tell thee all ere long;
 But now one more permitted glance of love
 Upon thy earthly home, and we must then
 Assay our long precipitate descent." 600

I follow'd where he led. Is it my home,
 My widow'd, desolate, and orphan'd home?
 O hush! o'er every child an angel bent,
 Nor was the nurse the only one who watch'd
 The cradle of my sleeping babe. My wife
 Had stolen to our silent chamber back,
 And knelt in tears beside my lifeless clay:
 And o'er her stood a scrapp, watching her
 With wondrous tenderness and love and grief.
 "And is it true," I ask'd—my words were quick 610
 And irrepressible for eager thought,—
 "Hath it been ever granted those who have pass'd
 The river, to appear and show themselves,
 Unchanged in form, in heart unchangeable,
 To loved ones they have left behind?" "'Tis true
 It hath been so," gently my guardian said,
 "But only by His sovereign will and word

Who holds the keys of Hades and of Death,
 And opens, as He wills, the mortal eye
 To see the mysteries of things unseen. 620
 There are who fondly call upon the dead
 To hear them, and imagine they receive
 Some dark response in symbols or in sounds :
 But either in their minds their own prayers raise
 Distemper'd phantasies, or spirits unblest,
 Perceiving that the bond of fealty
 Is broken with the One and Only God,
 Assume the very lineaments and voice
 Of those invoked, and answering them allure
 Their worshippers to ruin. Yet sometimes 630
 The veil is lifted by His high behest
 Who separates eternity from time,
 And spirits have spoken unto men, and then
 Their eye is open, and their ear attent.
 Blest seers, blest auditors : but higher still
 And holier is the pure beatitude
 On those who have not seen and yet believe ;
 And such is hers who kneels before thee : hers,
 As thine was, is the victory of faith.
 Leave her to God. Our journey summons us." 640
 "Enough, enough," I answer'd, "All is well ;
 I would not pluck one jewel from her crown :
 Arise, let us be going." And at my words
 The spirit who watch'd beside her look'd on me
 A look of tender gratitude, and waved
 His hand in token of a short farewell.

And I was now aware of two who stood
 Beside me, courier angels, wing'd for speed:
 Twin brothers they appear'd, so like their mien,
 So like their garments dipt in rainbow hues; 650
 They bent on me the beauty of their smile,
 And singing as they took my hand in theirs,
 "Home, brother, home," uncloused their wings of light:
 And we, my guardian leading us the way,
 Set forth upon the road to Paradise.

Smooth, easy, swifter than the winds of heaven
 Our flight was. In the twinkling of an eye
 We brush'd the mantle of a silver cloud
 That floated in mid sky. Like flames of fire 660
 We mounted upward, for awhile within
 The limits of the mighty shadow cast
 From the earth's solid globe athwart the heavens.
 But soon, emerging from its gloom, we saw
 The sun unclouded, but its disc reduced
 To half its former radiance,—faint its warmth,
 Feeble its light, and lessening every league.
 But when I saw that we had left the earth
 Beneath us, and were ever soaring higher,
 I turn'd me to my radiant guide, and said,
 "O blessed angel, wherefore calledst thou 670
 The road to Paradise a long descent
 Precipitate? Upward our pathway leads,
 Ascending, not descending: and the earth
 Already lies a planet at our feet."

And he, benignly smiling, answer'd me,
 " Call me, I pray thee, Oriel, such my name—
 One little beam from God's great orb of light.
 Ascension and descension, height and depth,
 Are here not measured by a line through space
 Drawn vertical or perpendicular
 From any spot on the revolving earth:—
 Of which let it suffice thee to reflect
 Thy highest hitherto hath ever been
 The lowest to the other hemisphere.
 Not so our zenith and our nadir lie.
 But height with us is where the Eternal God,
 Though omnipresent in the universe,
 Reveals the lustre of His throne supreme,
 Through clouds of glory in the heaven of heavens:
 And depth is the remotest opposite.
 We are descending now: for Hades lies
 More distant from the everlasting throne
 Than central earth. Fear not; for He who sits
 High throned above all height pre-eminent,
 Not only stoop'd from thence to Bethlehem,
 But dying, descended lower than the earth,
 And captive led captivity, His prey,
 In those vast realms beneath. Descending first,
 Soon He ascended far above the heavens,
 And with His presence fills the universe.
 His pathway, brother, must be thine. Nor think
 That Paradise, though situat in the deep
 Which lieth under, is not real heaven:
 Heaven is where Jesus is, and He is there.

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Even as in those mysterious temple courts
 Built on mount Zion, figures of the true,
 There was the outer court, the holy place,
 The Holiest of Holies, and yet all
 Were but one house, One Father's house of prayer ;
 So is it in the heaven of heavens. And now 710
 The veil is rent for ever, and He walks
 Who bears thy name engraven on His heart
 Before the throne of mercy, and amid
 The golden candlesticks, and where the souls
 Beneath the altar cry ' How long, O Lord ?'
 Fear not ; there thou shalt see Him as He is,
 There clasp His sacred feet, and rest beneath
 The beaming sunlight of His countenance,
 And follow where He leads through fairer fields 720
 Than Eden, by the gushing springs of life
 Fresh water'd. He makes heaven : and every part
 Of His great temple with His glory shines."

So spake he ; and I hung upon his lips
 Entranced, whose words were sweeter to my taste
 Than droppings of the honey dew. But now
 I was aware the pathway that we clomb
 No longer was a solitary track,
 Rather a mighty highway of the heavens :
 For other travellers, angels they seem'd,
 Were passing to and fro unweariedly, 730
 On manifold behests commission'd. Some
 Swept by us, swift as lightning, on their road
 From Paradise to earth : and other some

Journeying the way we went, in groups of light,
 Bore in their hands, like my angelic guard,
 A weary pilgrim to his home of rest.
 Others, and they were many, had each in charge
 A sleeping infant folded to his bosom,
 And ever and anon would stoop and gaze
 Upon it with unutterable love. 740
 Of some the flight was slow: but when I look'd,
 The spirit they carried was in chains, and all
 His stricken lineaments bespoke despair.
 And still the path became more throng'd, and shone
 With living meteors, so as to compare
 The things of sight and faith, at midnight when
 A rose-blush as of morning seems to steal
 Across the northern firmament, with jets
 Of ardent flame and undulating light
 Incessant. On our right hand and our left 750
 The stars sang Hallelujah, as we pass'd
 Now in the splendour of some nearer orb,
 Whether a satellite or blazing sun,
 And now within the twilight interval
 That lay betwixt their vast domains. But I,
 Solicitous regarding those whose look
 Of woe once seen was ineffaceable,
 Ask'd, "Holy Oriel, are those prisoners,
 Whose slower course we pass continually,
 Angelic, or lost spirits of human birth? 760
 And wherefore are they on this road with us?"

And he replied, his words were grave but calm,

"They are the disembodied souls of men
 Who lived and died in sin. Lightly they spent
 In Godless mirth or prayerless toil unblest
 Their brief inestimable day of proof,
 Till the last golden sands ran out: and now
 Their hour is come, and they are on the road
 To that profound abysmal deep, wherein
 The rich man lifted up his anguish'd eyes— 770
 Eyes never to be closed in sleep again:
 Nor marvel that one track their footsteps leads
 And ours. Remember he of whom I spake,
 Himself in torments, though far off, beheld
 The holy Lazarus, and call'd aloud—
 A bootless prayer—on Abraham for aid.
 And when that desperate monarch, Saul of old,
 Impenitent, besought of Endor's witeh
 The knowledge that insulted Heaven refused,
 The prophet's spirit, which rose at God's behest, 780
 Baffling the arts of soecry, replied,
 'To-morrow thou and thine shall be with me.'
 All die, for all have sinn'd. Their mother earth
 Has but one sepulchre for all. And here
 One Hades, by us call'd the under-world,
 Receives the spirits of the damn'd and blest:
 One world, but widely sunder'd by a gulf
 Inevitably fix'd, impassable,
 Which severs to the left hand and the right
 The prison-house of woe and Paradise. 790
 Before us now it lies."

I look'd, and lo
 Before us lay a sphere girdled with clouds,
 And glorious with illimitable lights
 And shadows mingling. Momently it grew
 Dilated, as with undiminish'd speed
 We outstripp'd lightnings in our homeward path,
 Until in vain I toil'd to mark the line
 Of its horizon. Boundless it appear'd
 As space itself, a nether sea of mist
 Unfathomable, shoreless, infinite. 800
 Thither our pathway led. But, as we near'd
 Its extreme confines, I beheld what seem'd
 A defile in those mountainous clouds, a chasm
 Whence issued floods of radiance, pure white light,
 And rainbow tints, roseate, and gold, and blue.
 Unparallel'd on earth: though he who sees
 The virgin snows upon the Alps suffused
 With blushes underneath the first salute
 Of morning, sees a shadow of this light. 810
 This was the gorgeous avenue which led
 Straight to the gates of bliss—a pass to which
 The grandest and the most sublime on earth,
 From Caubul to the sunny plains of Ind,
 Were but a miner's arch. The massive sides,
 Massive they seem'd, of this ravine were built
 Of clouds which ever hung there undispersed,
 And caught on every vaporous fold and skirt
 The glory of the sportive rays that stream'd
 Forth from the happy Paradise beyond
 Innumerable. But before we pass'd 820

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Under that radiant canopy, I saw
 Another road far stretching on our left
 Into the outer darkness, vast and void,
 And from its depths methought I faintly heard
 The sighings of despair. Time was not now
 For mute surprise or question. On we flew,
 As shoots a vessel laden with the wealth
 Of Ceylon's isle, or Araby the blest,
 Right onward, every sailyard bent with wind,
 Into her long'd-for port. And now the air
 Grew tremulous with heavenly melody. 830
 Far off at first it seem'd and indistinct,
 As swells and sinks the multitudinous roar
 Of ocean; but ere long the waves of sound
 Roll'd on articulate, and then I knew
 The voice of harpers harping on their harps.
 And lo, upon the extreme verge of cloud,
 As once at Eden's portals, there appear'd
 A company of angels clothed in light,
 Thronging the path or in the amber air
 Suspense. And in the twinkling of an eye 840
 We were among them, and they cluster'd round
 And waved their wings, and struck their harps again
 For gladness: every look was tenderness,
 And every word was musical with joy.

"Welcome to heaven, dear brother, welcome home!
 Welcome to thy inheritance of light!
 Welcome for ever to thy Master's joy!
 Thy work is done, thy pilgrimage is past;

Thy guardian angel's vigil is fulfill'd ;
 Thy parents wait thee in the bowers of bliss ;
 Thy infant babes have woven wreaths for thee ;
 Thy brethren who have enter'd into rest
 Long for thy coming ; and the angel choirs
 Are ready with their symphonies of praise.
 Nor shall thy voice be mute : a golden harp
 For thee is hanging on the trees of life ;
 And sweetly shall its chords for ever ring,
 Responsive to thy touch of ecstasy,
 With Hallelujahs to thy Lord and ours."

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So sang they ; and that vast defile of clouds
 Re-echoed with the impulses of song
 And music, and the atmosphere serene
 Throbb'd with innumerable greetings. Sounds,
 Such as no mortal ear hath ever heard,
 Save those who watch'd their flocks at Bethlehem,
 Ravish'd my soul, and sights surpassing words,
 Till, ear and eye fulfill'd with pure delight,
 I turn'd me to my angel guide, and said
 Unconsciously, "'Twere good to sojourn here !" 870
 But he, in tones of buoyant hope, replied,
 " Brother, thou shalt see greater things than these."

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Book Second.

THE PARADISE OF THE BLESSED DEAD.

ON, through that mountainous defile of clouds,
 My guardian and his winged ministers
 Bore me with smooth undeviating flight,
 And speed unslacken'd: round about us play'd
 Our retinue of angels, carolling
 And harping as they flew: the while an hour
 Pass'd peradventure of terrestrial time,
 Measuring in space leagues almost measureless,
 Though travellers along that blissful road
 Wish'd it were longer. But at last aware
 Of brighter radiance circumfused, I look'd
 Far in the gleaming distance, and behold,
 Barring our onward course were gates of pearl,
 Translucent pearl, through which the glory' of heaven
 Came soften'd in a thousand tender hues—
 Distinguishable Iris, chrysolite,
 Sapphire, and emerald, and sardius,
 And peerless hyacinthine amethyst.
 The deep foundations of those gates were such
 Lower than thought may fathom, and their top

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Appear'd to touch the empyrean's arch ;
 But at the echo of the harpers' song
 Back with melodious sound they softly flew,
 As if themselves instinct with sympathies
 Of welcome, and disclosed the scenes of bliss
 That lay beyond them bathed in amber light.

Here first upon the threshold of those gates
 My heavenly escort paused. Here first I trod
 A pavement of transparent gold, and gazed
 Upon that luminous ravine, which brought
 Us hither, in admiring marvel. Such
 A cincture, to compare great things with small,
 Of waters and of vaporous clouds composed
 Some hold the golden ring which circulates
 Round Saturn's orb: or such, as others tell,
 The lucid atmosphere enveloping
 The central sun, whose solid globe opaque
 Is only visible through rents which show
 As spots to the inhabitants of earth.
 But what might be the mantle, which enwrapt
 The unseen world of spirits, I ask'd not. Clouds
 Were none before us. Through the gates of pearl
 We pass'd, and on a terraced platform stood,
 Which overlook'd the realms of Paradise,
 And gazed awhile, like Moses from the rocks
 Of Pisgah on the promised land. O, scene
 Surpassing words! Beneath us lay outstretch'd
 A garden far more large than if the earth,
 From pole to pole, from sunrise to sunset,

Bloom'd with the countless roses of Cashmere;
 And yet not larger to the dark abyss
 That couch'd beneath it and beyond, than was
 Blest Eden to the whole primeval world.
 And this, like Adam's sinless nursery,
 Was planted by the hand of God Himself,
 And water'd with the rivulets of life,
 And shaded with innumerable trees,
 Fragrant and flowering and hung with fruit—
 Trees beautiful to view and good for food.
 All here was good. Nor were there wanting hills 60
 With valleys interspersed, and placid lakes,
 And plains, and forests, as of cedars, fit
 For holy intercourse of friend with friend,
 And opening glades between. The distant seem'd
 Near as we look'd upon it: whether this
 Were due to that crystalline atmosphere
 Purged from all film, or rather that the eyes
 Of spirits and angels in themselves excel
 The virtues of those lenses wherewith men
 Have arm'd their ineffective vision, as 70
 A microscope and telescope in one.
 For a brief space we gazed enamour'd. Then
 Cleaving with ease the light elastic air,
 By love's strong magnet drawn, we sloped our flight,
 As slopes a meteor with its train of gold
 Across the summer firmament, nor stay'd
 Till in a wooded vale beside a stream
 We lighted—we and our angelic choir.

II.]

THE BLESSED DEAD.

35

We lighted; and my guardian with a smile
 Of gladness, which no thought of self obscured,
 Turn'd to me, saying, "Brother, this is home—
 This is thy Saviour's rest, and this is thine,
 Until the archangel's trumpet sound in heaven:
 Here thou with Jesus art, Jesus with thee;
 Go forth and meet thy Lord. Beneath this shade
 Mean time we tarry for thee, while alone
 Thou seest Him whom thou hast loved unseen:
 That is an incommunicable joy
 With which no other hearts, angels or men,
 Can intermeddle. By yon grassy bank
 Follow where leads thee on thy way this stream
 Of flowing crystal; such is His command:
 And here will we await thy blest return."

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So they retired a little space aside,
 Under the grateful shadow of those trees
 Rich with ambrosial fruit: and ere my lips
 Could utter thanks I found myself alone—
 Alone, and on my way to meet my God.
 The solitude was sweet. So many scenes
 Of glory and unprecedented joy
 Had crowded on my vision, that I long'd
 To gather and compose my thoughts awhile
 In meditation. Such an interval
 Of brief but blissful solitude the bride,
 Left lonely on her bridal evening, feels
 To still the beating of a heart that beats
 Too high with virgin bashfulness and hope,

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Ere she receives her spouse. And, as I trod
 Those banks enamell'd with the freshest flowers,
 Soothed with the gliding music which that stream 110
 Made ever, brokenly at intervals,
 Communing with myself, I thought aloud:

“And am I, then, in heaven? Is this the land
 To which my yearning heart so often turn'd
 Desirous? This the Paradise of saints?
 And is it I myself who speak? The same
 Who wander'd in the desert far astray,
 Till the Good Shepherd found me perishing,
 And drew me to Himself with cords of love?
 Has He now brought me to His heavenly fold, 120
 Which sin can never touch nor sorrow cloud,
 Me who have water'd with my frequent tears
 The thorny wilderness, and struggled on
 Foolsore and weary—me, the wayward one?
 And shall I never wander from Him more,
 And never grieve His brooding Spirit again?
 O, joy ineffable! But am I now
 About to meet Him, see Him face to face
 Who made me, and who knows me what I am,
 Of all His saints unworthiest of His love? 130
 Why beats this heart so tremulously? Why
 Do thoughts within me rise? Is it not He
 Who bought me with His blood? Hath He not led
 Me on my journey hither step by step?
 Came He not to me at the hour of death,
 And whisper'd that my sins were all forgiven,

And now hath sent His angels to convoy
 My spirit safely home, and welcome me
 With songs of Hallelujah? What is love,
 If this indissoluble bond that links
 Me and my Lord for ever be not love? 140
 His costly, precious, infinite, divine :
 Mine human, limited, and mean, and poor,
 And yet His inward Spirit whispers, true.
 For what were all this gorgeous Paradise,
 The music of these waters, and these bowers
 Fragrant with fruitage, what were all to me,
 And tenfold all, twice measured, without Him?
 Without Him heaven were but a desert rude ;
 With Him, a desert heaven. And art Thou here, 150
 Jesu, my Lord, my life, my light, my all?
 When wilt Thou come to me, or bid me come
 To Thee, that I may see Thee as Thou art,
 And love Thee even as Thou lovest me?"

And as I spake I heard a gentle Voice
 Calling me by my name. So Adam heard
 And conscience-stricken Eve the voice of God
 Walking abroad through Eden in the cool
 Of sunset. But with other thoughts to theirs
 I turn'd to see who call'd me ; and lo, One 160
 Wearing a form of human tenderness
 Approach'd. Human He was, but love divine
 Breathed in His blessed countenance, a love
 Which drew me onwards irresistibly
 Persuasive : whether now He veil'd His beams

More closely than the hour His brightness shone
 Around the prophet by Ulai's banks,
 And in the solitary Patmos smote
 Prostrate to earth the Apocalyptic seer ;
 Or whether the Omnipotent Spirit of God
 Strengthens enfranchised spirits to sustain
 More of His glory. I drew near to Him,
 And He to me. O beatific sight !
 O vision with which nothing can compare !
 The angel ministrant who brought me hither
 Was exquisite in beauty, and my heart
 Clave to his heart : the choristers of light,
 Who sang around our pathway, none who saw
 Could choose but love for very loveliness.
 But this was diverse from all other sights :
 Not living only, it infused new life ;
 Not beautiful alone, it beautified ;
 Nor only glorious, for it glorified.
 For a brief space methought I look'd on Him,
 And He on me. O blessed look ! how brief
 I know not, but eternity itself
 Will never from my soul erase the lines
 Of that serene transfiguring aspect.
 For a brief space I stood, by Him upheld,
 Gazing, and then in adoration fell
 And clasp'd His sacred feet, while holy tears,
 Such tears as disembodied spirits may weep,
 Flow'd from my eyes. But bending over me,
 As bends a mother o'er her waking babe,
 He raised me tenderly, saying, " My child."

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II.]

THE BLESSED DEAD.

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And I, like Thomas on that sacred eve,
 Could only answer Him, "My Lord, my God."
 And then He drew me closer, and Himself
 With His own hand, His pierced hand of love,
 Wiped the still falling tear-drops from my face,
 And told me I was His and He was mine,
 And how my Father loved me, and He loved.

200

That hour for brevity a moment seem'd;
 For benediction, ages. But at last
 Calmly He said, "The night is almost spent;
 The morning is at hand. Fearless meanwhile
 Rest thou in peace. Oriel, thy guardian spirit,
 Shall lead thee to those bowers felicitous,
 Where now thy parents and thy babes await
 My kingdom with the other Blessed Dead."

210

So saying, by the hand He led me forth
 (Lowly in heart as when He stoop'd and led
 The blind man of Bethsaida aside),
 And brought me to the spot where Oriel stay'd
 Expectant with those courier seraphim
 And all that choir of angels. Reverent
 They rose, and knelt in worship at His feet;
 And there was silence, till again His voice
 Breathed new delight ineffable in all:

"Soldier and servant of the Lord, well done!
 My faithful Oriel, well hast thou discharged
 Thy long and arduous ministry of love

220

'Twixt earth and heaven, now for six thousand years :
 And not least faithful proved in guarding this
 Thy youngest brother from the hosts of hell
 Confederate to destroy My child in vain.
 And ye, My winged ministers of light,
 Well have ye brought him hither. And, ye choirs
 Celestial, I have heard well-pleased your songs
 And notes of welcome. For a little while 230
 Abide ye in these happy fields, for soon
 A mightier triumph shall awake your harps.
 And, Oriel, be it thine to take thy ward
 Where wait his coming those he loved on earth :
 And, when fulfill'd with their society
 And all the present bliss of Paradise,
 Lead him apart, and patiently disclose
 That which thou knowest of eternity's
 To-day and yesterday. The morrow dawns.
 Make him partaker of thy thoughts, whom thou 240
 Hast brought to share thy glory. And meanwhile
 Receive from Me this token of thy trust."

He said, and from His bosom pluck'd what seem'd
 A gem of fire, a globe of liquid light,
 As Venus in her prime shines on the earth,
 And placed it in my guardian's starry crown :
 An amaranthine diadem, enwove
 With many jewels, now at last complete.
 New love beat in all hearts, new joy, new praise :
 And in a moment we were there alone : 250
 Yet not alone, I felt that He was there,

Invisible, but personally there ;
 Spirit with spirit : I with Him, and He
 With me. Such virtue Omnipresence hath,
 Which only hides its glory in itself,
 That it may manifest itself anew
 In forms of unknown beauty, light with cloud,
 Voices with silence, movement with repose
 Combining in eternal interchange.

And through an open glade we took our way, 260
 And many an avenue of forest trees,—
 Such forests Paradise alone may rear,—
 And on through many a deep ravine, which slept
 Beneath the guardianship of shadowing hills,
 Gliding as easily as glides a train
 Of golden mist amid Norwegian pines ;
 Or as a parting smile of evening, shed
 By the proud king of day, ere he retires
 Within the crimson curtains of the West,
 Breaks over the cloud-mantled Pyrenees, 270
 Till their peaks glow like opal, and the lakes
 Catching the transitory radiance gleam
 Like liquid pearl : so smoothly without sound
 Of footfall on the printless flowers we pass'd.

The track was long, soliciting our stay ;
 The time was briefer than my words. And lo,
 A valley open'd on our sudden gaze
 Pre-eminently beautiful and bright
 'Mid that bright world of beauty. But straightway,

Or ever I could utter words of praise,
 Voices familiar as my mother tongue
 Fell on me; and an infant cherub sprang,
 As springs a sunbeam to the heart of flowers,
 Into my arms, and murmur'd audibly,
 "Father, dear father;" and another clasped
 My knees, and falter'd the same name of power.
 One look sufficed to tell me they were mine,
 My babes, my blossoms, my long parted ones;
 The same in feature and in form as when
 I bent above their dying pillow last,
 Only the spirit now disenrobed of flesh,
 And beaming with the likeness of their Lord.

290

The one who nestled in my breast had seen
 All of earth's year except the winter's snows.
 Spring, summer, autumn, like sweet dreams, had smiled
 On her. Eva—or *living*—was her name;
 A bud of life folded in leaves and love;
 The dewy morning star of summer days;
 The golden lamp of happy fire-side hours;
 The little ewe-lamb nestling by our side;
 The dove whose cooing echoed in our hearts;
 The sweetest chord upon our harp of praise;
 The quiet spring, the rivolet of joy;
 The pearl among His gifts who gave us all;
 On whom not we alone, but all who look'd,
 Gazing would breathe the involuntary words,
 "God bless thee, Eva—God be bless'd for thee."
 Alas, clouds gather'd quickly, and the storm

300

Fell without warning on our tender bud,
 Scattering its leaflets; and the star was drench'd 310
 In tears; the lamp burnt dimly; unawares
 The little lamb was faint; the weary dove
 Cower'd its young head beneath its drooping wing;
 The chord was loosen'd on our harp; the fount
 Was troubled, and the rill ran nearly dry;
 And in our souls we heard our Father, saying,
 "Will ye return the gift?" The Voice was low—
 The answer lower still—"Thy will be done."
 And now, where we had often pictured her,
 I saw her one of the beatified; 320
 Eva, our blossom, ours for ever now,
 Unfolding in the atmosphere of love:
 The star that set upon our earthly home
 Had risen in glory, and in purer skies
 Was shining; and the lamp we sorely miss'd,
 Shed its soft radiance in a better home;
 Our lamb was pasturing in heavenly meads;
 Our dove had settled on the trees of life;
 Another chord was ringing with delight,
 Another spring of rapture was unseal'd, 330
 In Paradise; our treasure was with God;
 The gift in the great Giver's strong right hand;
 And none who look'd on her could choose but say,
 "Eva, sweet angel, God be bless'd for thee."

But, were it possible, more beauteous seem'd
 The cherub child who clung about my knees—
 A different beauty, hers. Sweet Constance, she

Had trodd'n a longer, rougher pathway home,
 And not unset with thorns,—long for a babe,
 Two winters and three summers was her life— 340
 Rough only for a babe; but every step
 Ta'en by her little bleeding feet had left
 Its tracery upon her spirit now
 In tender lines of love, and peace, and praise.
 Yet both were only infants; babes of light
 In God's great household: heaven with all its joys
 Had perfected, not changed, their infancy:
 The younger, with the fearless gaze of one
 Who never knew the shadow of a cloud,
 Sparkling as sparkles a pure diamond: 350
 The elder, with a child's deep confidence,
 Which trusts you with illimitable trust,
 And with one look summons and wins your heart.

A babe in glory is a babe for ever.
 Perfect as spirits, and able to pour forth
 Their glad heart in the tongues which angels use,
 These nurslings gather'd in God's nursery
 For ever grow in loveliness and love
 (Growth is the law of all intelligence),
 Yet cannot pass the limit which defines 360
 Their being. They have never fought the fight,
 Nor borne the heat and burden of the day,
 Nor stagger'd underneath the weary cross;
 Conceived in sin, they sinn'd not; though they died,
 They never shudder'd with the fear of death;
 These things they know not and can never know.

Yet fallen children of a fallen race,
 And early to transgression, like the rest,
 Sure victims, they were bought with Jesus' blood,
 And cleansed by Jesus' Spirit, and redeem'd 370
 By His Omnipotent arm from death and hell :
 A link betwixt mankind and angelhood :
 As born of woman, sharers with all saints
 In that great ransom paid upon the cross :
 In purity and inexperience
 Of guilt akin to angels. Infancy
 Is one thing, manhood one. And babes, though part
 Of the true archetypal house of God
 Built on the heavenly Zion, are not now,
 Nor will be ever, massive rocks rough-hewn, 380
 Or ponderous corner-stones, or fluted shafts
 Of columns, or far-shadowing pinnacles ;
 But rather as the delicate lily-work
 By Hiram wrought for Solomon of old,
 Enwreathed upon the brazen chapiters,
 Or flowers of lilies round the molten sea.
 Innumerable flowers thus bloom and blush
 In heaven. Nor reckon God's designs in them
 Frustrate, or shorn of full accomplishment :
 The lily is as perfect as the oak ; 390
 The myrtle is as fragrant as the palm ;
 And Sharon's roses are as beautiful
 As Lebanon's majestic cedar crown.

And when I saw my little lambs unchanged,
 And heard them fondly call me by my name,

"Then is the bond of parent and of child
Indissoluble," I exclaim'd, and drew
Them closer to my heart and wept for joy.

But other voices of familiar love,
And other forms of light reminded me
By the deep yearnings of my soul, I was
Myself not only' a father but a child;
Nor child alone, but brother, pastor, friend.
How often had I long'd in dreams o' the night,
Or meditative solitude, to see
The beaming sunshine of my father's smile,
Which ever seem'd to me a reflex joy
Cast from God's smile; or haply oftener yet
My mother's face of fond solicitude,—
Solicitous for all except herself. 410
They were before me now. Nor they alone:
Betwixt them leant a slender seraph form,
My sister's spirit, who with frailest bark
Year after year had stamm'd the wildest sea,
Pain, conflict, cloud, and utter weariness,
Till the last billow, almost unawares,
On its rough bosom bore her into rest.
And can this be that wave-tost voyager,
This she? Radiant with beauty and with bloom,
As if the past had written on her brow 420
Its transcript in those shades of pensive grace
And breathing sympathy, wherein remain'd
Nothing of sadness, all of saintliness.
She stood and look'd on me a moment, saying,

“ My brother, it is he ! ” and on my neck
 She fell ; nor arms alone were interlock'd
 In that embrace. And then the pent up thoughts
 Of many years flow'd from our eager lips,
 As waters from a secret spring unseal'd.

I was no stranger in a strange land there : 430
 But rather as one who travel-worn and weary,
 Weary of wandering through many climes,
 At length returning homeward, eyes far off
 The white cliffs of his fatherland, and ere
 The labouring ship touches its sacred soil
 Leaps on the pier, while round him crowding press
 Children and kith and friends, who in a breath
 Ask of his welfare, and with joyous tongues
 Pour all their love into his thirsty ear.
 Such welcome home was mine ; such questionings 440
 Of things that had befallen me since last
 We met, and of my pathway thitherwards,
 And of the dear ones I had left behind :—
 Words with embraces interspersed. And then.
 Taking my hands exultingly in theirs,
 And singing for delight, they led me on
 Adown that heavenly valley : and the joy
 Of Oriel, who resign'd me to their charge
 Awhile, and with his radiant retinue
 Hung on our footsteps, was fulfill'd in mine. 450
 Straight towards a river bank they bent their steps,
 Shaded by trees of life, whose pendent boughs,
 Fann'd by soft gales, and laden with fresh fruit,

400

410

420

Dipp'd in the living waters. Every step
 Some fondly loved familiar face was seen,
 Whom I had known in pilgrim days, unchanged,
 And yet all bright with one similitude:
 One Lord had look'd on them.

So pass'd we on,
 And lo, a group of the beatified
 Advanced to meet us, on whose lips methought, 460
 Hush'd to a whisper for delight, I heard
 The strange salute of father. In amaze
 I ask'd, what meant such gratulation there?
 And one for many answer'd, "From'thy mouth
 We heard of Jesus' love, and thine the hand
 That led us to His feet." It was enough:
 For all the parent and the pastor woke
 Within me; all the holy memories
 Of bygone days flow'd in a reflux tide
 Over my soul once more. Some I had known 470
 From rosy dawn of childhood, and had watch'd
 Their hearts like buds beneath a cottage wall
 Unfolding to the sunshine of God's love.
 Some I had shepherded, yea many, who
 With all the throbbing impulses of youth,
 Gave me the inviolable confidence
 Of their young life. And some in after years
 Had pour'd the burden of a wounded spirit,
 Suffering and sunken, into mine; and we
 Had wept together, and together sought 480
 The sinner's only Friend, nor sought in vain.

And others, dying, heard me read of him
 Who on the cross for mercy cried to Christ;
 Heard, and themselves believed. All these I knew;
 And quickly' as light their story flash'd on me.
 But in that group of filial spirits there came
 Many I knew not—part of that great store
 Of unsuspected treasure heaven conceals:
 And they too pour'd on me beatitudes.
 Nor, what I chiefly noted, seem'd my heart
 Surcharged, or freighted overmuch, with love. 490
 Affections with affections jarr'd not. All
 Was music. As through some cathedral aisles
 An organ of a thousand pipes pours forth
 Its rich and multitudinous harmonies,
 While the rapt organist touches at will
 Its various stops, hautboy, and trump, and flute,
 The clarion with the dulciana smooths,
 And chastens with the plaintive tremulant
 The diapason's thunder-roll: so love 500
 Without confusion blended there with love,
 Symphoniously distinct: and I embraced
 Each one with all my heart, and all as each.

But now arrived upon that river bank
 Whose lucid waves were shaded by the trees
 Of life, along its marge in loose array
 We wander'd, saints and angels, hand in hand,
 The children dancing in their innocent glee,
 And showering roses round our steps. But soon,
 Hard by a wooded precipice, whence fell 510

The living waters with melodious fall
In numberless cascades from rock to rock
Exultant, like a rain of diamonds,
Through gates of woven myrtle' and vine we pass'd,
And enter'd what they call'd their bower of bliss,
One of the countless bowers of Paradise.
Or rather it might seem a sylvan shrine
For worship ; so precipitous the trees,
Trees loftier than those giant pines which cast
Their shade athwart Peruvian forests, shot 520
Right upward' towards the crystal firmament,
And wove aloft branches and leaves and fruit
In arches intricate, a fretted roof,
Through which the light cool'd and empurpled came,
Leaving beneath wide clearance, carpeted
With moss of amaranth and delicate ferns.
On these the spirits elect straightway reclined,
And I with them : while Oriel over me
Leant gazing with such pure perfect delight
As guardian angels only know. And then 530
My children placed within my hands the wreaths
Which they had woven of unfading flowers
Against my coming : these my mother took
And set upon my brow, smiling, and said,
" Thy crown of glory other hands than mine,
And in an hour of holier victory,
Shall give thee."

And at Oriel's signal came
My father, bearing in his hand a harp

Of simplest form but manifold in tones
 Of musical modulations without end, 540
 And gave it to me, saying, "Take it, my son;
 It is heaven's workmanship, and made for thee."
 I took it, nothing loth; and, though on earth
 In lute or harp my skill was nothing, then
 Immediately I felt the tremulous strings
 Responsive to my every thought, as when
 The wind in sportive or in pensive mood
 Wakens Æolian music. Strung it was
 And pitch'd in most mysterious unison
 With my heart's sympathies; for when I laid 550
 My fingers on its airy chords, straightway
 My very soul gush'd forth in melody,
 The harp and harper vibrating in tune:
 While words, like echoes of an old refrain
 That heard in childhood haunts our riper years,
 Broke in heaven's music from my lips—"To Him
 Who loved us, and hath wash'd us from our sins
 In His own blood, and made us unto God
 And to the Father kings and priests, to Him
 Be glory and dominion, power and praise 560
 For ever and for evermore. Amen."
 And all the ransom'd spirits rejoicingly
 Answer'd, "For evermore, Amen." And all
 The choir of angels struck their golden lyres,
 Prolonging the sweet melody, until
 On every face a brighter radiance fell,
 And He, whose presence in the bowers of bliss
 Is Omnipresent, secretly reveal'd

Himself to each, diffusing fragrance round
 And joy unutterable; as when the wind
 Moves clouds of incense from an altar flame,
 And sheds a momentary roseate light
 On priests and worshippers and temple walls.

570

The gleam o' the Divine glory pass'd: and then
 My children brought me fruitage they had pluck'd
 From off the trees of life, and water drawn
 From living springs, and ruddy juice of grapes
 More large and luscious than the fruit which grew
 On Eshcol's sunny vines. Nor deem it strange
 That bodiless spirits partake of meat and drink. 580
 Are not the angels spirits? and ate they not
 At Mamre, by the tent of Abraham,
 Press'd by his courteous hospitality?
 And when the manna fell for forty years
 Around the watchfires of that pilgrim host,
 Was it not angel's food—the corn of heaven?
 The Increate alone is self-sustain'd,
 Life in Himself possessing, and all other
 His creatures, from the burning seraphim
 That sing around His everlasting throne, 590
 Even to the moth which floating in the light
 Wings in an hour its little life away,
 Feed on the bounty of a Father's love,
 Who opens wide His hand and satisfies
 All living things with life-sustaining food.
 And so we bless'd the Ever Blessed One,
 And ate and drank with such pure appetite,

II.]

THE BLESSED DEAD.

53

As gives not pain but pleasure to the feasts
 Of angels. Nor was lacking there the joy
 Of innocent laughter (they who weep on earth
 Shall laugh in heaven) and all the genial glow
 Of brotherly endearment, heart to heart
 And eye to eye, after long severance,
 Meeting for ever in our Father's house.
 Sweet and refreshing interlude.

600

But soon

To graver converse turn'd we : and they ask'd,
 With keen expectancy, what last I knew
 Of the great warfare waged by saints on earth ?
 What lights of morning in the golden East
 Streak'd the horizon ? what the tidings sent
 From heathen shores and from Emmanuel's land ?
 What victories the cross had last achieved
 Over the paling crescent ? whether still
 The doom'd embattlements of Babylon
 Stood in apparent might ? and if the Bride
 Sustain'd her weary vigil, as of old,
 From watch to watch repeating "Till He come ?"
 They ask'd : I answer'd, marvelling to find
 How thin a veil parted the blessed Church
 Triumphant, and that militant on earth ;
 And how the wrestlers, racers, combatants,
 Wrestled and ran and fought, encompass'd round
 So closely by a cloud of witnesses.

610

620

Farther I may not linger to relate

The infinite delights of that first tryst
With those, who earlier than myself had won
Their rest, and tasted of the fruit of life.
It might be many days of earthly time,
Which pass'd in glory without weariness
Or measure. But at length our hearts were fill'd, 630
Even to the overflowing brim of joy,
Each with the other's love; and forth we pass'd,
In groups or singly, on our several paths
Of rest or service: service there is rest,
Rest, service: for the Paradise of saints,
Like Eden with its toilless husbandry,
Has many plants to tend, and flowers to twine,
And fruit-trees in the garden of the soul,
That ask the culture of celestial skill.
Some wander'd amid vines, and flowery meads, 640
And from the grateful lips of angels learn'd
More virtues than he knew who spake of trees
From cedars to the hyssop on the wall.
Some perfected their skill in dance and song,
With lyre or lute accompanied, and made
Those woods and valleys vocal with sweet sounds,
Sweeter than those which from a thousand birds
Fill Vallombrosa's vale in spring-time. Here
It was perpetual spring. Some clomb with ease,
Swift as the winds, the everlasting hills, 650
And from their summit bathed in light survey'd
The glorious landscape. Some in silence mused:
Heaven has its calm unbroken solitudes
For prayer and lonely meditation meet.

And some in clusters, walking or recline,
 Heard from an elder saint or guardian spirit
 The awful story of the past, or bent
 Over the mystic chart of prophecy,
 Brother to brother saying, "It is done.
 The day-spring is at hand!"

660

Me Oriel led

From bower to bower, from peopled glen to glen,
 From saintly company to company,
 And show'd me of the mysteries that fill
 That world of spirits, that nether Paradise,
 That suburb of the New Jerusalem,
 That Beautiful gate of heaven, that vestibule
 Where the saints wait their bright apparelling
 Of glory 'neath the veil, now rent, which hangs
 Betwixt the Holy and Most Holy Place.
 Children of light, through fields of light we pass'd 670
 Unchallenged, not ungreeted with the smiles
 Of welcomes without number. And I mark'd
 How largely the redeem'd, though free to range
 Within the limits almost limitless
 Of those celestial regions, group'd themselves,
 They and their guardian spirits, with other saints,
 Their fellow-pilgrims on the earth. It was
 No rigid severance; for many walk'd,
 As we were walking, to and fro abroad
 Throughout those blissful mansions: but enough 680
 Of chosen and endear'd companionship
 To mark the character of centuries

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650

And generations, as concentric rings
 Of increase chronicle the growth of trees ;
 Or as the strata of the rocks record,
 Not without many an intercepting vein,
 The onward march of ages. Oriel read
 My wonder, though unspoken, and replied :
 " Remember that the same Omniscient Love
 Design'd this temple built of living stones, 690
 Wherein Himself to dwell for evermore,
 As hung the firmament with globes of light,
 And group'd them, as it pleas'd Him best in groups
 Of suns and planets, and in spiral coils
 Of stars innumerable, and decreed
 Amid this maze of constellations each
 Should minister to each, and by one law
 Of gravitation be for ever link'd.
 So by the vast necessity of love,
 Necessity with equal freedom poised, 700
 Saints cling to saints, angels to angels cleave,
 And men and angels in One Father's house
 Are all as brethren. Not that love can be
 Without the chosen specialties of love,
 The nearest to the nearest most akin.
 But none are strangers here, none sojourners :
 And as the cloudless ages glide away,
 New fountains of delight to us, to all,
 Will open in the fellowship of hearts,
 Unfathom'd by us yet. Nor time will fail ; 710
 For an eternity to come is ours
 With humble contemplation to adore

The counsels of a past eternity.
 But mark who next seem waiting our advance
 In yonder vale."

Straightway I look'd, and lo,
 We were among the parents of that age
 In which my life was cast—my father's peers—
 Some of them standard-bearers in God's host,
 Who, when their mortal course was finish'd, left
 Large space, and in the front ranks, as they fell, 720
 Till comrades pressing onward fill'd the chasm.
 And others walking in the lowliest paths
 Of earth, now comrades with the high'st in heaven.
 The first who greeted me by name was one
 Whom I had known long since, an aged saint,
 Dwelling all lonely in her little room,
 On scantiest means subsisting and content,
 But with a queenly heart, wide as the world,
 And loving all for His sake who is love :
 Hers now was meet society. And then 730
 Saluted me the venerable man,
 Whose writings first waken'd my dying soul
 To deathless life—one of those secret bonds
 Which interlink the family of God.
 But here I must not register the names
 Of these, and spirits of every clime and tongue,
 Who throng'd this region clothed in dazzling white ;
 For through them, bent on traversing the fields
 Of Paradise, onward to other ranks
 Of that illimitable host we pass'd, 740
 Their fathers and their fathers' fathers, men

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710

Whose lamps burn'd brightly once in earthly gloom,
 And now themselves shone forth as stars in heaven,
 Illuminating with eternal light
 The brightness of that filmless firmament.

So pass'd we on from saintly band to band
 Among those vales resting from all their toil,
 In multitudes more countless than the tribes
 Of Israel when from Dan to Beersheba
 Flocking to Zion's sacred hill they kept 750
 The feast of tabernacles, seven days
 Of song and gladness. In their midst I saw
 Some who appear'd more radiant than the rest,
 And ask'd what meant their bright pre-eminence
 In glory. Oriel answer'd, "These are they
 Of whom the Church on earth so often sings ;
 Some of the martyrs' noble army : these
 For Christ gave up their bodies to be burn'd,
 Or bow'd their necks beneath the murderous sword ;
 Or, though their names appear not on the scroll 760
 Of martyrologists, laid down their life,
 No less a martyrdom in Jesus' eyes,
 For His dear brethren's sake—watching the couch
 Of loathsome sickness or of slow decay ;
 Or binding up the ravages which men ;
 Marring God's image, deal on fellow-men,
 Or visiting the captive in his cell ;
 Or struggling with a burden not their own
 Until their very life-springs wore away.
 These too are martyrs, brother." 770

As he spake,

The high supremacy of sacrifice,
The majesty of service fill'd my soul
With thoughts too deep for words.

And not a few

I saw there of the goodly fellowship
Of prophets, the ambassadors who stood
Age after age amid the scoffing world,
And lifted up the standard of the cross,
Unmoved, undaunted. Nor, as some have deem'd,
Form'd they an order to themselves of saints,
But mingling moved, like shepherds through their
flocks,

780

Amid their fellow-saints, wielding the sway
By them, by all, felt rather than confess'd,
Of grateful and predominating love.
There is predominance in heaven, and grades
Of lower and superior sanctities ;
All are not equal there ; for brotherhood
And freedom both abhor equality,
The very badge of serfdom ; only there
It is the true nobility of worth,
The aristocracy of gentleness,
The power of goodness and of doing good.

790

And when I look'd upon those blessed saints,
Those perfect spirits, albeit the lowest there
Was greater than the greatest upon earth,
For all were clothed in sinless purity,

At once I knew the principalities
 And virtues and subordinate degrees
 Amongst them. And, when Oriel told their names,
 A deep chord vibrated within my heart,
 And past things lived again. And then I saw 800
 That many first were last, and last were first—
 Not all, not most, but many. There were those
 Once foremost in the foremost ranks, not now
 Distinguishable from their peers in light :
 And some, aforetime hidden and unknown,
 Now shone in lustrous dignity sublime.
 But one and all were circled with a cloud
 Of infant spirits, pure mirthful innocents,
 Like sunbeams glancing to and fro, like birds
 Warbling their song of praise. The elder saint 810
 Seem'd to my eyes a countless multitude ;
 But these cherubic babes outnumber'd them,
 As the dark pine-trees of Siberia's wilds,
 Unfell'd immeasurable forests, yield
 In numbers to the ferns and summer flowers
 Which grow beneath their shadowing boughs, and
 fringe
 Their gnarled roots with beauty. Heaven methinks—
 So awful is eternal life, so vast
 Its lights and shadows—heaven itself would seem
 Too solemn and severe without its choirs 920
 Of infants revelling in innocence,
 Who never knew a touch of sinful grief,
 But live in joy, and joy because they live.
 So hath God will'd. So will'd the Son of God

BOOK

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II.]

THE BLESSED DEAD.

61

What time He took the children in His arms,
 Laying His hands on them and blessing them,
 And saying, "Suffer them to come to Me,
 Forbid them not, for of such babes as these
 And sucklings is My kingdom in the heavens."
 But time and space would fail me to narrate 830
 All I beheld in that great under-world;
 The golden grain of threescore centuries
 Reap'd from a thousand harvest-fields and stored
 In heaven. Backward from age to age we traced
 The course of time along those wastes of gloom,
 When darkness brooded o'er the Church of God,
 A darkness amid which the lurid flames
 Of persecution blazed, and witnesses,
 A mystic time and times and half a time,
 In ashes and in sackcloth prophesied, 840
 Now clothed in dazzling light: and with them those
 Who underneath the skirts of Antichrist
 Bewilder'd clung to Christ, and led by Him,
 In cell or cloister groped their way to heaven:
 Not one was wanting there.

And there we saw
 The children of the Gospel's holier dawn,
 Austin, and Chrysostom, and Cyprian,
 And Irenæus, and blest Polycarp,
 Names representing many not unlike
 In love and labour, fellow-travellers 850
 On earth, now fellow-citizens in heaven.
 And there was holy Antipas, and there

The protomartyr Stephen ; and the band
 Whom Jesus chose, the Apostolic Twelve,
 As heralds of His love to all the world.
 Peter and John were walking, as of old
 They used to walk along the silver sand
 Wash'd by the waters of Gennesaret,
 In closest converse ; and beside them he
 Of all men likest Christ, whose cross he preach'd 860
 Unwearied from Jerusalem to Rome,
 Burning with fire or melting into tears,
 As God's Spirit moved upon his human spirit—
 The myriad-minded lion-hearted Paul :
 Amid heaven's peers peerless triumvirate.
 Yet as we pass'd they bent a beaming smile
 On me, the humblest and the last arrived
 Of all their brotherhood, so full of love
 It seem'd to promise feasts of intercourse
 In after ages. And not far from them, 870
 Half hidden by a branching tree of life,
 Type of herself, the blessed Mary sate,
 In calm humility musing alone
 Upon those mysteries of grace, which seem'd
 Vaster in length and breadth and depth and height,
 The measureless dimensions of God's love,
 As still the Bridal of the Church drew near.
 Hard by, Elizabeth and Zachary,
 Anna the prophetess, and Simeon stood,
 Engraven on whose countenance I traced 880
 The light of summer suns and mellow tints
 Of autumn, not the wintry frosts of age.

And with them he who in the wilderness
 Was the voice heralding the Word, the star
 That hid itself within the golden beams
 Of the uprisen Sun of Righteousness.

Nor was there any chasm betwixt the saints
 Who wrought before and after. They were one,—
 One building, and one body, and one bride.

I saw the wise sons of Betirah there, 890
 Hillel who loosed, and Shammai who bound,
 And Rabban, Hillel's son, and Jonathan;
 And near them those great worthies, who deserved
 So nobly of their noble fatherland,
 The dauntless and heroic Maccabees;
 And there the mother of those tortured sons,
 Who in their dying suffer'd sevenfold death,
 Yet flinch'd not: round her clustering they stood
 A retinue of everlasting praise;
 She was not childless now. Esther was there, 900
 More lovely than upon that golden eve
 When she her royal captor captive led;
 And saintly Daniel, and the three who walk'd
 Unsinged and seathless in the fiery flame;
 And all the holy seers from Malachi
 To Samuel; there the rapt Ezekiel,
 And plaintive Jeremy, and he whose lips
 A seraph touch'd with a live coal of fire.
 And there the kingly Hezekiah moved
 Among the thrones of heaven; and David's son 910

Was there ; and David the beloved himself,
Touching a sweeter harp than that he struck
Upon the grassy slopes of Bethlehem.
And there I saw the captains of God's hosts,
Samson and Jephthah, not without his child,
Who for her country and her father's vow
A virgin lived and died ; and Gideon ;
And Deborah the warrior prophetess ;
And him who led his people Israel
Through Jordan's smitten waves, the son of Nun ; 920
And, of the elder saints haply the first,
Moses the man of God, who, looking down
On all the royalties of Egypt, sought
A nobler sceptre and a name inscribed,
Not in the hieroglyphic scrolls of men,
But in God's book of life. And there were all
The pilgrim fathers in the better land
They long'd for ; Joseph and the patriarchs,
The princely Israel, and that child of prayer,
The meditative son of Abraham, 930
And Abraham himself, the friend of God ;
And Noah and his children, who by faith
Condemn'd the faithless world ; and those who pray'd
In time's first dawn the matins of the Church,
Seated around our primal ancestors,
The father and the mother of mankind,
Who through the Son of Man, the woman's Seed,
Had won in heaven a nobler Paradise
Than Eden, forfeited and lost by sin.

Long while I gazed in silent awe ; for these 940
 Were only some familiar names and few
 Among ten thousand times ten thousand saints,
 All diversely felicitous, and each.
 On each reflecting gladness. But at last
 The fire of love and admiration burn'd
 So hot within me, that I spake and said,
 " O blessed Oriel, can the highest heavens
 Surpass the glory of this Paradise ?
 If only all I loved were present now,
 Here, here methinks I could for ever dwell. 950
 What beauty can excel these radiant forms ?
 What do they lack of excellence or grace ?
 Are they not swifter than the viewless winds ?
 Are they not pure as is the light itself ?
 Say, are there brighter robes in heaven, or harps
 Of tenderer music ? Or have they, who walk
 The golden streets and fill with songs of praise
 The mansions of the New Jerusalem,
 More open vision of the Lord their God,
 And in Him more divine beatitude ? " 960

Smiling, my guardian answer'd, " It is sweet
 Be sure for me, who hither led thy steps,
 To hear thy words of rapturous delight
 In this fair world of purity and peace,
 And in these blessed spirits who here throng
 Heaven's portals, waiting their investiture
 With resurrection glory. Yes, the Bride
 Is almost ready for her bridal robes :

The heavenly temple is almost complete.
 How different from that hour, for I was here, 970
 When the first saint, disrobed of mortal flesh,
 The martyr'd Abel, trod these fields, and we
 His angel brothers sought, and not in vain,
 To gladden his else solitary rest.
 Since then six thousand years have pass'd: and now
 The countless multitudes of God's elect,
 The festal throng and church of the firstborn,
 Are well nigh gather'd home. Yet think not this
 The crown and final summit of their joy.
 They are not perfect here, whose bodies sleep 980
 And moulder crumbling in the silent tomb,
 Death's trophies; for the union, flesh and spirit,
 In one compacted, was the fruit mature
 Of God's eternal counsels, when He breathed
 Into the moulded clay the breath of life,
 And man became a living soul: and when
 The dust returns unto its kindred dust,
 And the lone spirit to God, this strange divorcee
 Is the permitted reign, gloomy though brief,
 Of the dread king of terrors. Here unclothed 990
 Of their own natural apparelling,
 Man's proper garb, though his puissance is weak
 To that of angels who were arm'd by God
 Pure spirits. Nor is this Paradise of saints,
 Albeit large and glorious, more than one
 Of many mansions in our Father's house,
 Wherein His children, by their birthright free
 Of His whole universe, and citizens

Of the celestial city, wait the hour
Which shall for ever consummate their bliss. 1000
But see who yonder walk."

I look'd, and, lo,
Two diverse from the rest appear'd. Their form
Was that of men, and yet not mortal men ;
Their likeness spiritual, yet not spirits alone ;
So pure the texture of that robe they wore,
The light translucent through transfigured flesh,
As onyx stones, or ruby flashing fire.

"Who are these," I exclaim'd, "these royal priests ?
Are they Elias, and that saint who walk'd
With God and was not ?"

"Rightly hast thou judged,"
Oriel made answer ; "and their presenee here [1010
Is pledge and earnest to the Blessed Dead
Of that great resurrection day, whose dawn
Already gilds the Easter of the world :
They with the saints who rose when Jesus rose
Are wave-sheafs of the harvest. But of these
And other mysteries in earth and heaven
Conversing, on the range of yonder hills,
Whose summits bound these beatific fields,
And look far off into the waste beyond, 1020
If such thy pleasure, let us wait the end."

END OF THE SECOND BOOK.

Book Third.

THE PRISON OF THE LOST.

COME, Thou Eternal Spirit, who on the face
 Of the abysmal waters, when the earth
 Was without form and void, brooding didst move,
 Silent Omnipotence, unseen but felt,
 The while beneath Thy penetrating power
 Light at the voice of God brake forth, a faint
 Far tremour in the sunless starless gloom,
 Creation's twilight, nor didst cease Thy work,
 Till looking forth upon the vast expanse,
 By mountains, rivers, lakes, and placid seas. 10
 Diversified, on that first sabbath's eve,
 Infinite Goodness said that all was good :
 Come Thou, and brood over the deep unknown
 Which bounds the known in me, nor suffer clouds,
 Born of unfathomable mysteries,
 To cast their shade athwart heaven's blessed light,
 While, led by Thee, I speak of other worlds
 Than those fair fields I lately walk'd, and tell
 What from the' utmost precincts of Paradise
 I and my angel guardian saw and heard 20

Of outer darkness and Tartarean night.
 Come ; for Thou dwellest in the highest heavens,
 Thyself inhabiting eternity,
 Alone, Supreme, beyond all time and space,
 Yet deignest in the contrite heart to' abide
 As in Thy chosen temple ; Spirit of Truth,
 Who, in Thy Pentecostal might, from heaven
 Descending as a mighty rushing wind,
 Didst rest upon Thy suppliant saints of old
 In likeness as of cloven tongues of fire, 30
 A crown of lambent and innocuous flame ;
 Purge Thou mine eyes from film, my heart from fear ;
 Inspire, illumine, fortify my soul ;
 Breathe, O Thou Breath Divine, on my emprise ;
 Touch my fain lips, strengthen my feeble hands ;
 Nor let my footstep unawares intrude
 On counsels Thou art pleased to veil from man,
 Nor where Thy lamp shines dimly press too far
 Adventurous, nor in coward disbelief
 Shrink back appall'd where Thou dost lead the way. 40

As sweeps a breeze from off the spicy plains
 Of Florence to the lonely Apennines,
 Its passage only mark'd by rustling leaves
 In the thick olive-groves, and stronger waves
 Of light upon the mountain rivulets,
 So from that peopled glen, where last we saw
 The parents of mankind, Oriel and I
 Along those plains and smiling valleys pass'd,
 And up a forest-elad ravine that scarr'd

The bastions of those everlasting hills, 59
 Heaven's boundary, and, emerging, found ourselves
 On a vast table-land, leagues upon leagues
 In breadth, which traversed, led our rapid course
 To other hills hidden before from view :
 These scaled, we landed on a second plain
 Sublime, engirdled by yet distant peaks,
 The triple wall and battlements of heaven.
 Harder than adamant these rocks, yet seem'd
 Of such original substance, as those beds
 Of ice which with the flow of centuries 60
 Creep along Alpine glens : rocks, half opaque,
 Half lucid, where the piercing light was lost
 In depths impervious of intensest green :
 Ramparts far loftier than those giant hills,
 With rhododendrons clad, and crown'd with snows,
 The ancient Himalays. But, light as air,
 We clomb that uttermost of Paradise ;
 A path no vulture's eye hath ever seen,
 A height no eagle's wing hath ever soar'd,
 And standing on its extreme ridge, look'd down, 70
 Lone sentinels. Strange promontory ours :
 Behind us lay the radiant fields of bliss ;
 But who, unblanch'd with terror, may describe
 The scene before us ? Not in terraces
 Or tiers of hills, mountains on mountains built,
 Yielding access, though arduous, but a sheer
 Precipitate descent, a horrid chasm,
 Few paces off from where we stood, there yawn'd
 Right at our feet : down, ever down, a depth

Equal the height of those eternal hills,
 And how much lower no created eye
 Might fathom : for a sea of clouds midway
 Surged up and sank, and sinking surged again,
 Not vaporous mists alone, but sulphur smoke
 Mingled with sparkles, and with lurid flames,
 Earth, air, fire, water, formless, shapeless, waste,
 A chaos of all elements disturb'd,
 Fused and confused, which seem'd a billowing tide,
 Hither and thither sway'd, storm-tost, suspense,
 Betwixt that awful cliff of Paradise
 Rolling, and the far-distant shore beyond.

90

Was it a shore beyond? At first it seem'd
 Darkness alone, the absence of all light,
 Blackness of darkness. But the while I gazed
 Astonied, and mine eye more used became
 To bear the dazzling terror of that gloom,
 Dim lineaments before me slowly stretch'd,
 And distances receding without end
 Into the utter void; the realm of night,
 A land of darkness and of gloominess,
 Dark mountains, and yet darker vales between,
 And waveless depths profound, darkest of all;
 A world o'ershadow'd with the pall of death,
 The sepulchre of life. But whence it came
 Those outlines were not wholly' invisible,
 I knew not. Loom'd there such a sullen glow
 As fire suppress'd, not quench'd, emits : or such
 Faint earthlight as our planet casts reflex

100

On the dull surface of the crescent moon ;
 Or likest that sad mockery of day 110
 He sees who, standing near as dread permits,
 Beside a stream of burning lava, views
 The blasted landscape in the dead of night.

Awe-struck I gazed ; but for relief ere long
 Turn'd to the happy fields of light, which lay
 Behind us, nurturing my soul awhile
 With their pure joys. Then first I ask'd myself
 What made that heavenly Eden luminous
 With glory, and look'd up instinctively
 On the blue crystal of the firmament, 120
 Blue only from intensity of clear,
 As if expecting there some orb of light ;
 But there no lamp appear'd, no sun, no moon,
 No star far glimmering in the azure vault ;
 And yet the islands in the southern seas,
 Basking in light when rains have clear'd the sky,
 Were never bathed in radiance pure as this :
 And Oriel saw my wonder and replied :

“ Brother, remember Paradise is heaven,
 Heaven's portal, and the portal of God's ho use 130
 Needs not the shining of created light ;
 For He, the Light of Light, is ever there,
 And, where He is, darkness can ne'er exist ;
 Such virtue His eternal Presence sheds
 Throughout the courts where He abides well pleased,
 Rejoicing in the beauty' of holiness.

110 Far otherwise those realms of utter night,
Which lie beyond the mighty gulf thou seest,
Are darken'd with the shadow of His wrath.
That which is glory here is darkness there ; 140
As when the fiery cloudy pillar stood,
A shield betwixt the hosts of Israel
And baffled Egypt's chariots. Nor can those
Who fain would pass from us to yonder world
On thoughts of pity' intent, or hence to us,
Traverse with foot or wing yon chasm profound :
Not for the interval,—for as thou seest
The landscapes of those desolate regions lie
120 Within our range, and listening we might catch
(So subtle here the waves of light and sound) 150
Far off its cries and voices ; and as spirits
Ourselves, with speed of lightnings, to and fro
Go and return ; but that a spiritual law,
Akin to that magnetic force which binds
The mortal habitants of earth to earth,
Has laid its viewless interdict between,
And bound the sons of darkness and of light
Each to their proper home. There is no path
From hell to heaven, from heaven to hell direct.
But haply thou remember'st, ere we touch'd 160
The outer confines of this world of spirits,
A roadway wrapt in clouds and gloom which stretch'd
Far to the left of our celestial course,
A roadway with funereal blackness hung
As ours with bridal light, and resonant
With sighings of despair, as ours with songs

Of triumph. To the gates of hell it leads,
 Meet access for meet bourn, and down its track
 The angels, the executors of wrath,
 Bear in their hands lost men and rebel spirits, 170
 Consigning them to their awarded prison
 Of darkness, till the judgment trumpet sounds."

"And hast thou ever trodden that dread path,
 And enter'd those eternal gates, and seen
 The secrets of that penal world?" I ask'd,
 And my voice falter'd as I spake.

"Yes, thrice,"

Oriel replied with calm unfaltering lip,
 And with his words his countenance benign
 Grew more and more severely beautiful,
 The beauty of triumphant holiness, 180
 The calm severity of burning love:
 "Thrice in my ministry of saints hath God
 Ordain'd me to fulfil His missions there;
 And, brother, His behests are always good;
 Pure goodness without stain of evil, light
 Without the shadow of a shade of dark.
 The earliest that I trod that awful road,
 It was my charge, with other spirits elect,
 A legion arm'd of warrior seraphim,
 To bear in chains to their dark prison-house 190
 Those angels who forsook their high estate

Through alien and unnatural lust. Of this
 Thou shalt learn more hereafter. But the first
 Of disembodied human souls I bore
 To his own place in yonder realms of wrath
 Was one I fondly loved, of noble birth,
 Of high and generous bearing, who, alas,
 Like some brave vessel cast on shifting sands,
 Made shipwreck of his faith and sank to ruin.

“ In brief, the story of his life was this :— 200
 Three centuries and more had pass'd away
 Since Jesus' birth in Bethlehem ; and he,
 Of whom I tell thee, was a chieftain, born
 Of Christian mother, but of heathen sire.
 This was the bitter fountain of a stream
 Of bitterness. For when in evil hour
 His mother gave her heart to one who loved
 The gods she loathed, and loathed the cross she loved—
 She married immortality to death,
 Faith to distrust, and hope to dark despair : 210
 Discordant wedlock, whence discordant fruit.
 Fondly she dream'd by ceaseless prayers to win
 Her spouse to Christ. Vain hope ! her broken troth
 Hung like a leaden weight on every prayer :
 And he, a haughty consular of Rome,
 Scorn'd her low creed, himself incredulous,
 Yet loved the lovely votary. And when
 The sweet pledge of their bridal joy was given,
 And she would dedicate their child to God,
 With equal scorn he yielded to her tears 220

A thing indifferent. In a lonely cave
 Amid a group of trembling fugitives,—
 For hatred then pursued the Christian name,—
 An aged priest baptized him Theodore.
God's gift, his mother whisper'd. And thenceforth
 She pour'd upon him, him her only child,
 The priceless treasures of a mother's heart.
 I was his chosen guardian. No light watch,
 No easy vigil; for his home, unlike
 The moated fortress of a faithful house, 230
 Was ever open to the spirits malign.
 But not an arrow reach'd him. From himself,
 And not from hellish fraud or violence,
 His ruin. O mysterious web of life;
 Its warp of faith, its woof of unbelief;
 The mother teaching prayers the father mock'd!
 And yet her spell was earliest on her child,
 And strongest. And the fearless Theodore
 Was call'd by other men, and call'd himself,
 A Christian. Love, emotion, gratitude, 240
 All that was tenderest in a tender heart,
 All most heroic in a hero's soul,
 Pleaded on Christ's behalf. And oft I hoped,
 Hoped against hope, that his was real faith,
 A graft, a germ, a blossom—hoped till I
 Could hope no longer, for I never saw
 That warrior (he was train'd to arms) prostrate
 A broken suppliant at the throne of love.

“The hour drew on that tried him. Constantine,

The first of Christian emperors, was now
 Marching with lion springs from land to land
 Triumphant. Him to meet in mortal fight
 Maxentius hurried, vowing to his gods
 That, if they crown'd his eagles, he would crush
 The cross throughout the universe of Rome.
 And Theodore, won by his mother's prayers,
 Was with the faithful army; when it chanced,
 In sack of a beleaguer'd city, he saved
 A Grecian maiden and her sire from death:
 Her name Irene, his Iconocles:

230

Among the princes he a prince, of all
 Fair women she the fairest of her race,
 Not only for her symmetry of form,
 But for the music and the love which breathed
 In every motion and in every word.
 Yet both were worshippers at Phœbus' shrine,
 Fast bound in midnight-dark idolatry.
 And, when the enamour'd Theodore besought
 His daughter of her sire, Iconocles
 Made answer, 'Never shall my child be his
 Who kneels before a malefactor's cross.
 Thy choice Irene, or the Crucified.'
 And she by oath affirm'd her father's word.

270

"Then was there tempest in the swelling heart
 Of Theodore: truth struggled and untruth
 In terrible collision. For an hour
 He paced before his tent irresolute;
 Now cleaving to his mother's faith, alas,

More hers than his; and now by passionate gusts
 Driven from his anchorage, a helmless bark. 280
 Conscience was quick; and God's Spirit strove with him.
 'Twas mine to ward the powers of darkness off;
 And singly with himself the awful fight
 Was foughten, and, oh woe! for ever woe!
 Was lost. And he said, 'Adam chose to die,
 Not circumvented, not deceived like Eve,
 But braving death itself for her dear sake.
 So will I die. I cannot leave that spirit
 Angelic in a human form enshrined.
 She must be mine for ever. Life were death 290
 Without her.' And straight entering, where she lean'd
 Upon her father, as white jasmine leans
 On a dark pine, slowly, resolvedly,
 As measuring every word with fate, he said,
 'Irene, if the choice be endless woe,
 For thy sake I renounce my mother's faith:
 I cannot, will not leave thee. I am thine.'

"And through the dusky twilight that same eve
 The three forsook the tents of Constantine
 And join'd Maxentius' host. And without pause, 300
 Amid his early friends, Iconocles
 Unto the marriage altar proudly led
 The offering who had won so great a foe:
 Small space was there for hymeneal pomp:
 A soldier's spousal 'mid the clash of arms.

"That very night Great Constantine beheld

The fiery cross upon the sky, and read
 The signal, *IN HOC VINCES*. And the morn,
 Strange portent, saw far floating o'er his ranks
 The labarum emblazon'd with the cross. 310
 The armies rush'd to battle. Theodore
 Rose from his nuptial couch, a desperate man;
 No thought of penitence, none of retreat;
 But in his eye a wild disastrous fire,
 Sign of the fiercer flame he nursed within.
 Lost, ruin'd, hopeless, and as glad to' escape
 The tempest raging in his heart, he strode
 Impetuously into the thickest fight,
 And prodigies of valour wrought that day,
 Felling beneath his fratricidal blade 320
 Whole ranks, his comrades and his brethren late,
 Brethren in faith and arms. But as he stamp'd
 Upon the fallen in defiant pride,
 And now as madden'd or inspired by hell
 Pour'd blasphemies upon the Holy Name
 His mother taught his infant lip to lisp
 In blessings, even as he spake the words,
 An unknown arrow, not unfledged with prayer,
 Transpierced his eye and brain. Sudden he fell:
 One short sharp cry; one strong convulsive throe; 330
 And in a moment his unhappy spirit
 Was from its quivering tabernacle loosed.

"Oh awful passage! from the din and roar
 Of battle, from the trampling of horse-hoofs,
 The roll of chariots, and the measured tread

Of thousands, from the brazen trumpet's blare
 Drowning the shouts of victors, and the cries
 Of wounded, agonizing, dying men,
 From the worst dissonance of earth and time,—
 The soul, in an eye's twinkling, brought to face 340
 The calm deep silence of eternity.

“As stunn'd, the disembodied spirit awhile
 Fix'd upon things unseen a vacant gaze:
 But quickly' awaking from that dreadful swoon
 To worse reality, he cried, the first
 If not the strongest passion of his life
 Surviving all the earthquake shock of death,
 'Mother, where art thou, mother? where am I?'
 And not till then emerging on his view
 I spake and said, 'Lost spirit, it is not mine 350
 To aggravate thy utter wretchedness
 By words of idle grief or vain rebuke,
 But to convey thee to that viewless world
 Where thou must wait thy sentence from the lips
 Of infinite, supreme, eternal Truth.
 But thus far only, to anticipate
 Resistance;—to resist were futile here:
 Almighty Power hath given thee to my charge,
 And thou wert strengthless in my grasp. Our road
 Lies yonder. Lost one, rise and come with me.' 360
 So saying I laid my hand upon his hand,
 And through his nerveless spirit he felt the touch
 Of might superior to his own, and shrank
 Appall'd, but soon remembering my words,

Yielded, and went with me the way I will,
In tearless silence and in mute despair.

“It is not thus with all when first they wake
To consciousness of ruin. Some straightway
Will wring their hands in agony, and weep,
And pour their lamentations forth in words,
And wail for bitter anguish. Others strive
With proud reluctancies and vain despite
Against their doom inevitable doom.
Others, palsied with terror, shivering stand.
Others curse their creation. Theodore
Was diverse from such men on earth, and now
Was diverse. As I spake, at one fell glance
He seem'd to measure the abyss profound
Before him, and by terrible resolve,
Alas, too late submissive, to accept
The everlasting punishment of sin.

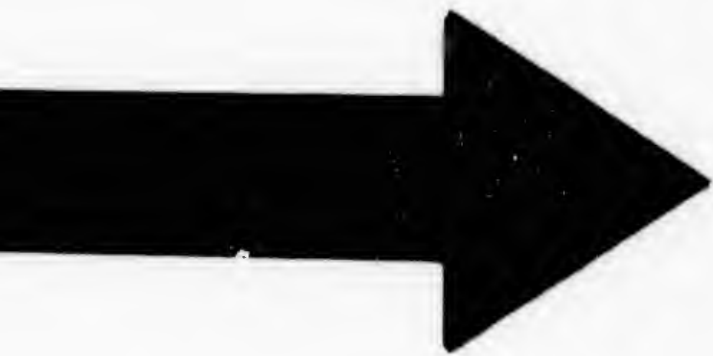
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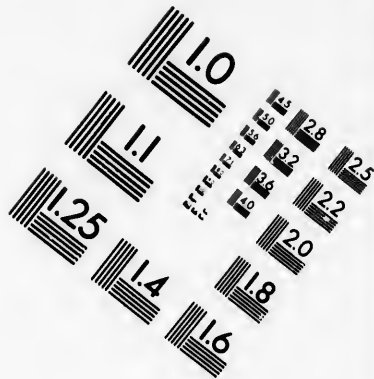
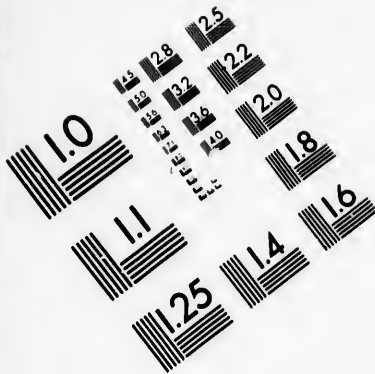
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“At first our pathway was the same as that
Which led thee homeward, brother. Through the
heaven
Which wraps the earth in its cerulean robe,
And through the starry firmament, until
The sun which lightens the terrestrial globe
Paled like a distant lamp, slowly we pass'd;
Slowly,—I had no heart for speed, nor was
The King's commission urgent. He delights
In mercy, and His embassies of grace
Have never found seraphic wings too swift:
But judgment is His strange and dreadful work.

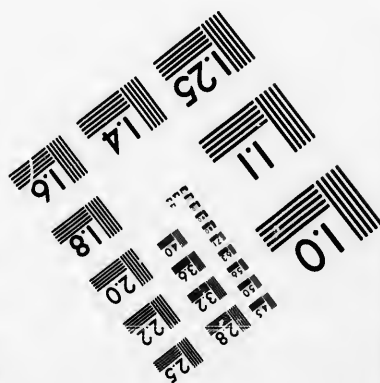
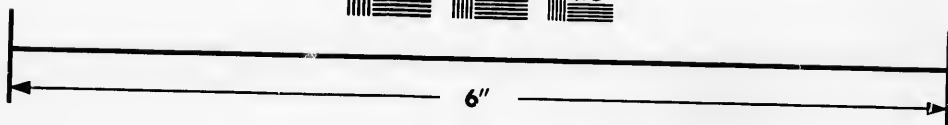
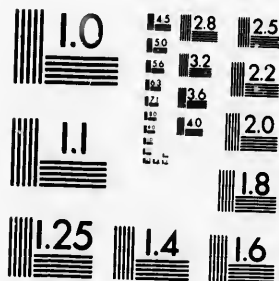
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And, as with measured step we trod adown
 That highway through the heavens precipitate,
 My hopeless captive gaz'd a long last gaze
 Upon the fading sun and passing stars
 As signs which he should never more behold :
 And drawn from out his bosom's depths at last
 A groan brake from him, and he sobb'd aloud—
 ' My mother, oh my mother, from thy love 400
 I learn'd to love those silent orbs of light,
 God's watchers thou didst call them, as they peer'd
 Evening by evening on my infant sleep,
 And mingled with my every boyish dream :
 Are they now shining on thy misery ?
 Who, now that I am gone, will wipe thine eyes ?
 Who, mother, bind thy bruised and broken heart ?
 Broken, by whom ? by me, thy nestling babe,
 Thy darling child, thy pride in arms ; by me,
 Thy wretched, renegade, apostate son.' 410

" So mourn'd he, and I answer'd, ' Theodore,
 Thou hast enough to bear of things that are,
 Without this load of unsubstantial grief.
 Thy mother knew not thine apostasy,
 Nor otherwise will deem of thee than slain
 One of the Christian host, the little while
 Weeping she sojourns in the vale of tears.
 Such fear she never harbour'd, and the cloud
 Of mercy veils thy ruin from her eye,
 Until the awful shades of time are seen 420
 In the clear noon-day of eternity.
 Thus far it is permitted thee to know.'

“My words were only the bare utterance
Of truth, but never will this heart forget
The impress of the look he cast on me.
He had not wept before ; but now a tear
Hung on his trembling lids, through which he look'd
Such gratitude as utter hopelessness
May render, like the Grecian fire that burns
Far under the deep waves, a look which said, 430
'I thank thee as the damn'd alone can thank :
Lost as I am, hell will not be such hell,
The while my mother thinks of me in heaven.'

“Again in speechless silence we moved on,
Until that billowy sea of mists and clouds
Which wraps the world of spirits appear'd in sight ;
And to our nearer step the avenue
Celestial open'd its translucent road,
Emitting floods of glory ; and there distinct,
Hovering upon its golden skirts, we saw 440
A group of angels waiting to receive
An aged pilgrim home, and heard far off
Their jubilant acclamations. Ours, alas !
Another path. Far to the left it led,
Gloomy as night. And as we turn'd aside
From those fair portals, piteously I mark'd
The longing, lingering, almost loving look
Which my unhappy captive cast behind,
As if heaven's sights and sounds, once seen and heard,
Might haply prove a gracious memory 450
Amid the cries of everlasting woe
And discords without end.

“ But now the light

Was fading: shadows into shadows gloom'd
More awful; and obscurity itself
Became more inexpressibly obscure,
More solid, as the interposing clouds
High overhead, beneath us, and beyond,
Built up impervious ramparts every way
Except the desolate ravine we trod.
Night reign'd sole monarch here, and spread around 100
Palpable darkness, darkness unrelieved
Save by the radiance of my form, a faint
And feeble torch in that ungenial air,
But yet enough to show the massive sides
Of fogs impenetrable. Never yet
Saw I such darkness: for, when last I march'd
This dreadful road, I came accompanied
By a whole legion arm'd of spirits elect,
Whose light, each on the other, blaze on blaze
Reflected, and turn'd midnight into noon. 470
But now I was alone—the Lord of Hosts
Makes all His servants lean on His sole arm—
Alone, my clinging captive and myself:
Though in the distance more than once methought
I heard the rushing of cherubic wings,
And, like a glimmering meteor, caught the flash
Of some good angel's transitory flight.
Haply the whole ravine equals in length,
Nor more than equals, that resplendent track
By which my courier angels bore thee on, 480
To sound of lyres and lutes and welcome songs,

Up to the pearly gates of Paradise ;
 But here our flight was difficult and slow,
 And seven times seven appear'd the weary length
 Of that interminable road. At last
 A dull and ruddy glow tintured the gloom :
 Not light, but something which made black itself
 Not viewless. As to one standing aloof,
 When Etna or Vesuvius pour their wrath
 In giant folds of smoke voluminous, 490
 A gloaming, from the fiery crater cast,
 Paints from below the dark impending mass ;
 So to our eyes the steep descent became
 Not all invisible, its cloudy walls
 And wide abysses cavernous betwixt
 Of horrid emptiness. But on we moved,
 And swerved not to the right hand or the left,
 For now, far off, fronting our path profound,
 Before us rose the iron gates of hell.

" We paused ; for lo, before these dreadful doors 500
 Waved what appear'd a fiery sword, or swords
 Innumerable, haply not unlike
 That flaming falchion, which at Eden's gate
 Revolving every way, flame within flame,
 Guarded the tree of life. Only these blades
 Were vast as are the rays a setting sun,
 Hidden itself, will sometimes proudly cast
 Up to heaven's vault athwart a thunder cloud.
 But straight, as if they knew my mission, these
 Parted to right and left, and oped a way 510

High overarch'd with fire, through which we pass'd
 Unscathed: and of themselves, dreadful to see,
 The adamantine doors of hell recoil'd
 Back, slowly back, with ponderous noise,—as when
 An Alpine avalanche moves from its ridge
 And with one crash of ruin overwhelms
 A valley's life,—and with their harsh recoil
 Disclosed the secrets of that world of woe.

“ Brother, come stand with me upon the edge
 Of this far-looking cliff, which overhangs 520
 The gulf betwixt that cursed land and ours
 Impassable. Not otherwise that day,
 Nor seen in other than yon dusky glow,
 The infernal realms, when we had pass'd the gates,
 Bencath us lay outstretch'd. Hills, valleys, plains,
 All mantled in disastrous twilight, couch'd
 Under our feet. But then it was no hour
 For marvel or for mute astonishment.
 Straight from the threshold of those gates sublime
 Through the oppressive sultry atmosphere 530
 I guided our slant flight, until midway
 Upon a barren mountain's steep ascent,
 (Yonder it rises girt with lesser hills,)
 Where a vast glen was ramparted with rocks,
 Alighting I relax'd my captive's hand.

“ And then and there upon that guilty man
 The Eye of everlasting righteousness
 Open'd. God look'd upon him. Through and through

His naked spirit, searching its darken'd depths,
Pass'd like a flame of fire, that Dreadful Eye, 540
Pass'd and repass'd, and passing still abode
Upon him; till the very air he breathed
Seem'd to his sense one universal flame
Of wrath, eternal wrath, the wrath to come.
And yet the glory of that majesty,
That burning brightness, shone not then full orb'd,
But veil'd in part; for disembodied souls,
Dismantled of their proper robe of flesh,
Could neither suffer nor sustain the weight
Of that unclouded Holiness Divine, 550
Which in the age of ages will subdue
All foes beneath the footstool of His throne.
So half eclipsed it shone: and a low wail
Ere long brake from those miserable lips—
'O God, and is this hell? and must this last
For ever? would I never had been born!
Why was I born? I did not choose my birth.
O Thou, who didst create me, uncreate,
I pray thee. By Thine own omnipotence
Quench Thou this feeble spark of life in me. 560
Why should I longer live? I never more
Can serve Thee: that Thy justice interdicts.
I am no adversary worthy Thee.
Can power be magnified on strengthlessness?
Put forth Thy might but once, and crush a worm,
For love, for hate unequal both. O Christ,
I kneel, I fall a suppliant at Thy throne.
I ask not pardon. Grace, I know, is past:

Redemption cannot cross those iron gates.
 But art not Thou the Son of God? Thyself 570
 God over all, supreme for evermore?
 And are not all things possible with God?
 O God, destroy me. Grant this latest boon
 Thy wretched ruin'd child will ever ask,
 And suffer me to be no more at all.'

" And then at last I spoke, ' Is this thy hope,
 Unhappy one, this aimless bootless prayer?
 Thou cravest what Omnipotence can do:
 Know that Omnipotence can but perform 580
 The counsels which Omniscient Love decrees.
 And therefore vainly dost thou now invoke
 Almighty power to thwart All-seeing Love.
 It cannot be. Discord can never dwell
 Within the bosom of eternal Peace,
 Nor darkness stain that uncreated Light.
 What then remains for thee? To flee were vain,
 And would but bring thee adamantine bonds;
 And fresh rebellion here at once incur
 Immediate instantaneous punishment.
 Free service, which is heaven's perennial joy, 590
 Guilt, said'st thou truly, interdicts. What then?
 Passive submission is the only way
 Left thee to serve thy Maker. Hades knows
 No other law. The judgment is beyond.
 Meanwhile this valley is thy prison assign'd;
 And not in utter solitariness,
 For other souls, who like thyself have sinn'd,

III.]

THE PRISON OF THE LOST.

80

Some known to thee on earth and some unknown,
 Here wait their sentence, whose companionship
 Will mitigate or aggravate thy woe, 600
 As thou submittest to the flame that burns
 The sin in thee with fire unquenchable,
 Or vainly chafest against its scorching ray :
 This yet is in thy choice. Haply at times
 This valley will be trodden by the feet
 Of angels on the embassies of God :
 But at rare intervals, for many and vast
 Are the dark fields of punishment, and few
 The ministrations of the sons of light
 In this the land of overshadowing death. 610
 And here there is no sentinel but God ;
 His Eye alone is jailor ; and His Hand
 The only executioner of wrath.
 And now I leave thee : let my words abide
 With thee, lest added torment scourge thy soul :
 Passive submission is the law of hell.'

" But, even as I turn'd to leave him, slowly
 He raised his eyes, bow'd hitherto beneath
 The intolerable Eye of Holiness,
 Which rested on him evermore. And lo!
 Far off, beyond this intervening chasm, 620
 Through an embrasure in heaven's triple wall,
 Where mountains distant mountains intersect,
 He caught a glimpse, permitted him by God,
 Of some sequester'd spot in Paradise.
 It riveted his gaze : it fill'd his soul

With longing : and unconsciously he cried,
 ' Am I asleep ? there is no slumber here.
 Is it a dream ? there are no dreams in hell.
 I see, I see far off the fields of bliss ; 630
 And there are figures moving to and fro :
 I see them by the liquid fountains walking,
 And resting underneath the trees of life.
 There I may never walk, there never rest :
 But oh, for one small ministry of love !
 Oh, for one leaf of those delicious groves
 To soothe the scars of my eternal pain !
 Oh, for one drop of those pure rivulets
 To cool, not slake, my agonizing thirst !'

" I could not leave him thus, vainly consumed 640
 By idle phantasies of hope, to which
 The fabled pangs of Tantalus were ease,
 And in mere pity answer'd, ' Theodore,
 Those whom thou seest are reaping now the seed
 They sow'd on earth, and thou must do the same.
 Time is the seed-plot for eternity ;
 Eternity the harvest-field of time.
 Thy lot is fix'd, and theirs. Nor can the foot
 Of disembodied spirit, nor angel wing,
 Transgress the deep inexorable gulf 650
 Betwixt the worlds of darkness and of light.'

" Still gazed he on, and gazing still replied,
 ' There is no hope for me ; but art not thou
 Returning to thy ministry on earth ?

Would it were not so! would that thou couldst stay
For ever here, whose light ethereal form
And heavenly essence suffer no eclipse
From hell's dark murky atmosphere! At first
Sorely I fear'd thy dreadful touch of power,
Before I knew thee good; but now I see 660
That in the hands of goodness power is love,
And crave thy longer presence. That is vain:
I know that thou must leave me. Thou canst do
No more for me. But is there not a hope
For one I briefly passionately loved—
Irene? surely she is mine, for whom,
Fool, fool, I barter'd immortality.
Angel, I would not she should perish too.
Go to her straight, I pray thee. Lay thy hand
Upon her, as on him who linger'd once 670
When wrath o'ershadow'd Sodom. Force belief.
Tell her, in mercy tell her, where I am—
What suffering—what must suffer evermore:
It may be, she will turn and live. And if,
Whene'er my mother's pilgrimage is pass'd,
And she, entering the gates of bliss, shall search
Through every field of yonder Paradise
To find her only son, and search in vain,
If then thou wilt but try and comfort her—
What way I know not, but thou know'st—and should
Her restless eye intuitively glance [680
Towards this valley, instantly divert
Its gaze else whither, thou wilt have done all
I ask for, and far more than I deserve.'

" I answer'd, 'Theodore, thy widow'd sponse,
 Listening the story of the cross, has more
 Than angel importunity to urge
 Submission. Who resist the blood-stain'd cross
 Resist the uttermost that Heaven can do.
 Faith must be free, not forced. Nor deem that she 690
 Who bore thee, and who knows not yet thy doom,
 If counted worthy of the gates of bliss,
 Will need the ministry of angel hands
 To staunch her wounds, or wipe her tears away :
 Love, tenderer than the tenderest mother's, there
 Comforts the weary heart and weeping eye.
 Thy prayers to thy own bosom must return.
 And yet, unhappy spirit, the Eye, which lights
 Thy darkness with intolerable flame,
 Doth not consume in thee the secret spring 700
 Of pity whence those supplications flow'd.
 For pity is of God, a fragment left
 Even here of thy Divine original,
 Not wholly crush'd. Nor can there be in God
 Wrath against any Godlike lineament
 Wherever found, or howsoever dimm'd.
 Not for thy pity art thou where thou art :
 Not for thy pity rests the wrath to come
 For ever on thy soul, but for thy sin
 Indulged, embraced, enjoy'd, till sin and thou 710
 No longer separable things became
 Incorporate in one, one sinful life,
 One ever-living sinner. But the Day
 Is coming, which will all to all declare.

And now, my mission done, my time elapsed,
I leave thee in thy Just Creator's hands.'

"So saying, through that lurid atmosphere
I rose, and through the flaming vault of hell,
And through the iron portals pass'd, which oped
And closed behind me of their own accord, 720
And through that dark ravine of midnight gloom,
And up that mighty highway of the heavens,
And by the passing stars and brightening sun ;
Nor stay'd upon the battle-field of earth,
But upwards soaring with unwearied flight
Swift as the lightning toward the heaven of heavens
I bent my eager course, nor paused until
Kneeling before the everlasting throne,
And gazing on the emerald arch of love,
I soothed my bosom's agitated depths 730
In the calm presence of the light of God."

Then Oriel's voice was hush'd ; and for a space
He seem'd as one communing with himself,
And nurturing his strength with memories
Of things that lived for ever in his soul,
The record of his ministry approved,
The beatific smile, the gracious words
Of benediction, and the choral songs
Of those who magnified his God in him :
But soon, mindful of my solicitude,
His awful story he resumed once more. 740

"Not then return'd I straight to earth; for then
 Throughout the lower provinces of heaven
 Was warfare. Michael and his angels fought,
 Satan and his: no visionary strife;
 But battle such as earth has never seen,
 Seraph with seraph warring. And my lot
 Was with Messiah's armies militant
 To drive the rebel hosts from those fair realms
 Their presence had too long defiled. Of this 750
 I will relate hereafter. But, expell'd
 From heaven, our foes and thine with doubled rage
 Possess'd the lower firmament of earth.
 And from that hour for fifteen centuries,
 Not seldom with a band of spirits elect
 Encamping, but more oft alone with God,
 My charge was ministering to heirs of life.
 Blest heirs, twice blessed minister! Nor came
 My summons the third time to tread the shores
 Of darkness, till the decade which forewent 760
 My latest guardianship of saints—thymself.

"Already had the seven last angels, seen
 By John in Patmos, from heaven's sanctuary
 Come forth array'd in priestly robes of white,
 Girdled with gold, and bearing in their hands
 The mystic vials of the wrath of God.
 Already had they pour'd those censers forth
 Upon the earth, the sea, the river springs,
 The sun's orb, and the great usurper's throne.
 Two only' of seven remain'd. It was the year 770
 When the last throes of labouring France were still'd,

OOK

III.]

THE PRISON OF THE LOST.

95

And her proud despot, he for whom the world
 Once seem'd too insignificant a throne,
 Was banish'd to his narrow sea-girt isle
 To chafe against the idle winds and waves ;
 Then first I heard a chosen embassy
 Of the angelic sanctities and powers
 (Myself the twelfth) was order'd to descend
 And traverse hell in all its length and breadth,
 Announcing to the prisoners of wrath
 The nearer advent of the day of doom.
 Immediately, for angels never pause
 To ask the wherefore of Divine behests,
 Nor question their own aptitude whom God
 Has summon'd as His aptest messengers,
 We, on the wings of morning light, obey'd
 And went. Swiftly, harmoniously we flew,
 And each the other cheer'd with sweet converse
 Of the Lamb's Bridal now at hand ; but soon,
 At hell's inexorable gates arrived,
 Our several and predestined pathways took
 Through diverse fields of gloom and fiery woe,
 Ordaining, when our dark sojourn was o'er,
 To meet at last in that profoundest depth
 Where rebel angels are immured in walls
 Of darkness nearest to Gehenna's lake.

780

790

“ First to that mountain valley, where I left
 Lost Theodore, I bent my course. O God !
 The solemn change which fifteen centuries
 In hell had written on his fearful brow.

800

750

760

770

l,

Unchanged in form, unchanged in hopelessness,
 The same immortal heir of endless wrath,
 But now the restlessness of agony,
 The writhing of the miserable spirit
 Under the first experience of despair,
 Was scarcely visible. Subdued he sate
 Apart, crush'd, conscience-stricken, almost calm ;
 Oft gazing on that distant Paradise,
 Which still appear'd within his vision's ken
 And cast its reflex light upon his ruin, 810
 But waken'd now no hope. He mark'd my flight ;
 He heard my footstep in the vale ; he rose
 In reverence : and, when he knew me, spake
 In accents so chastised, they touch'd me more
 Than loudest wailings or incessant tears.

"O holy angel, is it thou? What brings
 Thee to this dreadful prison-house again?
 I had not thought to see thee till I stood
 Before the judgment-throne. But I have learn'd
 Much since I saw thee last. My little span 820
 Of mortal life, inured and stereotyped,
 Is branded on the tablet of my soul
 Each year, each month, each week, each day, each hour.
 As drowning men have lived their bygone life
 Again in one brief minute, so to me,
 Each minute of these ages without end,
 My past is always present. Now I see
 Myself. 'Twas not apostasy alone
 Damn'd me: this seal'd my ruin: but my life

Was one rebellion, one ingratitude. 830
 God would, but could not save me 'gainst my will,
 Moved, drawn, besought, persuaded, striven with,
 But yet inviolate, or else no will,
 And I no man—for man by birth is free.
 Angel, He would, I would not. Further space
 Would but have loaded me with deeper guilt.
 Yea, now I fear that if the Eye of flame
 Which rests upon me everlastingly
 Soften'd its terrors, sin would yet revive
 In me and bear again disastrous fruit, 840
 And this entail more torturing remorse.
 Better enforced subjection. I have ceased
 Or almost ceased to struggle' against the Hand
 That made me. For I madly chose to die :
 I sold my immortality for death :
 And death, eternal distance from His love,
 Eternal nearness to His righteous wrath,
 Death now is my immortal recompense.
 I know it, I confess it, I submit.
 But oh! the boding dread that I ere long 850
 Must re-assume the flesh in which I sinn'd,
 And naked stand before the judgment-throne.'

"He ceased, and I replied: 'My mission is
 To tell thee that the time is short
 Before the dawning of that day of God,
 Its Advent sunrise, its millennial sphere,
 Its evening-tide of heaven and earth's assize.
 I may not linger; for my journey tends

Throughout these desolate confines of woe
 To hell's remotest verge ; but first to thee 860
 (Thee only of the lost, my ward) I come
 Permitted to advise thee this. If here
 The Uncreated Light, part seen, part veil'd,
 Hath wrung this last confession from thy lips
 That thy subordination, though compell'd,
 Is better in its everlasting chains
 Than dissolute freedom and unbridled guilt,
 Will not its veilless and meridian blaze
 (However terrible the fire that burns
 The ineradicable germs of sin 870
 For ever and for ever in thy soul,
 Repressing their fertility with flame)
 Be good, not evil? yea, the highest good
 Thy guilt has render'd possible? It will:
 For God Himself has sworn that every knee,
 Not only of the things in heaven and earth
 But of the regions under earth in hell,
 Shall bow beneath the sceptre of His Son,
 And, willing or constrain'd, confess Him Lord.'

"Nor paused I for an answer, but pursued 880
 My way along that valley of the dead,
 Only one valley of a myriad like,
 But yet so vast, that, though its habitants
 Were more than many a throng'd metropolis,
 Scatter'd throughout its solitudes they seem'd,
 Where'er I trod, but few and far betwixt
 And seldom group'd in converse. Every one

III.]

THE PRISON OF THE LOST.

889

Had his own chastisement to bear; on each
 And every one the Eye of God was fix'd;
 On every one the Hand of God was press'd. 890
 And for the most part silence reign'd: few sighs
 Were heard, or groans, or mutterings of remorse,
 And chiefly these among the last arrived,
 Who, when they knew themselves for ever lost,
 Wept and bewail'd their ruin, till, their tears
 And bitter outcries bringing no relief,
 They, like their fellows, sank upon the ground,
 Or wander'd to and fro in mute despair.
 Most, peradventure, chose to be alone
 From that sheer misery, which could not brook 900
 Another convict's eye to read their woe.
 But yet it was not always thus: at times
 They met, and fearfully exchanged their pangs
 And drear forebodings, which, from words I caught,
 Centred on judgment and eternity.

"Lost souls of every type were there: and yet
 The hell of one was not another's hell.
 Nor needed separate prisons to adjust
 The righteous meed of punishment to each. 910
 As they had sinn'd, they suffer'd; for the flame
 Of perfect righteousness abode on them,
 God's righteousness on their unrighteousness,
 Distinct, discriminate, distributive,
 More tolerant of guilty ignorance
 Than of intolerable guilty pride,
 Restraining that which chafed against restraint,

Abhorring most the most abhorrent deeds,
 Lighter on some, on others more intense ;
 Severest on the guiltiest, but to all
 An earnest of the final lake of fire.

920

“Some I beheld, who from the gayest haunts
 Of fashion’s revelries and pageantries
 Were summon’d by the icy hand of death,
 Blithe men, fair women, and, most piteous sight,
 Children in years but not in wickedness :
 And some, who fell asleep in sinks of vice,
 Amid the orgies of their drunkenness
 Breathing out curses in a harlot’s ear,
 And waken’d, unawares, amazed, to find
 Damnation, oft invoked, at last their own.

930

“I pass’d where two were standing side by side,
 A princess, who had floated on through life
 Wrapt in the perfumed incense-cloud of praise,
 And a poor beggar’s fallen child. They both
 Had lived the living death of godless mirth ;
 Though variously in marble palaces
 And wretched hovels matter’d little here :
 One hour had made them comrades ; one despair
 Was written on their face ; one sympathy
 Drew them together ; while in speechless woe
 Each wrung convulsively her sister’s hand.

940

“But heavier far their chastisement who drew
 Their fellows to perdition from their greed

Of mammon, or from fleshly appetite.
 In them the horrible antagonism
 Betwixt the pure of God and their impure,—
 His good, their ill,—His ruth, their cruelty,—
 His heavenly love, and their most hellish lust,—
 Bred an insufferable anguish words
 May never picture, nor the heart of saint
 Or any saintly' intelligence conceive. 950

“ And there were hypocrites unmask'd and stripp'd;
 And haughty Pharisæe dignities
 Low in the dust; and liars taught too late
 To utter agonizing words of truth;
 And gamblers, who had staked their soul and lost;
 And perjurers compell'd at last to dread
 God's oath; manslayers, convict or escaped,
 Confessing Hades had no shade secure
 From blood's avenging ery; and not a few 960
 Diviners, neeromaneers, sorcerers,
 Who once sought lawless commerce with the dead,
 Now number'd with the damned dead themselves;
 And learned infidels, who proved a God
 At least among improbabilities,
 Aghast for ever underneath His frown.

“ All these, and many more in that vast glen,
 As I pursued my embassage, I saw,
 And could narrate their names; but better far
 Buried in silence and oblivion's grave
 Until the day of doom. They heard my voice; 970

And countless as they were, so manifold
 The tokens of their anguish or dismay,
 When I proclaim'd the nearer dawn at hand :
 Tears, tremblings, pallor which became more pale,
 Moans, or more terrible than moans, the gaze
 Of agony suppress'd, heart-rending sighs,
 Or wailings of remorseless memory,
 Or darker lourings of malign despite
 Crush'd in a moment by the penal fire,
 But each in his own way betokening
 His terror of the unknown wrath to come.

980

“ They miss the truth who meditate that death,
 Or that which follows after death, can change
 The native idealities of men.
 These in the saved and lost alike remain
 Immutable for ever. There is nought
 In the unloosing of the mortal tent
 To alter or transform immortal minds.
 The gentle still are gentle, and the strong
 Are ever strong. Innumerable traits
 Each from the rest distinguish. It is true
 There lies a gulf impassable betwixt
 Salvation and perdition, heaven and hell ;
 But oh ! the almost infinite degrees
 Betwixt the lost and lost.

990

“ All this I saw
 In that one desolate valley of the dead,
 And then to other hills and rocks and plains

Of that dark world I pass'd. Nor boots it now

That I to thee, unwilling both, relate

1000

The progress of my terrible sojourn

In those drear regions. God was with me there,

Or my celestial pinions would have droop'd

Unequal by my side. But in His strength

I traversed all the provinces assign'd

To my celestial mission, nor surceas'd

My flight, till every habitant therein

Heard from my lips (and none who heard gainsay'd)

Messiah's nearer Advent, and that soon

1010

They might expect to see the Arch-fiend led

In chains to his millennial prison-house,

A presage of his everlasting doom.

“Vast were the realms I trod, and to my eye

No bound apparent: but from clime to clime

Not many hours, as men count hours, elapsed

Without some ruin'd soul arriving thither

And swelling the dark aggregate of woe.

And then perchance there was a transient pause,

A momentary break: but soon the rest,

Their own cup full of misery, sank back;

1020

In personal despair. It was but once,

And then for a brief space, I saw the dead

Stirr'd with profounder feeling. I was there,

What time a mighty conqueror came down

To limitless captivity. He came,

Aforetime wont to lead his armies forth,

The god of pride, incarnate selfishness,

The nations trembling at his iron rod,
 And tributary monarchs in his suite,
 Now guided only by a stripling cherub, 1030
 Yet in whose hand that vanquish'd victor's might
 Were less than nothing. For a little while
 His fall was theme of converse with the dead,
 But soon the voices sank; and hell resumed
 Its dread monotony of crushing calm.

“Terrestrial years pass'd by, as thus I trod
 These regions, but my Captain's charge fulfill'd,
 I came at last to that profound abyss
 Wrapt in a tenfold gloom of darkening wrath,
 Nearest Gehenna's lake, which first I saw 1040
 When with a band of seraphim in arms
 I bore the captive angels, Samchasai
 And Uziel, fallen potentates of heaven,
 In chains, themselves and their rebellious hosts,
 To their eternal banishment. Since then
 Four great millennial days had come and gone,
 But there they lay immured in darkness, link'd
 With adamantine manacles to rocks
 Of adamant: and with them other spirits 1050
 Who, having fill'd their cup of wickedness
 Before the time, before the time were hurl'd
 To this dark dungeon. Such were those who sought
 With suicidal prayer, Legion their name,
 Driven from the human heart, their chosen seat,
 To herd with swine; and, their demand vouchsafed,
 Rush'd headlong, they and all their bestial throng--

These into ocean depths and those to hell.
 Nor were they solitary in their doom :
 For think not He whose vengeance flashes forth
 Upon the sons of men, and unawares
 Strikes down the sinner in his hour of pride,—
 Think not He leaves the fallen hosts unwarn'd
 By dread ensamples of His wrath, though such
 No warning moves and no ensample' avails
 To turn from final death. Yet once they stood
 Pure spirits before the sapphire throne in heaven,
 And many I knew in that their first estate,
 And with them I had walk'd the golden streets,
 And pluck'd the vintage of celestial grapes,
 And tuned my harp in unison with theirs.
 But now, behold them—every lineament
 Dimm'd with despair and utter agony.
 For, as their guilt was deeper, fiercer wrath
 Alone their unrepentant nature curb'd
 From words and deeds of devilish violence.
 That wrath was there. And of despite was heard
 No whisper, nor a thought of open war
 Express'd, nor breathed a breath of blasphemy.

1060

1070

“ But them already advertised I found
 By heaven's angelic principalities
 Of our great errand. So, our mission o'er,
 Back from that bottomless abyss we turn'd,
 And through hell's desolate champaigns arose,
 Its iron portals, and its dark access ;
 And when, with footsteps nothing loth, we trod

1080

The confines of most blessed light again,
Our Captain, as Melchisedec of old
Met Abraham with mystic bread and wine,
Himself came forth to meet us bearing fruit
Himself had pluck'd from heaven's ambrosial trees, 1090
And with His benediction wrote on all
The large experience of those years of gloom
The rainbow of His clear approving smile."

So Oriel spake, and ceased: and as he ceased
I felt his tears were falling on my hand.

END OF THE THIRD BOOK.

Book Fourth.

THE CREATION OF ANGELS AND OF MEN.

O TEARS, ye rivulets that flow profuse
 Forth from the fountains of perennial love,
 Love, sympathy, and sorrow, those pure springs
 Welling in secret up from lower depths
 Than couch beneath the everlasting hills:
 Ye showers that from the cloud of mercy fall
 In drops of tender grief,—you I invoke,
 For in your gentleness there lies a spell
 Mightier than arms or bolted chains of iron.
 When floating by the reedy banks of Nile 10
 A babe of more than human beauty wept,
 Were not the innocent dews upon its cheeks
 A link in God's great counsels? Who knows not
 The loves of David and young Jonathan,
 When in unwitting rivalry of hearts
 The son of Jesse won a nobler wreath
 Than garlands pluck'd in war and dipp'd in blood?
 And haply she, who wash'd her Saviour's feet
 With the soft silent rain of penitence,
 And wiped them with her tangled tresses, gave 20

A costlier sacrifice than Solomon,
 What time he slew myriads of sheep and kine,
 And pour'd upon the brazen altar forth
 Rivers of fragrant oil. In Peter's woe,
 Bitterly weeping in the darken'd street,
 Love veils his fall. The traitor shed no tear.
 But Magdalene's gushing grief is fresh
 In memory of us all, as when it drench'd
 The cold stone of the sepulchre. Paul wept,
 And by the droppings of his heart subdued 39
 Strong men by all his massive arguments
 Unvanquish'd. And the loved Evangelist
 Wept, though in heaven, that none in heaven were found
 Worthy to loose the Apocalyptic seals.
 No holy tear is lost. None idly sinks
 As water in the barren sand: for God,
 Let David witness, puts His children's tears
 Into His cruse and writes them in His book;—
 David, that sweetest lyrist, not the less 40
 Sweet that his plaintive pleading tones oftimes
 Are tremulous with grief. For he and all
 God's nightingales have ever learn'd to sing,
 Pressing their bosom on some secret thorn.
 In the world's morning it was thus: and, since
 The evening shadows fell athwart mankind,
 Thus hath it always been. Blind and bereft,
 The minstrel of an Eden lost explored
 Things all invisible to mortal eyes.
 And he, who touch'd with a true poet's hand
 The harp of prophecy, himself had learn'd 50

Its music in the school of mourners. But
 Beyond all other sorrow stands enshrined
 The imperishable record—JESUS WEPT.
 He wept beside the grave of Lazarus ;
 He wept lamenting lost Jerusalem ;
 He wept with agonizing groans beneath
 The olives of Gethsemane. O tears,
 For ever sacred, since in human grief
 The Man of sorrows mingled healing drops
 With the great ocean tides of human woe ;
 You I invoke to modulate my words
 And chasten my ambition, while I search,
 And by your aid with no unmoisten'd eye,
 The early archives of the birth of time.

60

Yes, there are tears in heaven. Love ever breathes
 Compassion ; and compassion without tears
 Would lack its truest utterance : saints weep
 And angels : only there no bitterness
 Troubles the crystal spring. And when I felt,
 More solaced than surprised, my guardian's tears
 Falling upon my hand, my bosom yearn'd
 Towards him with a nearer brotherhood ;
 And, terrible as seem'd his beauty once,
 His terrors were less mighty, than his tears.
 His heart was as my heart. He was in grief,
 No feigned sorrow. And instinctively—
 Love's instinct to console the one beloved—
 I answer'd, " Oriel, let it grieve thee not
 Thus to have told me of thy dark sojourn

70

In yonder world of death. I thought before 80
 Of thee as dwelling ever in the light,
 And knowing only joy ; but now I see
 We both have suffer'd ; sinless thou, and I
 Ransom'd from sin ; for others only thou,
 I for myself and others ;—but yet links
 Betwixt us of a tender sympathy
 Eternity will rivet, not unloose.
 And now, albeit, had I nursed a hope
 For those unhappy prisoners of wrath.
 Thy words had quench'd the latest spark, yet thou, 90
 While quenching hope, hast hopelessness illumed.
 Far visions throng my eye and fill my soul
 Of evil overcome by final good,
 And death itself absorb'd in victory.
 But first I long to listen from thy lips
 The story of creation's birth, whene'er
 In the unclouded morning-tide of heaven
 Thou and thy holy peers beheld the light."

And Oriel took my hand in his once more,
 And from the summit of that cliff we turn'd, 100
 And, with the ease of spirits, descending sought
 A lower platform, whence the mighty gulf
 Betwixt that shadowy land of death and ours
 Was hidden, but afar pre-eminent
 Over the realms of Paradise. But soon
 A train of silvern mists and airy clouds,
 Only less limpid than the light itself,
 Began to creep from every vale, where late

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80
IV.] THE CREATION OF ANGELS AND OF MEN. 111

Invisible they couch'd by fount and rill,
Around us o'er the nearer hills, and hung 110
Their lucid veils across the crystal sky,
Not always, but by turns drawn and withdrawn
In grateful interchange, so that awhile
Rocks, mountains, valleys, woods, and glittering lakes,
And those uncounted distances of blue
Were mantled with their flowing draperies,
And then awhile in radiant outline lay;—
Haply less lovely when unclodeth than clothed
With those transparent half-transparent robes,
But loveliest in alternate sheen and shade. 120
I knew the token and was still: and there
Upon a ledge of rock recline, we gazed
Our fill of more than Eden's freshness, when
The mists of God water'd the virgin earth,
And gazing drank the music of its calm,
Silent ourselves for gladness. But at last,
As if recalling his far-travell'd thoughts,
Not without deeper mellowness of tone,
Oriël resumed his narrative and spake:

“Yes, saidst thou truly, in the world of spirits, 130
As in the early Paradise of man,
Creation had its morning without clouds;
When first the bare illimitable void
Throughout its everlasting silences
Heard whispers of God's voice and trembled. Then,
Passing from measureless eternity,
In which the Highest dwelt Triune Alone,

To measurable ages, Time began.
 And then, emerging out of nothingness,
 At God's behest commanding LET THEM BE, 140
 The rude raw elements of nature WERE:
 Viewless and without form at first. But soon
 God will'd and breathed His will; and lo, a sea
 Of subtle and elastic ether flow'd,
 Immense, imponderable, luminous,
 Which, while revealing other things, remains
 Itself invisible, impalpable,
 Pervading space. Thus Uncreated Light
 Created in the twinkling of an eye
 A tabernacle worthy of Himself, 150
 And saw that it was good, and dwelt therein.
 Then, moulded by the Word's almighty hand,
 And by the Spirit of life inform'd, the heaven
 With all its orbits and the heaven of heavens
 Rose like a vision. There the throne supreme,
 Refulgent as if built of solid light,
 Where He, whom all the heavens cannot contain,
 Reveals His glory' incomprehensible,
 Was set upon the awful mount of God,
 The Heavenly Zion: over it above 160
 The empyrean of the universe;
 And near it, or beneath it as it seem'd,
 That mystic chariot, paved with love, instinct
 Thereafter with the holy cherubim;
 And round about it four and twenty thrones,
 Vacant as yet—not long. God, who is Spirit,
 Bade spirits exist, and they existed. Forms

Of light, in infinite varieties,
 Though all partaking of that human type
 Which afterward the Son of God assumed 170
 (Angelical and human forms, thou seest,
 Are not so far diverse as mortals think),
 Awoke in legions arm'd, or one by one
 Successively appear'd. Succession there,
 In numbers passing thy arithmetic,
 Might be more rapid than my words, and yet
 Exhaust the flight of ages. There is space
 For ages in the boundless past. But each
 Came from the hand of God distinct, the fruit
 Of His eternal counsels, the design 180
 Of His omniscient love, His workmanship ;
 Each seraph, no angelic parentage
 Betwixt him and the Great Artificer,
 Born of the Spirit, and by the Word create.

“ Of these were three the foremost, Lucifer,
 Michael, and Gabriel : Lucifer, the first,
 Conspicuous as the star of morning shone,
 And held his lordly primaey supreme ;
 Though scarcely' inferior seem'd Michael the prince,
 Or Gabriel, God's swift winged messenger. 190
 And after these were holy Raphael ;
 Uriel, the son of light ; Barakiel,
 Impersonation of beatitude ;
 Great Ramiel, and Raamiel, mercy's child ;
 Dunah, and Lailah, and Yorekemo,
 And Suriel, blessed Suriel, who abides

Mostly beside the footstool of God's throne,
 (As Mary sate one time at Jesus' feet,)
 His chosen inalienable heritage.
 Nor these alone, but myriad sanctities, 200
 Thrones, virtues, principalities, and powers,
 Over whose names and high estates of bliss
 I must not linger now, crown'd hierarchs ;
 And numbers without number under them
 In order ranged,—some girt with flaming swords,
 And others bearing golden harps, though all
 Heaven's choristers are militant at will,
 And all its martial ranks are priestly choirs.
 And, even as in yonder Paradise
 Thou sawest the multitudes of ransom'd babes 210
 And children gather'd home of tenderest years,
 So with the presbytery of angels, those,
 Who will appear to thee as infant spirits
 Or stripling cherubs, cluster round our steps,
 Each individual cherub born of God,
 Clouds of innumerable drops composed,
 Pure emanations of delight and love.

“ And yet, though only one of presbyters
 There reckon'd by ten thousands, when I woke
 To consciousness I found myself alone, 220
 So vast are heaven's felicitous abodes,
 As Adam found in Eden. Not a sound
 Greeted mine ear, except the tuneful flow
 Of waters rippling past a tree of life,
 Beneath whose shade on fragrant moss and flowers

Dreaming I lay. Realities and dreams
 Were then confused as yonder clouds and rocks.
 But soon my Maker, the Eternal Word,
 Softening His glory, came to me, in form
 Not wholly' unlike my own: for He, who walk'd 230
 A man on earth among His fellow-men,
 Is wont, self-humbled, to reveal Himself
 An Angel among angels. And He said,—
 His words are vivid in my heart this hour
 As from His sacred lips at first they fell,—
 ' Child of the light, let Oriel be thy name;
 Whom I have made an image of Myself,
 That in the age of ages I may shower
 My love upon thee, and from thee receive
 Responsive love. I, unto whom thou owest 240
 Thy being, thy beauty, and immortal bliss,
 I claim thy free spontaneous fealty.
 Such it is thine to render or refuse.
 It may be in the veil'd futurity,
 Veil'd for thy good, another voice than Mine,
 Though Mine resembling, will solicit thee,
 When least suspicious of aught ill, to seek
 Apart from Me thy bliss. Then let these words
 Foreclose the path of danger. Then beware.
 Obedience is thy very life, and death 250
 Of disobedience the supreme award.
 Forewarn'd, forearm'd resist. Obey and live.
 But only in My love abide, and heaven
 (So call the beautiful world around thee spread)
 Shall be thy home for ever, and shall yield

Thee choicest fruits of immortality ;
 And thou shalt drink of every spring of joy,
 And with the lapse of endless ages grow
 In knowledge of My Father and Myself
 Ever more loving, ever more beloved.' 260

" Speaking, He gazed on me, and gazing seal'd
 Me with the impress of His countenance,
 (Brother, I read the same upon thy brow,)
 Until such close affinity of being
 Enchain'd me, that the beauty' of holiness
 Appear'd unutterably necessary,
 And by its very nature part of me.
 I loved Him for His love ; and from that hour
 My life began to circle round His life,
 As planets round the sun,—His will my law, 270
 His mysteries of counsel my research,
 And His approving smile my rich reward.

" Then whispering, ' Follow Me,' He led me forth
 By paths celestial through celestial scenes
 (Of which the Paradise beneath our feet,
 Though but the outer precincts of His courts,
 Is pledge), each prospect lovelier than the last,
 Until before my raptur'd eye there rose
 The Heavenly Zion.

" Terribly sublime
 It rose. The mountains at its base, albeit 280
 Loftier than lonely Ararat, appear'd

But footsteps to a monarch's throne. The top
 Was often lost in clouds—clouds all impregn'd
 With light and girdled with a rainbow arch
 Of opal and of emerald. For there,
 Not as on Sinai with thick flashing flames,
 But veiling His essential majesty
 In robes of glory woven by Himself,
 He dwells whose dwelling is the universe
 Of all things, and whose full-orb'd countenance 290
 The Son alone sustains. But at His will
 (So was it now) the clouds withdrawn disclosed
 That portion of His glory, which might best
 Fill all His saints with joy past utterance.
 There were the cherubim instinct with eyes;
 And there the crowned elders on their thrones,
 Encircling with a belt of starry light
 The everlasting throne of God; and round,
 Wave after wave, myriads of flaming ones
 From mightiest potentates and mid degrees 300
 Unto the least of the angelic choirs.
 Myself, nor of the first nor of the last
 I saw; but mingling with them was received
 By some with tender condescending love,
 By others with the grateful homage due
 To their superior. Envy was unknown
 In that society. But through their ranks
 Delightful and delighting whispers ran,
 'Another brother is arrived to share
 And multiply our gladness without end.' 310
 Meanwhile, as I was answering love with love,

My Guide was not, and in that countless throng
 I felt alone, till clustering round my steps,
 With loud Hosannas and exuberant joy,
 They led me to the footstool of the throne,
 And there upon His Father's right He sate,
 Without whom heaven had been no heaven to me,
 Effulgent Image of the Invisible,
 Co-equal co-eternal God of God.

“That day was one of thousands not unlike 320
 Of holy convocation, when the saints
 (This was our earliest name, God's holy ones)
 From diverse fields of service far and near,
 What time the archangel's trumpet rang through
 heaven,

Flock'd to the height of Zion—archetypes
 Of Salem's festivals in after years.
 And ever, as these high assemblies met,
 New counsels were disclosed of love Divine,
 New revelations of our Father's face,
 New proofs of His creative handiwork, 330
 Presentments at the throne of new-born spirits,
 Wakening new raptures and new praise in us
 The elder born. No discord then in heaven.

“So pass'd continuous ages ; till at last,
 The cycles of millennial days complete,
 Mark'd by sidereal orbits, seven times seven,
 By circuits inexpressible to man
 Revolving, a Sabbatic jubilee

[BOOK

Dawn'd on creation. Usher'd in with songs
 And blowing of melodious trumps, and voice 340
 Of countless harpers harping on their harps,
 That morning, long foretold in prophecy
 (Heaven has, as earth, its scrolls prophetic, sketch'd
 In word or symbol by the Preseient Spirit),
 Broke in unclouded glory. Hitherto
 No evil had appear'd to cast its shade
 Over the splendours of perpetual light,
 Nor then appear'd, though to the Omniscient Eye,
 Which only reads the mysteries of thought
 And can detect the blossom in the bulb, 350
 All was not pure which pure and perfect seem'd.
 But we presaged no tempest. We had lived,
 Save for the warning each at birth received,
 As children live in blissful ignorance
 Of future griefs: nor even Michael guess'd,
 So hath he often told me, what that day
 Disclosed of war and final victory.

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“Such was the childhood of angelic life.
 Such might not, could not always be. And when,
 Ranged in innumerable phalanxes, 360
 We stood or knelt around the sapphire throne,
 The Word, the Angel of God's Presence, rose
 From the right hand of glory, where He sate
 Enshrined, embosom'd in the light of light,
 And gazing round with majesty Divine,—
 Complacent rest in us His finish'd work,
 His perfected creation, not unmix'd

With irrepressible concern of love,—
 Thus spake in accents audible to all:
 “Children of light, My children, whom My hand
 Hath made, and into whom My quickening Spirit [370
 Hath breathed an immortality of life,
 My Father's pleasure is fulfill'd, nor now
 Of His predestinated hosts remains
 One seraph uncreated. It is done.
 Thrones, virtues, principalities, and powers,
 Not equal, but dependent each on each,
 O'er thousands and ten thousands president:
 No link is wanting in the golden chain.
 None lacks his fellow, none his bosom friends,
 No bosom friends their fit society, 380
 And no society its sphere assign'd
 In the great firmament of morning stars.
 The brotherhood of angels is complete.
 And now, My labour finish'd, I declare
 Jehovah's irreversible decree,
 With whom from Our eternal Yesterday,
 Before creation's subtlest film appear'd,
 I dwelt in light immutably the same,
 Which saith to Me, “Thou art My Only Son,
 From all eternity alone beloved, 390
 Alone begotten: Thee I now ordain
 Lord of To-day, the great To-day of Time,
 And Heir of all things in the world to come.
 And Heir of all things in the world to come;
 Who serve the Son, they too the Father serve;
 And Thee, My Son, contemning, Me contemn.
 My majesty is Thine: Thy word is Mine.

IV.] THE CREATION OF ANGELS AND OF MEN. 121

And now, in pledge of this My sovereign will,
 Before heaven's peers on this high jubilee
 I pour upon Thee without measure forth 400
 The unction of My Everlasting Spirit,
 And crown Thee with the crown of endless joy."

"So spake the Son; and, as He spake, a cloud
 Of fragrance, such as heaven had never known,
 Rested upon His Head, and soon distill'd
 In odours inexpressibly sublimed
 Dewdrops of golden balm, which flow'd adown
 His garments to their lowest skirts, and fill'd
 The vast of heaven with new ambrosial life.
 And for a while, it seem'd a little while, 410
 But joy soon fails in measurement of time,
 We knelt before His footstool, none except,
 And from the fountain-head of blessing drank
 Beatitude past utterance. But then,
 Rising once more, the crown'd Messiah spake:

"My children, ye have heard the high decree
 Of Him, whose word is settled in the heavens,
 Irrevocable; and your eyes have seen
 The symbol of His pleasure, that I rule
 Supreme for ever o'er His faithful hosts, 420
 Or faithless enemies, if such arise:
 And rise they will. Already I behold
 The giant toils of pride enveloping
 The hearts of many: questionings of good,
 Not evil in themselves, but which, sustain'd

And parley'd with apart from Me, will lead
 To evil; thoughts of licence not indulged,
 Nor yet recoil'd from; and defect of power,
 Inseparable from your finite being,
 Soliciting so urgently your will
 (Free, therefore not infallible) to range
 Through other possibilities of things
 Than those large realms conceded to your ken,
 That if ye yield, and ye cannot but yield
 Without My mighty aid betimes implored,
 From their disastrous wedlock will be born
 That fertile monster, Sin. Oh, yet be wise!
 My children, ere it be too late, be warn'd!
 The pathway of obedience and of life
 Is one and narrow and of steep ascent,
 But leads to limitless felicity.
 Not so the tracks of disobedience stretch
 On all sides, open, downward, to the Deep
 Which underlies the kingdom of My love.
 Good, evil; life and death: here is your choice.
 From this great trial of your fealty,
 This shadow of all limited free will,
 It is not Mine, albeit Omnipotent,
 To save you. Ye yourselves must choose to live.
 But only supplicate My ready aid,
 And My Good Spirit within you will repel
 Temptation from the threshold of your heart
 Unscathed, or if conversed with heretofore
 Will soon disperse the transitory film,
 And fortify your soul with new resolve.'

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"He spake, and from the ranks a seraph stepp'd,
 One of heaven's brightest sanctities esteem'd,
 Nought heeding underneath the eye of God
 Ten thousand times ten thousand eyes of those
 Who gazed in marvel, Penue! his name, 450
 And knelt before Messiah's feet. What pass'd
 We knew not: only this we knew; then first
 Tears fell upon that floor of crystal gold—
 Not long—a smile of reconciliation chased
 Impending clouds, and that archangel's brow
 Shone with the calm response of perfect love.

"Sole penitent he knelt,—if penitence
 Be the due name for evil, not in deed,
 But only in surmise. And for a space
 Unwonted silence reign'd in heaven, until 470
 The Son of God a third time rose and spake:

"Angels, from conflict I have said no power
 Avails to save you: here Omnipotence,
 Which made and guards from force your freeborn will,
 And never can deny itself, seems weak,
 Seems only,—hidden in profounder depths.
 But rather than temptation were diffused
 Through boundless space and ages without end,
 I have defined and circumscribed the strife 480
 In narrowest limits both of place and time.
 Ye know the planet, by yourselves call'd Earth,
 Which in alternate tempest and repose
 Has roll'd for ages round its central sun,

And often have ye wonder'd what might be
 My secret counsel as regards that globe,
 The scene of such perplex'd vicissitudes,
 In turn the birthplace and the tomb of life,
 Life slowly' unfolding from its lowest forms.
 Now wrapt in swathing-bands of thickest clouds
 Bred of volcanic fires, eruptions fierce 490
 And seething oceans, on its path it rolls
 In darkness, waiting for its lord and heir.
 Hear, then, My word: this is the destined field,
 Whereon both good and evil, self-impell'd,
 Shall manifest the utmost each can do
 To overwhelm its great antagonist.
 There will I shower the riches of My grace
 First to prevent, and, if prevention fail,
 To conquer sin—eternal victory.
 And there Mine enemies will wreak their worst: 500
 Their worst will prove unequal in that war
 To conquer My unconquerable love.
 But why, ye thrones and potentates of heaven,
 Say why should any amongst you, why should one
 Attempt the suicidal strife? What more
 Could have been done I have not done for you?
 Have I not made you excellent in power,
 Swift as the winds and subtle as the light,
 Perfect and God-like in intelligence?
 What more is possible? But one thing more, 510
 And I have kept back nothing I can do
 If yet I may anticipate your fall.
 Such glory have I pour'd upon your form

And made you thus in likeness of Myself,
 That from your peerless excellence there springs
 Temptation, lest the distance infinite
 Betwixt the creature and the Increate
 Be hidden from your eyes. For who of spirits,
 First born or last, has seen his birth, or knows
 The secrets of his own nativity ?
 Nor were ye with Me, when My Father will'd,
 And at My word the heavens obedient rose.
 Come then with Me, your Maker, and behold
 The making of a world. Nor this alone :
 But I, working before your eyes, will take
 Of earth's material dust, and mould its clay
 Into My image, and imbreathe therein
 The breath of life, and by My Spirit Divine
 Implanting mind, choice, conscience, reason, love,
 Will form a being, who in power and light
 May seem a little lower than yourselves
 (Yourselves whose very glory tempts to pride),
 But capable of loftiest destinies.
 This being shall be MAN. Made of the dust,
 And thus allied to all material worlds,
 Born of the Spirit, and thus allied to God,
 He during his probation's term shall walk
 His mother earth, unfledged to range the sky,
 But, if found faithful, shall at length ascend
 The highest heavens and share My home and yours. 540
 Nor shall his race, like angels, be defined
 In numbers, but expansive without end
 Shall propagate itself by diverse sex,

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And in its countless generations form
 An image of Divine infinitude.
 As younger, ye their elder brethren stand :
 As feebler, ye their ministers. Nor deem
 That thus your glory shall be less, but more ;
 For glory' and love inseparably grow.
 Only, ye firstborn sons of heaven, be true,
 True to yourselves and true to Me, your Lord ;
 For as mankind must have a pledge propos'd
 (And without pledge the trial were the same)
 Of their obedience, so mankind themselves
 Are pledge and proof of yours. Only be true ;
 And the pure crystal river of My love
 Widening shall flow with unimpeded course,
 And water the whole universe with life.'

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"So spake Messiah ; and His words awoke
 Deep searchings, *Is it I?* in countless hearts,
 Hearts pure from sin and strong in self-distrust :
 Nor holy fear alone, but strenuous prayer
 For strength and wisdom and effectual aid
 In the stern war foretold. And heaven that hour
 New worship and unparallel'd beheld,
 Self-humbled cherubim and seraphim,
 And prostrate principalities and thrones,
 And flaming legions, who on bended knees
 Besought their fealty might never fail,
 Never so great as when they lowliest seem'd.
 Would all had pray'd ! But prayer to some appear'd
 A sign of weakness unconceived : to some

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Confession of an unsuspected pride:
 And haply some rising ambition moved
 To strive against the Spirit who strove with all
 In mercy, forcing none, persuading most.
 Yes, most yielded submiss. And soon from prayer
 To solemn adoration we uprose,
 And all the firmament of Zion rang
 With new Hosannas unto Him who saw 580
 The gathering storm and warn'd us ere it broke.
 New thoughts of high and generous courage stirr'd
 In every loyal breast, and new resolves
 To do and suffer all things for our Lord.
 On which great themes conversing, friend with friend,
 Or solitary with the King Himself,
 That memorable Sabbath pass'd, a day,
 Though one day there is as a thousand years,
 Fraught with eternal destinies to all.

"Now dawn'd another morning-tide in heaven, 590
 The morning of another age, and lo,
 Forth from the height of Zion, where He sat
 Throned in His glory inaccessible,
 The Son of God, robed in a radiant cloud,
 And circled by His angel hosts, came down,
 Descending from that pure crystalline sphere
 into the starry firmament. Not then
 For the first time or second I beheld
 Those marvels of His handiwork, those lamps
 Suspended in His temple's azure dome, 600
 And kindled by the Great High Priest Himself;

For through them I had often wing'd my flight.
 But never saw I till that hour such blaze
 Of glory: whether now the liquid sky
 Did homage to its present Lord, or He
 Our eyes anointed with peculiar power:
 For to the farthest wall of heaven, where light
 Trends on the outer gloom, with ease we seann'd
 The maze of constellations: central suns
 Attended by their planets ministrant, 610
 These by their moons attended; groups of worlds;
 Garlands of stars, like sapphires loosely strung;
 Festoons of golden orbs, nor golden all,
 Some pearls, and rubies some, some emerald green,
 And others shedding hyacinthine light
 Far over the empurpled sky: but all
 Moving with such smooth harmony, though mute,
 Around some secret centre pendulous,
 That in their very silence music breathed,
 And in their motions none could choose but rest. 620

"Through these with gently undulating course
 Messiah and His armies pass'd, until
 They reach'd the confines of thy native orb,
 The battle-field of Good and Evil, Earth.

"Wrapt in impervious mists, which ever steam'd
 Up from its boiling oceans, without form
 And void, it roll'd around the sun, which cast
 Strange lurid lights on the revolving mass,
 But pierced not to the solid globe beneath.

Such vast eruption of internal fires 630
 Had mingled sea and land. This not the first
 Convulsion which that fatal orb had known,
 The while through immemorial ages God,
 In patience of His own eternity,
 Laid deep its firm foundations. When He spake
 In the beginning, and His word stood fast,
 An incandescent mass, molten and crude,
 Arose from the primordial elements,
 With gaseous vapours circumfused, and roll'd
 Along its fiery orbit: till in lapse 640
 Of time an ever thickening hardening crust
 (So have I heard) upon its lava waves
 Gather'd condense: a globe of granite rock,
 Bleak, barren, utterly devoid of life,
 Mantled on all sides with its swaddling-bands
 Of seas and clouds: impenetrably dark,
 Until the fiat of the Omnipotent
 Went forth. And, slowly dawning from the East,
 A cold grey twilight cast a pallid gleam
 Over those vaporous floods, and days and nights, 650
 All sunless days, all moonless starless nights,
 For ages journey'd towards the western heavens:—
 Unbroken circuits, till the central fires
 Brake forth anew, emitting sulphurous heat.
 And then at God's command a wide expanse
 Sever'd the waters of those shoreless floods
 From billowy clouds above;—an upper sea
 Of waters o'er that limpid firmament
 Rolling for eycles undefined, the while

God's leisure tarried. Then again He will'd, 660
And lo, the bursting subterranean fires
Thrust from below vast continents of land
With deeper hollows yawning wide betwixt
Capacious, into which the troubled tides
Pour'd with impetuous rage, and fretting broke,
Returning with their ceaseless ebb and flow,
On many a sandy beach and shingly shore.
But soon, wherever the dank atmosphere
Kiss'd with its warm and sultry breath the soil,
Innumerable ferns and mosses clothed 670
The marshy plains, and endless forests waved,
Pine-trees and palms on every rising slope,
Gigantic reeds by every oozy stream,
Rank and luxuriant under cloudy skies,
Fed by the steaming vapours, race on race
Fattening, as generations throve and sank.
Their work was done; and at the Almighty's word
Earth shudder'd with convulsive throes again,
And hid their gather'd riches in her folds
For after use. But now a brighter light 680
Flushes the East: the winds are all abroad:
The cloud-drifts seud across the sky; and lo,
Emerging like a bridegroom from his couch,
The lordly sun looks forth, and heaven and earth
Rejoice before him: till his bashful queen,
When the night shadows creep across the world,
Half peering through a veil of silvern mists,
Discloses the pale beauty of her brow,
Attended by a glittering retinue

IV.] THE CREATION OF ANGELS AND OF MEN. 131

Of stars. Again long ages glided by, 690
 While Earth throughout her farthest climes imbibed
 The influences of heaven.

“Not yet the end.

For not for lifeless rocks, or pure expanse
 Of the pellucid firmament, or growth
 Of ferns or flowers or forests, or the smile
 Of sun or moon far shining through the heavens
 Was that fair globe created; but for life,
 A destined nursery of life, the home,
 When death is vanquish'd, of immortal life.
 But there is no precipitance with God, 700
 Nor are His ways as ours. And living things,
 When His next mandate from on high was given,
 Innumerable, but unintelligent,
 Swarm'd from the seas and lakes and torrent floods,
 Reptiles and lizards, and enormous birds
 Which first with oaring wing assay'd the sky:
 Vast tribes that for successive ages there
 Appear'd and disappear'd. They had no king:
 And mute creation mourn'd its want; until
 Destruction wrapt that world of vanity. 710
 But from its wreck emerging, mammoth beasts
 Peopled the plains, and fill'd the lonely woods.
 But they too had no king, no lord, no head;
 And Earth was not for them. So when their term
 In God's great counsels was fulfill'd, once more
 Earth to its centre shook, and what were seas
 Unsounded were of half their waters drain'd,

And what were wildernesses ocean beds ;
 And mountain ranges, from beneath upheaved,
 Clave with their granite peaks primeval plains, 720
 And rose sublime into the water-floods,
 Floods overflow'd themselves with seas of mist,
 Which swathed in darkness all terrestrial things,
 Once more unfurnish'd, empty, void, and vast.

“ Such and so formless was thy native earth,
 Brother, what time our heavenly hosts arrived
 Upon its outmost firmament ; nor found
 A spot whereon angelic foot might rest,
 Though some with facile wing from pole to pole 730
 Swift as the lightning flew, and others traced
 From East to West the equidistant belt.
 Such universal chaos reign'd without ;
 Within, the embryo of a world.

“ For now
 Messiah, riding on the heavens serene,
 Sent forth His Omnipresent Spirit to brood
 Over the troubled deep, and spake aloud,
 ‘ Let there be light ;’ and straightway at His Word,
 The work of ages into hours compress'd, 740
 Light pierced that canopy of surging clouds,
 And shot its penetrative influence through
 Their masses undispersed, until the waves
 Couching beneath them felt its vital power.
 And the Creator saw the light was good :
 Thus evening now and morning were one day.

IV.] THE CREATION OF ANGELS AND OF MEN. 133

"The morrow came ; and without interlude
 Of labour, 'Let there be a firmament,'
 God said, 'amid the waters to divide
 The nether oceans from the upper seas
 Of watery mists and clouds.' And so it was. 750
 Immediate an elastic atmosphere
 Circled the globe, source inexhaustible
 Of vital breath for every thing that breathes :
 And even and morning were a second day.

"But now again God spake, and said, 'Let all
 The waters under heaven assembling flow
 Together, and the solid land appear.'
 And it was so. And thus were types prepared
 For generations yet unborn of things
 Invisible : that airy firmament, 760
 Symbolic of the heaven and heaven of heavens ;
 The earth a theatre, where life with death
 Should wage incessant warfare militant ;
 And those deep oceans, emblems of a depth
 Profounder still,—the under-world of spirits.
 But now before our eyes delighted broke
 A sudden verdure over hill and dale,
 Grasses and herbs and trees of every sort,
 Each leaflet by an Architect Divine
 Design'd and finish'd : proof, if proof be sought, 770
 Of goodness in all climes present at once,
 Untiring, unexhausted, infinite :
 Thus evening was and morning a third day.

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" And then again Messiah spoke, and lo,
 The clouds empurpled, flush'd, incarnadined,
 Melted in fairy wreaths before the sun,
 Who climbing the meridian steep of heaven,
 Shone with a monarch's glory, till he dipp'd
 His footstep in the ruddy western waves,
 And with the streaming of his golden hair
 Startled the twilight. But as evening drew
 Her placid veil o'er all things, the pale moon
 Right opposite ascending from the East,
 By troops of virgin stars accompanied,
 Arcturus and the sweet-voiced Pleiades,
 Lordly Orion, and great Mazzaroth,
 Footing with dainty step the milky way,
 Assumed her ebon throne, empress of night.

790

" But now the fourth day closed. And at God's word
 The waters teem'd with life, with life the air ;
 Mostly new types of living things, though some
 From past creations, buried deep beneath
 Seas or the strata of incumbent soils,
 Borrow'd their form. Innumerable tribes
 Of fishes, from the huge Leviathan
 Roaming alone the solitary depths
 To myriad minnows in their sunny creeks,
 The ocean pathways swam. Nor less the birds,
 Some of entrancing plumage, some of notes
 More trancing still, awoke the sleeping woods
 To gaiety and music. Others perch'd
 Upon the beetling cliffs, or walk'd the shore,

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Or dived or floated on the waves at will,
 Or skimm'd with light wing o'er their dashing foam,
 Free of three elements, earth, water, air.
 And, as the fifth day to the sixth gave place,
 We gazed in eager expectation what
 Might crown our Great Creator's work.

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" But first

All living creatures of the earth appear'd :
 Insects, that crept or flew as liked them best, 810
 In hosts uncounted as the dews that hung
 Upon the herbs their food ; and white flocks browsed,
 Herds grazed, and generous horses paw'd the ground
 And fawns and leopards and young antelopes
 Gamboll'd together. Every moment seem'd
 Fruitful of some new marvel, new delight,
 Until at last the Great Artificer
 Paused in His mighty labours. Noon had pass'd,
 But many hours must yet elapse ere night :
 And thus had God, rehearsing in brief space 820
 His former acts of vast omnipotence,
 In less than six days ere we stood aloof
 From that tumultuous mass of moving gloom,
 Out of the wrecks of past creations built
 A world before our eyes. All was prepared :
 This glorious mansion only craved its heir,
 This shrine of God its worshipper and priest.

word

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" Nor long His purpose in suspense. For soon
 Descending from the firmamental heavens,

Where He had wrought and whence His mandates
given,

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Upon a mountain's summit which o'erlook'd
The fairest and most fruitful scene on earth,
Eden's delicious garden, in full view
Of us His ministering hosts, He took
Some handfuls of the dust and moulded it
Within His plastic hands, until it grew
Into an image like His own, like ours,
Of perfect symmetry, divinely fair,
But lifeless, till He stoop'd and breathed therein
The breath of life, and by His Spirit infused
A spirit endow'd with immortality. 840
And we, viewless ourselves in air, saw then
The first tryst of a creature with his God:
We read his features when surprise and awe
Pass'd into adoration, into trust;
And heard his first low whisperings of love,—
Heard, and remember'd how it was with us.

“But now, lowly in heart, Messiah took
Mankind's first father by the hand, and led
His footsteps from that solitary hill
Down to the Paradise below, well named
A paradise, for never earth has worn
Such close similitude to heaven as there.
The breezes laden with a thousand sweets,
Not luscious but invigorating, breathed
Ambrosial odours. Roses of all scents
Embower'd the walks; and flowers of every hue

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IV.] THE CREATION OF ANGELS AND OF MEN. 137

Chequer'd the green sward with mosaic. Trees
 Hung with ripe clustering fruit, or blossoming
 With promise, on all sides solicited 860
 Refreshment and repose. Perpetual springs
 Flow'd, feeding with their countless rivulets
 Eden's majestic river. By its banks
 The birds warbled in concert; and the beasts
 Roam'd harmless and unharm'd from dell to dell,
 Or leap'd for glee, or slept beneath the shade
 The kid and lion nestling side by side.

"These, summon'd by their Maker, as they pass'd
 Before his feet, the ancestor of men
 Significantly named: such insight God 870
 Had given him into nature: but for him
 Of all these creatures was no helpmeet found.
 And solitude had soon its shadow cast
 Over his birthday's joy: which to prevent
 God drench'd his eyes with sleep, and then and there,
 Still in our aspect, from his very side
 Took a warm rib and fashion'd it anew,
 As lately' He fashion'd the obedient clay,
 Till one like man, but softer gentler far
 (The first of reasonable female sex, 880
 For spirits, thou knowest, are not thus create)
 He made, and brought her, blushing as the sky
 Then blush'd with kisses of the evening sun,
 Veil'd in her naked innocence alone,
 To Adam. Naked too he stood, but joy

Not shame suffused his glowing cheek and hers,
 The while their gracious Maker join'd their hands
 In wedlock, and their hearts in nuptial love ;
 Nor left them, till by many a flowery path
 Through orange groves and cedarn alleys winding 890
 At length He brought them to a fountain's brink,—
 The fountain of that river which went forth
 Through Eden, watering its countless flowers
 With tributary rivulets, or mists
 Exhaled at nightfall. There, on either side,
 A fruit-tree grew, shading the limpid spring,
 The tree of knowledge and the tree of life.

“ Hither when they arrived, the Son of God,
 With mingled majesty and tenderness
 Their steps arresting, bade them look around 900
 That garden of surpassing beauty, graced
 With every fruit that earth could rear, and rich
 With every gift that heaven could give to man,
 And told them all was theirs, all freely theirs,
 For contemplation, for fruition theirs,—
 Theirs and their seed's for ever. But one pledge
 He claim'd of their allegiance and their love,
 And, upon peril of His curse pronounced,
 The awful curse of death, forbade them taste
 The tree of knowledge. Then smiling He turn'd, 910
 And told them of the other tree of life,
 Of which divinest fruit, if faithful proved,
 They by His pleasure should partake at length,

And without death translated, made like Him,
 In heaven and earth, for earth should be as heaven,
 Reap the full bliss of everlasting life.

“But now the evening sang her vesper song,
 And lit her silver lamps; and vanishing
 From view of thy first parents, not from ours,
 Messiah rose into the heavens serene, 920
 And, gazing on His fair and finish'd work
 Outstretch'd before Him, saw that it was good,
 And bless'd it, and in blessing sanctified;
 Nor sooner ceased, than all the marshall'd host
 Of angels pour'd their rapture forth in songs
 Of Hallelujah and melodious praise.
 No jar was heard. Then sang the morning stars
 Together, and the first-born sons of God
 Shouted for joy, a shout whose echoes yet
 Ring in my ear for jubilant delight. 930
 And He with gracious smile received our praise,
 Lingering enamour'd o'er His new-made world,
 The latest counsel of His love, the while
 Your earth her earliest holiest Sabbath kept,
 Gladden'd with new seraphic symphonies,
 And the first echoes of the human voice.

“Too quickly' it pass'd. And then, ere we retraced
 Our several paths of service and of rest,
 Messiah call'd us round His feet once more,
 And said to all, ‘Angels, behold your charge, 940

Your pledge of fealty, your test of faith.
 Thine, Lucifer, of heavenly princes first,
 Earth is thy province, of all provinces
 Henceforth the one that shares My first regards.
 This is thy birthright, which, except thyself,
 None can revoke: this firmamental heaven
 Thy throne ordain'd; and yonder orb thy realm.
 Thee, My vicegerent, thee I constitute
 God of the world and guardian of mankind.
 Only let this thy lofty service link
 Thee closer to thy Lord; apart from Whom
 This post will prove thy pinnacle of pride,
 Whence falling thou wilt fall to the lowest hell;
 But under Me thy seat of endless joy:
 If faithless found, thy everlasting shame;
 If faithful, this thy infinite renown.
 For, lowly' as seems the earth compared with heaven,
 We, the Triune, have sworn that through mankind
 The angels and celestial potentates
 Shall all receive their full beatitude;
 Yea, that Myself, the Uncrated Word,
 Join'd to mankind, shall of mankind elect
 My Church, My chosen Bride, to share with Me
 My glory and My throne and endless love.
 I am the Bridegroom, and the Bride is Mine:
 But yours, ye angel choirs, may be the joy
 Pure and unselfish of the Bridegroom's friend.
 Only be humble: ministry is might,
 And loving servitude is sceptral rule.

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iv.] THE CREATION OF ANGELS AND OF MEN. 141

Ye are My servants, and in serving men 970
Ye honour Me, and I will honour you.'

"So spake the Son, and forthwith rose sublime,
His pathway heralded with choral hymns,
Till on the heavenly Zion He regain'd
His Father's bosom and His Father's throne."

END OF THE FOURTH BOOK.

Book Fifth.

THE FALL OF ANGELS AND OF MEN.

" WHEN throned on that aerial firmament
 Messiah singled out great Lucifer
 As His vicegerent over all the earth,
 Haply not one of the celestial hosts
 But felt in that archangel's rule mankind
 Had surest safeguard against harm. Such power,
 Such glory, such supremacy of will
 Was his. Even now his eclipsed majesty,
 Though fall'n, o'ershadows potentates of heaven. 10
 But I have seen him, when sublime he came
 Forth from the presence of the Increate,
 His eye glistening with joy for some design
 Of lofty enterprise beyond our reach
 Safely confided to his puissant arm ;
 Some new apocalypse of truth vouchsafed
 To him, as prophet, to reveal to us.
 Things which to other angels seem'd obscure,
 Were crystal in his eyes : born to command ;
 In stature as in strength above his peers ;
 With whom and him comparison was not, 20

Except with Michael, next in princely rank,
 And Gabriel the beloved; three hierarchs—
 But Lucifer the chief. Nor odds appear'd
 In outward state and circumstance of power
 Betwixt him and Messiah, when the Word
 Shrouding the awful blaze of Deity
 Beneath angelic garb, as He was wont,
 Mingled and communed with us face to face.
 All gifts of form, all attributes of mind,
 All high predominance of dignity 30
 Among his fellows, bound that lordly spirit
 To Him who made him such. Oh wherefore not
 The bond of everlasting gratitude?
 Was it that knowledge with its dazzling light
 Grew yet more rapidly with him than love?
 God knows, God only, how and when his will,
 Ranging through boundless latitudes of thought,
 First tamper'd with tyrannic pride. Unfallen
 He stood, though not unwavering, when the Son
 Placed in his hand the sceptre of a world. 40
 That crowning gift determined his resolve.
 Then wherefore placed He' it? Brother, He foreknew
 That arch-imperial will, crown'd or uncrown'd,
 Would yield spontaneous and spontaneous fall
 Untempted, unpersuaded, unsexed
 Save by itself, chafing because controll'd
 And finite amid God's infinitudes:
 Nor his alone, but myriad spirits of light,
 Wavering like him, like him would fall. And, this
 Foreknowing, nothing to Omnipotence 50

Remain'd but so to circumscribe the ruin,
 That evil might succumb to good at last,
 And darkness yield to everlasting light.
 For this must Sin be known, her face unmask'd,
 Her carcase stripp'd, her secret shame exposed,
 And thus her loathsome harlotry abhorr'd :
 Mask'd haply she had tainted all alike.
 Hence to the prince of angels was mankind
 Entrusted, and to man the fatal tree
 Straitly forbidden, though accessible.

60

“ Unfall'n had Lucifer received his charge ;
 Unfall'n, not long. For, when Messiah rose,
 His new creation perfected, to heaven,
 He left as next associate in command
 Gabriel my chieftain : and with him I sate
 One eve conversing, on our watch intent
 (Earth had not kept her circling birthday yet),
 Upon that hill o'erlooking Paradise,
 Where Adam was created, when we heard
 Our leader's footstep, and together rose
 To greet him. Salutation with salute
 Freely he answer'd, but as one amused
 With his own thoughts quickly address'd us saying,

70

“ Brothers, I praise you and your faithfulness :
 No meagre proof of true humility
 For thee, archangel Gabriel, thee of all
 Heaven's principalities among the first,
 Here set to guard this latest work of God,

This freak, this marvel of Omnipotence.
 Yes, we are to believe this worm o' the earth, 80
 A spark may be of immortality
 Enshrined within a mortal coil of flesh,
 Made of the clay we stamp beneath our feet,
 Equal to us the first-born sons of light ;
 Nay more than equal, that through him at last
 Beatitude shall flow to us, and man
 Exalted to the everlasting throne,
 The Bride, so spake Messiah, of Himself,
 Shall see the peerless potentates of heaven
 Standing far off in circles infinite, 90
 Or prostrate at her Bridegroom's footstool. Sure,
 If lowliness, as we have often heard,
 Be measured by the depth that we descend,
 This crowns that coy and virgin grace with praise.'

“ And Gabriel in sarcastic war unversed
 (The sword of sarcasm was not drawn till now)
 Replied without suspicion ' Lucifer,
 The smile upon thy mouth betrays thy mind.
 Thou dost but try our fealty, and test
 What answer we should make, if that unknown 100
 Tempter predicted should assail our faith.
 But wherefore should I weary thee, who knowest
 The easy answer to such sophistries ?
 Our charge is not on man's behalf alone,
 Or chiefly, though our power is likest God's
 Whenever strength sustains infirmity ;
 But rather for His sake who made us both .

His work is wages, and His smile is heaven.
 What then if we are call'd to stoop to man,
 Our Maker, ours and his, stoop'd lower still 110
 In making and preserving us when made ;
 Both in His glorious likeness wrought. Nor will
 Our common Father raise these later born
 To our disparagement, but higher bliss,
 Through man more nearly' united with Himself.
 And, when the fight foretold is fought and won,
 We, mutable by birth, shall stand henceforth
 For ever in our God immutable,
 By His love and our own experience fenced.
 Such arrows, Lucifer, thyself art judge, 120
 Recoil soon blunted from the shield of faith.'

"To whom thus Lucifer, 'So let it be.
 And, if my language seem too bold, reflect
 It is the tempter, and not I, who speak.
 But were I he, and wert thou, O my friend,
 As thou art not, obnoxious to assault,
 I would attempt thee thus. Two paths are ours :
 That which for ages thou and I have trod,
 The pathway of obedience. There remains 130
 Untrodden that of disobedience. Why
 Should one be always best ? God calls for praise :
 Praising I please Him ; praising not, displease.
 Why should I alway please Him ? Say, I choose
 To be my own eternal lord ? What then ?
 Oh, by those burning thoughts, those hopes that rise
 Within me subject to no will but mine,

[BOOK

v.] THE FALL OF ANGELS AND OF MEN. 147

I ask, why are we made thus circumscribed?
 Are there not possibilities of being
 Higher and nobler far than those we see?
 Why are these myriads of the hosts of heaven 140
 So limited in power, that thou or I
 Can scarcely find our mate? Why less than we?
 Look at these vast innumerable worlds
 Rolling around us; why not all the homes
 Of sentient things? Man, male and female made,
 Is in himself a fountain-spring of life;
 And why not angels? Was the gift too great,
 Too perilous for us? Remember, friends,
 The things that might be always underlie
 The things that are: things possible, things real. 150
 Say, thou art wise and happy,—it is well.
 But why not wiser, happier? answer me.'

“ ‘Let Oriel answer,’ Gabriel interposed.

“ ‘So hath it pleased Eternal Love,’ I said,
 ‘Perfect, Supreme, Unfathomable Love.
 To ask why we have finite faculties
 And diverse each from the’ other, is to ask
 Why all yon planets are not suns, and suns
 All gorgeous as the heaven of heavens. Enough,
 The universe is music as it is. 160
 Ye both are greater far than I; yet I
 Would not be other than I am, whose cup
 Already mantles to the brim with joy.
 And why yon globes are yet untenanted,

Though not unuseful as the lamps of God,
 I know no more than why my Maker fix'd,
 As pleas'd Him, in the mighty Past my birth.
 Nor care I further to inquire, but deem
 His hour is not yet come of whose increase
 Eternity itself shall see no end.
 His time, His counsel must be best. Be this
 Our wisdom with Omniscience to converse,
 Our joy the beaming of Eternal Light,
 Our strength to lean upon Almighty Power.'

170

"And Lucifer, as strangely moved, replied,
 'I know He is Almighty: but I see
 Another image of Omnipotence,
 The awful Power of self-determined choice.
 Suppose I choose to worship at that shrine,
 What hinders? Will God drag me to His feet? 180
 Forc'd adoration, what were this, and where
 His own irrevocable gift, free-will?
 Will He destroy me? Nay, Himself has said
 We are endow'd with immortality.
 That fatal dowry makes destruction null.
 What then? He will beseech me to repent;
 And, if obdurate, punish me? But how?
 He spake of death: but what is death to us?
 Beasts die and birds; man, made of flesh, may die;
 But we are spirits, imperishable spirits. 190
 He spake of hell: but where or what is hell?
 Gabriel, thy lightsome wing from star to star
 Has spann'd creation's height, depth, length, and breadth;

Say, brother, hast thou ever seen this hell?
 What is't? a place of chains? of punishment?
 Can fetters bind ethereal essences?
 Or would God make a creature who should live
 For ever in perpetual torment? say,
 Gabriel, is this like God,--God, who is love?
 Nay, rather when mankind has broken loose 200
 From his poor pledge, as tempted he will break,
 We shall be left sole arbiters of earth,
 And all angelic natures, one by one,
 Or flocking to our side in multitudes,
 Will join us. If I fall, why should they stand?
 They poorer, I have more to lose than they,
 And yet risk all for freedom; so will they.
 Ages may pass, but they will fall at last:
 Finite their power, temptation infinite.
 And God will exile me and them from heaven, 210
 And out of boundless space create new worlds,
 New habitants, but henceforth will beware
 How He endows with free-will like His own
 Spirits mutable like ours. All such methinks
 Sooner or later will forsake His throne.
 Nor will our realms be limited, for wide
 As stretches this star-spangled firmament,
 The deep that lies beneath is wider still.
 And there at least we shall be free, unwatch'd,
 Lords of ourselves. His own essential form, 220
 Though in the outer darkness, will make light
 For each one to direct his steps at will.
 Nor will my legions wholly be debarr'd

From fairer fields. This firmamental throne
 Was given me as my proper seat, this earth
 My destined empire, which I mean to hold
 Against all foes secure. Nay, shudder not :
 Not without God shall I with God contend.
 Himself hath arm'd me for the awful strife.
 He made me free, immortal, innocent : 230
 He made abiding in His love the pledge
 Of service ; which whoever breaks becomes
 His adversary. This mankind will do,
 And straightway will be my allies, my bride,
 Who, if prolific as foretold, shall fill
 My kingdom with an offspring like their sire.
 Say, Gabriel, wilt thou cast thy lot with me,
 Equal associate ? or return to joys,
 Which only seem delightsome, till the higher 240
 Delights of perfect liberty are known ?
 Wilt thou be chain'd or chainless ? bond or free ?'

" Impetuous words hung on my lips : but me
 Gabriel prevented : doubt obscured his look,
 Never obscure till now, as thus he spake,
 ' Son of the morning, Lucifer, if thou,
 Though for our safer guardianship, assumest
 The tempter, let me answer thee as such.
 False voice ! that image of Omnipotence
 That so allures thee, self-determined will,
 Is but an image, at whose dreadful shrine
 Whoever worships is the slave of self,
 And must expect the portion of a slave,

Fetters and stripes. Thou say'st there is no hell;
 Hast thou explored the secrets of that deep
 Thou claimest as thy heritage and realm?
 Or if no hell exists as yet, why not
 Exist, as in a moment, if thou sin?
 Thou canst not die, thou say'st: but what if death
 Be immortality in mortal pain;
 Not endless nothingness, but endless woe? 260
 Thou pleadest God is love: but what if love,
 Love to the universe, ay, love to thee,
 Lest worse rebellion worse restraint demand,
 Compel the flashing forth of those pure flames
 Which—now there is no sin, no enemy—
 Innocuous play around His awful throne?
 All thou foreseest will yield like thee. False seer!
 Hast thou forgotten that the hosts of God,
 Premonish'd of the coming strife, besought
 His prevalent aid? And what if some refused, 270
 Weak in the fancied might of innocence,
 The Same who warn'd us enemies should rise
 Foretold their final overthrow. And thou,
 Dost thou forecast the future, and in thought,
 Piercing eternity, assay to clutch
 Earth as thy empire and mankind thy bride?
 False oracle! Shall His word be reversed
 Who here ordain'd Messiah Heir of all?
 Or wilt thou, wrestling with Omnipotence,
 Wrest from His hands the sceptre, or usurp 280
 The smallest foothold of His universe,
 Who by Himself hath sworn that every knee

Of things in heaven and earth and under earth
 Shall bow beneath His sceptre or His rod?
 This, if thou wert the tempter, as my heart
 Of thee abhors to think, were my response,
 Now and for ever to reject thy thrall,
 And in the liberty of truth abide.'

"The Arch-hypocrite replied, 'Gabriel, I said
 Thy heart was proof against seductive wiles. 290
 I did but try thee: untried faith is nought.
 Pride has no charms for thee. Impregnable
 Thou standest. Only thus maintain the strife,
 And in the kingdom of eternal peace
 No brighter coronal than thine shall blaze
 Among the innumerable hosts of light.
 Both have our task assign'd us. Mine is now
 To test the faith of others as thine own,
 Detecting whose fidelity is staunch,
 Or who are open to the coming foe.' 300

"So saying, he left us on that hill. In muse
 Sate Gabriel for long while contemplating
 The moonlight sleeping on the woods and lakes
 Of Eden: but his thoughts were elsewhere,
 And at the last, heaving a heavy sigh,
 He said, 'Oriel, the conflict thickens. Days
 Of peril are upon us. Be it so.
 Farewell, a long farewell, ye hours of peace!
 Thou unsuspecting confidence, farewell!
 And welcome, so the Master's will be done, 310

The strain of battle, and the patient watch
 For hostile stratagem far worse than strength.
 Now, brother, let us quit ourselves like those
 Whom God has call'd to fight, and pledge our troth
 As fellow-soldiers in the brooding war,
 And fellow-heirs of everlasting peace.'

290 " I gave him silently my hand, and there
 Upon that mountain's brow we knelt and pray'd
 For timely succour in our hour of need.
 And, as we rose, the blessed Suriel came 320
 Like lightning from the footstool of the throne,
 And swift of wing spake to us winged words :

300 " ' Gabriel, thy prayer is heard. Messiah calls
 Thee to a counsel of angelic thrones,
 Held in His presence. Oriel, it is thine
 To watch mankind's first parents with a band
 Of holy ones now camping round their bower,
 And guard them from all ghostly violence :
 Other temptations, warn'd, themselves must shun.
 Brothers, my path is devious. Fare ye well.' 330

0 " We parted, Gabriel to the heaven of heavens,
 I to heaven's miniature, sweet Eden's vale.
 There in a leafy arbour, side by side,
 Half waking, half asleep, for early dews
 Still drench'd the landscape, Eve on Adam's breast
 Pillow'd her head. Her loose dishevell'd hair
 Part hid the scarlet of her cheek, and part

Curl'd like a wreathen chain about his neck ;
 While underneath her slender waist his arm
 Embracing pass'd, until the listless hand 340
 Rested upon her heaving bosom. Round
 A company of angels lean'd entranced.
 Nor marvel: thou hast known in pilgrim days
 Earth's princes, weary of their royal state,
 Hang o'er the cradle of a sleeping babe,
 Spell-bound. And so in their most innocent loves
 Was that which moved us more than all the blaze
 Of seraphim; or song of heavenly choirs :
 The very tenderness of flesh and blood ;
 The very weakness of humanity ; 350
 The unutterable sweetness of that bond
 Which link'd them, bone of bone and flesh of flesh ;
 The promise of fertility to Eve ;
 The fresh bloom of that first and loveliest bride
 Unfolding, like rose petals, to the joy
 Of Adam, first and goodliest spouse ; the rites
 Of their pure nuptial couch, a couch of flowers,
 Known but unwitness'd (there are mysteries
 Which holy angels guard, but gaze not on) ;
 And the last awful issues, life or death, 360
 With their fidelity or frailty link'd.

" But now the rosy-finger'd morn aside
 The curtains of the sun's pavilion drew,
 And he arose refresh'd. So from their sleep
 That innocent pair invigorated rose,
 And from their arbour naked pass'd to pay ;

As they were wont, their early orisons
 Beside the fountain shaded by the trees
 Of knowledge and of life. Both loved the spot.
 There oftenest God would walk at eventide, 370
 Or dewy morn, or send some spirit eleet
 To gladden more their gladsome solitude:
 A spot more sacred than the stony bed
 Where Jacob slept, and visited more oft
 With heavenly visitations.

"So that morn
 Joyful they came. But even as they knelt
 And look'd adoring upward, Adam saw
 Amid the foliage of that sapient tree
 Two glowing eyes, and soon a serpent knew, 380
 Amazed; for heretofore nor beast would graze
 Beneath it, nor bird light upon its boughs—
 Such awe circled it round—but more amazed
 To hear that sinuous snake utter a voice
 Like God's voice, saying, 'Thou only follow me.'
 And Adam, by preventing prayer unarm'd,
 Obey'd and went, whispering to startled Eve,
 'What this means it is mine alone to search:
 Wait here my quick return.' And through the walks
 Of Eden, gliding with contorted rings,
 Now twisted in voluminous folds, and now 390
 Shot forward like a bird upon the wing,
 The serpent led the way, until his voice
 Seductive, ever beckoning 'Follow me,'
 Through many a labyrinth of fruits and flowers,

Roses with orange groves, myrtles with vines
 Entwining, brought the ancestor of men
 To the far distant gates of Paradise.
 And then again the serpent spake and said,
 'Here tarry, while I bring a mystic key,
 Which shall unlock these envious gates, and yield 400
 Thee access to the boundless world beyond
 Of undefined delights. Fear nothing. God
 Will guide thee forth, and angels guard thy way,
 Eve thy companion.'

"So the serpent leas'd,
 And back with smooth and undulating course
 Slid unimpeded by the tangled woods
 To that salubrious fountain spring, where Eve
 Waited impatiently. Before her feet
 He bow'd submiss, and to her gaze, which ask'd
 Why Adam linger'd, with ambiguous words 410
 Replied, 'He waits thy coming at the gates
 Of Eden, whence ere long thy steps and his
 Issuing shall tread the unexplored expanse
 That lies beyond our narrow vale of bliss.
 But this beware, those gates instinct with life
 Will only on their golden hinges turn
 To one who in his hand a cluster bears
 Of this divinest fruit; this fruit which first
 Open'd my eyes to see, my tongue to speak.
 Take, fairest Eve, and eat.' 420

"'Enough,' she said,
 'Our gracious Maker interdicts this treat'

“Whereat the serpent subtle’ of heart replied,
‘What, hath God placed you in this fruitful vale,
Fruitful but narrow, and not given you range
At least of every tree herein to eat?
It cannot be. Thou hast misdeem’d His voice.’

100

“And Eve responded, ‘Yea, of all the trees
Innumerable which here flower and bloom,
And with delicious fruitage tempt our taste,
We may eat freely. But this tree alone, 430
Planted as in a temple here by God,
He, knowing those who eat thereof will die,
In love denies us.’

“And the serpent said,
‘Ye die? Die ye? Ye shall not surely die.
I ate and died not. I, a serpent, ate;
And lo, so far from dying, instantly
I lived a life to which my former state
Now bare existence seems. Then first I saw,
Then spake I, heretofore incapable
Of mental vision or articulate speech. 440
This was my only death. And what for thee
And Adam? Surely ye will be as gods,
Knowing all mysteries of good and ill,
Divine intelligences, and, no more
Within this garden’s strait precincts confined,
Shall range at will your boundless heritage.
And this your Maker knows. Why otherwise

410

20

Placed He this tree within your easy reach?
 Why, but to test if those sublimer thoughts
 Within your bosom planted by Himself, 150
 Thoughts ever stretching towards the Infinite,
 By one bold venture daring death itself
 (That is, a translation to a higher life—
 There is no other death in yon fair fruit),
 Were worthy of Himself? Take, Eve, and eat.
 For what were all these trees, and what their fruits
 Delightful in one heap before thee piled,
 Compared with this? They feed the body' alone:
 This nurtures, elevates, expands the soul.
 They with their ruddy bloom rejoice the eye, 160
 And with their odorous scent the smell; but this,
 At once in beauty and perfume supreme,
 Clothes all terrestrial things with heavenly light,
 And quickens by its spiritual essences
 The heaven-implanted spirit. Of this, fair Eve,
 This noblest boon of God to Paradise,
 Freely and without fear partake with me.'

"Into her ear, into her heart the words
 Of that first tempter stole. Now glow'd the fruit
 Deliciously beneath the morning sun, 470
 Sweet to the eye, and sweeter to the mouth,
 Sweetest of all as promising unknown
 Unending banquets to the craving spirit.
 And so, with fatal and disastrous ease
 Lifting her hand into the clustering boughs,

She touch'd, she took, she tasted. One small taste
 Sufficed. Her eyes were open'd; and she seem'd,
 The moorings cut which bound her to the shore,
 Launch'd on an ocean of delights. Alas,
 Perfidious sea, on which the fairest bark 480
 E'er floated suffer'd foulest wrong and wreck!

“ Awhile as in a dream she stood, but soon
 Her scatter'd thoughts recall'd, and from the boughs
 Selecting one loaden with luscious fruit
 She pluck'd it bower'd in leaves, and took her way
 To seek her absent lord. Him soon she met
 Returning with no laggard steps; for when
 The serpent slid with such strange haste away
 The loitering minutes hours appear'd, and then
 A strange solicitude unknown before 490
 Began to creep around his boding heart,
 And he retraced his path. But when he saw
 Eve with flush'd cheek and agitated mien
 Advancing, in her hand that fatal branch,
 His heart sank, and his lip quiver'd. And when
 She told her tale, the serpent's honey'd words,
 Her brief refusal, his repeated suit,
 Her answer, his reply, her touch, her taste,
 Then first upon the virgin soil of earth
 Fell human tears, presage of myriad showers. 500
 But when again with pleading eye and hand,
 Silent but most persuasive cloquence,
 She pray'd him share with her the fruit she bore,
 Then Adam wail'd aloud:

“O Eve, my wife,
Heaven's last, heaven's dearest gift, what hast thou
done?

Me miserable! Thou hast undone thyself,
Thyself and me; for if thou diest I die,
Bone of my bone, flesh of my very flesh,—
Eve, in whose veins my heart's best juices flow.
What can I do, what suffer for thee? Say 510
I rigorously refuse this fatal fruit,
What, shall I see thy warm and gentle limbs
Stiffen in death, and live myself? How live?
Alone? Or peradventure God will take
Another rib, and form another Eve?
Nay, we are one. My heart, myself am thine.
Our Maker made us one. Shall I unmake
His union? and transfer from heart to heart
My very life? Far higher I deem of love,
No transferable perishable thing, 520
But flowing from its secret fountain, God,
Like God immortal and immutable.
But oh, what follows? Adam, be thou sure
Of thy inflexible resolve—death, death:
Both cannot live, and therefore both must die.'

“So saying, from his hand he took and ate,
Not circumvented by the serpent's fraud,
But blindly overcome by human love,
Love's semblance, which belied its name, denying
The Great Creator for the creature's sake. 530

“ All this, and more than I can tell thee now,
 Ourselves invisible we saw : and, when
 Eve laid her hand on that forbidden fruit,
 Not one but felt God’s interdict alone
 Restrain’d from dashing it aside. This knew
 The wily serpent lay not in our charge,
 Enjoin’d to ward off violence, not fraud.
 But little guess’d we what malignant foe
 Lurk’d in that snake. Nor marvel : who, though
 warn’d

Dark mysteries of evil were abroad, 540
 Who ever surmised that God-like Lucifer,
 The noblest of the first-born sons of light,
 Would so debase his archangelic form
 As into that sly reptile to descend,
 And mingle his ethereal spirit one hour
 With bestial instinct ? Little then we guess’d
 To what abominations pride will stoop.
 Nor only we, but heaven’s sublimest thrones
 Were here at fault.

“ Three weary days and nights
 We watch’d that miserable human pair, 550
 Weeping their utter ruin. Death had stolen
 Into their bosom’s sanctuary : and lo,
 For love despite, for confidence mistrust,
 And for the ringing merriment of joy
 Mourning and heaviness ; but not the death
 For which in desperate expectancy
 They waited. And when this came not, they strove

(And who that saw them could refrain his tears?)
 To hide their shame with fig-leaves loosely strung,
 Lamenting their rent robe of innocence, 560
 Rent by themselves. But now the third day's sun
 Was setting, and the wind of evening blew
 Its cool refreshment over wood and wave,
 When to our inexpressible delight,
 But their quick fear, Messiah's voice was heard
 Walking in Eden. In His eye was grief,
 And on His holy brow displeasure, mix'd
 With deep compassion, sate. With gentle voice
 He summon'd those, who in their dread had sought
 The shelter of a leafy labyrinth. 570
 Trembling and pale they came, expecting death
 From Him their righteous Judge; but He, with all
 A father's pity towards an erring child,
 Father and Judge in one, inquired their shame.
 Alas, their very words betray'd them, while
 Adam on Eve, Eve on the serpent, threw
 The load of guilt. But first upon the last
 The crushing sentence fell, the curse of God.
 No longer emulous of birds in speed,
 Darting like light from tree to tree, henceforth 580
 The serpent's belly to the dust should cleave,
 Must be its nauseous meat, until at length
 The woman's Seed beneath His bruised heel
 Should bruise its head for ever. Mystic words,
 Which, even as utter'd, fill'd our hearts with awe!
 Then, turning to the serpent's victims, God
 Assign'd to each their lot retributive:

BOOK

560

570

580

To Eve were sorrows of the womb and breasts
 Foretold, and multiplied from age to age,
 With strict subjection to her husband's law— 590
 A lot unsoften'd till the Son of man
 Was of a woman born: to Adam, toil
 And bread wrung hardly from his native earth,
 Fruitful of thorns and water'd with his sweat,
 Till dust should to its kindred dust return.

“ And then mankind's first Priest and Minister
 Before them slew some firstlings of the flock,
 And pour'd their blood upon the thirsty soil,
 And having flay'd the carcases consumed
 The flesh upon a sudden hearth of coals: 600
 First altar, and first holocausts, which taught
 The sinner that through sacrifice alone,
 The guiltless for the guilty slain, was now
 For man access to God. This having done,
 He took those skins and fleeces, nor disdain'd
 To fashion garments for their trembling limbs,
 Type of His spotless robe of righteousness,
 And clothed them. Nor till then the Son of God,
 Before He re-assumed His Father's throne,
 In pity lest in some rash hour they dare, 610
 Fall'n as they were, to touch the tree of life,
 And thus (disastrous victory) achieve
 An immortality in mortal sin,
 Drave them before Him, weeping as they went,
 Forth from that happy garden, through its walks
 Of fruit-trees, by its crystal rivulets.

And past its countless bowers of blossoming shade,
 To Eden's distant gates. These opening wide
 Disclosed what seem'd a tangled wold beyond,—
 Dark forests with their sparse and scanty plots 620
 Of pasture. But no choice remain'd them now.
 Loth went they forth. And at the portal blazed
 The flaming circling sword which warn'd their steps
 From nearer access to the tree of life,
 And cherubim of glory shadowing
 The mercy-seat, the footstool of God's throne.

“The sun was set. The mists hung heavily
 Around the mountain-tops: Adam and Eve,
 Without the gates but near them as they might,
 Were sleeping for sheer sorrow; when my prince, 630
 Gabriel, who with Messiah came from heaven,
 Call'd me. Together silently we roam'd
 The lonely walks of Paradise, through trees
 Which to our pensive musing seem'd to droop
 Their foliage as we pass'd; until we came
 To Eve's now solitary nuptial bower.
 No happy hearts beat there; no angel guards
 Kept vigil: not a sound ruffled the air—
 Till Gabriel pointing to the desolate couch
 Said, ‘See what Sin hath wrought. The die is cast, 640
 The vast conspiracy is now abroad,
 The conflict is begun. Of all the thrones
 Summon'd to meet in council before God,
 Not one was there but Lucifer had tried
 Their faith as ours—whether in truth or not,

None knew—such subtle ambiguity
 Had clothed his words. Nor only potentates,
 But all the legionary hosts of light,
 Since his vicegerency began, have known
 Struggle with doubts of outer darkness born. 650
 Myriads have fall'n: myriads twice told are firm.
 Thus far the Word reveal'd. But when we ask'd
 Who was the tempter? Who had fall'n? Who stood?
 How first the war arose, and how would end?
 He answer'd that the strife would shortly prove
 His friends and foes, assaying every spirit;
 And warn'd us that rebellion, now awork
 Among the hosts of heaven, would forthwith cast
 Its shadow upon earth: that man would fall:
 That days of foul ingratitude would seem 660
 To blot His love: that angels would be devils,
 Traducing God and all that breathed of God:
 That devils would become from age to age
 More devilish; and mankind likewise: that Sin,
 Deadlier eruption than when hidden fires
 Bursting from earth's entrails have wrapt in night
 Former creations, over all would cast
 The mantling pall of death, dreadful eclipse:
 That He, foreseeing all this ruin, had form'd,
 Deep in the unfathomable depth that lies 670
 Beneath the ocean veiling things unseen,
 Two vast receptacles sunder'd though near;
 One luminous, one dark: the first He named
 After this lovely Eden, Paradise,
 Henceforth the outer court of heaven itself;

The other, precinct to the fiery lake
 Of dread Gehenna, Hell : and, ever as death
 Touch'd with his icy spear the sons of men,
 Thither their spirits dismantled should descend,
 And there await His judgment-bar, when they 680
 And rebel angels should receive their doom.

“ Thus while Messiah spake, who should approach
 His throne, as wearied with unwonted speed,
 But Lucifer? his brow contract, his eye
 Flashing with indignation, which at once
 Burst from his lips—“ Mankind, Thy chosen race,
 Ingrate, and only by a reptile urged,
 Have eaten of the fruit proscribed. Wilt Thou
 I smite them, so that in the threaten'd day
 Of their transgression they may perish, Lord ? ” 690
 “ Myself will judge them,” in calm majesty
 The Son replied—“ Myself will judge them soon.
 Meanwhile their sin will be its chastisement.
 Sheathe thou thy sword, and to thy charge return.”

“ And forthwith Lucifer obey'd ; and then
 The everlasting Son, as if, methought,
 Reposing on our loyalty and love,
 Turn'd to us saying, “ My children, be not ye
 Stagger'd or troubled overmuch. Or ever
 The cloud arose, I warn'd you of the storm. 700
 And fiercely will the tempest rage ere long,
 And the proud billows toss themselves on high,
 And seem to mingle heaven's serene expanse

With nether darkness. Fear not ye. For I
 Am throned above the angry waterfloods,
 Compassionate because Omnipotent,
 Patient because Eternal. Sons of God,
 Be ye, too, patient. Not by power alone
 Must this great fight be foughten, or My foes
 Beneath the glory of My countenance
 Would melt like yonder incense clouds away. 710
 Howbeit not by power, but love with hate
 Conflicting, and humility with pride,
 Matchless humility with matchless pride,
 My Spirit shall wrestle with the spirit of evil
 In what may seem long while an equal war,
 But shall not prove so in the event. Hereby
 Shall the allegiance of My saints be known.
 There will be adverse powers, yet high in rank,
 The thrones and principalities of hell, 720
 Who shall bear rule through their appointed times,
 And challenge, as My representatives,
 Observance. Evil shall have scope enough,
 And range through heavenly places unconfined,
 The sons of darkness robed as sons of light,
 Until their hideous nature be declared
 And branded with the brand of wickedness,
 (Nor sooner their commission I revoke,)
 Gods of an evil eminence. Till then
 Their eminence observe, their evil abhor. 730
 Avenge not ye My cause. Vengeance is Mine.
 And when My time is come I will arise
 And with the blasting of My breath of wrath

680

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690

700

Scatter My foes, and all My Father's smile
 Reflecting on My saints, angels and men,
 Fill heaven and earth with everlasting joy."

"So spake Messiah. And such pure delight
 In blessing and responsive blessedness,
 Such calm assurance, such triumphant love
 Breathed in His aspect, none who saw but clave 740
 To Him with new intensity of zeal;
 And, arduous as the strife foretold might prove,
 All felt beneath the banner of His love
 Labour was bliss, and battle victory.
 And soon the council was dissolved. The rest
 Thou know'st: man's summons to his Maker's feet;
 His and Eve's sentence, and expulsion hence:
 But tell me how the guileful serpent led
 Those guiltless to transgress; for much I deem
 Angels from men as men from angels learn.' 750

"Then I to Gabriel told what now to thee
 Of Eden's wreck. Nor then alone, but oft
 That great archangel summon'd me to rove
 With him among those solitary walks,
 And talk of happier days. But time would fail
 Here to retrace the ages, age by age
 Darker and more defiled, until the earth
 Was fill'd with lust and rapine. Not at once,
 In men or angels, the abhorrent plague
 Appear'd in all its loathsomeness. But as 760
 In some fair virgin's bosom a small spot,

As if a thorn had prick'd the delicate skin,
 Rises and spreads an ever-fretting sore,
 Creeping from limb to limb, corrosive, foul,
 Until the miserable leper lives
 A dying life, and dies a living death :
 So there. What though the cherubim diffused
 Their glory at the gates of Paradise,
 Earth's altar-hearth of worship : what though men
 Peer'd through those golden bars on heavenly fields : 770
 What though they knew the tree of life within
 Shed month by month its beatific fruit,
 Unpluck'd but unremoved, a silent pledge
 Of immortality not wholly lost :
 What though thy eldest ancestors, themselves
 The firstfruits of redeeming pity' and love,
 Their children and their children's children told
 (A few millennial lives link'd all to each)
 Of man's primeval state : all was in vain.
 The babe whom Eve, drying her woful tears,
 Clasp'd as the promised Seed, while angels stood 780
 Around.unwitness'd sponsors to his name,
 Arrived at years, too soon betray'd himself
 Begotten of the Serpent's venomous brood,
 His brother's murderer : I was one who bore
 That protomartyr to his saintly rest :
 Dark omen of dark days to come. Arts grew
 Apace, but chiefly minister'd to arms ;
 Till Earth grew sick with deeds of violence,
 Sick at the heart. And when a holy seer,
 Who walk'd with God amid a godless world, 790

Stood forth, and by the Prescient Spirit foretold
 Jehovah's Advent with His myriad saints
 To judgment, soon the madden'd multitude
 Had torn that prophet limb from limb, except
 The Master whom he served had stoop'd, and borne
 His servant in His whirlwind chariot home.

“ And then the darkness deepen'd. Men with men
 Wrought wickedness. Nor less the spirits malign,
 The which when first they fell, as I have known, 300
 Compassionated even the wreck they made,
 Grew in malignity, till crime and craft
 Became to them what virtue once had been,
 Their joy, their nature, their essential life:
 Lovers of darkness, foul, obscene, impure;
 Some darker, fouler than the rest. Of whom
 Were Uziel and Samehasai his mate,
 By birthright sons of God, now sons of wrath,
 Who, prompted by the boast of Lucifer,
 Mankind should be his bride, and stung with lust, 310
 Mix'd with the daughters of unhappy Eve,
 Heirs of her beauty, not her penitence,
 In wedlock. Fatal league! whence soon arose
 The monstrous brood of giants, ruthless race,
 Offspring of human and angelic kind,
 Who now confusion more confused, and stain'd
 The fairest homes with violence and blood.
 Rapine ran riot on the earth. Alas,
 Was this the earth, whose birth we blithely sang?
 Hell gloated o'er the ruin: till the Arch-spirit, 320

Who ever at heaven's circling festivals,
 Cloaking his malice under show of zeal,
 His bitter accusations plied, at last
 Affirm'd all godliness extinet, and pray'd
 For vengeance on the wretched sons of men
 To vindicate the majesty of heaven.
 False spirit, in after ages *Devil* call'd,
 The lying father of all lies! But then
 He seem'd to triumph when the Word replied,
 One saintly patriarch alone was left;
 And, if mankind refused his warning voice,
 Then after respite due the wrath should fall.

830

“ Fresh respite only fresh rebellion bred.
 Earth fainted at her children's deeds. And God,
 With whose unalterable attributes
 Grief jars not, grieved within His heart, that man
 Was made for disobedience to unmake.
 Judgment awoke, and watch'd with tearful eye
 The cup of crime fast rising to the brim,
 And trembling on the very edge. Meanwhile
 At His command the ponderous ark was built,
 That jest of scoffers, on the wooded plains
 Of Asshur. Little reek'd the sons of men;
 The shipwrights lightly jested as they wrought,
 And ask'd if that huge vessel were to mount
 The hills or navigate the sandy wastes?
 They ate, they drank, they wooed them wives and won,
 They buildd palaces, they planted trees,
 Rich with far distant promise. Drop by drop

840

The measure of godliness was fill'd. 850
 It overflow'd. And forthwith Lucifer,
 Whether his eye, burning like coals of fire,
 With indignation gleam'd, or proud despite,
 Some doubted, claim'd the overhanging wrath
 Should fall as threaten'd on his guilty realm.

" His triumphing was short. For now the Son
 Came by a legion of His armed saints
 Attended (I was there), and sent us forth
 To seize amid their foul indulgences
 (So Phinehas the lustful Zimri smote) 860
 First victims, Uziel and his cursed crew
 Surprised, and bring them fetter'd hand and foot
 Before Him. As He spake, so was it done.
 And these Messiah, in the sight of all
 Fall'n and unfall'n alike, adjudged to lie
 In chains of darkness in the lowest hell,
 Reserved unto the dreadful day of doom.
 Immediately we led them forth. No hand
 Was raised for rescue, and no pleading voice
 For mercy. Terror shook the adverse ranks 870
 To see some of their mightiest thus arraign'd,
 And cast to punishment condign: nor less
 Forebodings of like vengeance on themselves
 Disturb'd their guilty thoughts.

" While startled heaven
 Thus first beheld empyreal thrones dethroned,
 Earth trembled underneath her Maker's frown.

The ark received her freightage, Noah last :
 Then God shut to the door : and massive clouds
 From treasure-houses inexhaustible
 Mantled the firmament in black, and burst 880
 In torrent floods on the soon sated plains.
 The rivers spurn'd their custom'd banks. The sea
 Roar'd, and enormous waves, crested with foam,
 Broke with incessant flow o'er sands and cliffs,—
 Vain barriers ! Whether now the ocean beds,
 By subterranean fires upheaved and raised,
 Disgorged the secrets of their pathless depths ;
 Or whether, as the moon's calm influence draws
 The refluent tides in daily ebb and flow,
 So now she or some planetary orb 890
 Displaced, or in malign conjunction set,
 Drew more than half their waters from those seas
 Which more than half submerge thy native globe,
 Charging the heaven with clouds, and wrapping earth
 From pole to pole in one unbroken flood,
 A dreary waste of ocean without shore,
 And only by the solitary ark
 Relieved, the second cradle of mankind.

"So saw I it, returning with my peers
 From our sad quest to Hades. Not that those 900
 Alone within the patriarch's vessel hid
 Found mercy. They alone were saved from death.
 But others, when the flood of waters rose
 From shores to plains, from plains to upland slopes,
 From slopes to craggy rocks, from rocks to hills

Still fugitive, at last betook themselves
 To agonizing prayer, their sin and guilt
 With bitter anguish not unmix'd with faith
 Bewailing, ere the lamp of life was quench'd ;
 Too late for rescue from the whelming waves,
 But not for that Almighty love they sought
 To snatch them from a lower depth beneath.
 And these, a remnant of that ruin'd world,
 Surnamed the disembodied spirits in ward,
 Were convoy'd to a lonely vale distinct
 With its own walks and gates in Paradise :
 Nor mingled with the other Blessed Dead,
 Till He, who grasp'd the keys of death and hell,
 Unbar'd those portals, and proclaim'd
 The everlasting triumph of the cross.

910

920

"Justice had had its way ; and Mercy's voice
 Was now heard pleading in the ear of God
 Well pleased. Heaven closed its windows, and the deep
 Restrain'd its fountains, while the arid winds
 Swept o'er the floods, until the floating ark
 Grounded on Ararat, whose haughty peaks
 Soon from the tide emerged, islands of rock
 'Mid those subsiding waters. Day by day
 The thirsty sun drank seas. And when the dove,
 A second time returning to her roost,
 Brought in her mouth a tender olive-leaf,
 Emblem of peace, then Noah and his sons,
 With living tribes innumerable, beasts and birds,
 Forth from the ark came flocking. And ere long

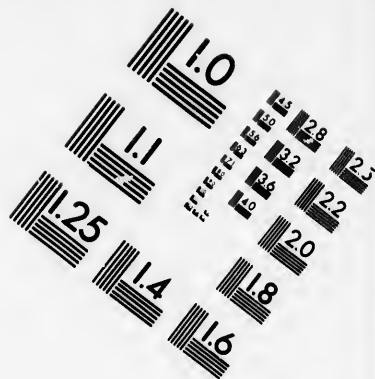
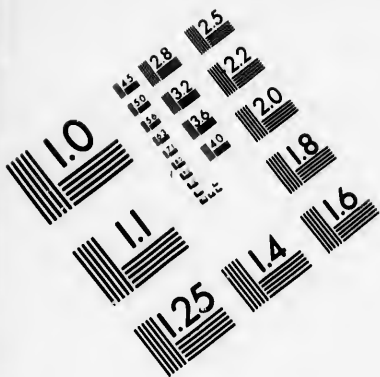
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The smoke of sacrifice arose, and God
 Smell'd a sweet savour of obedient faith,
 And set His opal rainbow in the e'
 A token when His judgments are abroad
 Of His perpetual covenant of peace.

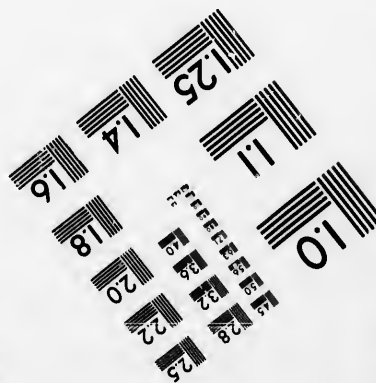
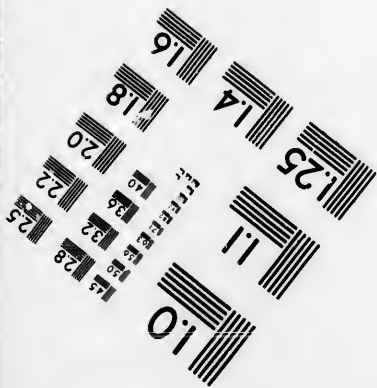
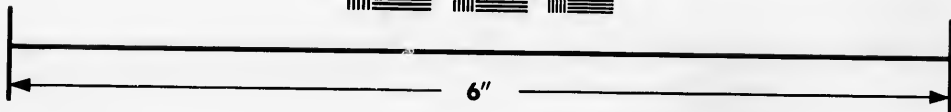
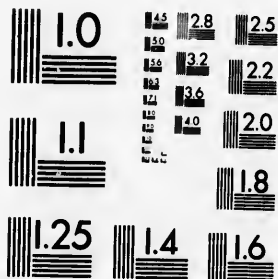
“ Thus have I at thy suit in brief retraced 940
 The early annals of Creation's birth,
 Its cloudless sunrise, cloudless soon no more,
 Obscured and dark, but in its darkness spann'd
 By the pure arch of promise. Time remains
 (Thine eye forbids me think I weary thee)
 To tell thee of another better ark,
 Like Noah's, cast upon the stormy floods,
 But sheltering One who gave His life for man,
 A nobler Victim on a holier mount,
 The fragrance of which perfect Sacrifice 950
 Breathes infinite beatitude, and spans
 The clouds of judgment with eternal light.”

Thus Oriel spake, and after grateful pause,
 Sweet silence, and yet sweeter interlude
 Of music on melodious strings, resumed
 The story of the great To-day of Time.





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Book Sixth.

THE EMPIRE OF DARKNESS.

"THE rainbow, that o'er Noah's sacrifice
 Stamp'd on the morning clouds the smile of God,
 Had scarcely hidden in the amber light
 Its unremaining hues, when Lucifer
 Summon'd his scatter'd armies to attend
 His presence on his great viceregal throne,
 Set in the airy firmament. Far off
 The signal of the archangelic trump
 Rang through the void of heaven, and all his hosts
 Flocking in numbers without number stood, 10
 Cohorts and fiery legions arm'd for war,
 At awful distance from the standard waving
 Hard by his seat. Around it thrones were set
 In imitation of the mount of God,
 And soon a clarion blast resounding call'd
 The rebel chieftains from their serried ranks
 To close about their Prince. Congress malign
 Of powers in common covenant with death,
 Gloomy conspirators, despair of good
 Graved on their brow, and in their baleful eyes 20

Hunger for mischief! But their robes of light
 And coronets of glory flashing fire
 Dazzled the empyrean, nor bespoke
 Less than a synod of apostate gods;
 Whom Satan, over all predominant
 In cruelty and craft and fiendish pride
 As in infernal splendour, thus address'd:

“ Virtues of heaven, my comrades, who with me
 Have rather chosen liberty and war
 Than vassalage and ease, noble have been 30
 And vast beyond my highest hopes achieved
 Our triumphs. Where is now that innocent world
 Which God created for His pastime? Where?
 Destroy'd, except a miserable few
 Hardly escaping with their skins, and they
 Sure victims in their turn to our intrigues.
 Messiah said that life should fight with death,
 And good with evil. They have fought. But whose,
 Proudly I ask, the victory? ours or God's?
 Not God's, but ours. One solitary seer, 40
 One only has been snatch'd from death and us.
 Is this the uttermost the Prince of Life,
 Aided by Michael and his peers, can do
 For His poor servants? Nay, I wrong His rule:
 Some obscure suppliants age by age have foil'd
 Our efforts immature as yet. The rest
 Have rather seem'd to court our tutelage
 Than we to proffer it; and greedily
 Have revell'd in what we misdeem, no doubt,

Hard servitude with scanty wages paid. 50
So fertile in that cursed soil have proved
The germs of sin. Darkness, tremendous Power,
I see it written on the scrolls of fate,
Must reign for ever there. But not from this
My only confidence of empire. God,
As I forewarn'd you, wars with God: and hence
Interminable strife, or endless truce.
What are they but His attributes in us
That baffle Him? Had He not fashion'd us
Free and immortal, He had forced our love, 60
Or in a moment quench'd our feeble hate.
But now Omnipotence hath bound itself,
Nor can Omniscience pierce the shrine of thought
Itself has made inviolate. Think you
Messiah knew me, when of all His hosts,
Of all His flaming myriads, me He made
God of the world and guardian of mankind,
And for His viceroy chose His bitterest foe?
Ah, friends, He was too prodigal of gifts,
And now repents too late. Wisdom and might 70
Have here outwitted and outdone themselves.
But now, ye gods, advise how best to wage
Protracted warfare: for it seems mankind,
As from a second centre, shall proceed
To propagate their race—matter to us
Of future triumph. Let them multiply:
They only multiply our wealth in slaves.
Were they upright as Adam, ere he fell,
And pure as was their unstain'd mother, Eve,

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THE EMPIRE OF DARKNESS.

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Did innocence secure those guileless hearts 80
 From guile? And these, impair'd by sin, will prove
 An easier booty. That pellucid belt,
 Slung on the clouds, forbids us hope or fear
 Another flood of waters. And henceforth,
 Safe from such vast catastrophe of ruin,
 Though sweeping millions into hell at once,
 We weave our snares, and ply our arts to draw
 From their allegiance all the sons of men,
 Not one like that grave patriarch unseduced
 (For see how God's love lingers over one) : 90
 Then shall we reign without a rival here,
 This firmament our throne for ever. Say,
 What counsel or what might were best employ'd
 For this great enterprise, in which we stand
 Equal antagonists to heaven in arms?

" He ask'd, and Baalim arose, who next
 Shone in that fallen hierarchy sublime :
 Himself the prince of three, who with him wrought
 In all things, Belus and Beelzebub,
 A triad of angelic thrones. For God, 100
 Who, when He lit the firmamental dome,
 Hung in the heavens a thousand double stars,
 Triple, quadruple, multiple, around
 Each other or a common centre poised,
 With colours complementary to each,
 Associate suns of glory,—God who group'd
 The Pleiads in their glittering sisterhood,
 Thus in the birthtime of creation wove

Innumerable bonds 'twixt spirits and spirits,
 Source of untold delights in holy hearts, 110
 Sweet concords, charities, and tender loves,
 As with the fourfold cherubim, instinct
 With One presiding Spirit: but in the rest,
 Apostate, breeding worse conspiracies;
 Which now appear'd, when Baalim, his brow
 Clouded with counsel, pride impersonate,
 A trinity of wills in one express'd,
 Thus open'd to his peers in crime his mind:

“ Well hast thou summon'd us, O Lucifer,
 To consultation. Hitherto the war, 120
 Though crown'd with victory beyond our hopes,
 Has lack'd deliberate plan. And now mankind,
 Afflicted by the recent flood, will prove
 Less facile to our desultory' assaults.
 My counsel is, mindful how we ourselves,
 Combining and conspiring, spirit with spirit,
 Under thy subtle leadership, O Prince,
 Escaped the yoke, whenever flesh and blood
 Have swarm'd into a multitude again,
 To bind their scatter'd tribes and families 130
 In one confederate nation. Let one name
 Unite them. Let one vast metropolis
 Foster one common pride. Or, if ye will,
 Incite them to erect some mountain pile
 Whose top shall reach to heaven in their surmise,
 And let this be their citadel of strength
 For after ages. So shall deeds of wrong,

VI.]

THE EMPIRE OF DARKNESS.

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Which timid hearts had shrunk from if alone,
Be wrought together in defiant league.'

"So counsel'd Baalim; and after him

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Rose on his right Apollyon, truculent
His eye, and on his flaming sword half drawn
Rested his restless hand. 'Comrades,' he said,
'If Baalim's design prevail, and one
Colossal empire stride athwart the world,
What room were left for war? What space for fields,
Where I have reap'd the richest sheaves of death,
And mingling with the hostile ranks infused
Infernal hatred into human hearts?

Nay, be it ours to nurture rival realms,

150

Ourselves o'er them presiding (we shall love,
As loves the prowling wolf its chosen flock,
Each one his kingdom), and then sow betwixt
Suspicious, hatreds, lusts, whence wars are spawn'd,
Until we lead their armies fired with rage
To mutual slaughter, foiling Him who made
All of one common blood. Ye have my mind.'

"Apollyon sate, gloomy as death. But now

Near him arose, the loveliest in form

Of all the lost archangels, Ashtaroth,—

The corypheus of a band of spirits,

160

Six spirits, himself the seventh, and the rest

Only less lovely than their chosen chief,—

Of winning voice and sweet attractive grace;

So gentle, that his worshippers on earth

Deem'd him a goddess, though none such exist
 Among the fallen or unfallen hosts ;
 In diverse countries known by diverse names
 Hereafter : by the virgin troops of Tyro
 Surnamed Astarte, but in Nineveh 170
 Mylitta call'd ; along the isles of Greece
 Invoked as Aphrodite ocean-born,
 As Venus by the stately dames of Rome ;
 But in all lands adored with moonlight rites
 And softest hymns melodious. Ah, false fiend,
 In whose perfidious eye damnation lurks,
 A chalice in his hand of sparkling wine
 Whereof who drinks must die, and on his lip
 Kisses and smiles and everlasting woe !

“ Thine, lordly Baalim, the task severe 180
 Of building vast confederacies of pride :
 And thine, Apollyon, jarring wars to breed
 Among the nations. But to me belongs,
 To me and to my legionary band,
 The smoother but the not less onerous work
 Of garlanding with buds and flowers and fruits
 The paths of pleasurable youth. I hang
 Around the traveller's footsteps day and night
 Singing my dulcet songs, and few are they
 Who close their ears against the charmer's voice. 190
 Each victim draws his mate : the throngs increase :
 They cluster round my cloud-like draperies :
 They press around my glancing feet : as moths
 That scorch their wings against the ardent flame,

But stay not till with many an airy flight
 They plunge at last into their fiery tomb.
 Men call me Love, the deity of love.
 And thus it happen'd; when I saw that lust
 Conceiving brought forth sin, and sin alone
 Could wrest from God the empire God had made, 200
 I thought the best perverted would be worst,
 And chose the holiest of connubial rites,
 The mutual laying open each to each
 Of life's profoundest purest sanctities,
 And deem'd infusing poison there to mar
 The river at its fountain. The event
 Hath not belied my hopes. Friends, I have breathed
 Upon the lamp of hymeneal joy,
 And it hath sicken'd, sicken'd and expired,
 Almost as soon as lighted. Oftener yet 210
 Have I beguiled unstable hearts to seek
 In licence pleasures God has link'd to love,
 And blown upon their innocence, and bent
 In triumph not unmix'd with pity' and scorn
 O'er the unhallow'd couch. Men arm'd in proof
 Against all other wiles have yielded here,
 And, conquer'd by a glance, a blush, a sigh,
 For one brief hour upon a stranger's bosom
 Have barter'd immortality of bliss.
 And haply in my woven chains of flowers, 220
 Chains light as gossamer, I, Baalim,
 Have bound more captives to our prince's car
 Than thou hast held in fortresses of power,
 Or thou, Apollyon, slain on fields of blood.'

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"And, as the fallen seraph sate, he threw
 A glance of such bewitching tenderness
 Around the assembly, none who caught his eye
 But felt, and with involuntary assent
 Did homage to the spell. his radiant form
 Recline or standing seem'd embodied grace, 230
 And the melodious treble of his voice,
 Like the far echo of seraphic harps,
 Rang in their ears: when on a sudden one,
 In stature low for gods, of downcast look,
 Rose from the furthest of those golden thrones,
 Mammon his name. His slow and painful words
 At first seem'd clinging to his lips, but soon
 Fell on that council with momentous weight,
 Nor least upon its haughty president:

"I too have poised the heart of man, and watch'd
 With sleepless eye what avenue may best [240
 Yield us access. And here I answer, Gold.
 Smile not that yellow dust should have such power;
 For what is man but dust? What marvel then
 Dust over dust holds sway? The blighted earth
 No longer yields him her spontaneous fruit.
 Poor wretch, his sweat moistens his daily bread.
 Labour is bread; and bread is life: and thus
 He lives a pensioner for every breath
 Upon Another's bounty—yoke to us 250
 Insufferable, not the less to man.
 But gold appears a tower other than God,
 With honours, pomp, and endless pleasures stored,

OOK

230

Impregnable while life shall last. Poor fool,
 He knows not in the lowest keep a fire
 Smoulders in its own ashes self-conceal'd:
 It glows; it flames; it never says, Enough—
 More is more fuel—till the shrivell'd soul,
 Alive but wrapt in cerements of death,
 Breathes out itself upon that funeral pyre. 260
 Whatever counsels may obtain this day,
 Let mortals worship at this golden shrine,
 They will not fail of hell. What would ye more?'

"So Mammon sate; and opposite arose
 Moloch, tremendous deity, who thus
 Louring address'd his peers:

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240

"There is a power
 Mightier than pride, or war, or pleasure's thrall,
 Or greed of gold,—the intolerable pangs
 Of conscience seeking rest and finding none,
 The terror which hath torment. Slighting this, 270
 We do ourselves, we do our cause much wrong.
 Friends, I have seen the wretched outcast rove,
 Driven by the anguish of tyrannic guilt,
 From land to land self-exiled. I have seen
 Parents imbrue their clenched hands in the blood
 Of their own children. Nor do I despair
 Of more. So dreadful are the shadows cast
 From the dark outlines of that prison of death
 Whence never yet a prisoner return'd,
 That unknown all-embracing dungeon house, 280

250

What likelier in process of time than they
 Of men most miserable, finding God
 Deaf to their rebel importunities,
 Should call upon the dead? a boot'ess cry,
 Which nathless we will condescend to hear,
 And by permission answer those who sell
 Their souls for hidden lore, ordaining them
 Not without dismal rites of sorcery
 Our priests and priestesses. So shall we wield
 An enginery of next to' Almighty power. 290
 For conscience hath in it the strength of God,
 Which can creation uncreate, and make
 A hell of heaven. It is God's oracle:
 And, if our voice be but mista'en for God's,
 The terror-stricken worshipper is ours,
 Body and soul, for ever and for ever.'

" As Moloch spake, his gloomy words though brief
 Such echo found in lamentable hearts
 Once calm as yonder firmament, but now
 Vex'd and disquieted and ill at ease, 300
 (For what was man's unrest to theirs, though like?)
 That misery held them mute. Which soon their chief
 Perceiving, fearful lest remorse might lead
 Any to mourn their choice (example dire),
 Majestically rising from his throne
 Around the council threw his scornful eye
 Burning with pride, and thus resumed debate:

" Thrones, virtues, principalities, and powers,

Titles vouchsafed us not in vain by One
 Who never of His words or gifts repents, 310
 Ours therefore by inalienable right,
 Ye hear your brethren. Well have they advised.
 Let Baalim his empire raise supreme,
 Or empires out of ruin'd empires build,
 Each greater than the last (for who can doubt
 That God will cross our counsels? vain attempt),
 Each worse,—a worse must still be possible,—
 Our scale of greatness. Let Apollyon whet
 The keen edge of intestine feuds and wars,
 Let Ashtaroth in chains of love or lust 320
 Lead forth his groups of willing prisoners,
 Gay captives, garlanded with fading flowers,
 Behind our chariot wheels. Let Mammon heap
 Fuel for fire on stubborn hearts, and there
 Foster the secret flame unquenchable.
 And last, though loftiest enterprise, be thou,
 O Moloch, as a god to men, and grasp
 Their conscience with the iron gripe of fate.
 We need your banded strength. Nothing, O peers,
 Nothing is done while aught remains to do. 330
 We have not trodden yet the unseen shades,
 Divided, if report speaks true, betwixt
 A paradise of bliss and prison of woe;
 To us alike impenetrable. At least
 I own my uttermost of effort foil'd,
 By some obscure necessity debarr'd,
 Some limit against which I dash'd my wings
 As against viewless crystal. Be it so.

We have not yet achieved the battle-field,
 Nor can expect the provinces beyond. 340
 Earth once our trophy, we shall conquer peace,
 And soon behold the regions under earth
 Abandon'd by their Maker, nothing loth,
 Being we leave the walls of heaven unsealed.
 Earth, earth must first be ours. But, friends, for this
 We must defile mankind ere we destroy :
 Evil must go before us, death behind.
 God has not yet forsaken man, nor yet
 Suffers that we assail the fleshly tent
 Of his short pilgrimage. Herein beware. 350
 Here Samehasai and Uziel with their hosts
 Erring have fall'n ; a fall to be avenged,
 Not follow'd. What, shall we, celestial powers
 For the brief lust of carnal pleasure mar
 Our mighty future? Tush, leave this to man,
 Your dupes and drudges. Or if thoughts of joys,
 Forbidden to angelic natures, stir
 Within your bosom, only' abide your time,
 And when the realms of darkness are defined,
 And God has yielded this fair earth to us, 360
 As He must yield when utterly corrupt,
 Then shall ye and your legions, as ye list,
 Act by mankind, your conquer'd heritage.
 I will not question how ye treat your slaves.
 Meanwhile be this our sleepless care to' estrange
 Them and their God, rousing His wrath, their hate.
 How think ye? Had He not at Eden's gate
 His mercy-seat and altar blazing nigh,

Whereat who knelt with sacrifice and prayer
 Alone repulsed our arms? Henceforth, O peers, 370
 If men will worship, let them worship us,
 Despite the everlasting interdict
 Which severs things unseen and seen. Why not?
 Let them make images of wood and stone,
 Brass, iron, silver, gold, and call them gods,
 Adoring us in them by countless names.
 My counsel moves your laughter. But if once
 The Almighty, jealous of His name blasphemed,
 Swear in His wrath that He disowns mankind,
 Our work is done, the empire is our own. 380
 Be it thy charge, O subtle Sammael,
 Thou master of the spells of ignorance,
 To blind their eyes and indurate their hearts.
 For now our watchword must be fraud, not force;
 Darkness our panoply: and of success
 The past affords us no uncertain pledge.'

"He spake, and murmurs of assent not loud
 But deep,—as is the ocean's sudden roar,
 When a careering blast with tempest charged
 Down rushing through the mountain gorges strikes
 The waters of a rocky bay, whose cliffs [390
 And caves re-echo when the storm is past,—
 Spread in interminable waves of sound
 Along those countless ranks. Gladly they crouch'd,
 As weaker spirits will crouch, beneath the shade
 Of wickedness more wicked than their own,
 And call'd upon their prince as God: when, lo,

A cloud impenetrable to all light,
 At first not larger than the mystic hand
 The prophet's servant saw from Carmel's rocks, 400
 Hung poised above the throne of Lucifer,
 And, spreading with the speed of thought, o'erhung
 The apostate armies, shroud of dreadful gloom,
 Darkness that might be felt. Nor dark alone,
 But soon sharp lightnings flash'd abruptly ; bright
 Startling the black a moment, and then quench'd ;
 While volleys of tremendous thunder shook
 The furthest empyrean, and the hearts
 Of that rebellious host. Speechless they stood
 And stricken, as if every peal announced 410
 The crash of worlds. In horror Lucifer
 Gazed upward, sinking on one knee appall'd.
 For still the darkness deepen'd, and the wrath
 Apparent stamp'd on every guilty brow
 Its scathing impress ineffaceable,
 The death-brand on the children of despair.
 And for one dreadful hour, one of heaven's hours,
 None from his seat arose, or station stirr'd,
 Or moved his lip, or trembled. Terror froze
 Their hearts insensible, until a sound, 420
 More terrible than thunder, vibrated
 Through every spirit, Jehovah's awful laugh,
 Mocking their fears and scorning their designs,
 The laughter of Eternal Love incensed.
 It pass'd ; and then as suddenly the sky
 Was clear, and save the graven brand on each
 No vestige of that cloud of wrath remain'd.

"Nor was it long before the rebel host
 Resumed their courage, and in marvel gazed
 Each on the other that the vengeful flame
 Had smitten none amongst them, and ere long
 Jested at their own fears, but vainly' assay'd
 To rase the ineradicable sign
 Too deeply on their cursed brow inured;
 But, finding all their efforts useless, laugh'd
 At this dark badge, which Satan told his mates
 (Satan henceforth his name, and demons theirs)
 Was the predestined bruise on him and his,
 The serpent and its seed:—cheap penalty,
 He vaunted, for a world, and gladly paid,
 A warrior's honourable scar, the pledge
 Of daring and of desperate revenge.

430

440

"So in their fiendish pride they schemed. But this
 Shadow of things to come was but the first
 Faint pressure of God's hand, a transient breath
 Blown from that wrath which to the lowest hell
 Burns and shall burn for ever,—though by them
 Discredited, when forth in swarms they went
 From that infernal senate, as they thought
 To wrest the sceptre from Almighty power,
 And baffle the All-wise in counsel. Fools,
 And blind! Vainly, when plann'd by Baalim
 The city of confusion rear'd its brow
 Towards heaven, a whisper of God's voice perplex'd
 The builders' language and their works at once.
 When Ashtaroth, standing himself aloof,

450

Through some of his perfidious crew defiled
With lust and blood the cities of the plain,
Vainly the fiery wrath too long provoked
Fell undistinguishing on men and fiends, 460
And made of earth's most fragrant flowery vale
A picture of Gehenna's burning lake.
And when at last the prince of darkness, couch'd
In symbol of the great leviathan,
The dragon of the river floods of Nile,
Harden'd the heart of Pharaoh, scourged by all
Heaven's plagues, until it grew like adamant,
And led him to assay the ocean depths
And satisfy his lust on Israel there,
Vainly God moving in the pillar cloud 470
Smote with His glittering sword that monster's head,
And with the wreck of chariots and of arms
And horsemen overta'en in baleful rout
Cumber'd the waters and confused the shores.
All was in vain. Each desperate repulse
But seem'd to kindle fiercer subtler hate
In those infatuate spirits, till I have seen
The check of Michael alter with distress,
And all the hosts of heaven astonied stand,
As couriers in successive hours announced 480
Hell's endless crafts, each deadlier than the last.

“ The clouds yet brooded upon Sinai's peaks,
And twice ten thousand chariots flashing fire
Attended Him, who plants His steps serene
Upon the whirlwind and the storm, and there

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VI.]

THE EMPIRE OF DARKNESS.

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Was communing, as communes friend with friend,
 With Amram's princely son, when Sammael,
 (In Egypt as the great Osiris known,) 490
 By all the judgments on his countless fances
 And Satan's ghastly wound unterrified,
 Moved Israel and their timid priest to cast
 Their idol god, and interweave with songs
 Their naked danees round the golden calf;—
 Vision to us of horror and of grief,
 Presaging woes. Al, faithless children! Still
 The manna fell around their pilgrim tents;
 The living water from the smitten rock
 Still track'd their devious steps; the fiery cloud,
 Shadowing the tabernacle, still bespoke 500
 Jehovah's awful Presence;—when they turn'd
 (Hard to believe, though seen) and chose for gods
 Grim Moloch's shrine and Remphan's lurid star.
 But Mercy strove with Judgment, and prevail'd,
 And led them to the promised land, a land
 With milk and honey flowing, redolent
 With Eden's fragrance in a fallen world,
 The glory of all other lands. But there
 Abandoning ere long the holy tent,
 In Shiloh first, after on Zion pitch'd,
 Throngs of insensate worshippers besiege 510
 Lewd Baal's gates in Bethel and in Dan.
 But little boots it to recall those scenes
 Of foul apostasy, though here and there
 Illumined with celestial lights of faith

And virtue militant. Once only' it seem'd,
 When saintly David fell on sleep, and left
 To Solomon his sceptre, prince of peace,
 Angels might yet behold upon the earth
 A nation witness for the truth. Ah, brief
 And fleeting vision! Soon on Salem's height 520
 Gaunt altars rose to every hideous god.
 And thenceforth, on through weary centuries
 Of vigil, oft the blessed stars appear'd
 As blotted from the very firmament
 Appall'd. What time of Israel's chosen tribes
 Ten, like a loosen'd cliff, crumbled and sank
 Into the surging tide of heathen lands,
 Who shall relate the scoffs of fiendish mirth,
 That taunted our persistent ministries
 Camping around God's hidden ones? And when,—
 Albeit awhile the sudden blast of death, [530
 As Michael waved his keen far-reaching sword
 Over the armies of Sennacherib,
 Shielded the royal city,—when at last
 The cup of Israel's wickedness was full,
 And Asshur, trampling on Jerusalem,
 Led forth her trembling prisoners to hang
 Their harps beside the proud Euphrates' banks,
 Then shouts of nearer victory fill'd the air,
 And Satan's firmamental kingdom rang 540
 With praises of their leader's matchless craft,
 And loudly-mutter'd blasphemies of Him
 Whose patience they misreckon'd impotence.

"So dream'd they dreams, which nothing but the
strains,

Breathed from the solemn harp of prophecy,
Disturb'd;—mysterious harpings on the wind,
Not now first mingling with the jarring sounds
Of earth and time, for they had ever rung,
Since Enoch laid his hand upon the chords,
Echoes of heavenly voices in faith's ear,
Still clearest in the hour of sorest need,
But never more distinct than now.

550

"The sun
Still couch'd unrisen beneath the dawning hills,
But far and wide the heavens were all aglow
With saffron lights and hues of roseate pearl,
Shedding upon the towers of Babylon,
Its massive walls, and gates of burnish'd brass,
And gardens in the golden morn suspense,
Nor least upon the river's amber waves,
A thousand changeful splendours. On a roof
Beneath the open sky a young man lay
And slept; serene his brow; and on his face
Even in his sleep a smile of holy joy
Play'd inexpressible, which, when he rose
With morning from his calm unruffled couch,
Flow'd from his lips in praise. Gabriel and I
Had watch'd his slumbers, and, so order'd, hung
On his unfaltering steps, as through the ranks
Of courtiers, follow'd by a trembling group
Of magi, sorcerers, astrologers,

560

570

Who gazed on him incredulous, he pass'd,
 And calmly faced his monarch's baffled pride.
 And as, instructed by the Spirit of God,
 He in their audience (nor in theirs alone)
 Renew'd the faded image, excellent
 In brightness and in stature terrible ;
 And then, as God's ambassador, reveal'd
 The import of the head of gold, the breast
 Of silver, and the loins of brass, and legs
 Of iron and of miry clay compact, 580
 Portending ruin, till a mystic stone,
 Quarried and fashion'd by no human hand,
 Smote that colossal idol, which straightway
 Crumbled to dust and vanish'd as the chaff
 Driven idly from the summer threshing-floor,
 The while that rock grew vaster and more vast,
 A mountain whose circumference was earth,
 And whose eternal canopy the heaven ;
 As thus that youthful seer, dauntless in heart
 And mien, cast his prophetic eye of fire 590
 Athwart the changes of tumultuous time,
 And in the illimitable distance saw
 Eternal love triumphant, Gabriel look'd
 On me and smiled, and we refresh'd our faith
 With strength in mortal weakness perfected.
 Hard by us Baal stood, and Ashtaroth,
 And Moloch, kept in terror by the sword
 That waved in Gabriel's hand ; but oh, the scowl
 Of cruel disappointment on their lip
 And baffled vengeance, till obscure they shrank 600

To nurturo worse designs ; while songs of praise,
 Flowing spontaneously from angel harps,
 Were wafted to the ear of God in heaven.

“ Nor learn'd we less of faith's omnipotence,
 When Shadraeh, Meshach, and Abednego
 Chose for their dying couch the fiery kiln,
 Rather than vile prostration to the god
 Chaldea's monarch, brooding o'er his dream,
 Not uninspired by Belus, rear'd aloof
 On Dura's sultry plain, finding amid
 Those thousand forked tongues of hungry flame
 An unsuspected Paradise more sweet,
 Than sinless Adam when he walk'd with God
 In Eden. But enough, brother, thou knowest
 All that befell that haughty monarch driven
 From palace halls with flocks and herds to graze,
 A bitter school. Thou knowest the weary lapse
 Of those predestined threescore years and ten
 Of Israel's woe and Babylonia's pride,
 Even to their latest bourne, that impious feast
 By those brief characters of doom perplex'd,
 When Persia grasp'd the sceptre Asshur dropp'd.
 Thy heart has been with Daniel in the den
 Of lions. I was by his side that night.
 And when he wrote upon his mystic scroll
 The visions of his lonely bed, wherein
 Earth's proudest realms as ravenous beasts appear'd,
 Assyria, Persia, Macedon, and last
 One diverse from all others, iron-tooth'd,

610

620

Ten-horn'd, dreadful and strong exceedingly, 630
 Far ranging o'er the desolated world,
 Till earthly thrones all sank in ruinous heaps
 Before the Ancient of eternal days,
 I saw the joyous eloquence, that flash'd
 From that lone prophet's eye undimm'd by age,
 And lighted up his wrinkled countenance
 With glories from the everlasting hills.
 Nor was I absent, when his prevalent prayer
 Clomb to the highest heavens, and Gabriel came,
 Descending with the speed of seraphim, 640
 The herald of evangel grace, though link'd
 With mystic times and numbers, seventy sevens;
 Nor wholly clear nor dark, faith's chosen light.
 And I was there what time a mightier One
 Than Gabriel, having striven, self-limited,
 With Persia's guardian fiend three weeks of days,
 Till Michael sped, permitted, to his aid,
 Beside the crystal waves of Hiddekel
 Reveal'd His glory and the scroll of time
 Till time should be no more. 650

“ The light of heaven
 Soon faded, and the transitory rent
 Through which it stream'd was block'd with denser
 cloud:
 But it had lit imperishable hopes
 In human hearts and ours. How could we faint,
 Or how despond, when men of flesh and blood,
 Weaker than we in power but strong in prayer,

Wrestled and wrought and vanquish'd? Oft herein
They minister'd to us as we to them.

“ Without us haply human faith had fail'd,
Without them ours. For still the gloom increased. 660
What though a band of stricken fugitives
Return'd to lorn Jerusalem and built
Their wall and temple gates in troublous times ;
What though in faded splendour Judah held
His trembling sceptre ; darkness wrapt the earth.
Apollyon, Baalim, Beelzebub,
Bel, Dagon, Chemosh, Nisroch, Arioch,
Merodach, Moloeb, these and countless more,
With hosts of spirits subordinate to each,
They to their pryncedoms, these to Satan bound, 670
Ranged in imperious tyranny abroad,
And chose their various realms as liked them best,
And parcell'd out the kingdoms of the world
Amongst them as their rightful heritage.
Each region had its dynasty of gods :
Primeval Asshur hers, whose altars blazed
Upon the plains of Shinar : Persia hers,
Beside her founts of liquid fire : and where
The mighty Indus rolls its tide of wealth,
Innumerable shrines, sparkling with gems, 680
Studded the odorous banks. But none like Greece
Could boast its names of graceful deities
For every fountain, and for every wind,
For every stream, and wood, and ocean shore,
For night and day, for sunshine, and for storm,

For every changeful phase of Nature's moods,
 For every passion of the human heart,
 For wine, for war, for laughter, and for tears,
 For nuptial dances, and for funeral dirge,
 For all things from the cradle to the grave 690
 And past the grave in Hades,—over all
 Were gods, or goddesses, or demigods,
 Sylphs, nymphs, fawns, muses, graces president;
 For here the sevenfold power of Ashtaroth,
 Encamping with his liminary hosts,
 First fix'd his seat, in after years removed
 Where Tiber rolls beneath the walls of Rome.

" Amongst them Satan ranged pre-eminent,
 Incessant ; and, denied ubiquity,
 Yet seem'd the more to multiply himself, 700
 And almost with the speed of thought to be
 (For narrow is the breadth of earth to spirits
 Accustom'd to celestial latitudes)
 Where most the struggle lack'd his puissant arm,
 Or archangelic counsel. Nor the less,
 When to the heaven of heavens the sons of God
 Were summon'd, sate he on his ducal throne.
 Arch-adversary was his name, well earn'd ;
 And well by all his ministers of state
 And legions seconded. 710

" Yet deem not we
 On God's behalf were idle. O'er the world
 As it reign'd, but underneath its sable shroud

Life wrought in secret, as serenest gems
In darkest caverns oft are found anneal'd,
Crystalline amethysts, or roseate quartz,
The pure quintessence of incumbent rocks
Distill'd by extinct fires. And it was ours
To watch these priceless jewels carved and set,
As finish'd, in that diadem of glory,
Wherewith in fulness of predestined time
Messiah shall appear for ever crown'd."

720

END OF THE SIXTH BOOK.

Book Seventh.

REDEMPTION.

As one, who having climb'd the livelong day,
 Not unaccompanied by friendly steps,
 From the rock-girdled marge of gay Lucerne
 By Altorf's memorable walls, and glens
 Through which the headlong Reuss rushes amain,
 Scarce under skiey Hospenthal one hour
 Sojourning, stands at last with weary feet
 Upon the summit of Saint Gotthard's wilds,
 And sees the intricate ravines, that slope
 Down to the sunny vales of Italy, 10
 And smiles to see them, yet before he wends
 Along the young Ticino's purling brook,
 Pauses, and with inquisitive retrospect
 Speaks with the toilworn comrade by his side
 Of defiles they have pass'd to right and left,
 And chasms, and rainbow-haunted cataracts,
 And vistas through the dawning hills, the which
 Their onward track forbade their steps explore ;—
 So paused Oriel, my guardian, here. And long
 We spake of sacred stories, such as oft 20
 In pilgrim days I loved to meditate,

Now by his transitory words illumed
 With unsuspected glory : of Jacob's dream
 Sealing the heavens, and built of things that are ;
 Of those funeral rites on Pisgah's brow,
 When Michael in Jehovah's name rebuked
 The daring prince of hell ; of that Arch-fiend
 Repairing with the other sons of God
 To heaven's high festivals, ere leave obtain'd
 To breathe disaster and eclipse of joy
 Upon the patriarch in the land of Uz ;
 Of David moved by him in evil hour
 To count the tribes of Israel ; of the strife
 On Carmel's rocky sides, when Baalim,
 By bloody supplications importuned,
 Raved all in vain to answer ; of the car,
 That fiery car by fiery chargers drawn,
 Which stooping o'er the Jordan's wilderness
 Wafted Elijah to the rest of God ;
 Of that false emissary, who assumed
 To lure forth Ahab to the field of doom ;
 Of Joshua, son of Josedeck, withstood
 By Satan, but upheld by Satan's Lord ;—
 Of these and other marvels, when the veil
 Was rent betwixt the things unseen and seen,
 Shedding bright beams of glory on the earth
 What time the clouds were darkest, for a while
 We communed, till my heart afire with hope
 Besought him to resume where last he left,
 Upon the extreme verge of better days,
 Timo's awful drama, which he thus vouchsafed :

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"One night, when night was listening for the dawn,
 Aloof upon the brow of Olivet
 I gazed on sleeping Salem. In the East
 Flush'd a faint streak of pearl: the distant hills
 Slumber'd in shadow, and the vales in mist:
 When haply prompted by the hour, or thoughts
 Of loftier vigilance, for many signs
 In heaven and earth as in the middle air
 Of late had quicken'd us to keener guard, 60
 Musing I utter'd half unconsciously
 The prophet's words, 'Watchman, what of the night?'"

"Sudden I heard the rush of angel wings,
 And Gabriel stood beside me, saying, 'Brother,
 The morning cometh, and the night: beyond
 All is unclouded everlasting day.
 This very hour the Sun of Righteousness
 Peers o'er the horizon. Virgin-born to-night
 Within the crowded gates of Bethlehem
 A Babe, who owns no human sire, is lying 70
 Upon His mother's bosom. It was mine,
 Some space ago, to tell that lowly maid
 Of David sprung, in David's house betrothed,
 The awful secret of Messiah's birth,
 The advent of the Holy Quickening Spirit,
 The overshadowing Power of the Most High,
 Herself the chosen vessel; and to watch
 The deepening blush of childlike innocence,
 As slowly to herself she realized
 The bliss immense vouchsafed her, not unmix'd 80

With bitter anguish from a faithless world.
 It has been mine to guard her low estate,
 As month by month within her virgin womb
 She bore the promise of her Lord. Nor now,
 Albeit the mystery of mysteries,
 For which eternity has waited, dawns,
 Is the veil rent in twain. The tree of life
 Must strike its roots in secret in the earth:
 The well-spring gush from hidden depths. Not all
 Heaven's radiant ministries, but spirits elect 90
 As yet are advertised, the Son of God
 Incarnate tabernacles among men:
 Far less the powers of darkness, now elate,
 Finding the rigid interdict relax'd,
 Or rather with less pains transgress'd, that fenced
 The bodies of their slaves from violence.
 Demons possess demoniacs: thou hast seen
 Their victims toss'd and driven by fiends malign
 To worse than frenzy: and on this intent
 For the most part the myriads of the damn'd 100
 Heed not this fateful hour. Far otherwise
 Their leader and his fallen thrones are fill'd
 With torment and remorseless fear, and scheme
 Their uttermost to thwart Eternal love:
 Which work to counterwork is ours. But now
 Come, brother, let us hasten where the tryst
 Of friends awaits us on the grassy slopes
 Of Bethlehem, and, as is meet, announce
 Messiah's humble birth to humble men,
 The shepherds, who there hold nocturnal watch.' 110

"So swifter than the eagle's flight we flew
 Over the shadowy landscape, and there found,
 As he had said, a heavenly cohort arm'd,
 And keeping by command that region free
 From footstep or from wing unblest. Forthwith
 Gabriel diffused unwonted lustre round,
 And in the glory of that light appear'd,
 Though softening all the terrors of his brow,
 Not less than heaven's elect ambassador,
 Heralding tidings of eternal joy;— 120
 Which, even as he utter'd, all the band
 Of angels, suddenly apparent, caught
 And set to music of seraphic harps,
 Pure crystal symphonies of joy and love,
 Until the waves of Hallelujah moved
 The orient clouds, and gathering strength rang out
 Among the golden stars, and travelling on
 Held for a space the tongues of cherubim
 Mute for delight before the throne of God.

"Soon from that throne, through clouds of glory
 stealing, 130
 The whispers of the Spirit of God were heard;
 And Suriel moving at that still small voice
 Took of the lamps, that ever blaze beside
 The altar of celestial frankincense,
 Symbols of love enkindling endless praise,
 And from that lucid sphere descending sloped
 His course to earth, where on the nightly plain
 Chaldea's watchers read the starry heavens;

And holding in his hand that torch, which seem'd
 As if a planet brighter than its peers 140
 Had wander'd from its path, viewless himself,
 Allured their steps, whose minds were taught of God,
 Until their weary pilgrimage at last
 Was ended with unutterable joy
 Before the Royal Babe of Bethlehem.

“ Why should I tell thee what thou know'st ? His
 flight

To Egypt's house of bondage ; and return
 'Neath angel wings to lowly Nazareth ?
 No palaece home was His. No menials nursed
 His childhood. Mary kept her secret close, 150
 Or only breathed thereof in prayer to God,
 Yet watch'd her gentle meditative Child,
 Unlike yet like His brethren (for they err
 Who deem her firstborn Son her only one),
 With love beyond a mother's. Holiness
 Breathed in His meek aspect. No passion wrought
 To fret His bosom. Never a word of guile
 Sullied His lips. Pure, harmless, undefiled,
 He loved of all things best to be alone,
 And oft would hie Him to the fields, and there 160
 Ponder and pray. And, when the Sabbath came,
 Such gleams of glory in the synagogue
 Play'd on His blessed countenance, as if
 Conversing with the Invisible, mouth to mouth,
 That I have seen His virgin mother's eyes
 Fix'd on him, till they flow'd with tears of joy.

120

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glory

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But chiefly, when the yearly festivals
 Drew them to Zion, a mysterious awe,
 A child's most tender awe, the awe of love,
 Seem'd to dilate His swelling breast, the while 170
 He trod, as One at home, His Father's courts.

“Years pass'd ; and still He grew in grace : yet still
 His brethren knew Him not. His perfect love
 Disturb'd them ; and they oftener chose consort
 With those, whose goodness was not all unstain'd.
 They quail'd before His gentleness. But when
 Their father sank beneath the weight of years,
 As sinks the sun behind the autumn hills,
 Then in that darken'd home the Light of Light
 Diffused its softest radiance. He it was, 180
 Who bound up with the tenderest balms of love
 His mother's bleeding heart ; who mix'd His tears
 With those that chased adown His sisters' cheeks,
 Till sorrow's self grew calm ; and He, who first
 Summon'd His brethren to the needful toil,
 Toil shared by Him, their common heritage.
 And when He spake with such unflinching faith
 Of that celestial Paradise, wherein
 Their father now was walking, even as One
 Familiar with its living founts and fruits, 190
 The bitterness of grief was gone, and death's
 Dark portal was the golden gate of life.

“But if they saw and marvell'd, how with us
 Who knew Him what He was, the Son of God ?

Brother, our hearts were bow'd within us. Pride,
 That deadliest upas, that sought cast its shade
 Over angelic natures though elect,
 Wither'd before that wondrous spectacle.
 It was not only grace we saw, but grace
 That fail'd not in a world of selfishness;
 Nor only light, but light in poisonous air
 Miraculously burning, self-sustain'd;
 Nor faith alone, but faith, emptying itself,
 Itself to strengthen in Another's might;
 Self-limited Omnipotence, that deign'd,
 Weak even as man is weak, to lean on God.
 Messiah praying:—brother, I have watch'd
 His lips moving, until my very soul
 Clave to Him with intensity of love;
 And heard Him plead for those He came to save, 210
 Until of all hard tasks the hardest seem'd
 Not to go trumpet-tongued, and summon all
 To fall and worship at His sacred feet.

“ But now His time was come: His herald, John,
 Who, like Elias, in the wilderness
 Had nursed his kingly soul to kingly deeds
 Heroic, came, the voice before the Word,
 Crying, ‘Repent, the kingdom is at hand.’
 God's Spirit echoed the warning, and the cry
 Struck sharp on human hearts, like steel on flint: 220
 And crowds, their sins bewailing, throng'd the man
 Whose hand explored the secret womb of thought,
 And in whose dreadless eye eternity

Or deadlier stratagems, recall'd his peers
 To their dark council chamber wrapt in clouds,
 Whence issuing after long consult, a smile
 Of baleful hope upon his faded brow,
 He sought the designated Son of God.

“Meanwhile from Jordan’s farther banks the Christ,
 With His own thoughts communing, thoughts im-
 pregn’d

And glorified by the incumbent Spirit, 260
 Which in His sevenfold plenitude of grace,
 Life, light, power, wisdom, counsel, fear, and love,
 Immeasurable on Him abode, was led
 Eastward towards the wilds of Araby.
 Hour after hour He walk’d lonely, nor felt
 Or weariness or want: such bursting hopes
 Of His unparallel’d emprise surcharged
 His bosom. And, when nightfall unawares
 Came down upon the rocky wilderness,
 He, like the solitary Jacob, laid 270
 His head upon a stone and slept: but dreams
 Diviner than the pilgrim patriarch saw
 Visited His bleak couch, we camping near.
 And, when the morning broke, He rose refresh’d,
 His first thoughts like the fragrant incense borne
 Up to His Father’s presence. Onward still,
 As One guided invisibly, He press’d,
 Nor ate nor hunger’d. Thus a second day
 Pass’d, and a third; till Nebo’s barren cliffs
 And rugged precipices barr’d in front 280

His prospect. But, as night again descended,
And on a stony pillow as before
Messiah sought repose, we were aware
Of change and peril imminent. Thick clouds,
Dragging their vaporous skirts along the hills,
Blotted the stars; and distant thunders roused
The beasts of rapine from their lairs, whose roar
Seem'd ever nearer on the moaning blast.
The darkness was not all of earth: wing'd forms
Unhallow'd pass'd us in the thickening gloom. 290
We watch'd in doubt, unweeting what designs
The foe was hatching. But, when morn approach'd,
And Jesus through the twilight walk'd abroad,
Far other visions than the last appear'd
To' have haunted His night hours. His calm aspect
Was troubled; and in place of joy His eye
Flash'd with the wrath of tempted innocenee
Indignant. Not the brooding wintry storm,
That beat in gusts upon His sacred head,
Vex'd Him whose spirit was swept with fiercer winds;
Nor yet the lion's baffled growl, that slunk [300
From Gabriel's sword into the tangled brake;
Nor pangs of hunger, for in that stern strife
He felt them not. But now the Arch-fiend wove
His subtlest machinations, flinging shafts
Incessant of all racking doubts and fears,
The tempter wielding archangelic powers,
The Tempted in weak human flesh enshrined.
Night came, but night was terrible as day;
And sleep, but sleep was worse than waking thoughts:

Nor one day only, nor yet seven, nor seven
 Twice told or thrice; but forty days and nights
 That conflict inexpressible was waged,
 No avenue of reason unassail'd,
 No bolt from that wide quiver's mouth unshot:
 All, all in vain. Then inly to himself
 The devil mutter'd, as I caught the words,
 'My ghostly weapons fail, let sight and sense
 Avail me, as in Eden,'—and relax'd
 His onset.

311

320

“Then it was, the urgent stress
 Of battle interrupted, hunger seized
 The fainting Saviour. And His foe and ours,
 No longer unapparent, what remain'd
 Of his original lustre re-assumed,
 And in his proper shape approach'd, his aim
 Dissembling. 'If Thou art the Son of God,—
 Nor other can I deem Thee, who hast foil'd
 My uttermost attempt,—our duel now
 Is ended. I confess discomfiture.
 One only proof I ask, not for myself
 Who know Thee, but for those who know Thee not,
 One act as innocent in Thee to grant
 As it is reasonable in me to crave;
 Nay further, necessary for Thy wants,
 Who here wilt perish in the wilderness.
 Change by Thy word this rocky stone to bread.
 Vouchsafe me this; and henceforth I and mine
 Will leave Thee undisturb'd, the Christ of God'

330

"So glozed the tempter. But the Son of Man,
 As man clad in the panoply of faith, 340
 Drew from its sheath the sharp sword of the Spirit,
 And answer'd, 'It is written, Man shall live
 Not by bread only, but by every word
 Spoken by God.' And Satan shrank abash'd:
 For on these very rocks, when bread was not,
 The food of angels, at His voice who spake,
 Had fallen round the tents of Israel.

"But from the deserts now the spirit of evil,
 God's Spirit permitting, led the Saviour forth
 Invisible, and with speed miraculous 350
 Brought Him to Salem's sanctuary sublime,
 Where over Kedron's vale the dizzy porch
 O'erhung the valley. It was then the feast
 Of tabernacles, and the crowds were spread
 Like aloes by the rivers far beneath,
 While others from Siloah's fountain fetch'd
 The mystic water in a golden ewer,
 And pour'd it in the temple forth with songs
 Of Hallelujah and exuberant joy.
 There, as they stood upon the utmost ridge, 360
 Thus spake the tempter—'Be it as Thou sayest:
 Thy faith forbids Thee work a work to still
 The cravings of Thy mortal need. For Thee,
 Whether by famine or by violence,
 Death has no terrors. Be it so. But now,
 Not for Thyself, but for Thy chosen race
 I ask Thee, show Thyself the Son of God.

Cast Thyself down from hence. Angels of light,
 Thou knowest, are about Thee: they will bear,
 As promised in the oracles of truth, 370
 Thee in their hands. I meanwhile will direct
 All eyes upon this lofty battlement;
 And joyful Israel shall behold her Prince
 Descending with His radiant ministries
 About Him, and shall crown Thee, as foretold,
 The Son of David upon David's throne.'

“Messiah answer'd,—‘It is written again,
 Thou shalt not dare to tempt the Lord thy God.’
 Brief words but keen: beneath whose subtle edge
 The devil writhed in anguish. But yet one, 380
 One last and damnable assault remain'd;
 And from the holy city quickly' he bore
 The Saviour to that mountain peak, which look'd
 Far over His late solitary watch,
 Whence Moses, ere he fell on sleep, beheld
 The hills and valleys of the land, with milk
 And honey flowing, to the western sea
 And goodly Lebanon. But now (such skill
 That mighty regent of the air had learn'd)
 Whether by optical illusion wrought, 390
 Like some mirage of cataracts and lakes
 And gardens in Arabia's barren sands,
 Or suns in mockery flushing Zembla's snows,
 Refraction on refraction multiplied,—
 Or haply' air pictures cunningly disposed
 Within the eye's transparent microcosm,—

The mode I know not—but the dædal earth
 With all its mighty realms from pole to pole,
 Illumed with sudden supernatural light,
 Seem'd lying, kindreds, peoples, nations, tongues, 400
 A gorgeous panorama, scene on scene
 Reflecting splendour, at Messiah's feet,
 And in the twinkling of an eye condensed
 The glories and the miseries of man,
 As in a focus, on His startled soul,
 Moving compassion and amaze at once.

“ Then spake again the tempter, ‘ Not for Thee,
 Whose meat it is to do Thy Father's will,
 Nor yet for Israel, far too scant a field
 For Thy illimitable sovereign schemes 410
 Of goodness, do I now prefer request ;
 But for the world, the universal world,
 To me committed, as Thou know'st, by One
 Who never of His words or deeds repents :—
 Let these four thousand years of wreck and ruin
 Bear witness. I had fondly thought to hold
 This sceptre as mine own. But let it pass.
 Rather than wage interminable war,
 I yield Thee my dominion. I shall find
 Some other orb untenanted as yet, 420
 Whereon to fix my throne. And for the gift,
 Vouchsafed me first, mine therefore to restore,
 This coveted inheritance, I ask
 But one brief passing act of homage done,
 One transient recognition whence Thou owest

Thy kingdom. At my feet receive the boon.
 Thou shrinkest? Why not? I have seen Thee bow
 To earthly rulers,—by Thy mother's side
 Have seen Thee kneeling. Having stoop'd so low,
 Stoop once again to less indignity 430
 By far than prophecy assigns Thee. Thou
 Already' hast suffer'd much; Thy gentle spirit
 Amongst ungentle children; Thy pure youth
 Alien amongst impure; Thy ripening faith
 Exotic in a faithless world; but all
 Is nothing, less than nothing, to the doom
 Before Thee chronicled in scrolls of fate,
 If Thou refuse my offer. Thou wilt stretch
 Thy weary hands, loaden with gifts of life,
 To disobedient and gainsaying men: 440
 Thine own will not receive Thee: cruel craft
 Will dog Thy footsteps: till Thou sink'st at last
 Under distress, dismay, derision, death.
 What, death for Thee, the peerless Prince of life?
 Truly, though I have done fell deeds,—in war
 All things are lawful,—I, though damn'd, should grieve
 To see death's ghastly weapon pierce Thy heart.
 My Liege, to Thee I owe my being: what
 Of great I am is Thine: why then abhor 450
 In me to honour Thy own workmanship?
 Fear not, though I have woven countless snares,
 And tangled countless hearts, angels and men,
 With Thee all snares were useless; and I swear,
 In this my offer lurks nor lure nor guile:
 One insignificant act of homage paid,

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And I retire, and with me all my hosts,
 From earth and earth's precincts. Sole sovereign here
 May'st thou achieve Thy God-like enterprise,
 Thy Good Spirit recreate this shatter'd world,
 And earth re-echo Thy Great Father's name. 460
 Nor ever again will I disturb Thy realm :
 I have my gloomy bodings, even as Thou,
 What may ensue, thus struggling without end :
 Weary of horrid war, I long for peace.
 One little act, and I resign Thee all.'

"Messiah's words anticipate our thoughts,
 His hand still cleaving to the two-edged sword,
 'Hence, Satan: it is written, Thou shalt serve
 The Lord thy God, and worship only Him.'
 And by the lightning of the Saviour's eye, 470
 Bent full upon the Adversary, we saw
 His desperate repulse. The naked truth
 Had rived his bosom. Gnashing with remorse,
 Slowly, reluctantly, he sank, as sinks
 The angry tide from off a lighthouse rock,
 Which it has drench'd in blinding spray and foam,
 Leaving the light unseathed. And it was ours
 To cluster round that humble Victor's feet,
 And offer fruitage from the vines of heaven,
 And water from the rivulets of life, 480
 And blossoms gather'd on their marge; from me
 He took with smiles a flower of amaranth—
 (As Oriel spake, a blush of deeper rose
 Crimson'd his cheek at the remember'd joy) —

Yea, and to tender sympathies more sweet
 Than flowers, or fruit, or fountains gushing life,
 Wherewith refresh'd ere long Messiah bent
 His footsteps to the plains of Galilee.

“ Full of the Spirit He came: His sinless powers
 All quicken'd to the uttermost of man: 490
 His faith transparent without clouds: His love,
 Clear radiance on the altar of His heart,
 Fire without smoke of darkness: prophecies
 Of everlasting joy kindling His soul:
 Pure perfect Manhood. We had often wept
 Tears of delight to see celestial grace
 Struggling and triumphing in weakness; but
 Some stains had ever with the saintliest saints
 Blotted the story of their life. What need
 To speak of Noah, and of Abraham, 500
 Of Moses, David, Hezekiah, Job,
 Who sometime trail'd their garments on the earth,
 Though whiter now than snow? But here was One
 Faultless though compass'd with infirmity,
 In human weakness sinless, who had stoop'd
 Lower than angelhood in might, but dwarf'd
 In uncreated goodness infinite
 The loftiest seraphim: no stern recluse,
 As His forerunner; but the Guest and Friend
 Of all who sought Him, mingling with all life 510
 To breathe His holiness on all. No film
 Obscured His spotless lustre. From His lips
 Truth limpid without error flow'd. Disease

Fled from His touch. Pain heard Him, and was not.
 Despair smiled in His presence. Devils knew,
 And trembled. In the omnipotence of faith
 Unintermittent, indefectible,
 Leaning upon His Father's might, He bent
 All nature to His will. The tempest sank,
 He whispering, into waveless calm. The bread, 520
 Given from His hands, fed thousands and to spare.
 The stormy waters, as the solid rock,
 Were pavement for His footsteps. Death itself
 With vain reluctancies yielded its prey
 To the stern mandate of the Prince of life.

“Not that these things are hid from thee: but,
 brother,
 None but an angel can methinks conceive
 What angels felt, as over Him they stoop'd
 Lost in adoring contemplation. Oft
 Has Gabriel call'd me to his side in awe 530
 At His Divine humility; which once,
 Once only in His earthly pilgrimage,
 Suffer'd the shrouded glory to escape
 Its fleshly veil.

“Once only, on the crest
 Of snowy Hermon as He knelt in prayer,
 His chosen witnesses beheld His form
 Apparell'd in its own celestial light,
 More dazzling than the snows on which it shone,
 When Michael, who on Satan's fall assu. ed

At God's command the hierarchal primacy,
 The same who guarded Moses' funeral rites
 And bore Elijah in God's chariot home,
 Brought them, one bodiless, embodied one,
 From Paradise before the other dead,
 To commune with their Lord on His decease
 Now nigh at hand. Then the Shekinah cloud
 Descending, wrapt them in its radiant folds,
 And from its excellent glory came a Voice
 'This is My Son Beloved, hear ye Him.'

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"This Voice we heard, nor we alone who knelt 550
 Near as permitted: fiendish auditors
 Beyond us, in the dusky air suspense,
 Heard it, and quaked in silence: Satan heard
 Confounded, and now, desperate of fraud,
 Seem'd only' intent to deal the cruellest bruise
 Immedicable on his Victim's heel,
 His Victor soon. Ranging abroad he stirr'd
 The hosts of darkness to maligner hate,
 Saying, Now was the hinge of battle, now
 The fated hour of doom: one effort more, 560
 And earth, their destined heritage, was theirs.
 Then round him cluster'd, gloomy body-guard,
 His peers, into whose venomous breasts he fused
 Fresh venom, urging some to wreak worse ill
 On their demoniac slaves, others to wind
 Their coils of envy around priestly hearts,
 And others in the path of ruthless men
 To dig quick pitfalls of insensate pride:

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Himself, with Mammon for his minister,
 Tracking the Saviour's steps, and beckoning on, 570
 With lures of miserable gold, a wretch
 Who sprang well pleased into his cursed embrace,
 Judas, the heir of everlasting shame.

“Once he was cow'd; when seated with his mates
 In council (such were daily now convened)
 Quick tidings reach'd him, that his fiercest spirits
 Quail'd at the name of Jesus breathed in faith
 By humblest lips. Instantly, whether rage
 O'ermaster'd him, or shadowing fear surprised,
 Down like a meteor or a lightning flash 580
 From that aerial height he sank, he fell,—
 Not unobserved by Him whose piercing Eye,
 Scanning the ages, in that lapse beheld
 A presage of his endless fall from heaven
 To the abysmal pit. But Satan soon,
 Collecting his dejected legions, cried,
 The while he spat defiance on his Lord,
 'Do Thou Thy worst: Thou hast not tasted ours'—
 And without further pause of hate pursued
 His drear deliberations, boding death. 590

“The hour was almost come. Six days had pass'd,
 Since from the lonely Ephraim the Lord
 Had sought the house He loved at Bethany,
 Where Martha and her sister dwelt, and he,
 Whose disembodied spirit we sometime kept
 Lull'd by the wafting of angelic wings

As in a dream of undefined delight,
 Until the Word recall'd him : six brief days,
 But every moment big with destiny :
 The Sabbath of unbroken peace and prayer : 600
 That evening,—was it much for her, whose heart
 Was crush'd, to crush the alabaster vase?—
 Mary, with love's foreboding instinct, pour'd
 The precious myrrh upon His head and feet,
 And wiped them with her rich disbevell'd hair.
 The midnight watches spent with God : the ride
 Of lowly triumph dash'd with tears, and songs
 Woven with sighs, into Jerusalem ;
 The weary Wayfarer's return afoot
 Over the ridge of wooded Olivet 610
 At nightfall ; the surprise of early dawn
 Startling His orisons ; the lonely curse,
 Pregnant with gracious warning, which His lips
 Pronounced ; the sanctuary cleansed anew ;
 The nightly calm ; the morrow's stern contest
 With stubborn hearts, sheathed in dark unbelief
 Or darker superstition,—crystal truth
 Confuting guile, pure love predicting woes
 Upon impure malignity ; the cry
 ' We would see Jesus,' breathed by Gentile lips, 620
 While on His presecient troubled soul there fell
 The first dark shadows of the vale of death,
 Rugged with tempest ; the suspended prayer,
 Whose dread alternative was death or life,
 Which rested ' Father, glorify Thy name ;'
 The Voice responsive from the Throne, which fill'd

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The hearts of prostrate seraphim with awe,
 But fell unheeded upon mortal ears ;
 Until the Lord o' the temple, not before
 He made the widow's heart to sing for joy, 630
 Forsook His house. As once Ezekiel saw
 The symbol of His awful Presence pause
 Reluctant o'er the threshold, cherub-borne,
 And o'er the city brood like guardian fire,
 And move, and rest upon the hill that lies
 Fronting the dawn,—so then on Olivet
 The weary Saviour rested and forecast
 The anguish coming on Jerusalem,
 The birth-pangs of evangel life, nor left
 That mountain's brow, nor limited the range 640
 Of His prophetic vision, till He spake
 Of His great Advent in the clouds of Heaven.
 One day of calm seclusion ; and a night
 And meaning all unvex'd, albeit the powers
 Of evil throng'd the air ; but, as the sun
 Swerved westward, Jesus, with the Twelve, set forth
 Towards the city which He loved, the while
 We hung around their footsteps, till they sat
 In silent thought around the Paschal board.

"Thou knowest all. But when the Son of God, 650
 Equal Assessor of the Father's throne,
 Author and Heir of all things, girt Himself,
 Stoop'd, and the Servant of His servants, wash'd
 Their feet, we gazed upon the awful scene
 In terrible amazement, till His words

Recall'd us to the Infinite of love
 Which dwelt within Him and in which He dwelt,
 Making, it seem'd, all other humbleness
 Appear too high, all other love too low.
 But now the Paschal lamb was eaten, now 660
 The wine-cups fill'd and drunk; when He, who knew
 What was in man, and from that hour look'd forth
 Upon the ages of all time, ordain'd
 Those holy mysteries of bread and wine,
 The banquet of His body and His blood,
 The ever fresh memorials of His death
 To faith instinct with life, and quick with love,
 Symbols of eucharistic sacrifice,
 The sacramental oath of fealty,
 The bond of brotherhood, the pledge of heaven. 670

"Alas, far different fruit those emblems now
 Wrought in the traitor! Satan, who ere this
 Had visited his heart nor met repulse,
 Now readily assumed the ready throne,
 And sway'd him willing to his will. The light
 Was torment: and alone he stagger'd forth
 Into the darkness on his dark intent.

"And now from lips, which spake as never man,
 Flow'd words of inexpressible tenderness
 Mingled with power, while more than human love, 680
 Clothing itself in human language, pour'd
 Immortal comforts into mortal hearts,
 Until they overflow'd in tears. And then

The Great High Priest, with eyes uplift to heaven,
 Standing as if the mystic veil were rent
 Before the seat of mercy, in full view
 Of those He loved, pleaded their cause with One
 Who loved them even as Himself; nor stay'd
 Before He breathed that wonderful 'I will'
 Which draws His children hither as their work 690
 Is finish'd, spring of countless tears on earth,
 And harvests sown in weeping reap'd in joy.

“Meanwhile the moon had risen full-orb'd: and they,
 Passing through lights and shadows, bent their steps
 Along the city's now deserted streets
 To Kedron's vale; over the brook; where wound
 The mountain path to Olivet: and there
 Upon the right a garden, into which
 They enter'd, olive-set Gethsemane.

“But wherefore now with trembling lips recall 700
 That scene of unimaginable woe?
 The summons of the chosen three; the moan
 Of mortal anguish from the Lord of life;
 The vigil, tenderly enjoin'd in vain;
 The agony of prayer; the bloody sweat,
 Wrung from His sacred brow and trembling limbs
 By griefs, which no created mind can sound;
 The cry, when that exceeding bitter cup
 Sear'd as hot iron His lip; the human soul
 Quivering, until from the unfolding heavens 710
 A seraph (which of the empyreal thrones

We knew not, for upon that awful quest
 His mantling wings had too securely veil'd
 His presence and his face perplex'd with tears,
 And his dear Master's look sufficed for praise)
 Descending knelt beside that kneeling Form
 And strengthen'd Him: and through the moonlight
 stole

The slow, the tremulously balanced words,
 'Not My will, O My Father, Thine be done,'
 Once and again.

“The first sharp paroxysm, 720
 As Death infix'd his keen envenom'd sting
 Full in the bosom of Eternal Life,
 Was over. Follow'd now the traitor's kiss;
 The binding of Omnipotence; the stroke
 Of Peter, kept from rash repeat by words
 That thrill'd our hearts, and sheathed more swords
 than his

Each in its scabbard; the apostles' flight;
 The hurried Sanhedrim; the viewless fiends,
 Thronging that hall and plying all their arts
 On men abandon'd to their curs'd will; 730
 The strength of one, who lean'd upon himself,
 Found wanting; meantime falsehood bearding Truth;
 The Lamb of God silent; the faith which look'd
 From that tribunal to the final bar:
 And, as the cold grey morning struggled through,
 The guiltless Sufferer bound, and rudely dragg'd
 From court to court abhorr'd, accused, reviled,

Until that proud contemptuous Roman heart
Yielded to those infuriate cries, and gave
The Man of sorrows up to bitter death.

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“Woe, brother, woe for those, who against hope
Ere this in hope persisted! One of us
Was summon'd to the wretched traitor's end.
And by command led forth his damned spirit
To its own place of doom. But we, the rest,
Forbidden longer to oppose the worst,
Could only follow with those weeping few
Who hung around the footsteps of their Lord,
Amazed, appall'd. We saw the weary cross
Laid on His fainting strength, His sacred limbs 750
Ruthlessly stripp'd, His quivering hands and feet
Pierced with the cruel nails, while words of love,
Father, forgive who know not what they do,
Fell from His agonized lips. And now
The cross was raised. And there betwixt two thieves
The Increate Creator of all worlds,
The Son of the Eternal Father, hung
Betray'd, bereft, beleaguer'd, crucified.

“Thou weapest, brother: well thou may'st. My
tears
With thine are flowing. But in that first hour 760
No angel wept. Sorrow itself was numb'd
Within us: while the bitter jests and taunts
Of soldiers, priests, and reckless passers by,
And curses mutter'd from between clenched teeth

[BOOK

VII.]

REDEMPTION.

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Fell ever on the meek Redeemer's cars,
 A pitiless storm. But, when upon His right,
 Gazing upon His superhuman love
 Till the hard stone was crush'd and contrite, one
 Of those who hung beside His cross reluked
 His fellow, and cried, 'Lord, remember me,'
 And, firstfruits of His dying anguish, drew
 Life from that bleeding sacrifice; and when
 The Saviour, looking on the faithful group
 That cluster'd at His feet, tenderly gave
 His mother to His friend,—the sight unseal'd
 The frozen springs of sorrow, and we wept.

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"Was love stronger than death? Upon that cross
 They grapple'd in final strife. For now
 Hell put forth all its malice, and let loose
 Its gather'd vengeance. All the air was dense
 With fiends; and blackness, blacker than the night
 Which Moses' rod on smitten Egypt drew,
 Dismay'd the heavens: such delegated power
 Had Satan, regent of the air, and all
 The gloomy hosts of darkness at his beck
 Hemming the Saviour round. And, as the load
 Immense, intolerable, of the world's sin,
 Casting its dreadful shadow high as heaven,
 Deep as Gehenna, nearer and more near
 Grounded at last upon that Sinless Soul
 With all its crushing weight and killing curse,
 Then first, from all eternity then first,
 From His beloved Son the Father's face

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Was slowly' averted, and its light eclipsed ;
 And through the midnight broke the Sufferer's groan,
Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani ?
 The echo was the mockeries of hell,
 Reverberate in human lips. We heard,
 And shudder'd. Gabriel lean'd on me a space,
 And hid his face within my vesture's folds, 800
 As if the sight were all too terrible
 Even for archangelic faith. But now
 Once more the agonizing Victim moan'd,
 Uttering His anguish in one dreadful plaint,
I thirst ; His last : for, when the cooling sponge
 Had touch'd His lips, a loud and different cry
 As if of triumph, *It is finish'd,* rang
 Upon our startled ears ; and with a child's
 Confiding tender trustfulness, that breathed
Father, to Thy hands I commend My spirit, 810
 He bow'd His head, and yielded up the ghost.

“ Earth quaked. The rocks were rent. The graves
 of saints
 Were open'd. And the temple's mystic veil
 Was riven in view of worshippers and priests,
 Disclosing things unseen. Ere long the spear
 Open'd the fountain in the Saviour's side,
 And soon that holy tabernacle lay,
 Like a deserted temple, cold and still,
 In Joseph's rock-hewn tomb. But, brother, who
 Of angels can describe what next ensued, 820
 When Jesus breathed His last upon the cross,

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VII.]

REDEMPTION.

In the throng'd firmament of spirits? Straightway
 Around His disembodied soul the powers
 Of darkness swarm'd, and Satan face to face
 With burning falchion barr'd His path. One look,
 Mere virtue bent on mere maliciousness,
 Pierced him like lightning, and shot withering fire
 Among his blasted hosts. Distraught they stood,
 Insensible, one moment; and then fell
 From round Him, as the billow's cloven pride 830
 Falls in thick spray from off the vessel's prow
 By northern blasts, as by the arm of fate,
 Driven towards the port of refuge. Fain had we
 Accompanied His steps. His warning hand
 Restrain'd us. Lonely He had fought the fight;
 And lonely He must stoop to strip the slain,
 And lonely gather up the spoils of death.

"Immediate, quicken'd in His human spirit,
 More swiftly than the swiftest seraph's wing,
 With speed akin to thought journeying He pass'd 840
 Adown the firmamental heavens, and through
 The maze of constellations, and, or ever
 His stiffening corse was from the tree unloosed,
 Had traversed the dark avenue that leads
 Straight to the adamantine doors of hell.
 These open'd to His advent, and beneath
 Their awful archway He descended; and,
 As downward through the lurid air He oped
 His discontinuous path, beneath Him lay
 The ruins and the wrecks of sin. And then 850

Full on His naked soul His Father's Eye
 Rested with uneclipsed unclouded blaze,
 Rested and found no flaw, no film of dark,
 No jar, no discord, no antagonism,
 But light to light responsive, beam to beam,
 And love in faultless unison with love,
 Perfection imaging Perfection: whence,
 Not agony as with the damn'd perforce,
 But trust, and peace, and joy too deep for words.

“ Around Him devils and lost souls stood thronging,
 Under God's custody compell'd that hour [860
 To gather from the farthest vaults of hell,
 And witness His descent, whose calm aspect
 Might crush all hope, not wholly dead before,
 That Satan in the conflict waged on earth
 Should win some transient triumph, and unbar
 Their prison. But when now they saw their Lord
 Strengthless, for so He seem'd, as they themselves,
 Dark thoughts possess'd them to seize fast their prey,
 And hold Him hostage for their own escape— 870
 Proof that no hell can change the lost. But lo,
 The Son of God upon that cursed soil,
 In human weakness though Almighty, knelt,
 And gazing up into His Father's face
 Pleaded for rescue from that dark sojourn
 Among the dead. And instantly His prayer,
 As Jonah's issuing from the ocean depths,
 Rose like a cloud of incense high within
 Heaven's temple. Then the empyrean shook ;

The everlasting hills trembled ; the heavens 880
 Were bow'd beneath His glory, who came down
 Upon the wings of Cherubim, in wrath,
 Darkness beneath His feet, lightnings before,
 And round about Him clouds, which from their skirts
 Shot hailstones and thick burning coals of fire
 Among His enemies : while at their feet
 The solid yawn'd with fissures, and disclosed
 A lower depth of fire unquenchable,
 Gehenna's lake, soon hidden ; but the sight,
 Once seen, was shadow of the second death. 890
 And now the right hand of Omnipotence
 Was laid in love upon His Only Son,
 And drew Him from among His stricken foes,
 And from that vast profound, and o'er that gulf
 Untravell'd by created wing, that lies
 Betwixt that land of utter death and ours,
 Athwart that billowy chasm, over these hills
 And triple battlements of Paradise :
 And, ere on earth the Sabbath eve began,
 The Saviour met the sinner He had saved, 900
 And welcomed him beneath the trees of life.

" Now was there joy and jubilant delight
 In that fair Eden. Now was come the hour,
 For which four thousand years had look'd and long'd,
 Since first the solitary Abel trod
 These hills and plains. Placid had been that rest,
 And calm that haven after life's rough sea,
 Each one at will in holy solitude

Reposing, or with the other saintly spirits
 Walking in blissful converse. Age by age 910
 Earth yielded hither her choicest and her best,
 And here the angels on their ministries
 Pass'd ever to and fro. But till the Word
 Had conquer'd death, He came not to the dead
 In excellence of glory manifest,
 Though there, as every where, in power and spirit:—
 Haply such advent had not all bescem'd
 The Lord of life:—howbeit they saw not God,
 As saints thereafter saw His face and lived,
 But rather walk'd by faith like those on earth; 920
 And oftentimes the craving cry 'How long?'
 Of souls beneath the altar rose to heaven.
 Judge then their ecstasy of joy, when now,
 Apparent in a human form like theirs,
 The Saviour stood amongst them, and proclaim'd,
 The fight was foughten, and the victory won.

"From realm to realm of that great under-world
 That day He journey'd. No one but received
 Some token of His love. And, as He pass'd
 That lonely vale with its own gates recluse, 930
 Whercin the disembodied spirits in ward,
 Who once were disobedient ere the flood,
 Waited His advent with intenser hope,
 He enter'd and reveal'd Himself, their Lord,
 Besought, too late, for rescue in the ark,
 But not for mercy ere they died, which same
 Now bade them join the other Blessed Dead.

"This was His latest work. For now the hour
 Predestin'd summon'd Him again to earth :
 And, follow'd with innumerable songs
 Of blessing, through the gates of Paradise,
 And all along its glorious avenue,
 Lonely He pass'd, and through the subject heavens
 (His foes still cowering from their sore defeat)
 To the lone chamber of the tomb.

910

"The sun

Had not yet risen ; but in the golden East
 The morning star was tricking his soft lamp,
 Like some fair pearl with amber overlaid,
 When through the twilight slid the hurrying steps
 Of women bearing to the sepulchre
 Unguents, and spice, and balm. Suddenly the' earth
 Trembled and shook : and Gabriel, such his charge,
 Descending from our airy watch roll'd back
 The sealed stone, and, with his glory, cast
 In a dead swoon the guards. Abash'd, confused,
 The women, seeing, saw not ; hearing, they
 Heard not : save only she of Magdala
 Hasted, and ran, a breathless messenger,
 To those who mourn'd Him sorrest. Quickly these
 Ran, love outstripping ardour, to the spot,
 And found the empty sepulchre. Love mused ;
 Faith marvell'd ; but persistent Grief remain'd,
 Weeping beside that desolated tomb.
 Her heart lay buried there. He was her all,
 Who in her helpless hopeless misery

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Had sometime pass'd her by, and spake the word,
 And set the hell-bound captive free. Henceforth
 She loved Him with a holy clinging love,
 Stronger than death. With broken heart she stood
 Brokenly moaning at His cross: she heard 970
 His dying cry. Alas, the weary night!
 The long interminable day of rest!
 The mournful task of mingling that rich myrrh!
 The stifled doubt, could a dead Saviour save?
 She crush'd the maddening thought, and only elung
 The closer to the sepulchre: and now
 Weeping she lean'd upon the cold grey stone
 And, stooping, look'd within.

“ There two of us,
 Where the dear body of our Lord had lain,
 Sate robed in radiant white. Little she reek'd 980
 Of angel ministries who sought her Lord:
 And when we ask'd, ‘ Woman, why weepest thou?’
 She utter'd her one plaint, ‘ He is not here.’
 But turning mournfully away beheld
 One whom she knew not, for the sluice of tears
 Had drench'd her eyelids: and He likewise ask'd,
 ‘ Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou?’
 She answer'd; when the Stranger turn'd and said,
 ‘ Mary.’ She started, and, in one deep cry,
 Breathing her incommunicable bliss, 990
 ‘ Rabboni,’ fell before His feet, and fain
 Had clasp'd them.

"But not now as heretofore,
 The human intercourse vouchsafed on earth;
 Nor was He to His Father's throne in heaven
 That hour ascending. Yet a little space
 Emmanuel tabernacled among men
 To solace and sustain His orphan Church,
 To heal the bleeding heart of penitence,
 To cheer the downcast wayfarers, to stand
 Suddenly as a spirit, but very Man 1000
 Among His brethren, and imbreathe on them
 The benediction of His peace and power,
 To transform human fear to heavenly faith,
 To conquer doubt by love, a second time
 To teach His chosen fishermen to cast
 The drag-net of the kingdom, to reveal
 Himself unto His own in Galilee,
 Where He had lived and labour'd longest; thence
 Returning to Jerusalem, once more
 To lead His loved apostles o'er the slope 1010
 Of Olivet to sacred Bethany;
 And, ere He left them in that world of sin,
 Irradiate with the bow of heavenly hope
 Their watchings, and their warfare, and their woes.

"It was a golden eventide. The sun
 Was sinking through the roseate clouds to rest
 Beneath the Western waves. But purer light
 And vestments woven of more glorious hues,
 Albeit invisible to mortal eyes, [1020
 Gladden'd the heavens. For there the hosts of God,

Ten thousand times ten thousand, tier on tier,
 Marshall'd by Gabriel, fill'd the firmament ;
 The lowest ranks, horses and cars of fire,
 Circling Mount Olivet ; and next to these
 A body-guard of flaming seraphim,
 And hierarchal thrones ; and after them
 Celestial armies without number stretch'd
 In infinite ascent aloft, their swords
 Sheathed by their side (for, like an eagle scared,
 No foe on that great triumph moved the wing, 1030
 Open'd his mouth, or peep'd), and in their hand
 The palm of victory and the harp of praise :
 While through their thronging multitudes there oped
 A path of crystal glory, all perfum'd
 With love and breezy raptures, such as heaven
 Had never known. But every eye was bent
 Upon the Saviour, as He stood amongst
 The apostolic group, and lifted up
 His hands and bless'd them, and in blessing rose,
 No wind, no ear, no cherubim of fire 1040
 Ministrant, in His Father's might self-moved,
 Into the glowing sky ; until a cloud
 Far floating in the zenith, which had drunk
 Of the last sunbeams, wrapt His radiant form,
 And instantly became like light itself,
 Then melted into viewless air. But we,
 Closing around His path, with shouts of joy
 Rose with Him through the subjugated heavens,
 The desolate domains of Lucifer,
 And through the starry firmament, whose orbs, 1050

Vibrating with the impulse of our march,
 Resounded Hallelujahs and flash'd fires
 Of welcome—a procession such as earth
 Saw never, nor had heaven beheld till now—
 Observing each his place, yet each one near
 The Prince of glory, who was near to each,
 His Omnipresent Eye on every face
 Shedding His rapture; ever soaring higher,
 And singing as we soar'd, until we reach'd
 The confines of the third celestial sphere, 1060
 Shut in by gates of pearl, transcending these
 Of Paradise, as these surpass the porch
 Of the first Eden. There aloof, around,
 Thronging the arch on this side and on that,
 Was Michael with a host equal to ours,
 Sent from the heavenly Zion. Onward still
 We swept like clouds over an azure sky,
 And to the sound of martial trumpets sang
 Exultingly, 'Lift up your heads, ye gates!
 Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors! 1070
 Up, and the King of glory shall come in.'
 Immediate, like an echo from those ranks
 Guarding the heavenly citadel, the voice
 Of myriads perfectly attuned as one,
 Came back the peal of joyful challenge, 'Who,
 Who is the King of glory?'—and from ours
 The jubilant response, 'The Lord of hosts,
 Mighty in battle' against the powers of hell,
 Jehovah, King of glory! Lift your heads!
 Be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors! 1080

Up, and the King of glory shall come in.
 'Who is the King of glory?' yet again
 Peal'd from those opening gates. 'The Lord of hosts:
 He is the King of glory,' broke once more
 In waves of thunder on those jasper walls,
 Which never shook till now. And, host with host
 Commingling, through the portals on we swept,
 And through the city of the King of kings,
 The streets of golden crystal tremulous
 Beneath the nimble tread of seraphim, 1090
 And eager principalities and powers,
 And cohorts without number, till we came
 Into the heavenly temple (space enough
 Beneath its comprehensive dome for all
 God's ministries and more than all twice told
 In order ranged): and then the Great High Priest
 Alone advancing with His precious blood
 Touch'd, as it seem'd, the spotless mercy-seat;
 And lo, the Everlasting Father rose,
 Diffusing beams of joy ineffable, 1100
 Which centred on His Son, His only Son,
 And rising to His bosom folded Him
 (If acts of Him the Incarnate can thus
 Be duly in our language shadow'd forth)
 And set Him at His own right hand: while clouds,
 Breathing Divine ambrosial fragrance, fill'd
 The temple, and awoke in every heart
 Bliss inconceivable of silent praise.

"Much, brother, could I tell what then and there

Befell in heaven : and chiefly how the Son
 1110
 Cleansed with the virtue of His blood those courts
 Which had defilement from the access thither
 Of spirits accurst, and having cleansed them bless'd
 With unction of the Holy One, and then
 Utter'd His irreversible decree,
 Which henceforth from those holiest precincts barr'd
 Entrance of ill. But yet remains untold
 The warfare which ensued in earth and heaven :
 And in the age of ages yet to come
 Often shall we resume the wondrous tale,
 1120
 Which now I touch so briefly, of the past."

END OF THE SEVENTH BOOK.

Book Eighth.

THE CHURCH MILITANT.

AVAUNT thee, horrid War: whose miasms, bred
 Of nether darkness and Tartarean swamps,
 Float o'er this fallen world and blight the flowers,
 Sole relies of a ruin'd Eden! Hence
 With all thy cruel ravages! fair homes
 Rifled for thee of husband, brother, son;
 Wild passions slipp'd like hell-hounds in the heart,
 And baying in full cry for blood; the shock
 Of battle: the quick throes of dying men;
 The ghastly stillness of the mangled dead; 10
 The crumbling ramparts breach'd, the city storm'd,
 The massacre of unresisting age,
 The shrieks of violated innocence,
 And bloom, almost too delicate for the print
 Of bridal kisses and the touch of love,
 Ruthlessly trampled underneath the heel
 Of armed lust; and, pitiful to see,
 The mother's womb ripp'd by the pitiless sword,
 And life—her unborn offspring's and her own—
 Shed in short mortal travail; lurid flames, 20

Wrapping the toils of arduous centuries
 And hopes of ages in one funeral pyre ;
 Gaunt famine after, and remorseless plague,
 Reaping their myriads where the warrior's seythe
 Had been content with thousands ; leaving scars
 Upon a nation's heart, which never time
 Wholly can heal : hence horrid, horrid War !
 But, as I mused, there crowded on my spirit
 The lofty virtues nursed in strife ; the will
 That breaks but bends not ; goodness even in death 30
 Abhorring evil ; right defying wrong ;
 The stern self-sacrifice of souls afire
 For perill'd altars and for hearths profaned ;
 The generous chivalry, which shields the weak,
 And dares the oppressor's worst ; love guarding love
 From rapine, or, as God's executor,
 Dealing forth vengeance on the stubborn foe,
 And mercy to the vanquish'd ; all along
 The ages, names the noblest and the best
 From Israel's chiefs to those brave men whose swords 40
 Have been the bulwark of my native isle ;
 Till musing I exclaim'd, O righteous War,
 Thou immemorial school of deathless deeds,
 Not thee I censure, nor thy sons, but those
 Dark powers of evil, who awoke thee first
 From thy eternal slumbers undisturb'd,
 Leaning remiss upon thy stainless spear
 Hard by God's seat : not thee or thine I blame,
 Not thee,—Jehovah is a man of war,
 Nor thine,—Jehovah is the Lord of hosts.

Howbeit not of war in earth or heaven,
 After a grateful interlude, where thought
 Flow'd onward to its own sweet rhythm, at first
 Oriel discoursed ; but of the Sevenfold Spirit
 Who, in similitude of burning lamps,
 Burning before the sapphire Throne, appear'd
 At signal of His voice who sate thereon
 To move, His glory's effluence part veil'd
 And part translucent in a radiant cloud,
 While through the ranks of prostrate hierarchs 60
 Descending from the heaven of heavens He came,
 And with a sound of mighty rushing wind,
 And likeness as of fiery tongues, diffused
 In His Divine munificence of gifts
 The brightness of His Presence, and enwreath'd
 Each suppliant's head with flame. By the same
 Spirit

Impregn'd, as if his lips were touch'd with fire,
 My guardian spake with an enthusiast joy
 Of those first Pentecostal days, that morn
 After such long millennial watches hail'd, 70
 That burst of dewy spring unchill'd by frost,
 That garden water'd by the early rain,
 And tended by the risen ascended Lord,
 The rosy childhood of His bride, the gush
 Of pure first love untinctured by the world,
 When silvery Hope whisper'd in angel hearts,
 The time was short, the kingdom was at hand.

“Where, brother, thou wilt ask,” Oriel pursued,

“ Where, meanwhile, lurk’d the powers of darkness?
Crush’d

They lay, and scatter’d for a week of years, 80
And of their buoyant life utterly drain’d

By that intolerable mortal stroke

The Saviour’s spirit, enfranchised on the cross

From the rent tabernacle of His flesh,

Dealt in one gaze around. Six years and more,

Smit by that scathing agony, they cower’d,

Irresolute, disheartened, disarray’d,

The spoilers spoil’d, the thrones of hell dethroned,

And all their routed hosts wandering astray,

In earth or air, a spectacle of shame. 90

But then (so Wisdom Infinite ordain’d),

Time soothing their disastrous wound, of all

Satan the first recall’d his drooping pride,

And, gazing on earth’s battle-field, renew’d

His desperate counsels. All appear’d not lost,

While ruin out of ruin yet might rise,

As thus, conferring with his own dark thoughts

And gathering courage from his daring words,

Upon the height of Lebanon he mused :

“ Satan, bethink thee who thou art. To faint 100

Were weaker than thy vassal’s weakness. Man

For a few years’ abandonment to lust,—

Prodigious venture,—risks eternal flames.

And shalt thou yield, thus always respited

From age to age? Who knows not, but for ever?

Omniscience, as it seems, can only read

Futurity but dimly. Hath the Cross
 Drawn, as foreshadow'd by the Crucified,
 All to His footstool? I trow not. To thwart
 Love's best, to baffle Mercy's uttermost, 110
 This were revenge indeed, worthy the name,
 For the corroding fire His Dreadful Eye
 Has kindled in my secret bosom. Thou,
 Arch-adversary, be thyself once more.
 The crisis challenges despatch: for lo,
 Heaven's sapling strikes its roots deeper each day;
 The fount of life unscal'd on Zion's hill
 Is ever sending forth fresh rivulets
 Of blessing,—blessing which to me is curse:
 Be mine to blight that tree: be mine to shed 120
 A secret poison in that crystal spring.
 Despair, as hope, breeds counsels. I have found
 Anguish no sluggish spur to thought. Despatch—
 Yet for despatch delay. My faithful hosts
 Are scatter'd, and my princes, Baalim,
 Apollyon, Ashtaroth, and all their peers,
 Cower till the storm be overblown: with them
 Let me advise how easiest to retard
 The Gospel chariot wheels. Tides flow and ebb:
 This now hath reach'd its flood. The Son hath gone 130
 With his bright ministries to heaven, and there
 By sore experience taught, I dread Him less
 Than walking on this earth in mortal flesh.
 Nor fear I greatly His vicegerent Spirit,
 Whose tongues of harmless lightning seem to' announce
 A different war. Here I put off the last

Soft remnants of compunction. I have been
 Too generous, too gentle heretofore ;
 But henceforth, rather than the sinuous snake,
 Assume the fiery dragon. If this fail,
 As likely' it may, my quiver is not void.'

140

"So saying, his dusky pinions he outspread,
 And rose sublime into his ancient throne
 Set in the starry firmament, and thence
 Call'd his afflicted mates, who soon, though shorn
 Of their late glory, with unabated rage,
 And eyes that flash'd implacable revenge,
 Came at their leader's summons, and ere long
 In dire deliberations sate absorb'd.

"The shadow of that council fell on earth
 When Stephen, on whose lips the Spirit had breathed
 More of the fire of love than on the rest,
 Was dragg'd before his nation's Sanhedrim,
 And with seraphic radiance on his face,
 Pleaded his Master's cause, heaven's advocate
 Confronting hell's inexorable bar
 In vain: but, from that presbytery malign
 And ruthless judge averting his rapt gaze,
 Behold the heavens were open'd to his view,
 And with the eagle eye of faith he saw
 Within the veil the holy cherubim
 Shadowing the glory of the mercy-seat,
 And on the right the Great High Priest of God,
 Messiah, ministering (vision of bliss

150

160

Ineffable), and, calmly kneeling down,
 Amid those cruel taunts and crushing stones,
 The dying martyr breathed his spirit forth,
 And fell in his Redeemer's arms asleep.

“This was the signal of that bitter war,
 Which Satan and his re-assembled hosts, 170
 Now urging, now relaxing, the contest,
 Waged to the death for nine long months of years,
 War which upon its scroll of heroes 'nscribed
 Apostles, prophets, seers, evangelists,
 Princes, and peasants of a princely heart,
 Matrons, and maids, and children, till the cross
 Was planted on the battlements of Rome.
 Sore was the tempest; but the roof of oak,
 Though loaden with the stormy winds and bruised,
 Only more widely cast its acorns round, 180
 The seed of after forests. On our part,
 Like lightnings on our ministries of love,
 Moved by the Omnipresent Spirit we flew.
 Heaven put forth all its ghostly strength as hell,
 Counsel with counsel militant: what time
 The snow-white horse and its imperial lord,
 Apollyon's symbol (worshipp'd there as Mars)
 Chosen in defiance of the King of kings,
 With eagles crown'd by Capitolian Jove,
 Went conquering and to conquer forth long 190
 That hue triumphal changed to fiery red
 The rider and his horse incarnadined
 By fratricidal slaughter. And again,

Lean hunger prowling o'er the Roman world,
 That mystic horseman and his crimson'd steed
 Grew black as night: all faces gather'd gloom;
 The new wine languish'd, and the mirth of harps
 Was quench'd, and all the merry-hearted sigh'd:
 Presage of worse. For that black phantasm soon
 Assumed a livid pale, most ghastly steed, 200
 Bestriden by the king of terrors, Death,
 And follow'd by the shades of hell. Through all
 We pitch'd our tents around the saints of God,
 Alike in prisons and in palaces,
 In cities, and in lonesome dens and caves;
 And, when the fadeless crown of martyrdom
 Was wreathen for the martyr's holy brow,
 The Captain of our armies oft ordain'd
 No slender band of spirits, but legions arm'd,
 And turns of the celestial chivalry, 210
 Such as in Dothan camp'd about the seer,
 To' attend His dying servants; or Himself
 Descended in His chariot paved with love
 To bear them straightway home.

“But time would fail

To speak of all who trod in Stephen's steps,
 Who for their Master's sake endured the worst
 Of vengeance men could wreak on fellow-men,
 Shame, taunts, revilings, hunger, nakedness,
 Bonds, dungeons, scourges, tortures, till at last
 They yielded up their bodies to be burn'd, 220
 Or bow'd their neck to the devouring sword.

By many, with my bright compeers, I stood
 In their last agony. Some I had watch'd
 Like thee, from earliest infancy of faith,
 My chosen wards: of whom thou know'st by
 name

Perpetua, beautiful Perpetua, pride
 Of Carthage. I was by her side that hour
 When she a wife, a mother, stood unblench'd,
 So young and fair, so tender and so true,
 Before the proud Hilarian. In mine ears 230
 Vainly her father urged his passionate suit,
 And pleaded his thin silvery locks in vain.
 And when the shouting theatre received
 Her and her sister saint, Felicitas,
 A princess and a slave (rank weigh'd not then),
 And with them other three—when ruthless hands
 Stripp'd from her gentle limbs her robes, and gave
 To the rude gaze of thousands charms which love
 Had scarcely seen,—I heard her low-breathed cry
 For patience, by her Lord vouchsafed, though now 240
 The scourge made furrows on her quivering flesh,
 And soon the madden'd and infuriate bull,
 Wild with affright, forth rushing from its den
 Gored all her tender side; until herself,
 Triumphant in the hour of mortal pain,
 Guided the gladiator's trembling blade
 Straight to her bursting throat: and 'twas mine,
 Attended by a glorious retinue
 Of angels, to await her parting spirit,
 And lead her, heralded with songs of praise, 250

Through heaven's glad portals to her Lord's embrace
In yonder bowers of beatific joy.

“Martyr'd Perpetua was but only one
Of thousands not unlike: until the cry,
Swelling from year to year, from age to age,
Rose ever louder and more loud from souls
Beneath the altar crying, ‘How long, O Lord,
Most Holy, dost Thou not avenge our blood?
How long, O Lord, how long?’ A little space
God's patience suffer'd. Then the Pagan earth 260
Trembled as smitten with His hand: the sun
Became as sackcloth, and the moon as blood:
The stars fell ruinous from heaven, as when
A fig-tree, shaken of a mighty wind,
Casts its untimely figs: the firmament
Was shrivell'd as a scroll: the island rocks
Fled, and the everlasting mountains sank
Appall'd. Jehovah had arisen, and man
Was prostrate at His feet.

“The earthquake ceased;
And all things had ere long resumed their calm, 270
When lo, the mystic Bride appear'd in heaven
Clothed with the sun, the moon beneath her feet,
And on her head a coronal of stars,
Exceeding fair. But, even as we gazed,
Her hour was come, and travailing in birth
She cried aloud, with bitter pangs and throes
Tormented. And, or ever we were 'ware,

Right opposite a fiery dragon roll'd
 His baleful eyes, all ravenous to devour
 Her helpless babe when born : portentous sign 280
 Of woe and warfare imminent, which soon
 Darken'd the fields of heaven. Her new-born babe
 In sooth was caught up to the throne of power ;
 And upon eagle wings the woman fled
 Into the lonely wilderness, and there
 Abode for six times seven months of years,
 Until the time appointed her of God.
 But now the dragon and his hosts must drink
 More deeply of the bitter cup of shame,
 And taste from our avenging swords that wrath 290
 Which they had braved too fiercely and too long.

"It was the year that Constantine avow'd
 Allegiance to the conquering Cross, when I,
 Returning from my solitary charge
 With the lost Theodore to Hades, found
 War, open war, already pre-announced
 In heaven. For though Messiah, when He rose
 Triumphant from Mount Olivet, had cleansed
 The Heavenly Zion and its vast precincts,
 Nor suffer'd from that hour unholy feet 300
 To tread those temple courts, there lay betwixt
 Wide champaigns, lower than the heaven of heavens,
 But loftier than the earth ; and these the foe,
 Recovering from their fatal bruise, possess'd,
 Wide regions of the starry firmament,
 Not without orbs and embryo worlds, the which

They fortified with munimental walls
 Of fire and darkness, fastnesses and forts
 Innumerable, but chiefly' around that pole
 Far stretching toward the regions of the North, 310
 Where Satan fix'd his capital supreme,
 By mortals Pandemonium call'd, for there
 He and his rebel potentates were wont,
 A gloomy consistory, to sit immured,
 And thence descending in quick raids to ply
 Their devilish arts upon mankind: as when,
 To liken things in heaven to things on earth,
 A pirate chieftain in the Egean lurks
 By Lesbos or its tributary isles,
 And sweeps the ocean from his secret lair. 320
 Moreover from those dark palatial halls,
 Where fallen gods in synod sate enthroned,
 Invective blasphemies against the saints,
 Exaggerating or inventing ill,
 Cruel, obscure, vindictive, false, malign,
 Rose day and night to God: never more loud,
 Never more loathsome than when Cæsar's crown
 Wreath'd Christian brows, and Satan knew his seat
 Was crumbling underneath its idol weight.

"But now the inevitable hour had struck 330
 Of conflict. Hell's iniquity once more
 Had risen and trembled on the utmost brim.
 Nor was it longer possible for ours,
 Who for four thousand years and more had fought,
 Opposing stratagem to stratagem,

Manœuvre to manœuvre, toil to toil,
 But from the forceful violence of war
 By God's command refraining, not to feel
 A stern and holy joy, when now the word
 Came from the height of Zion, by the mouth
 Of Suriel, to equip themselves for fight, 310
 And where the standard of great Michael waved,
 A sheet of flame athwart the northern heavens,
 To muster their innumerable ranks
 For battle, following where he led the way.

“ But ere that burning messenger resumed
 His station at the footstool of God's throne,
 Unarm'd, and unaccompanied, he pass'd
 (Such is the fearless confidence of love,
 And such amazement fearless love compels— 350
 So Moses stood unmoved in Pharaoh's court)
 Within the triple walls of darkness piled
 By Satan round his vast metropolis,
 And through the throng of ruin'd seraphim,
 And lurid cohorts round about them ranged,
 And, suddenly amid that council hall
 Apparent, for His Lord spake winged words :

“ Ye fallen principalities of heaven,
 Wrath is impatient Michael and his hosts
 Already by command are on their way 360
 To cleanse these heavenly regions. Ere the sword
 Drive you and yours to ignominious flight
 Or worse—”

"But Satan, rising from his throne,
 Scarce in his fury finding words, brake short
 The warning voice of heaven's ambassador,
 'Whence art thou, cherub? Are not heaven's domains
 Sufficient for thy nimble wing, that thou
 Must violate my realms? Michael, thou sayest,—
 He first, or I, of the archangelic three?
 His armies—are they more or less than mine? 370
 But let him come, with all the hosts of God
 Number'd tenfold,—I fear, I fly him not.
 Whatever it avail in idle peace,
 Love is no equal match for hate in war,
 Nor truth for guile, nor courage for despair.
 Meanwhile for thy insultant ambassage,
 Until the cohorts of thy friends are driven
 From our imperial battlements confused,
 Within the darkest dungeon they conceal,
 Cherub, abide in chains, a spy's desert.' 380

"So saying, the Arch-fiend stretch'd his puissant arm,
 To grasp that fearless spirit, but grasp'd him not,
 For God around him cast His shield of power
 Invisible; and through them forth he pass'd
 (As once Messiah through the furious crowd
 Of Nazareth pass'd scatheless) through the guards
 Who vainly throng'd his path, and through the maze
 Of bastions—none could stop his way—nor paused
 Until he came within angelic ken
 Of the bright legions now from far and near 390
 Assembling round the hierarchal tent

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Of Michael. Goodly was the sight and brave.
 Far as the eye could reach, beneath him lay,
 In turms and squadrons and battalions rank'd,
 The armies of the living God. Like light
 Their helmets shone; like lightnings flash'd their
 swords;

While over them their ensigns waved like fire:
 Warriors innumerable, of whom the least
 Thus militant appearing among men
 Would loose the loins of thousands. On the right 400
 Was Gabriel marshalling his endless hosts;
 Nor less upon the left was Raphael's charge;
 Michael the centre held: while far in front
 Ten thousand times ten thousand chariots blazed,
 And horsemen clad in armour white as snow,
 Who oft to right and left disparting show'd
 The forest of impenetrable spears behind.

“Straight to those guards of flaming seraphim,
 Where Michael stood alone pre-eminent,
 Directing with his eye, and hand, and spear, 410
 The glorious tryst, sped Suriel and announced
 The scornful answer of the foe: whereat,
 From chief to chief, from armed rank to rank,
 And from brigade to battailous brigade
 Rolling, arose a shout of martial wrath
 Indignant. Thrice it rose, and thrice it fell,
 A mighty wave of multitudinous sound,
 And broke far off amid the troubled stars:
 And, as the latest echoes sank, I came

From Zion's height, and took, at Gabriel's beek, 420
 My post upon his distant right reserved.

"But now, at secret signal from the Throne,
 Sounded the archangelic trump. Forthwith
 That host of hosts, as by one breath inspired,
 In silence voiceless as the hush of night,
 Moved on with unimaginable speed,
 Smooth and unbroken (as the peopled earth
 Unjarring and unjarr'd moves evermore
 Along her heavenly orbit), through the realms
 Of light, until frowning before them lay 430
 Outstretch'd in almost limitless extent
 The empyreal kingdom of the prince of hell,
 Immured in gloom, meet ramparts for meet foes,
 Walls of what seem'd impenetrable dark,
 Blind fissures yawning here and there betwixt,
 Inviolable, embrasures none above,
 Foundations none below, to mine or scale:
 Nothing to mark where lurk'd the unseen foe;
 No whisper heard within.

"Thither arrived

Michael his legions wide aloof disposed 440
 To search if guarded portal, or ravine,
 Or secret avenue, might tempt approach.
 But none appear'd, though twice ten thousand leagues
 Each touching each his millions stretch'd; such clouds
 And exhalations had the Apostate Fiend
 (In likeness of the judgment clouds that roll

Veiling the Light of Light from creature gaze,
 Though those be pure and these impure and foul)
 Around his throne of evil circumfused.

But as we stood at gaze, a furnace blast 450

Rush'd from those bastions forth, and storms of hail,
 As sharp rocks hurl'd from countless catapults,
 With whirlwind fury on our armies smote;
 Nor intermitted, while above our heads
 Hot clouds of fiery ashes, black as night,
 Discharged their ominous burden: such as once
 Vesuvius travailing in earthquake pour'd
 On Herculaneum's idle battlements,
 And doom'd Pompeii's last festivities.

Horrible tempest: but for us that hour 460

Innocuous, who with instinct's quick surmise
 (So flashes before thought the closing lid
 That guards the apple of the human eye)
 All cover'd by our golden shields received
 Those levell'd thunderbolts; and on our helms,
 And mail of proof those burning ashes fell
 Harmless as rain, which we beneath us shook—
 Not without scorn. Haply to one who watch'd
 From Pharos or from Egypt's plain it seem'd

Far in the Northern heavens a nebulous mist 470

Streak'd with strange fires, which vanish'd as he gazed.
 But, when that terrible Simoom had pass'd,
 No son of light had moved, none crouch'd with fear,
 None counsell'd base retreat. Such lofty strength
 God in the hearts of all infused. And lo,
 Michael stretch'd forth his spear; and instantly,

Quick as the lightning's flash, from east to west
 The watchword ran; and even as we were
 We plunged into those beetling clouds—no thought
 Of dastard terror, though it seem'd as well 480
 Plunge into Etna's crater. For each one
 His armour, forged of diamond and light,
 Made luminous a foothold; and for each
 The breath of his own lips before him clave
 A dubious path, dubious and throng'd with foes,
 Who now half hidden, half apparent now,
 With arms of darkness in the darkness aim'd
 Their deadly thrusts. Wounds were received and
 given

By weapons upon diverse anvils wrought,
 Keen, ghastly, fiery wounds. Nor deem it strange 490
 That sinless angels bear some marks of war,
 A transient anguish for eternal gain.
 Has not the King of glory in His hands,
 And feet, and side, prints which eternity
 Will not efface? Why not His angels? Is
 The servant greater than his Lord? Were we
 By hearing and by sight alone to know
 His sympathy with pain?"

As Oriel spake,
 He laid his hand upon a scar that seam'd
 His forehead, which not unobserved before 500
 Only appear'd a line of deeper thought,
 No foul disfigurement, but added power
 And more majestic royalty of mien.

“This from the furious Moloch’s blade, who deem’d
With shout of victory and redoubled stroke
To end our duel; but Gabriel succour’d me,
And bore the fiend on his avenging spear
Back to his cloudy ambush. Few of ours
In that dread battle but received some sign
Of like endurance, honourable scars, 510
More precious to the warrior’s glistening eye
Than spoil or jewell’d diadem: and few
But in extremity of peril owed
Their safety to a comrade’s generous arm.
Deeds of high courage and renown were wrought,
And links enwove by stern self-sacrifice
Brother to brother binding, binding all
The closer to the Prince of all, whose eye
Nothing escaped, and whose recording hand
Wrote every act of loyalty and love 520
In heaven’s unfading ageless chronicles.
The war was hand to hand: albeit at times
The storm-clouds scatter’d by God’s breath reveal’d
A cubic phalanx of the foe, more densely’
Embattled than the guards of Macedon,
Who for great Philip’s greater son subdued
Wan Persia ’neath the leopard’s feet. And then
Oft have I seen some mighty seraph, arm’d
In adamantine armour, throw himself
Into those serried hostile ranks alone, 530
While, following in the path that fiery sword
Made for itself, others to right and left
Have dealt their indiscriminate vengeance. Thus

Or singly, or in groups, or marshall'd charge,
 As time and place befell, that conflict rag'd :
 Millions of flaming spirits on either side,
 And heaven, with planetary orbs for towers,
 The ample battle-field. But from the first
 Darkness succumb'd to light : though not one day,
 As mortals reckon days, nor one brief year 510
 Look'd forth the sun on the revolving earth,
 But seven times seven her annual circuit mark'd,
 The while from battlement to battlement,
 From cloudy lair to lair, from orb to orb,
 From plain to plain of dismal overthrow,
 The foe borne slowly backward fell. In chains
 My chieftain led Apollyon breathing fire,
 And with him his quaternion body-guard,
 Four angels fiercest of hell's brood, and bound 520
 After the battle, for worse fate reserved,
 These last in fetters by Euphrates' banks ;
 But hurl'd their leader to the abysmal pit,
 To moan his fall with Uziel and his hosts.
 Nor less Michael encounter'd Baalim
 With Belus and Beelzebub, who drave
 Consentient in tempestuous hurricane
 Their fiery cars against his single might,
 But found the race not always to the swift,
 When, cleaving through their shields and useless helms
 Those twain, our archangelic hierarch 530
 Smote Baalim as with a stroke of fate
 Inevitable, and dragg'd him from his throne
 Above that flaming chariot, and consign'd

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Him, maugre his relentless blasphemies,
 To durance by Gehenna's brazen doors.
 These our sole captives : for the rest our charge
 Was not to capture but to drive them forth
 From that supernal firmament. So God
 Commanded, so His ministers obeyed.

For, as the trumpet of the jubilee 570

Blown on the height of Zion rang through heaven,
 Their latest stronghold storm'd, their proud array
 Pierced and transpierced on all sides, and their chiefs
 Staggering with ghastly wounds, and pale with rage,
 While now the breath of the Eternal Spirit
 Cleansed all that sulphurous atmosphere, the crowds
 Of those rebellious, gnashing with remorse,
 And inextinguishable pride, were seen

Driven to the uttermost precincts, that lie
 Betwixt celestial and terrestrial things ; 580

While Michael and his peers advancing bore
 Their mangled cohorts down, a hideous rout,
 Falling, like meteors quench'd, from heaven. Nor
 was

One province, lost in that disastrous fight,
 Ever by the infernal powers regain'd :
 For, while his armies march'd triumphant on
 To songs of undeclining victory,

Messiah seal'd the glorious realms they trod
 Against the foes' return. And, in the year
 The apostate Julian breathed his last on earth, 590
 The rearmost of those ruin'd ones, despite
 The cloudy covert of the Arch-fiend's shield,

Was driven from the empyreal regions down
To lower worlds. And heaven had rest from war.

“Scarce in the limitless demesnes of space
Echoing had our triumphal pæans sunk
To whispers, ere a strange refrain of woe,
Foreboding ill to dwellers on the earth,
Rose from the Prescient Spirit; and, without pause
Of service, we on God’s behalf resumed 600
Our stations militant about the saints:
Nor needless, nor too soon. For Satan now,
Dislodged from heaven with all his powers accurst,
Driven headlong, and tormented with quick wounds
(For not to them were healing leaves of life
Brought in that battle from the trees that bloom
Around the heavenly Zion), urged their flight
Through the terrestrial firmament, nor stay’d
Till shrouded by the vaporous skirts of clouds, [610
That for seven moons had hung like ominous death
Over the frozen regions of the North,
They cluster’d shivering with despair and shame,
A ghastly rabblement of angels—small
And great were there—the nightiest as the least
Confounded. But as when a stranded bark
Is beating on the surge-swept rocks, the crew
Pale with near death around their captain throng,
Tae while he schemes some miserable raft
Only less hepeless than the ravenous waves,
So they around the lost Archangel flock’d, 620
Who, with intensity of stifled rage,

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Not fear, pallid and trembling, for his time
 He knew was short, lest premature despair
 Should, ere the fated hour had struck, consign
 Him and his armies to the bottomless pit,
 Opening designs, which on himself and them
 With tenfold vengeance should recoil, thus spake :

“ Comrades in arms, and in this sore defeat
 Equal companions, sinister this day
 Hath been to us the sword's arbitrament. 630
 Such is the lot of war. But not the less
 Stands adverse our unconquerable will,
 Against which iron obstinate resolve
 Omnipotenee is shatter'd. Friends, hercin
 Let us make virtue of necessity.
 The door of mercy hath long since been shut ;
 And soon, after a respite pre-ordain'd,
 If rightly' I read the oracles of fate,
 The portals of the vast abysmal deep
 Will open, and the victor hosts of heaven, 640
 Or heaven's High King Himself descending, drive
 Us from our native light to the dark realms
 Of chaos, there to' abide disconsolate,
 Disown'd of God, disherited of heaven,
 Unless in sooth we make a hell of earth,
 And thus anticipate a lower fall,
 Embracing (our primeval hope) this orb
 Within the empire of eternal night.
 Nor call I now a secret consistory
 Of potentates, and seraphim, and thrones : 650

My comrades, be ye all my counsellors—
 Thus much your zeal, your faith, your sufferings claim.
 Not wisely has One deem'd Allwise, methinks,
 Suffer'd our weary multitudes to rest
 Midway on this vex'd globe, whose former wrecks
 Shall be forgotten, overlaid with more ;
 Nor will the hostile legions find their charge
 So light as their untimely shouts misdeem.
 Much may in brief be done. First let us loose
 The barriers of those Northern floods that chafe 660
 Around the confines of the Roman world,
 An angry fretting sea, which loosed may sweep
 That Woman (ye that hear me, understand),
 Her with the starry crown and new-born child,
 To utter death. But failing this,—and this
 Is but the prelude of my last revenge,—
 Our triumphs in the past, and they have been
 Such as have shaken the Eternal Throne,
 Have sprung from fighting God with God-like arms :
 Now let us counterfeit Himself, Triune. 670
 Comrades, for this I willingly forego
 My solitary regal state supreme,
 And for the common sake of all resign
 My archangelic primacy, and give
 My sceptre to another. Which, ye gods,
 Which of ye will ascend my throne, and share
 With me its everlasting royalty ?'

" He ask'd, but for a space no whisper broke
 The gloomy silence,—such far-shadowing fears

Fulfill'd all hearts,—till Ashtaroth, still sore 680
 With wounds unclosed and torments unassuaged,
 Groan'd forth, 'If only Baalim were here!'

“And Satan, as a prescient god, return'd—
 'Thy prayers shall be accomplish'd. Baalim
 In the ripe fulness of predestined years
 Shall rise—so fatal oracles ordain—
 Rise from the dark abyss: and him I set
 Vicegerent on my throne, by virtue earn'd,
 Messiah's not unmeet antagonist,
 Subdued and risen against subdued and risen, 690
 And with him thee, my faithful Ashtaroth,
 Indomitable in thy sevenfold might.
 Henceforth my glory is to glorify
 You twain, you only. Let us, three in one,
 If not in essence yet in will triune,
 Trinity of darkness, counterwork
 The Trinity of light. My soul forecasts
 The shadows of the future. Is the cup
 Of vengeance sweet? Comrades, it shall be fill'd 700
 Full and for ever to the cruel brim.
 Messiah hath espoused a Bride on earth:
 We will defile that Bride. His Church of old
 Fell easily in our lascivious arms;
 But this chaste matron, nurtured at the Cross,
 And overshadow'd by the Dove, and school'd
 In suffering, will be far more rigid found:
 Yet not impregnable, we copying Him.
 Doth He work slowly? slowly we must work:

And secretly? we must in secret work :
 And patiently? we patiently must work. 710
 And if at last within His temple courts
 His well-beloved, by us betray'd, debauch'd,
 Decking herself with scarlet, gems, and gold,
 And all the blandishments of harlotry,
 Have dalliance with the nations and their kings,
 And offer them her honey'd cup of loves,
 Drunken herself with sweeter nectarine,
 The life-blood of the martyr'd saints of God,
 Were not this vengeance which might soothe our
 pangs

Here, or in dread Gehenna, to recall? 720
 Let Him chastise as likes Him. Let Him crush
 Our hatred underneath His burning feet.
 We shall have marr'd His bridal. What amends
 Were to the injured spouse the worst of ills
 Heap'd on the loathed adulterer? Likelier far,
 Weary and sick at heart of those ingrate,
 Messiah will foresake that ruin'd race,
 Them and their tainted home, and leave us here,
 Apostate gods of an apostate world.'

"So spake the lost archangel; and his hosts 730
 Infatuate on their bucklers clash'd applause.

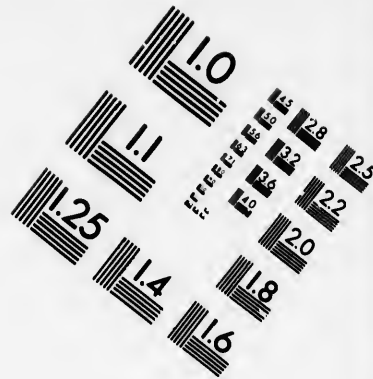
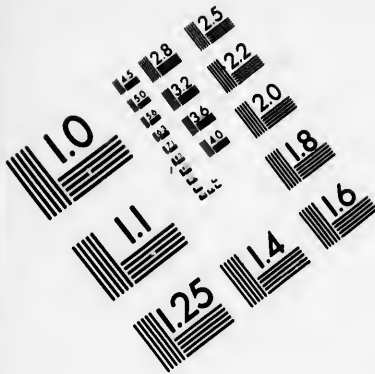
"Ah subtlest, snared in thine own subtleties!
 False spirit, by thine own falsehoods circumvent!
 Folly impersonate! And deem'dst thou
 In thy blind madness to defile the Bride,

Whom from eternity the Father gave
 Affianced consort to His only Son ?
 Defile her ? or, if not defile, destroy ?
 Go, ply thy devilish arts, thou shalt but grasp
 An unsubstantial phantom, or at most, 740
 Polluting more thy loathsome seed, advance
 A harlot to the world's hierarchal throne :
 The Bride is hidden in the wilderness.
 Go, heat thine idol furnace sevenfold,
 And, baffled of the Bride, her children cast
 Into the burning kiln, it shall not singe
 The tender blossom on their cheek ; for lo,
 Walking at large as sons of God with God
 Through fire and fume, their white asbestos robes
 Grow only purer with intenser flame. 750

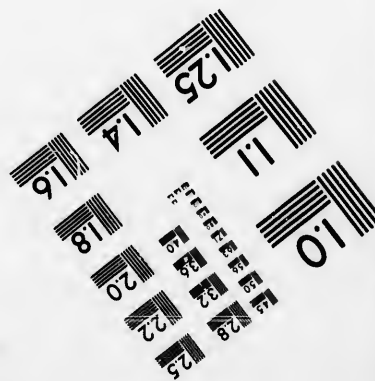
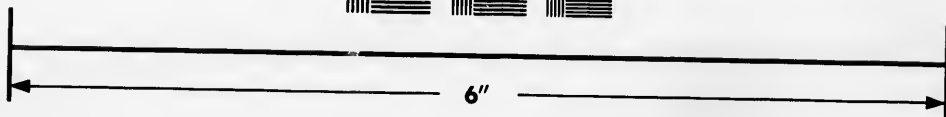
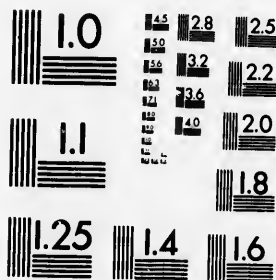
“ Dead calm before the tempest : a strange hush
 Upon the expectant deep : the winds enchain'd,
 Till from the mystic Israel's tribes the saints
 Were seal'd in secret with the seal of God ;
 And visions of the upper Paradise,—
 Palm-bearing, white-robed multitudes who sing
 Salvation, pastures of unwithering bloom,
 And fountains of perennial living joy,—
 Drew homeward pilgrim hearts. 'Twas done : and
 heaven
 In solemn awe kept silence for a space : 760
 While now seven angels stood with trumps in hand ;
 And habited in light, as man's High Priest
 Standing before the golden merey-seat,

The Christ, the Angel of the Covenant,
 Offer'd in sacrifice rich fragrant clouds
 Of incense with the struggling prayers of saints,—
 Propitious eucharist. But, this rite de
 The Angel in His golden censer took
 Fire blazing from that altar hearth, and east
 Earthward the flaming coals, which as they fell 770
 Kindled the tempest-charged electric air.
 And the first angel blew his trump; and lo,
 Forth rushing from the North a hailstorm burst
 Upon the Roman earth, and fire and ice
 (More terrible than that which smote the pride
 Of Egypt at the beck of Amram's son)
 Fell mix'd with blood. Nor long delay: for now
 The second angel sounded, and forthwith
 A mountain, belching lava streams and smoke,
 Torn from its dark foundations, slowly sank 780
 Into the angry seas, and dyed their waves
 With ruddy fires. And lo, an ominous star,
 As the third trumpeter his clarion blew,
 Sloped through the startled firmament and fell,
 Bitter as wormwood, in the crystal springs:
 Whence after flow'd not life, but death. But, ere
 This plague was past, the fourth celestial watch
 Sounded his boding cornet, and behold
 The sun and moon endured dismal eclipse,
 And through the heavens a third part of the stars 790
 Grew pale: while flying with disastrous wing
 An eagle cleft the troubled sky and scream'd
 Its triple dirge prophetic, Woe, Woe, Woe!





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" Like buried Nineveh, or Carthage, Rome
 Had sunk for ever underneath these plagues,
 But on the verge of ruin, as forecast
 By Satan, Baalim, heal'd of his wound,
 In likeness of a ravenous beast of prey,
 Rising from the abysmal waters, ranged
 The desolated shores, ten-horn'd, ten-crown'd, 800
 And on his heads the names of blasphemy :
 To b'n the dragon tender'd all his power.
 While sevenfold Ashtaroth, with beauty smirch'd
 In battle, but with undecaying wiles,
 Couching his fell designs in lamb-like guise,
 Sent through all lands his legionary spirits,
 And led the shepherds of the silly sheep
 Blindfold, and blinding others, to adore
 The beast whose deadly wound was heal'd, and make,
 By his perfidious miracles beguiled, 810
 A bestial vocal image, who as God
 Upon the altar seated in God's house,
 Holding the keys of Peter, should receive
 The homage of the world. Thus Phoenix-like
 On the rent walls and smoking towers of Rome,
 In hideous mimicry of Him who built
 His church on Salem's crumbling battlements,
 The Arch-adversary for his harlot bride
 Buildd a mystical metropolis,
 The haunt of devils, Babylon the great, 820
 Whence in her pride and pomp she might allure
 The nations, as the peerless queen of heaven,
 Mother and mistress of all lands. Alas

For miserable Christendom! The East
 Gloom'd underneath the shadow of new gods,
 Sculptured, or cast, or pictured: and the West
 Drove out Olympian deities to' instate
 Angels and saints within their vacant shrines,
 Blaspheming God and them at once. Meanwhile
 Apollyon, otherwise Abaddon call'd, 830
 Who sank with Baalim, equal in crime,
 Nor had in the abyss unlearn'd revenge,
 Oped, when his chains were loosed, the infernal pit,
 From whence, as from a furnace, fiery smoke
 Rose, darkening the terrestrial firmament;
 And locust legions issuing, mail'd for war,
 None such before or after them, swarm'd forth
 Embattled from the wilds of Araby,
 And with their lion teeth and scorpion stings 840
 Tormented them that dwelt upon the earth
 For twice five months of years. Nor had this scourge
 Pass'd ere the sixth prophetic trumpet clang'd,
 And the four spirits, Apollyon's fourfold guard,
 Bound in Euphrates, by command were loosed,
 And straightway from the famed Bagdad led forth
 Myriads of myriads, turms of horse, twice told,
 In sulphur clad and hyacinth and fire,
 Over the devastated earth which shook
 Beneath their trampling: but the rest, whose names 850
 Were not engraven in the book of life,
 In foul idolatries and endless lusts
 And devilish incantations lived and died.

"The roots of fairest bloom lie sometime hidden
 The deepest underneath the soil: the stones
 Of purest crystal are from gloomiest mines:
 The tenderest pearls are won from roughest seas:
 And stars of colours dipp'd in Iris' vats
 Beam from unfathomable distanecs,
 Ere they diselose their radiance. And when night
 Hung darkest o'er the struggling Church,—when faith
 Was weary wrestling, not with heathen focs, [860
 But, mystery of mysteries, with her
 Who claim'd allegiance as the Bride of Christ,—
 When Satan and his fellow-fiends devised
 Daily new tortures, and relentless scythics
 Mow'd swaths of martyrs in the Alpine glens,—
 When fronting all the powers of Antichrist
 Christ's feeblest braved their fiercest,—then and there
 Were vessels fashion'd for th' Master's use
 Of unexampled beauty and grace [870
 Beyond all price. The Comforter was there,
 And in His tender ministries we learn'd
 Patience and graec not dream'd of hitherto.
 Angels hung clustering round an infant's sleep;
 And seraphs waited for a child's response;
 And legions watch'd who deem'd themselves alone.
 Love baffled hate; and never a trembling lamb
 Was from the Heavenly Shepherd's bosom torn.
 Eternity irradiated time:
 A Father's smile outweigh'd earth's myriad powers;
 A Saviour's love was country, kith, and home; [880
 The weakest, in the Spirit's might, were strong.

Ah! brother, there are tales of secret grace,
Written in heaven, which shall suffuse thine eyes
With tears of joy hereafter.

“But those days
Were number'd of rebuke and blasphemy.
And even as Rome in her infatuate pride
Vaunted the last faint witnesses were crush'd,
Lo, from the heavens descended One whose face
Shone as the sun, cloud-mantled, rainbow-crown'd, 890
And set His fiery right foot on the sea,
His left on earth, and with His lion voice
Waking far thunders in the clouds that hung
Around the throne of judgment, sware by Him
Who lives for ever and for ever, time,
As meted on His chart, should be no more,
Save only till the great archangel blew
The latest trumpet of the seven, and then
The mystery of God should be complete.

“Askest thou, who it was, thus robed in light? 900
None other than Messiah. For they err
Who deem, because the Word as man's High Priest
Within the Holiest Sanctuary abides,
That never, as before His days of flesh,
He, Omnipresent, as in heaven, on earth
Reveals His glory to the sons of men
Or angels. Show'd He not Himself to Saul
Of Tarsus, as he near'd Damascus' gates?
And fell not John in Patmos at His feet?

And when unhappy Salem sank, as sinks 910
 The blood-red sun in clouds of fiery storm,
 Came He not in His royalty descending,
 Smiting His foes, and rescuing His own
 According to His word? Nor otherwise
 When dragon ensigns fled before the Cross,
 The Incarnate Lamb, beaming His beams of wrath,
 Was present in the awful strife. And now
 What time this last confederacy of hell
 Was stricken to the heart, He stood and cried,
 By man, but not by us unseen, unheard. 920

"That Morning Star, herald of dawn, diffused
 Its radiance on all lands and distant isles,
 Nor, brother, least on thine. Never again
 Such midnight darkness whelm'd the earth. Far
 streaks
 Of glory flush'd the heavens. Yet not the less
 The powers of hell conspired to dim or quench
 The God-enkindled flame. But stifled here,
 The bright fire burst forth there in tenfold strength.
 And when with better augury they breathed
 Over the toilworn Church a sultry heat, 930
 Mephitic, somnolent, the winds of God
 Rushing tempestuous, and with lightnings wing'd,
 Scatter'd the deadly sloth. For now appear'd,
 Emerging from the heavenly sanctuary,
 Seven angels, clad in priestly robes of white,
 Each holding in his hand a golden vase,
 Full of the wrath of God. These as they pour'd

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Forth from their fiery censers one by one,
 The earth was smitten by a noisome plague,
 The sea became a pool of stagnant gore,
 The rivers and the fountains flow'd with blood. 940
 The old Euphrates dwindled in its bed
 And ran a puny stream a child might wade,
 While spirits malignant, by hell's triad urged,
 Sped forth, gathering the nations and their kings
 To Armageddon's battle-field. The while
 Another angel, flying in mid-heaven,
 Preach'd as he flew to every tribe and tongue
 Evangel tidings of eternal love.
 And on from watch to watch adown the streets 950
 Of Zion pass'd the cry, 'Arise, behold
 The Bridegroom cometh,' and the virgins rose
 Who for long hours had slept, and trimm'd their
 lamps
 And ready stood, waiting their Lord's return.

"Thus, brother, have I at thy suit retraced,
 Though but in briefest retrospect, the fight
 The militant Church hath foughten. Nor remains
 Save that the latest censor of God's wrath
 Be pour'd into the ærial firmament
 Ere the shout echoes round the startled world, 960
 'Great Babylon is fallen!' and the Prince
 Leads forth His armies with triumphal palms
 And hymning Hallelujahs, while His foes
 Are crush'd before Him, and Himself assumes
 The sceptre of His rightful universe."

So Oriel spake ; and while he spake mine eye
Moved not from reading his ; such glorious thoughts,
Passing his own angelic tongue to' express,
Were written on his countenance. The more
He spake to me, the more I long'd to know, 970
And fain methought had listen'd on and on
In raptured audience evermore. But now
After sweet interval in which he touch'd
The light chords of what seem'd a golden lute,
And to spontaneous gushing melodies
Sang from heaven's psalter one of those refrains
Whose faint far echo ravish'd David's soul ;—
This ended, he turn'd to me and besought,
As he had open'd things unknown by me,
I would vouchsafe his earnest suit, and tell 980
What he had watch'd and guarded from without
But knew not from within,—my spirit's life
From its first dawn to noon : this he besought
With such unfeign'd humility, such grace,
Making it easy to refuse or grant,
That all my bosom open'd to his love,
So far as one may know another. Depths
There are in all no creature eye can read,
Sacred to God. But, as I told him all
That love may ask of perfect confidence, 990
Our hearts were knit for ever. I henceforth
Had claims on him who thus drank in my words,
A mute rapt listener. As the astronomer,
Who on the starry heavens the livelong night
Has gazed unwearied, in the dewy dawn

Returning homeward, plucks a simple flower,
 Primrose, or cowslip, or anemone,
 And in its tender beauties peering finds
 More calm delight than in those mighty orbs
 With all their pendent satellites: so then
 My guardian with an elder brother's joy
 Rested upon me in his love, the while
 I told the humble story of my heart.

1000

How long might there elapse of earthly time,
 As thus upon that mountain range we sate
 Communing, I knew not. But suddenly
 A clear deep musical sound about us breathed,
 Like to a silver trumpet blown far off,
 From rocks to distant rocks reverberate,
 As though the hills, instinct with harmony,
 Themselves were live and vocal. And my guide
 Sprang to his feet, and gazed intently' and long
 Upon the blissful Paradise that smiled
 Beneath us, while a flush of eager joy
 Crimson'd his cheek, and quick words from his lips
 Dropp'd hurriedly,—“ Brother, this is the first
 Of the three trumpet signals fore-announced,
 That usher in the long-expected close.
 The first portends our tryst on yonder plains;
 The second, our ascent beneath the sword
 Of Gabriel to the confines of the earth;
 The third, the Bridal of the Lamb. But now
 They need our presence yonder. Let us go.”

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1020

So saying, again he took my hand in his;
And swifter than the light of morn we pass'd
Down from those airy battlements, and soon,
Albeit the intervening space was far
As Atlas from the snowy Himalays,
Rejoin'd the multitudes of the redeem'd
With angels intermingled, rapidly
From every distant realm of Paradise
Within what seem'd one endless vale of flowers
Assembling, joy in every bounding step
And love past utterance stamp'd on every brow.

1030

END OF THE EIGHTH BOOK.

Book Ninth.

THE BRIDAL OF THE LAMB.

O MYSTERY of love, whose simplest signs
 Are hieroglyphics of another tongue
 Love only can interpret, from a babe's
 First smile of joyance at its mother's voice,
 To the warm ruddy glow of frostless age ;
 A web of heavenly warp and earthly woof ;
 Affections twined, and intertwined ; gold threads
 Woven, unwoven, and again rewove ;
 Links riveted, and loosen'd, and relink'd,
 Imperishable all,—what shall I say ? 10
 How speak of thee in language worthy thee ?
 My spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak.
 I see thee through a glass but darkly,—beams
 From the great Fontal Orb of love, which shone,
 Ere the foundations of the heavens were laid,
 Self-luminous, self-centred, self-contain'd,
 In its own increate immensity,
 Perfect, incomprehensible, Triune ;
 But which in fulness of the age of ages
 Brake effluent forth, the exuberance of life 20

Creative, till the universe of things
Rose underneath the hand of God, instinct
With His own na'ture, sinless, undefiled ;
And, when foreseen but not the less abhorr'd
Evil arose from good, and cast its pall,
The pall of death, over the birth of life,
Which, not one ray of glory quench'd or dimm'd,
Ceased not to shine, immutably the same,
Through clouds of judgment and quick flames of wrath
On worlds perplex'd with tempest. Holy love, 30
Which out of that corrupt creation deignedst
To build a new creation inecorrupt,
And link thyself thereto by sinless bands
Incarnate, that Godhead to manhood join'd,
And through mankind to all material worlds
(Wondrous espousals), might at last present
His chosen Bride in virgin white array'd
Before the Eternal Throne:—how shall I speak
Thy fulness, who can scarce conceive thy least ?
How gaze upon the sun, when one bright beam 40
Dazzles my feeble sight ? Spirit of love,
Hear me, who humbly supplicate thine aid ;
That which is gross in me, etherealize ;
That which in me is carnal, spiritualize ;
That which is earthly, elevate to heaven ;
The weak enable, and the dark illumine,
Till love, which is of God, abides in me,
And I abide in God, for God is love.

Oh, precious foretaste of the feast at hand !

Oh, blessed prelibation of the draughts
 Of everlasting joy! When I return'd 50
 With Oriel from our lonely mountain watch
 To that fast-filing vale of Paradise,
 Who first of all those white-robed multitudes
 Should greet me, but my own, my sainted wife,—
 Her spirit like mine dismantled of the flesh,
 But radiant with the likeness of her Lord;
 Our infant cherubs clinging to her skirts,
 The mother with the children (how not so?);
 And by her one whom I had seen, but scarce 60
 Remember'd, till his grateful smile revived
 The memory of his watch the night I died?
 My wife—yet deem not by that name, her soul
 Had not put off its earthly, and put on
 Its heavenly. In a moment I was 'ware
 She was for ever altogether mine;
 Not spouse, but what is symbolized by spouse;
 Not consort, but what consort typifies;
 The meaning now made fact; the ideal here 70
 Transparent in our real unity;
 A reflex glory' and image of myself;
 An help meet for me in the house of God.
 Oh, never in her loveliest on earth
 Of bud or bloom appear'd she lovely' as now;
 Nor ever had I loved her as this hour,
 When hanging on my neck, as she was wont,
 She look'd up with her tender pleading face,
 And sobb'd for very ecstacy, not grief,
 "My husband!" This was all, but this was heaven.

Nor was there longer interval for muse, 80
 Ere Gabriel with a royal retinue,
 Passing, as so it chanced, adown those ranks,
 Amid those princely hierarchs a prince,
 Advanced to meet us :—majesty of rule
 Engraven on his awful brow and mien,
 Temper'd with grace ; and military power,
 Mix'd with such gentleness as might beseem
 The Bridegroom's friend. With open hand and heart
 He hail'd us, and to Oriel spake, and said,
 " Yonder midway, where trends towards the right 90
 This happy vale, brother, assign thy group,
 Till the next trumpet sound. The time is short."

So saying he pass'd, he and his gorgeous suite.
 And as he said, we did. Whither arrived
 I stood a brief space gazing right and left,
 Fulfill'd with joy. Far as the eye could reach,
 Stretch'd that illimitable valley, named
 In flowery Paradise the Vale of Flowers :
 For here whatever Eden's walks could boast
 Of fair or fragrant, asphodel or rose, 100
 Lily or orange bloom, or citron fruit,
 Myrrh, spikenard, cinnamon, or frankincense,
 Grew in ter-fold luxuriance unsurpass'd,
 Fearlessly opening to that crystal light
 Its perfume and its purity. But now
 Nor flower nor fruit could fix the lingering eye :
 For here in numbers without number flock'd
 The saints of every age ; the Bride was here,

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Clothing herself with light; no bower of bliss
 But hither sent its blessed habitants: 110
 So shrill the archangel's clarion rang through heaven.

They came in multitudinous throngs; but soon
 Celestial order reign'd, nor one appear'd
 But necessary where he stood, albeit
 Wide gaps were here and there discernible,
 Room, as I deem'd, for struggling saints on earth,
 We without them not perfect. But behold,
 More frequent every moment were the shouts
 Along the victor armies, welcoming
 Saints newly' arrived from earth. For now their foes, 120
 Knowing they stood upon the brink of fate,
 Redoubled their blind rage. Disguise was not:
 The dust instead of water drank in blood;
 And fiery persecution in all lands
 Lit up the lurid flames of hell. The whole
 Creation in birth-pangs travail'd and groan'd;
 While Satan inly tortured, with a fiend's
 Dark jealousy contemplating the power
 Of Baalim and envious Ashtaroth,
 Though by himself advanced, as yet subserved 130
 Their banded domination. Antiehrisť,
 All hollow subterfuges cast aside,
 Usurp'd the throne of Christ. And there was woe
 Intense, insufferable, such as earth
 Saw never, such as heaven shudder'd to see.
 For as these tidings came, and every hour
 Disclosed some new atrocity of crime,

The language of all hearts, angels and saints,
 Thrilling with cries of martyr'd innocents,
 Swell'd in one tide of prayer adown that vale, 140
 And clomb the highest heavens—" Arise, O Lord!
 Arise, O God of vengeance, show Thyself!
 Make bare Thine arm, and lift Thy glittering spear!
 Awake, awake, Almighty One! How long
 Shall the ungodly triumph, and Thy foes
 Trample Thy heritage beneath their feet?
 How long, Eternal, tarriest Thou? Arise!
 Jehovah, God of vengeance, show Thyself!"

And He, whose ear is never heavy, heard;
 And He, who never slumbers, woke. But yet 150
 A transitory pause, a breathing space,
 A silence terrible as sound before,
 Until a cry of anguish and alarm
 Rose from the lowest vaults of Tartarus,
 "Alas! the dreadful day of wrath is come."

It pass'd, and silence reign'd. And far and near
 Messiah's Presence, though unseen, was felt
 Amongst us, shedding secret power on all.
 Angels on saints, and saints on angels look'd
 Expectant; when lo, Gabriel by command 160
 Put to his lips the trump of God, and blew
 A blast so long and clear and musical,
 That none drew breath until its echoes ceased.
 And straightway, even as we were, we rose
 (So rises from an Alpine vale the mist

At daybreak by the golden sun allured)
 Self-poised, or rather by the Spirit upborne
 Into that ambient atmosphere of light,
 Angels and principalities and thrones
 Mingling and ministrant. Slowly we rose 170
 Towards the upper gates of Paradise,
 Gates of pellucid pearl, which as we near'd
 Seem'd to dilate themselves, the while our hosts,
 Myriads abreast, pass'd through them singing songs
 Of irrepressible joy, or friend with friend
 Sweetly communing. Eagerly I ask'd
 Of her, who like a sunbeam moved beside me,
 What had befallen our sweet lambs, since I
 Their shepherd left them in the wilderness
 These many years; for years I found had flown, 180
 While I, unconscious of their flight, had hung
 On Oriel's lips, or follow'd where he led.
 Let it suffice that all had faithful stood,
 Much tried, much toiling, but all leal and true,
 And children's children walking as they walk'd.

Thus all along that bright ravine we moved,
 Expanded to what seem'd an hundredfold
 Its former breadth, upon our easy march
 Ascending, nor too swiftly for the flight
 Of the innumerable babes, that swell'd 190
 That vast procession of the sons of God,
 And with their innocent rapture woke new joy
 In all. But now, this zone of mist traversed,
 Forth issuing from its roseate avenue

Into the open firmament we pass'd,
 And unimpeded held our way,—as though
 That nebulous belt of stars, that girdles heaven,
 Were seen moving among the other orbs,
 And with a closer cineture binding earth.
 How diverse from my last descent, alone 200
 With Oriel and his courier seraphim,
 Down this celestial roadway, to a world
 I knew not, lit with passing splendours! Now
 It seem'd as heaven itself were sealing heaven
 For love, not war.

But half remains untold.

While thus along the star-paved firmament
 The Bride, awaken'd from the holy rest
 Of ages, hasten'd to her mother earth,
 There to assume her hymeneal robes,
 And, with the residue of God's elect 210
 Made perfect, wait the advent of her Lord,
 Himself the Bridegroom on the right of power,
 Where in the heaven of heavens He sate embosom'd,
 Rose in His awful Majesty, and deign'd
 Ascend the chariot of Omnipotence,
 Borne onward by cherubie shapes.

As when

To the lone seer, by Chebar's waves exiled,
 There came dense cloud and whirlwind from the North,
 And fiery wreaths of flame, fold within fold,
 And brightness as of glowing amber round 220

Those living creatures inexpressible,
 Of human form apparent, clad with wings
 Of Seraphim, like burning coals of fire
 Or lamps or lightnings flashing to and fro,
 Straight moving where the Spirit will'd : beneath
 Wheels rush'd, set with innumerable eyes,
 Wheel within wheel of beryl, and instinct
 With One pervading Spirit ; and overhead
 The firmament of crystal, terrible
 In its transparent brightness stretch'd : they rose 230
 And lo, the rushing of their wings appear'd
 The roll of mighty waters, or the shout
 Of countless multitudes : but, when the voice
 Of God above them sounded eminent,
 Straightway they stood and droop'd their awful wings ;
 And far above the firmament, behold
 The likeness of a sapphire throne ; and there,
 Mysterious presage of the Incarnate, shone
 The likeness of a Man. Human He was
 In every lineament, yet likest God, 240
 Flame-girdled, like a sardine stone afire,
 Pure bright amid impenetrable dark,
 Insufferably radiant, till it wrote
 Mercy's great symbol on the clouds of wrath,
 And with its arch of soften'd rainbow hues,
 Gold, emerald, and vermilion spann'd the throne.

Thus came He to that solitary seer.
 But who of men or angels can relate
 His coming with the sanctities of heaven,

This day of His espousals? Such estate 250
And pomp and presence, as might best comport
With Filial Majesty, Supreme, Divine,
Were round about Him pour'd. Eternal love,
Rejoicing in its well Beloved, breathed
New raptures o'er His blessed countenance ;
While in His Father's glory and His own,
By thousand times ten thousand ministries
Attended, through the holiest heaven of heavens
He came, and through the multitudinous maze
Of jubilant constellations. But, or ever 260
His armies, following underneath the sign
Of Michael's archangelic standard, touch'd
The confines of the sun's crystalline sphere
Earthward descending, on the other side
The hosts of the redeem'd, by Gabriel led,
Advancing from the opposite aspect,
Not without songs of triumph heard far off,
Stood on what seem'd the nether edge of space
Bordering earth's airy firmament. So stood
Israel aforetime, from the ocean depths 270
Emerging, by the clouds of spray baptized,
Beside the marge of Idumea's sea,
And sang the song of Moses to the sound
Of Miriam's timbrel, or disposed themselves
In loose array along those hoary rocks
Fretted by waves, which here and there cast up
The bodies of their late blaspheming foes.
Not otherwise that hour nor with less joy
We, all invisible to mortal sight,

Enwrapp'd the circling earth from pole to pole, 250
 A thin pure veil of disembodied spirits,
 (Scarcely less subtle than the luminous hair,
 Dishevell'd, streaming from a comet's brow,
 Through which the faintest star shines on undimm'd,)
 And nearing now our birth-land, at a word
 That with electric speed circled the globe,
 Bore downward through the realms of air (as once
 The lambent fiery tongues of Pentecost
 Fell straight from heaven) where waited each the
 germ,

Once sown in weakness, to be raised in power. 260
 The motion was as thought. Howbeit nor I,
 Nor any, lost one moment's consciousness.

It was a village churchyard where I lighted,
 My wife, my babes, beside me, on the left
 My parents, and my chasten'd sister's spirit,
 Our angel guardians hanging on our steps.

But, even as we touch'd the solid earth,
 The Lord Himself descended with a shout,
 Loud as of torrent floods, into mid-heaven,
 His bright cherubic chariot veil'd in clouds 300
 Of dazzling glory. And at His command

The voice of Michael, like the knell of doom,
 Broke on the slumbers of a guilty world,
 And on the last conspiracies of hell;
 And flashes of incessant lightnings wrapp'd
 The incandescent sky from East to West,
 Where night was, making night itself as noon,
 And where was day, blinding the sun with light:

A thunder sound, but no articulate words ;
 A lightning glory, but no lineaments 310
 Apparent to the habitants of earth,
 Save on the hills of Zion, where the tribes
 Of Israel, gather'd from all lands and seas,
 Heard what the nations heard not, and beheld,
 Astonied, Him whom they had pierced ;—as once
 To Saul, alone of all that stricken band,
 His persecuted Lord appear'd and spake.
 But now Gabriel a third time blew his trump,
 Given him from the celestial sanctuary
 Against this Bridal hour. And in a glimpse, 320
 In the individual twinkling of an eye,
 The ground, on which we stood, trembled and clave ;
 And I, a sense of rapture like new life
 Through every limb discoursing, found myself
 Apparell'd in celestial robes, what once
 Was mortal clothed in immortality,
 What was corrupt in incorruption lost.
 So were all clad. But angel whispers now
 Spake welcomes scarcely audible ; for still
 The echoes of the Bridal trump rang out, 330
 And still the Bridegroom's voice resounded, and
 Straightway, as if the altar of the earth
 Exhaled one cloud of incense, we rose up
 Towards the sapphire throne ; but scarce had risen,
 Ere thousand times ten thousand living saints,
 Changed and transfigured, from all lands and seas,
 Like Enoch and Elias, without death
 Achieving deathless life, translated rose

And swell'd our soaring multitudes, and fill'd
 Whate'er was wanting to the Bride. Behold
 The Church of the Firstborn at last complete! 340
 The while, with Hallelujahs on our lips,
 Still on and on towards the throne we swept
 Through the ærial regions, every eye
 Bent on the King, and every instant rich
 With new delights; until His hosts and ours
 Seem'd two fraternal armies edge to edge
 Approaching, nothing save His car of fire
 Flashing prismatic flames betwixt. As when 350
 (If such celestial mysteries may bear
 Earthly comparison, nor suffer loss),
 Emergent from his eastern couch, the sun
 Pours forth at last his horizontal beams
 Between two banks of clouds, above, below,
 Rubied with light, a flood of golden day,
 Till closing round his chariot they imbibe
 The full effulgence of his ardent wheels,
 Leaving the hills in gloom: so clustering round
 Messiah, who descended from His throne
 To greet us, as the bridegroom greets the bride,— 360
 Love omnipresent, inexpressible,
 Welcoming all as each, and each as all,—
 We from His smile drank in beatitudes
 Beyond all words to picture. But what more
 Befell us in those high ærial realms
 Was closely mantled from unholy gaze.

Earth trembled at the sudden night. The Bride

Was not. They sought her, but she was not found ;
 And for a space in mute amaze men ask'd
 Each of his fellow, where were those they loathed, 370
 Yet loathing fear'd ? But soon far other scenes
 Engross'd all hearts : for lo, great Babylon
 Trembled, as smitten with the curse of God,
 And fell in ruinous heaps, and sank, as sinks
 A millstone in the mighty waters, down
 Into a dreadful chasm of fire, which oped
 Beneath her battlements, while overhead
 The sky rain'd burning sulphur, till the smoke
 Of her great torment clomb into the heavens ;
 And all her merchants, standing far aloof, 380
 Bewail'd her, casting dust upon their heads.
 But not on Satan and his peers that hour
 The rath-beam fell : whereat greatly rejoiced
 The rebel triad, and, embolden'd more
 By what had cow'd less than infernal pride,
 From every shore their thronging armies drew,
 Weening to' erect, where Zion's temple stood,
 The throne of wickedness, and set thereon
 The proud son of perdition, in whose breast
 They three might tabernacle, as the Arch-fiend, 390
 Sole monarch, once in wretched Judas dwelt.

There was a sound of weeping on the slopes
 Of Zion, not the children's hungry cry,
 Or wail of women over slaughter'd babes,
 Or the loud groans of linked prisoners,
 Albeit the eagles of destruction swoop'd

Wheeling in ever nearer circles o'er
 Emmanuel's land. Their hour was not yet come.
 But all the air breathed sadness. Sobs and sighs,
 Vainly suppress'd, were heard in every home. 400
 A nation was in tears. For they had seen
 Their Prince the Lord of glory, and had heard
 Him saying, "I am Jesus, whom ye pierced,"
 And, pierced themselves, in bitterness of soul
 Mourn'd for Him, as men mourn an only son,
 Mourning in solitude ; or, if they met,
 None to his fellow spake except in sighs,
 And smiting on his breast would go his way.
 But one among them moved, of nobler mien
 Veiling in mortal guise immortal power, 410
 And like another Baptist bow'd all hearts,
 Priests, people, parents, children, as one man,
 Till, gazing on the cross their fathers rear'd,
 Israel beheld the Crucified and lived.

Such things were wrought on earth. But who of
 saints

Or seraphs may with chasten'd reverence
 Disclose what holy mysteries ensued
 Within the veil, when now the rest withdrawn
 Past earshot, not beyond angelic view,
 Retiring till their robes and wings and crowns 420
 Appear'd as hangings wov'n of richest dyes
 Star-spangled, like the temple curtains twined
 With purple, crimson, blue, and gleaming forms
 Cherubic curiously traced in gold,

The Bridegroom met the Bride alone? Himself
 In glorified humanity supreme,
 Incarnate Light: and she like Him in glory,
 No spot or wrinkle on her holy brow,
 No film upon her robes of dazzling white,
 Most beautiful, most glorious: every saint 430
 Perfect in individual perfectness;
 And each to each so fitly interlink'd,
 Join'd and compact, their countless millions seem'd
 One body by One Spirit inspired and mov'd,
 The various members knit in faultless grace,
 The feeblest as the strongest necessary,
 Nor schism, nor discord, nor excess, nor lack;
 The Ideal of all beauty realized,
 The Impersonation of delight and love.

And the Lord look'd on her; and in His Eye 440
 Beam'd admiration infinite, Divine.
 She was His chosen, His elect. When cast
 Abroad a foundling infant in her blood,
 Hers was the time of love: no eye but His
 Had pity: but He took her to His heart,
 And nurtured all her helpless infancy,
 And taught her gentle childhood, and at last
 Betroth'd her virgin beauty to Himself,
 And, being that another claim'd her life,
 Had with His heart's blood ransom'd her from death,
 For her descending from His throne to die, [450
 And re-ascending to prepare her home,
 Had won her tender maidenhood to long

For this chaste Bridal. Now His time was come ;
 And all her coy and childish bashfulness
 Had ripen'd into womanly reserve.
 Pure and intense affection o'er her threw
 A veil of soften'd light. To share His throne
 Was little in her eyes, whose glory' it was
 To hear Him whisper, "My beloved is Mine," 460
 To lean upon His bosom, and reflect
 The sunshine of His everlasting joy.

And still He look'd on her ; and silently
 Drank in her beauty, as once Adam look'd
 On Eve, till underneath His searching Eye,
 Conscious of loving, confident of love,
 Quick flushes of delight suffused her heart
 And shed new charms about her, when it seem'd
 (I speak of heavenly things in earthly words)
 As if He drew her nearer to Himself, 470
 And folded her to His Eternal breast,
 And spake to her, and said, "My love, My dove,
 My beauty be upon thee. Thou art Mine.
 Thou art all fair. There is no spot in thee."

When in the nether Paradise He stamp'd
 Me with the impress of His gaze of love,
 My cup, methought, ran over, nor could hold
 Another crystal joy. But now His Spirit
 Empower'd my spirit to receive new streams
 Of gladness, which from all sides flow'd on me. 480
 The throbbing pulses of the Bride's great heart

Seem'd from the joy, that coursed through every vein,
 To gather new intensity of life,
 While glowing, like the morning sky, she blush'd
 Beneath the sun-smile of His holiness,
 Who look'd on her, revealing evermore
 New wonders of unfathomable grace,
 Grace blent with glory, tenderness with truth,
 Light without shade of dark, love without end.

Wife of the Lamb, known only by His name : 490
 Oh finite image of the Infinite :
 Oh holy creaturehood, perfect at last :
 Oh true Self raised to true unselfishness,
 Living for Him alone, who is thy life,
 All and in all for Him as He for God.

But now, at secret signal from Himself,
 The saints dispersing, like a golden cloud
 Of incense blown among the orange groves,
 In twos or threes, or groups, as liked them best,
 He walking in the midst, to each and all
 Most affable and most accessible,
 Held converse : and the angels gather'd round,
 Rejoicing greatly for the Bridegroom's joy,
 And soon at His permissive voice disposed
 And piled the banquet of His love with fruits
 And nectar from ambrosial vines distill'd.

500

Then first, for interval ere this was none,
 Turning I look'd upon my wife to read

My immortality of bliss in hers
 Reflected. O my God, the glad surprise 510
 Thou hadst prepared for us! Never in thought
 Or dream or waking vision had such bloom,
 As I in her, and she in me beheld,
 Floated across our meditative eye.
 Our spiritual body was the same in type,
 In face and form and fashion, as on earth,
 Yet not the same,—transfigured: suited this
 For the quick motions of the new-born spirit,
 As that for all the functions of the flesh;
 Obedient to our faintest wish, as was 520
 Sometime the disembodied soul; yea, more,
 So willingly responsive, that it woke
 Wish to exert, where exercise itself
 Was pleasure. Would I speak, my tongue was fain;
 And language copious, yet precise and clear,
 Embracing all the loftiest thoughts enshrined
 In all earth's dialects, flow'd from my lips
 Spontaneously, catching the finer tints
 Of mingled light and shade, like photographs
 Of contemplation. Would I touch my harp, 530
 The very touch was music, and enticed
 Melodious words. The opening eye drank in
 Such scenes of beauty, and the listening ear
 Such traning harmonies, audience and sight
 Seem'd sweet necessity. Or would I move,
 Volition, without wings, or nimble tread
 Of footsteps, wafled my aërial form,
 Swifter than sunbeams glance from East to West,

Whitherso'er I would, as mortals move
 Their hand or foot by motion of swift thought. 540
 A body meet for heaven, as that for earth ;
 One from the other nascent : that the root,
 This the fair flower : even as the hyacinth,
 With its pavilion of green leaves, and wealth
 Of blossom and rose-tinted petals, springs
 From a dull dismal bulb, which none who saw,
 And knew not of its latent power, could dream
 The cradle of such loveliness, yet each
 Meet for its home, for the rain-nurtured soil ;
 And the soft kisses of the playful air ; 550
 And each to each indissolubly join'd.

And when instinctively we raised our eyes
 From contemplation of the heavenly forms,
 Now ours for ever, to the Prince we loved,
 To thank Him who had made us thus, behold
 These bodies of our glory could sustain
 More of His glory than the naked spirit ;
 Our pure affections His affections clasp'd ;
 And every power within us had some hold
 On His omnipotence. Like imaged like. 560
 And, as with us, so was it with the rest :
 To all a vast promotion of their bliss,
 To each the increase, as each sow'd on earth.
 Love only can know love. And as they loved,
 They knew Him. As they knew Him, they return'd
 His lineaments of beatific light :
 So glory is proportionate to grace.

But, hearken, now a concert of sweet sounds
 On all sides imperceptibly arose,
 From twice ten thousand flutes the ravish'd air 570
 Soliciting, and whispering in all hearts,
 The marriage supper of the Lamb was come.
 And, even as we were, we saw what seem'd
 A banquet of all heavenly fruits and food,
 And chalices of crystal wreath'd with flowers,
 Before us. And what seem'd, was there. And lo,
 The Prince, at once our Minister and Host,
 Assign'd to each his festal couch, whereon
 No sooner were the happy guests recline
 Than He Himself crown'd every cup with joy, 580
 And charged attendant seraphim to keep
 The tables loaden with the choicest bloom
 Celestial walks could yield. They, nothing loth,
 Bore from the Paradise of God such rich
 Exuberance of vernal promise, mix'd
 With the ripe fruits of summer (for in heaven
 Summer and spring dance ever hand in hand),
 As heaven itself had never seen till now
 Pluck'd in one hour and on one board profuse,
 Yet presently repair'd its gift, nor seem'd 590
 The poorer. These the blessed angels piled,
 In large unsparing hospitality,
 Before the presence of their guests. Nor lack'd
 Greetings, nor glad surprises, nor fond eyes
 Flashing their welcome to beloved ones round:
 Whether the bliss of guardian spirits or saints
 Was greater, whether children most rejoiced

In parents, or their parents most in them,
 I know not: this I know, all hearts were full.
 Angels and principalities and thrones
 Confess'd, they never tasted joy like this;
 While youthful cherubs without number flew,
 Shaking a dewy fragrance from their wings,
 And in their rosy fingers bore to each
 Some token of the Royal grace. And soon
 The genial flow of converse, like the sound
 Of many waters heard far off, appear'd
 A multitudinous tide of mirth and love.

600

The crystal river of eternal life
 Flows ever deeper on; and since that hour,
 It may be, I have witness'd other scenes
 Of majesty and grandeur more august;
 But purer rapture could not be. The first
 Unfolding of the blossom to the sun;
 The leaping of the spring, when first unseal'd;
 The young bride's incommunicable joy,
 When first the words, My husband, cross her lips;
 The first babe folded to the mother's heart;
 These have a rapture all their own. And we,
 Methinks, of that delicious feast of love
 Had never wearied (half a week of years
 As meted by the sun, so I have heard,
 Pass'd by the while: they only seem'd like days),
 But now Messiah rising from His throne,
 In the calm awe of His Omnipotence,
 Address'd us, saying,

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“ My Father's will be done

His will is Mine. The fated hour has struck
 Of battle. On mine ears but now there fell
 The short sharp cry of Israel's travail-pangs.
 Come with Me, saints and angels, and behold
 My foes and yours prostrate beneath our feet.
 Now is the day of vengeance in My heart,
 And now the year of My redeem'd is come.”

He spake; and lo, that festive scene of love
 Quickly appear'd a camp of mustering war,
 From whose cerulean gates, wide open thrown,
 Messiah seated on a snow-white horse
 Of fiery brightness, as the Lord of hosts,
 Apparell'd in a vesture dipp'd in blood,
 And many crowns upon His sacred head,
 Rode conquering and to conquer forth. And those,
 Who lately at His marriage feast reel'd,
 Appear'd an army, clothed in robes of white,
 And mounted like their Lord on steeds of fire,
 A glorious retinue. On either side,
 Like wings of light-arm'd troops, innumerable,
 The hosts of angels, ranged in order, march'd,
 And, as they march'd, to sound of martial trumps,
 Pour'd forth prophetic strains of Jubilee:

“ Hail, Prince of life! Hail, virgin Princess, hail! 650
 Thou fairer than the sons of men, Thy lips
 Drop with the fragrant honey-dews of grace,

For God, Thy God, hath blessed Thee for ever.
 Almighty, gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh.
 Ride, in Thy Majesty, Thy glory, forth:
 In truth, in meekness, and in righteousness
 Ride on and prosper! Thy right hand alone
 Shall teach Thee deeds of vengeance, and Thy shafts
 Shall drink the life-blood of Thy vaunting foes. 660
 Thy throne, O God, from everlasting years
 Hath been, and is, and shall for ever be.
 Thy sceptre is a rod of righteousness.
 Right loves Thee, and wrong dreads Thee: wherefore
 God,
 Thy God, anoints Thee with the oil of joy
 Immeasurable. From Thy Bridal feast
 Thou ridest forth to conquer; whiles Thy robes
 Of myrrh and cassia smell and mingled spice,
 And love and gladness glisten in Thine eye.
 O Blessed Bridegroom! O thrice-blessed Bride!
 Happy art thou, O fairest among women. 670
 Follow where triumph waits thee. All thy tears
 Shall be forgotten in thy Husband's smile,
 Resting upon thy perfect loveliness:
 Thy Husband is the Lord, the Lord of hosts.
 And be it ours in countless multitudes
 To throng around thy steps, and lavish love
 On the Beloved of the Lord we love:
 Until the palaces of glory, fill'd
 With ever-during infinite delights,
 Receive thee in their golden gates, and there, 680

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IX.]

THE BRIDAL OF THE LAMB.

303

Peerless Queen-consort of the King of kings,
Thy virgin ministries about thee drawn,
Thou dwellest in His mansions evermore,
Sharing His throne, and from the well of life
Diffusest living streams through earth and heaven."

END OF THE NINTH BOOK.

Book Tenth.

THE MILLENNIAL SABBATH.

A SABBATH morn—softly the village bells
 Ring out their welcome to the sacred day.
 The weary swain has drunk of longer sleep,
 And now, his children clustering round him, leads
 The happy group from under his low porch
 And through their little garden, where each plucks
 A rose or pansy, to the school they love :
 The busy hum delights his ear ; and soon
 The morning hymn floats heavenward ; but himself,
 Holding the youngest prattler in his arms, 10
 Waits in the churchyard, where about him lie
 His father and his father's fathers, till,
 The children following in their pastor's steps
 Whose grey locks flutter in the summer breeze,
 All pass beneath the hallow'd roof, and all
 Kneeling, where generations past have knelt,
 Pour forth their common wants in common prayer.
 A rural Sabbath—nearest type of heaven :
 Yet scarcely less beloved in toilworn courts
 And alleys of the city. What true heart 20

Loves not the Sabbath? that dear pledge of home;
 That trysting-place of God and man: that link
 Betwixt a near eternity and time;
 That almost lonely rivulet, which flows
 From Eden through the world's wide wastes of sand
 Uncheck'd, and though not unalloy'd with earth
 Its healing waters all impregn'd with life,
 The life of their first blessing, to pure lips
 The memory of a bygone Paradise,
 The earnest of a Paradise to come. 30

Who know thee best, love best, thou pearl of days,
 And guard thee with most jealous care from morn
 Till dewy evening, when the ceaseless play
 Hour after hour of thy sweet influences
 Has tuned the heart of pilgrims to the songs
 And music of their heavenly fatherland.
 But mortal ears are heavy', and mortal eyes
 Catch only glimpses dim and indistinct
 Of things unseen, beauteous but far away;
 Enough to quicken, but not satiate love: 40
 And the soon weary spirit exhausted sighs
 For wings to flee away and be at rest,
 Or solaces its musings, there remains
 A Sabbath for the toiling Church of God.

It dawn'd at last. But not, as many thought
 And fabling sang, the amber twilight glowing
 More and more radiant in the Eastern heavens,
 Till almost imperceptibly the sun
 Should glide above the golden hyaline,

And straightway what remain'd of dark be light. 50
 But rather now the angry thunder-clouds,
 Which for six thousand years in broken drifts
 Had roll'd athwart earth's troubled firmament,
 Portended unexampled storms ; so dark
 The masses of disastrous gloom, that hung
 Over all lands. Was it heaven's blessed light,
 That shone behind and through their sulphureous folds ?
 And could this bloody fiery haze be day ?

Ah, woe for Zion ! for the hills that rise
 Like ramparts round about Jerusalem ; 60
 Where, as a flock of timid goats or sheep
 Driven by fierce wolves together to one fold,
 Ill-fenced for such an onset, Israel cower'd,
 Contrite and crush'd in bitterness of soul !
 Jerusalem, thy hour is come. Lo, Gog,
 The prince of Rosh, Meshech and Tubal's prince,
 In panoply of impious pride leads forth
 His hungry myriads to Emmanuel's land,
 Gomer and all its swarming multitudes, 70
 Togarmah and its rugged uncouth hordes,
 Elam, and Phut, and Lud, and Javan's isles,
 Asshur, and Shinar, and the tents of Cush,
 Myriads of myriads, numbers numberless,
 From North and South and East, three dreadful hosts,
 The least of which earth never saw the like,
 Muster'd by hell to quench on Zion's heights,
 Despite that lonely prophet's words, the last
 Faint glimmering brands of truth. So Satan ween'd,

And in their aid had gather'd from all lands
 And airy realms, where they in secret wrought, 80
 The spirits of ill. Not one was wanting there :
 Foul and obscured by centuries of crime,
 But with unmitigated rage they came,
 Unweeting for their common doom compell'd.
 Scent they afar the field of blood ? for now
 Those chafing hosts, by wrath and lust inspired,
 Like beasts of ravin, burst on Israel's camp,
 And gorge themselves with slaughter. Woe for thee,
 O Zion ! woe for thee, Jerusalem !
 Thy birth-pangs are upon thee ; and thy cries 90
 Reach to the heavens. Jerusalem is fallen.
 The iron rives her heart. Her little ones
 Are dash'd in fury on the cruel rocks.
 Her virgins, and her mothers great with child,
 Speak not of them. Her priests and elders lie,
 Their silvery reverend hair defil'd with blood,
 Even where they fell, upon the ghastly hills.
 Fire wraps her ramparts round : the clouds are live
 With vengeance ; and the stars shoot withering flame ;
 And her slain armies block the narrow gates 100
 And causeways of the city : for the cup
 Of her last agony is in her hand,
 And now she drinks it to the bitter dregs.

A shout of fiendish triumph ! They have storm'd
 With ruinous battering-rams the temple doors,
 And now upon the holiest mercy-seat,
 Betwixt the golden cherubim, instal

The proud usurper of Jehovah's name :
 And out of human lips there came a voice,
 Like man's voice, from the trinity of hell 110
 Within that breast, three voices heard as one,
 Most terrible : " This is the hour of fate.
 God has abandon'd earth ; and I assume
 The vacant throne of vanquish'd Deity.
 Worship me, all ye gods." Straightway arose
 The swell of adoration ; and the hosts
 Of darkness, mingling with the sons of men,
 Sang triumph to the three in equal strains,
 " Hail, Satan, Ashtaroth, and Baalim !
 Triunity of darkness, hail, all hail ! " 120
 But, even as the echoes sank, behold,
 Tyrannic jealousy, too long suppress'd,
 Burst forth, as nitrous powder touch'd by flame,
 In Satan's heart ;—torment intolerable !—
 Ah, fool ! to think that concord, born of heaven,
 Could bind in lasting league infernal hate !—
 Thus pondering,—" Was it then for this I left
 My archangelic primacy of light ?
 In realms of darkness to be one of three ?
 One of three only ? I, who know myself 130
 Worthy of monarchy ? Monarch I am,
 And will be : none shall share my gloomy throne,
 Dark, solitary, unapproachable."

Nor Baalim, meanwhile, that lordly fiend,
 Conceived less envy of great Ashtaroth,
 Nor Ashtaroth of him : which Satan saw

Well pleased, and now dilated rose sublime,
 Hovering on what appear'd cherubic wings,
 Above the clouds, and fostering, as he rose,
 The horrid feud in his associate gods, 110
 Till envy grew to wrath, and wrath to rage,
 And rage to deadly warfare. They, for oft
 Passions with spirits are instantaneous acts,
 And thoughts are deeds, in no unequal strife
 Guile match'd with guile, might militant with might,
 Wrestled within that narrow battle-field,
 The impious breast of Antichrist, until
 Their miserable victim foaming writhed
 Convulsed, and strengthless lay as dead; and then,
 Each on his fellow seowling dire revenge, 120
 Forth from that fleshly tenement they came,
 And parted right and left. Flock'd around each
 An army of the rebel spirits. Swords flash'd
 Infernal fires; and in the sulphurous air
 The embattled clouds were squadrons lock'd in fight,
 By Satan both infuriate, who thus
 Madly against himself divided fought
 A duel ghastlier far than that which drench'd
 The ramparts of Jerusalem with blood,
 And from the trembling fugitives, who cower'd 130
 Behind Elijah's mantle, wrung the cry,
 "How long, O Lord, how long? Why tarriest Thou?"

That hour, what time the hideous din of war,
 Fiends in their fury' o'ershadowing furious men,
 Was at its worst, a blast more terrible

Than all the dread artillery of earth,
 Vomiting iron hail in one discharge,
 Appall'd the firmament. A silence fell
 Sudden, as if all hearts had ceased to beat,
 Upon the madding combatants: and lo, 170
 The sound of distant chariot-wheels was heard
 Rolling in heaven. Nearer and nearer still
 The rush of flaming millions, and the tramp
 Like as of fiery chivalry. But, hark!
 A voice: it is the shout of God. Behold!
 A light: it is the glory of the Lord.
 And thither, where the marshall'd hosts of hell
 Opposed the densest gloom, onward He rode
 Almighty,—a devouring fire,—no room
 For flight, no space for idle penitence, 180
 No thought of prayer, no lurking-place to shun
 The lightnings of His omnipresent Eye.
 First as it seem'd (though sequence in the acts
 Of the Eternal needs not lapse of time)
 Upon the rebel spirits He rain'd His wrath,
 Till from the mightiest to the least they lay
 Under his fiery horse-hoofs crush'd. Of all
 From hell's dark triad singling Baalim
 And Ashtaroth in everlasting chains,
 Chains such as spiritual essences may hold, 190
 These twain He bound, and, stamping with His foot,
 Asunder by the act appear'd to cleave
 Whate'er subtle or solid lay betwixt
 His presence and Gehenna's burning floor:
 And in the right hand of Omnipotence

Grasping huge Baalim, and in the left
 The lustful Ashtaroth, He hurled them down
 Like meteors through the lurid vault, and fix'd
 Their adamantine fetters to a rock
 Of adamant, submerged but unconsumed 200
 Beneath the lake of fire. Nor paused He then,
 But pointing where the vanquish'd Arch-fiend lay
 Crouching in agony, bade Michael seize
 The spiritless spirit of evil, and convey
 Him and the countless myriads of the lost
 In chains to their Tartarean prison. Straightway
 The God-like chief descending with the key
 Of Hades and a ponderous chain, to which
 Earth's mightiest cable were a strand of tow,
 Grasp'd his dread captive, once his peerless peer 210
 In glory, now his miserable prey,
 And bore him manacled and fetter'd forth,
 And with him his dejected hosts, beneath
 An equal escort of angelic guards,
 To their own place of doom. Oh dreadful march!
 O yet more dreadful issue! Hell had seen
 Terrific sights ere now, within her depths
 Receiving hecatombs of dead at once,
 But never ruin like this. For lo, meanwhile
 The King of glory, on the chariot clouds 220
 Riding serene, shot blasts of flaming fire,
 As from a furnace, from His opening lips
 On Israel's conquerors. The murderer's arm
 Was stricken in the very act to strike:
 The ravisher was rapt by death, and lay

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foot,

Blasted before his shrieking captive's feet :
 And to the wild and dissonant cries of men,
 Calling upon their gods, the sole response
 Which heaven, too long insulted, now vouchsafed 230
 Was storm, and tempest, and hot burning coals—
 Horrible hail. Nor only on the hills
 Of Judah fell the whirlwind of God's wrath,
 But through all lands and seas (for the whole earth
 From pole to pole was wrapt in clouds and flame)
 Whoever bore the mark of Baalim,
 Or bow'd the knee to Ashtaroth, on him
 The wrath-beam fell, distinguishing the rest
 Who, though they knew not fellowship with God,
 Knew not communion with the spirits of hell. 240
 Wherefore not ruin'd fiends alone that day
 Were captive led captivity, and throng'd
 The roadway to the abysmal pit with groans,
 But with them crowds of disembodied souls,
 Such as till now the portals of the grave
 Had never received, a hideous spectacle,
 Each heart a fathomless profound of woe,
 Each spirit the wreck of everlasting life.

How art thou fallen, Lucifer, from heaven,
 Son of the Morning! Hell beneath is moved 250
 To meet thee at thy coming; and the dead,
 The chiefs and potentates of elder time,
 Stirr'd from the silent calm of their despair,
 Flock round thee. Narrowly they scan thy face,
 And ask, astonied, "Art thou one of us?"

All heartless, nerveless, passionless as we ?
 Thou that would'st wrestle with Omnipotence,
 And plant thy seat above the stars of God,
 And soar beyond the azure clouds that veil
 The throne of the Eternal ?”

Through their ranks

By Michael led, with downcast luring looks, 260
 Answering them never a word, he slowly pass'd
 To his own place of woe. Over against
 The fissure, where the brazen floor of hell
 Yawn'd to receive his ruin'd mates in guilt,
 And yawning closed again, there was he bound
 In adamantine fetters, and beneath
 The unclouded terrors of the Eye of God.
 And next to him was Moloch, his swarth brow
 Darken'd with tenfold gloom : and next to him
 Mammon, whose boundless wealth of artifice 270
 Purchased no solace in this house of chains :
 And next, ruthless Apollyon,—he who show'd
 No mercy found none here. Nor far away
 Was Sammael, blind leader of the blind ;
 Nor Lailah, prince of night. But why prolong
 Memorials of the damn'd, or fiends, or men ?
 Or measure their immeasurable loss,
 Immeasurable, hopeless, limitless,
 Who lay in torments, prisoners of wrath,
 Waiting the judgment of the last assize ? 280

Meanwhile Messiah, from the tempest clouds

Descending, calm'd the terrors of His brow,
 And drew His garment of celestial light
 About Him, rainbow-fringed, until His feet
 Rested on Olivet. Beneath Him lay
 Jerusalem in flames, and all the air
 Glow'd with intensity of heat. But lo,
 His people underneath His shadowing wings,
 And hidden in the hollow of His hand,
 The remnant which the sword of war had left, - 290
 Felt not the breath of those devouring flames,
 Heard not the roar of those wild cataracts
 Of fire, nor knew what time the solid earth
 Was moved as ocean by the wintry wind.
 They only saw Messiah's glorious form;
 They only heard His voice; they only knew,
 As the three children in the burning kiln,
 That they were with their Lord, their Lord with them.
 Other spectators than the Bride were none,
 When now, as once in Egypt's royal courts 300
 Young Joseph drew his brethren to his heart
 And kiss'd and wept upon them tears of joy,
 The Prince of glory veil'd His glory' anew
 In tenderness of most forgiving love.
 But when the dreadful cloud of fire and smoke,
 Which brooded on those hills, was clear'd, behold
 The mountain of the Lord had risen sublime
 Above the mountains: Olivet was cleft
 Asunder to the North and to the South;
 And a vast vale, with sudden verdure clad,
 Stretch'd toward the former and the hinder sea, 310

A paradise of fruits. And far aloof
 Mount Zion, marvellous to see, was crown'd
 With a resplendent city (whether this
 Were the immediate handiwork of God,
 Or of angelic ministries) where shone
 Like gold a temple supereminent
 In dazzling sheen, and thence on either side
 A river of perennial waters flow'd
 In ever-deepening waves of crystal life.

320

The voice o' the Lord is on the waters! Hark,
 Not now in thunder with red lightnings wing'd,
 Making the everlasting mountains bow
 And the scathed forests shiver: but hark, a Voice
 Is heard above the troubled elements,
 A low clear Voice, which whispers, "Peace, be still."
 And all the winds have sunk to gentle breaths,
 And, as on vex'd Gennesaret of old
 When He rebuked the raging winds and waves,
 There is a mighty calm. The broken clouds
 Melt into colours, like a dream. The Sun
 Of righteousness with healing in His wings
 Has risen upon a world weary of night,
 Most glorious, where emergent from the flood,
 That from far Lebanon to Kadesh roll'd
 Its waves of fire baptismal, Zion rose
 In perfect beauty. There the Light of Light
 Entering His temple courts assumed His throne,
 And from the unveil'd golden mercy-seat,
 His Bride beside Him, and His angel guards

330

340

About Him in their radiant phalanxes,
 A pattern on the earth of things in heaven,
 Sent forth His embassies of grace. No shade
 Obscured His beatific countenance;
 For in that holy temple all was love,
 And in that holy city all was light,
 Which lighten'd, far as human eye could reach.
 The outmost confines of Einmanuel's land.

Yet deem not of His Presence as restrict
 There only, where those pure Shekinah beams 350
 Gladden'd Jerusalem, nor limited
 By measurable accidents of time,
 Who fills all space Incomprehensible,
 And dwells the Highest in the highest heavens,
 And spans the breadth, and circumscribes the depth,
 Inhabiting eternity. For now,
 While quickening the Millennial earth with life,
 And sending forth ambassadors of peace
 From Zion to all lands and seas, the Prince 360
 With us, His Bride, was custom'd to withdraw,
 Where far above the clouds His throne was set
 Within the purple curtains of the sky,
 But lower than the starry heavens, and there
 Commune with us of all the solemn past
 And all the dawning future. One by one
 We stood before Him. One by one He spake
 With us, conversing of our mortal life
 And heavenly home; and words of grateful praise,
 As the fidelity of each appear'd,

Fell from His lips. Nor were His servants' falls 370
 Wrong done and good undone, conceal'd that day :
 But being all was now forgiven and cleansed,
 And being it was the Bridegroom's Eye that judg'd,
 And being we were members of one Bride,
 Brothers and sisters in one home of love,
 The retrospect but bound us, each and all,
 Closer to Him who wash'd us in His blood,
 And closer to each other, when we saw
 Our debt of service by another paid.
 For envy had no foothold there. Pure love, 380
 Beaming upon regenerate spirits, had left
 No film of that pollution. What was most
 For His eternal glory whom we loved,
 And for our brethren's purest happiness,
 Fulfill'd all hearts with rapture to the brim,
 And more than fill'd: they overflow'd with love,
 And drank in light till they could hold no more,
 All full, though fulness not the same to all,
 As dewdrops, fountains, streams, and argent lakes,
 Albeit with diverse breadth and brilliancy, 390
 Reflect one rising sun. If grief were there,
 In memory of so little done for Him
 Who had done all for us, it was that grief
 Which, while it chastens, only deepens joy,
 Seeing the mantle of His love was thrown
 Over the past, and henceforth it was ours
 To see, adore, and serve Him without end.

And there and then, as when a monarch's son,

The heir apparent of a mighty realm,
 Well pleased in that his father's will is his, 400
 Fixes his love upon some lowly maid
 Of noble ancestry though faded wealth,
 But, ere he brings her to her palace home,
 Instructs her in all gentle courtesies,
 And in such queenly graces, as bescem
 The bride of one whom nations own their prince,
 But chiefly tells her of his father's love,
 His glory, and his goodness, and his grace,
 Until her heart travels before her steps
 To see the sire beloved of her beloved:— 410
 So, hour by hour, through that millennial day,
 In the pavilion of the heavens recluse,
 As in the active royalties of earth,
 Messiah taught His virgin Bride to long
 For full fruition of the light of God,
 A rapture inconceivable before,
 And only from His own lips to be learn'd.

• Meanwhile on earth the Sabbath morn, that rose
 In its first freshness on Emmanuel's land,
 Scatter'd its glory o'er the nations. Realms, 420
 For ages mantled with the pall of death,
 Woke and arose to life. The ocean waves
 Caught the far splendour, and the winds of heaven
 Wafted the tidings on. Evangelists,
 Of whom the least was mightier in God's might
 Than that prophetic voice by Jordan's banks,
 Went forth from Salem. All the powers of hell

Were bound, and not a rebel spirit abroad :
 But angels plied their ministry uncheck'd,
 Untired. And human hearts, weary of sin, 430
 Weary of warfare, weary of themselves,
 Welcomed with shouts the messengers of peace
 Upon the morning mountains. Beautiful
 Their steps, and beauty follow'd where they trod ;
 For ever, like a crown of holy flame
 Wreathing their brows, the Pentecostal Spirit
 Moved in the wastes of darkness ; and again
 God said, Let there be light : and there was light.

Creation, which had groan'd in travail-pangs
 Together with her children until now, 440
 Ceased from her groaning. Long-forgotten smiles,
 The smiles of her sweet childhood's innocence,
 Stole o'er her happy face. The wilderness
 Rejoiced, and blossom'd as the rose. The curse,
 Which for six thousand years had sear'd the heart
 Of nature, was repeal'd. And where the thorn
 Perplex'd the glens, and prickly briars the hills,
 Now, for the Word so spake and it was done,
 The fir-tree rear'd its stately obelisk,
 The cedar waved its arms of peaceful shade, 450
 The vine embraced the elm, and myrtles flower'd
 Among the fragrant orange-groves. No storms
 Vex'd the serene of heaven : but genial mists,
 Such as in Eden drench'd the willing soil,
 Nurtured all lands with richer dews than balm.
 Earth breathed her thanks. Rivers of living waters

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Broke from a thousand unsuspected springs ;
 And gushing cataracts, like that call'd forth
 On Horeb by the rod of Amram's son,
 Gladden'd the mountain slopes, and coursed adown 460
 The startled defiles, till the crystal wealth,
 Gather'd in what was once an arid vâle,
 A lake of azure and of silver shone,
 A mirror for the sun and moon and stars.

Peace reign'd. Antipathies of kind were now
 Things of the past. The wolf and yearling lamb
 Were playmates ; and the leopard and the kid
 Gamboll'd together on one knoll ; the steer
 And lion grazed one herbage, and the ox
 Couch'd with the bear on one luxurious sward. 470
 Nor of the advent of the Prince of peace
 Lack'd the calm sea its symbols, nor the sky.
 Dolphins and sharks in many a sunny creek
 Together bask'd at noon ; and glittering shoals
 Made mirth around the huge leviathan.
 Nor less, as I have seen, the king of birds
 Would bear the cushat dove upon its wings
 Into the morning sunlight ; while beneath
 The swallow and the vulture only vied
 In speed, disporting o'er the woods and waves. 480
 And now in air and ocean, as on earth,
 A holy fear of man, Nature's true priest,
 Subdued all creatures to his will. His word
 Was law. Even the infant stretch'd its hand,
 Its tiny hand, towards the cockatrice,

Now seen, now hidden in its den ; and babes
 Play'd with the innocent asp, wreathing a coil
 Of burnish'd gold and opal round the neck,
 Or as a bracelet round the dimpled arm.
 Freed from the curse, the grateful garden gave 490
 Its fruits in goodly revenue. Nor frost
 Nor blight nor mildew fell ; nor canker-worm
 Nor caterpillar marr'd one ripening hope.
 The clouds dropp'd fatness. The very elements
 Were subject to the prayerful will of those,
 Whose pleasure was in unison with God's.
 There winter was as summer : summer there,
 Attemper'd with soft dews and cooling winds,
 Appear'd in sevenfold glory ; for the moon
 Was as the sun in that pellucid air, 500
 The sun as seven days' light in one condensed.
 And when the sun had set nor moon had risen,
 The lesser glories of the stars shone forth,
 As flames fair Venus in the Eastern heavens,
 Or lordly Jupiter.

War was unknown ;
 The brotherhood of nations unrelax'd :
 Swords now were ploughshares, spears were pruning-
 hooks,

And all the enginery of battle shown
 As trophies of the victory of love.
 Babel's confusion was unlearn'd. And one 510
 Melodious language, wherein every thought
 Found utterance, overspread the circling globe,

A language worthy of the sons of God.
 No labour now was lost. Commerce diffused
 From pole to pole the gifts of every clime,
 And spread her sails to every wind that blew,
 Though love, not greed of lucre, held the helm.
 But chiefly to Jerusalem and fro
 The drift of ceaseless traffic set; for there
 David, vicegerent, sate on David's throne; 520
 And on their thrones of judgment round about,
 Judging the tribes of Israel, the twelve,
 Who sometime suffer'd with a suffering Lord,
 Reign'd in His glorious reign. Mercy and truth
 Met in His presence: righteousness and peace
 Kiss'd each the other underneath His eye.
 His people were a royalty of priests,
 And offer'd in His temple ceaseless prayer
 And incense of uninterrupted praise.
 Thither the nations flock'd. There every doubt 530
 Was solv'd: there perfect equity held sway.
 No wrong, but there was instantly redress'd;
 No right, but there was gloriously confirm'd:
 For Zion was the mercy-seat of earth,
 The footstool of the throne of God; where faith
 Had clearest evidence of things unseen,
 And hope climb'd easiest up the golden stairs
 Scaling the heavens, and love, pure passionate love,
 Saw the Beloved One and was at rest.

Yet deem not this millennial Sabbath knew 540
 The perfectness of that which was to come,

Save in Emmanuel's land. There all was light :
 And all the holy race of Abraham
 Were clothed in priestly robes, spotless as snow.
 But elsewhere good was prevalent, not perfect,
 Not universal. Evil lurk'd unseen
 In hearts that strove against the striving Spirit,
 And at rare intervals appear'd ; though wrath
 Then quickly flashing from Messiah's throne
 Branded the sinner with a curse like Cain's ;
 And vice crouch'd before virtue. Nor was death
 Wholly unknown ; though now, as ere the flood,
 Decades were centuries of life. Enough
 Remain'd to witness of the awful past,
 And warn the nations of the dread To be.

Nor prophesy was mute. But, fill'd with joy,
 Little thought men of twilight shadows ever
 Falling upon their day of rest : so bright
 The morn ; so cloudless the meridian sun ;
 So calm the after ages as they roll'd.
 Earth teem'd with life. Connubial love recall'd
 The freshness of the bowers of Paradise ;
 And rosy infancy and childhood smiled
 In every homestead ; and the heart of youth
 Open'd its buds and blossoms to the light,
 Unchill'd by devilish lust. Disease had fled.
 Nor wounds, though rare, lack'd healing from the
 leaves,
 That grew beside the crystal stream of life
 Forth issuing from Emmanuel's throne. But who

May tell the stillness, who the melodies 570
 Of that great Sabbath's sabbaths, when the voices
 Of the whole world were hush'd in silent prayer,
 Or in successive Hallelujahs roll'd
 From shore to shore along the circling hours ?
 But chiefly' in thee, O Zion, where the Prince
 Held court, and His seraphic minstrelsies
 In mortal hearing touch'd immortal harps,
 And fill'd earth's temple with the sounds of heaven.
 There on their thrones the crowned hierarchs
 Sate in due course : and oftentimes it seem'd 580
 As if the deep-blue sky was rent asunder,
 Till they who worshipp'd, through cherubic wings
 Unfolding like a woven veil of light,
 Beheld Messiah and His Bride in glory,
 And angels up and down those radiant stairs
 Ascending and descending, on their quests
 Of mercy and high embassies of power.

Thus visions seen far off, and sung of old
 By holy seers and prophets, grasp'd by faith
 And long'd for, though the half could ne'er be told 590
 In language, nor by hope itself conceived,
 Had now accomplishment—a waking bliss,
 The rest foreshadow'd for the Church of God,
 The golden eve of everlasting day.

Book Eleventh.

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

WHEN first the armies of the blest, recall'd
 By Michael's trumpet, left the gloomy depths
 Of Hades, where the damned, fiends and men,
 Lay in the gulf of Tartarus o'erthrown,
 There was an outcry as of those who wept,
 And gnashing as of teeth, and passionate groans
 Of spirits in pain, and clanking as of fetters,
 That fill'd those dolorous abodes, though used
 To every sight and every sound of woe,
 With unimaginable dread, the first 10
 Loud wail of endless bottomless despair.
 But when, as those Sabbatic ages roll'd,
 The Omnipresent Eye of Righteousness
 Rested on each, nor moved, nor swerved, nor changed,
 Nor of its terrors mitigated aught,—
 Eternal Equity enveloping
 The passions of iniquity with flame,—
 The cries grew fainter and more faint, until
 Oppressive silence like a leaden weight
 Brooded upon the Deep unbroken, save 20

When some dark memory of forgotten guilt
Flash'd on a tortured conscience, and a low
Moan of remorse bewail'd in that red stain
An added anguish for eternity.

Yes, there was silence, silence but no sleep :
Sleep on the weary eyelids of the lost
Hath never rested, nor can rest : and thought
Was terribly awake in every heart,
Traversing and retraversing the past,
And auguring at times with frightful truth 30
The interminable future. But in none
Tyrannic conscience stirr'd such inward storm
As in the Arch-apostate. For long while
Nor moan, nor motion in his fetter'd limbs,
Nor sign upon his faded brow betray'd
The suppress'd agony : but at the last,
Like Pharaoh scourged by those resistless plagues
Which crush'd, but could not kill his obstinate pride,
In a low whisper that yet thrill'd through hell,
As one communing with himself, he said, 40
"The Lord is righteous ; I and mine have sinn'd."

And now that he had spoken, others spake :
And each, beneath his individual load
Of guilt and punishment and fear, confess'd
The madness and the bitterness of crime.
Their words were few : but in that heavy air
They sounded like the muffled bell, that tolls
Above a murderer ere he dies. Sometimes

A fiend in torments thought of early days
 And raptures now for ever lost, and moan'd,
 "Fool, fool, to barter heaven for endless hell!" 50
 And sometimes one with fearful balancing
 Would weigh the pleasures 'gainst the pains of sin,
 And with a sigh of desperate remorse
 Inly would murmur, "Tekel." But with most
 The judgment and the wrath to come fulfill'd
 Their dark imaginings with darker drea^d,—
 "The worst not come; yet what of terrible
 Can ever be more terrible than this?"

Thus centuries roll'd slowly by: and now 60
 Earth's holy Sabbath of Millennial rest
 Was drawing to its outmost verge, when lo,
 Once more through those vast depths reverberate
 The voice of the Arch-adversary pierced,
 Though weak and painful, fearfully distinct;
 As not in guile, for guile was useless now
 When God's Eye through and through search'd out
 the folds
 Of next to infinite duplicity:
 Submiss, but not in penitence or grief,
 He thus gave broken utterance to thoughts, 70
 Fruit of a thousand years of agony:

"Yes, we have sinn'd, I most, I chiefly; and ye,
 My comrades in apostasy and pain,
 Have sinn'd in following me. Madness to deem
 We could do battle with Almighty Power,

Or with a measurable guile elude
 The counsels of immeasurable Light!
 Enough : I see it now. Yet what remains ?
 The past is even to Omnipotence
 Irrevocable. Shall we humbly sue 80
 For mercy, and fall low before the throne,
 And all on bended knees send up one cry,
 'Spare us, O Lord! who bitterly repent
 Of our stupendous folly and misdeeds,'—
 And urge the prayer, if it must needs be so,
 For tén times ten Millennial days like this,
 Or that re-multiplied a thousand times
 Ten thousand (an eternity beyond
 Would swallow this as ocean sucks a shower),
 Until our tide of importunity, 90
 Swelling above the songs of Cherubim,
 Obtain at last from wearied Justice that
 Which Justice might unblamed deny to less
 Unconquerable resolve? But is it true
 We bitterly repent us of our deeds?
 Ah! comrades, search your hearts as I search mine.
 The issue we repent, but not the act.
 Of all our multitudes, rack'd as we are,
 Is there one grieved for having grieved his God?
 Is there one bosom that could ever glow 100
 With love towards Him who cast us hither down?
 One right hand that could ever touch again
 The string of Hallelujah? I trow not.
 Others may do' it—think of them if ye will,
 Haply with envy—but not we. Our spirits

Are wretch'd for ever and averse from God.
 Thus much at least this torturing flame reveals.
 And knowing no repentance, in God's ear
 What would avail us words of penitence?
 Tush, would Eternal Justice be cajoled, 110
 Or wearied with our importunities?
 It cannot be: there is no streak of light.
 For man, tempted by us, by us seduced,
 The Son of the Eternal must needs die,
 Die in his stead, ere Mercy could prevail,
 And God's Great Spirit descending recreate
 His marr'd and shatter'd image. But for us
 No Christ has shed His blood; no Spirit of love
 In my obdurate conscience or in yours
 Awakens one response. It cannot be. 120
 Our lot is irredeemable: our fall
 Is final: we are damn'd for evermore."

Again was silence for a space in hell,
 So terrible, that only the quick breath
 Of spirits in pain was heard like tongues of flame
 Sibilant in the sultry atmosphere.
 But shortly Satan, sighing, thus resumed:

"That which is done can never be undone.
 Believe me, I who led you on to ruin,
 And as is righteous suffer most, have tried 130
 All pathways of return, and thought, and thought,
 Till thought itself was vacancy and reel'd
 Upon the giddy pinnacle it clomb,—

80

90

mine.

d?

100

own?

There is no hope. How is that possible,
 Which we can never ask, nor God vouchsafe?
 Friends, reconciliation cannot be,
 Nor war, nor peace: one thing alone remains,—
 Submission. Underneath His scorching Eye
 Who knows what anguish this averment costs,
 Who knows herein I utter all my heart,
 I say submission to His iron rod 140
 Whose golden sceptre we have spurn'd for ever;
 Here lies the only unction for our woes:
 Submission, which persisted in, despite
 All cravings from without and from within,
 May bring at least escape from this abyss,
 And from the fiercer lake which burns below.
 Hearken, ye know upon the scrolls of truth
 It stands recorded when the Sabbath rest
 Is o'er, we shall be loosen'd from our chains 150
 A little season. Wherefore? for man's sake?
 Not wholly: God deals equally with all.
 One trial more is there accorded us.
 'Tis true, the Oracle proceeds, that we
 Shall quickly with mankind conspire again
 To mar His reign, and lead the apostate earth
 Against the embattled army of His saints:
 But this is ours to do, or not to do.
 There is no Fate, as once I madly thought,
 Which writes decrees immutably ordain'd 160
 Other than creature will, and increate
 Foreknowledge of the workings of that will
 In Him who governs all. And for myself,

This by my right hand have I straitly sworn,—
 Never, if instant monarchy were mine,
 Never to gratify revenge or pride,
 Never, ye all soliciting the deed,
 Insensate, never will I raise an arm
 Against Omniscient and Eternal Power."

140

He paused, and hollow murmurs of assent,
 Such murmurs at midnight the desert wind
 Wakes in Gomorrah's dead mephitic sea,
 Crept over the abyss: so pleasing seem'd
 The least abatement of their vivid pangs.
 And readily they pledged their dismal oath,
 If only' escape from this Tartarean pit
 Were granted, never more to violate
 With deeds of rapine or designs of wrong
 The kingdom of the Prince of Peace. Ah, fools,
 Tempters too long, who now misdeem'd themselves 180
 In their own might against temptation proof!

150

But barely had the echo of their words
 Died in the gloomy distances of night,
 When lo, the thing they long'd for was: their chains
 Were loosen'd: the terrific flame of fire
 Assuaged its lightnings: the infernal gates
 Recoiling by some viewless hand were thrown
 Wide open; and a Dreadful Voice proclaim'd,
 "The roadway of return to earth is free;
 But touch not mankiud lest far worse ensue." 190

160

Straightway, like that Apocalyptic smoke
 By John seen rising from the bottomless pit,
 Whence issued swarms of locusts on the earth
 All arm'd for battle,—through the open gates
 Of terror-stricken Hades they ascended,
 And through that lustreless defile of clouds
 Which led to the expanse, and through the fields
 Of ether, and the blasted stars which paled
 Sensibly as their ruinous train swept by,
 Startling the sons of men. But 'mongst them soon 200
 Arriving, to their old familiar haunts
 Of earth, or air, or ocean, they repair'd—
 Unheralded, except Creation sigh'd
 Through all her lengths and breadths and depths and
 heights
 A sigh prophetic of her latest pangs.

Three days the prince of darkness, day and night,
 Though night was now what day had once appear'd,
 Flew with disastrous pinion to and fro
 Over the renovated earth. No shore
 Escaped his gloomy visitation. Straight 210
 From Arctic to Antaretic climes he pass'd,
 And in the dubious light from East to West,
 Only so steering his pernicious course
 As to avoid Emmanuel's saintly land,
 Outstripp'd the rising sun. The glorious sight
 Fill'd him with envy and amaze: so soon
 His footprints, as it seem'd, had been effaced:
 So transient evil's film; so naturally

Goodness and mercy had reclaim'd their own.
 Not that the sparse and rare remains of ill 220
 Escaped his sympathetic eye, or fail'd
 To' awaken pleasure in the Evil One :
 But these were few and far. The earth was full
 Of gladness ; and her hymns of ceaseless praise,
 Rich with the music of his Rival's name,
 Grated worse discord in his ear than all
 Hell's wailings. But for full three days and nights
 The memory of his dark Millennial prison
 And his late dominant resolve suppress'd,
 Albeit with inward agony untold, 230
 Utterance of hatred c. by deed or word
 Or louring frown.

But then, as morning broke,
 It chanced he lighted there where Penuel,—
 The seraph who first dropp'd on heaven's bright floor
 Such contrite tears as the unfall'n may weep,—
 Shed fragrance on the bridal couch of two
 Only last eve united in the links
 Of marriage. Through her half-closed lids the bride
 Glanced bashfully upon her sleeping spouse
 As glad to find him not awaked, that she 240
 Might gaze embolden'd with less burning cheek
 Upon his lofty brow. Sweetly she quaff'd
 The odours, and imbibed the quicken'd air,
 Nor knew the perfume was from heavenly bowers,
 Nor human love was fann'd by angel wings.
 It was a scene of which the happy earth

Had myriads not unlike. But Penue's watch,
 So like his own in Eden o'er the sleep
 Of our first parents, stirr'd such fell despite,
 Such envy' and enmity and withering pride
 In Satan's breast, that, when the seraph flew,
 His errand done, swift as a beam of light,
 To Zion's golden gates and thence to heaven,
 The fiend no more refrain'd himself, but scowl'd
 Defiance on the sky, and spake aloud :

250

“ God, this is worse than hell. Here rent in twain
 Myself against myself wage deadly strife.
 What see I here but love? innocent love?
 Love, which I share not, nor can ever share,
 But crave with inextinguishable desire
 To shrivel all its beauty like a scroll
 Now and for ever. Rest, proud heart, be still.
 How rest amid this restless rising tide?
 Anguish intolerable: not these twain,
 Nor millions like upon this peopled world.
 One world might be endured. But, maddening
 thought,

260

These are but firstfruits of the things to be.
 Love must needs multiply. Nothing but sin
 Can kill its growth. Prolific tree of life,
 Whose seed is in itself upon the earth!
 And Earth, her granaries overstock'd ere long,
 Doubtless will sow the starry heavens with love,
 New worlds on worlds impregning (who shall fix
 A term to that increase?) while I and mine,—

270

They multiplying more and more, we not,—
 Become through endless ages less and less,
 Less great, less formidable, less observed,
 Nothing or worse than nothing;—gazing-stocks,
 At which the elect will point and cry, Behold
 The fruit of disobedience, and fear; 280
 Poor motes, floating amid a flood of light;
 And every new apocalypse of grace,
 To Michael and his peers new bliss, new heaven,
 To us and ours new shame, new loss, new hell;
 Our torment more, our power to injure less.
 Better strike now. Better to be abhorr'd
 Than pitied. Mar this second paradise,
 And perish rather. What forefends? Not God,
 Or He had never brought me hither again. 290
 Nor His bright winged ministries: mine arm
 Hath not yet lost its native puissance:
 Nor men, too easy victims, flesh and blood,
 Unfenced in spotless purity like those
 Who fell in Eden, and through long disuse
 Untaught to cope with cruelty and craft.
 What hinders? Nothing but my mighty oath,
 Sworn only to myself and mine, from which
 I therefore can absolve myself and them;
 And they, so willing, loose themselves and me. 300
 Ha! my strong lust wrestles with my resolve,
 Which waxes weak and weaker every pulse.
 The inevitable end approaches. Death,
 Whatever death may be to spirits like us,
 Were easement to this riven and ruptured life.

But haply, ere we perish, we shall drink,
Sweeter than nectar to our lips, the cup
Of desolating desperate revenge."

And like a cloud with tempest charged, which rolls
Suddenly o'er the azure firmament
Its darkness in the teeth of wind, he swept 310
Over a sleeping world. Little reek'd men
Of danger. But his gloomy hosts he found
Beyond his utmost expectation ripe
For new revolt. Their will, less strong than his,
Had struggled less against temptation's tide:
Their foresight less was sooner at a fault:
Brief respite banish'd centuries of pain.
Had they not fasted a Millennial fast
From deeds of violence and wrong? And now, 320
As prowls a pack of lean and hungry wolves
Driven by fierce winter from Siberian steppes
Around a camp's fast waning fires, they fix'd
Their ravenous glances on a world which lay
Basking in unsuspecting Sabbath rest,—
Near and delicious booty. Every hour
Inflamed them: and their fretting cowardice
Only awaited one to lead them forth,
Fit captain for fit crew.

The time was short;
But fiendish malice made short work. The earth
Was of one speech and language. Myriads teem'd 330
In former wilds: and all the sons of men

Were link'd in countless bonds of intercourse,
 No wasting war check'd the full tide of life.
 Oceans were walls no more, but voyaged now,
 No storms occurrent, with electric speed
 Were highways of the nations. Science ask'd
 Of Nature's limitless munificence
 Vast largesses, nor met refusal: love
 Won easily what she had grudged to lust;
 Millennial life ripening her fruits. All lands
 Were wont to gather now in holy tryst
 At Zion's glad memorial festivals
 With greater ease than Israel of old
 Flock'd to the temple gates of Solomon.
 Thought circulated like the light. Mankind
 Was one great family, and earth one home:
 Source of innumerable joys, when all
 Was purity and evil was unknown,
 Or known was instantly repress'd with good;
 But of infectious pestilence, if once
 The foe infuse his venom unobserved
 Into the human heart,—which now befell.

Watchman, what of the night? Night is far spent:
 Morn is at hand, the morn of endless day.
 Broods yet a tempest? Yet the last, hell's last
 Expiring struggle, heaven's last victory:
 Beyond is cloudless light and perfect peace.

Yet seem'd it passing miracle, that they,
 Who lived beneath the shadow of the throne,

And saw the glory of the Prince, and knew
 That Canaan, of earth's provinces elect, 350
 Was as His temple, Israel His priests,
 The Church His Bride, and holy seraphim
 The servants of His pleasure, they should heed
 Infatuate the Arch-tempter's glozing speech
 And yield—how easily deceived, how soon
 Deceivers! It was passing miracle.
 God only knows the fathomless profound
 Of man. Yet peradventure otherwise,
 Maugre the lessons of six thousand years, 370
 Earth, mother of the human race, and nurse
 Of countless generations yet unborn,
 Had rested in her native strength, nor learn'd
 The creature by itself can never stand,
 Mutable, fallible, and on its God
 For righteousness dependent as for life.
 Pride falls for ever now: and lowliness
 Meekly receives her amaranthine crown.

But the last strife was terrible. Each fiend
 Was now as Satan, train'd in guilt and guile, 380
 Student and scholar of the human heart.
 And skilful when and where to show himself
 Clad in angelic light. Quickly they saw
 The perilous exaltation free from fear
 Of those who revell'd in Millennial peace.
 They mark'd the easy avenue, they gauged
 The powers of man, the limits of his power,
 And what beyond was feasible to hope:

XI.]

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

339

Long life was his, not immortality;
 Swift motion, but not flight; far-reaching fields 390
 Of knowledge, but yet wider lay beyond;
 Earth was not heaven; men were not angels; saints,
 Not seraphs; though celestial intercourse
 Was oft within terrestrial homes vouchsafed.
 Hence first the spirits of evil in men's hearts,
 Echoing the serpent's lie a million times,
 Clandestinely infused mistrust, and plied
 The vacillating will with hateful doubt:
 Could that be love which circumscrib'd their power?
 Why were they fetter'd to this narrow orb? 400
 Why not, as angels, free to range the heavens?
 Why this delay of glory? Could it be
 That He, who gave so much, begrudg'd them more?
 Nor marvel, if such thoughts, which once avail'd
 To drag archangels from their thrones, had power
 To baffle unsuspecting human hearts,
 To try their faith who lean'd upon their God,
 And taint the rest. No longer instant wrath
 Visibly on transgression fell. For now,
 As once on Sinai in awed Israel's sight, 410
 God had retired into His secret place
 Of thunder, and had wrapt His glory round
 In swaddling bands of darkness. Hell meanwhile
 Embolden'd show'd its lying signs of power
 And fiery portents in the sky: till earth,
 Heaven's mirror late, became again the haunt
 Of fear, suspicion, hatred, violence,—
 All save Emmanuel's land. Yet think not all

Fell from their loyalty. Myriads were found
 Faithful in every region under heaven. 420
 And speedily, for half a week of years
 Saw this rebellion schemed and swoll'n and crush'd,
 War reassumed her bloody car, her sons
 Wielding infernal powers unguess'd of yore,
 And drave the saints before her: not a few,
 Like Enoch, rapt from the tumultuous strife
 To the calm presence of the Prince of Peace,
 Companions of the Virgin Bride: the rest
 Flocking by day and night, by land and sea,
 Under the shadow of that holy cloud 430
 Which o'er the height of Zion hung sublime.

But now the foe infuriated draws
 All nations from the fourfold win'ds, himself
 Incarnate, and in blasphemous despair
 Or bitter mockery of his last defeat,
 As Gog and Magog, leads his armies forth
 To compass the beloved city. Earth
 Groan'd underneath the tread of armed men:
 The winds and oceans chafed to bear their fleets:
 The very sky was frighted by the rush 440
 Of fiendish wings. Baleful conspiracy!
 Devils and men at last in open league
 Assuming empire with a front, to less
 Than strength Almighty, irresistible.
 Darkening all lands they come, but densest where
 Euphrates roll'd her ancient tide of wealth
 Through Shinar's plains: for in their pride they ween'd

To storm the citadel of heaven and climb
The ladder of crystalline gold there set,
And leading higher than the stars of God.

450

Ah! blind rebellion, madness to the last,
Infatuate, suicidal, desperate!

The latest band of unpolluted saints
Was gather'd now beneath the shadowing wings
Of that Shekinah cloud which stretch'd its shade
From Lebanon to Nile; and now the hosts
Of Satan flock'd around the holy realm
By foot unblest as yet inviolate;
When from the frowning heavens again that sound,
Which shook the first fell council of the damn'd, 460
More terrible than thunder vibrated
Through every heart, Jehovah's awful laugh,
Mocking their fears and scorning their designs,
The laughter of Eternal love incensed.
From pole to pole it peal'd. And lo, the cloud,
Whence it appear'd to issue, spread abroad
Over the rebel hosts its pregnant gloom,
And, luring, in the twinkling of an eye
Flash'd into flame. The dreadful storm of fire
Bore ever down, precipitately down, 470
Scathing the spirits of evil first (of power
These everlasting burnings to destroy
Spiritual and carnal essences alike),
Still down,—though not before a whisper ran

420

ush'd,

450

ts:

440

here

y ween'd

Through those pale ranks like that which blanch'd the
lips

Of Pharaoh's bravest in the yawning deep,—

“God fights for Zion; let us flee His face.”

It was too late: for down, still ever down,

The arrows of destruction fell, the flames

Baffling escape or flight. And now the Lord

480

Himself on the Arch-adversary laid

The right hand of Omnipotence. The touch

Alone was foretaste of the second death,

Such death as damned spirits for ever die.

He shudder'd and was still. Nor less his hosts,

Whelm'd by the glory' of God, and manacled

Beneath angelic wardenship, were ranged

Far to the left of the consuming fire

Burning around the central throne, and there

In speechless horror waited, till the Judge

490

Should summon each to His eternal bar.

But first Messiah spake again, His voice
Resounding from the jasper walls of heaven
To hell's profoundest caves. And lo, the Deep

Grew darker at the summons. Hades shook

Through all her strong foundations, as of old

Sinai beneath the feet of God. Nor now

Was key or loosen'd bar or facile bolt

Needed to ope her adamantine doors;

For, as it seem'd, the firmament, which

500

That prison of the damn'd with lurid gloom,

To right and left was rent : and Death and Hell
 With dreadful throes and agonizing groans
 Disgorged their dead, the lost of every age,
 In myriads, small and great confusedly. These,
 As shivering on the bare expanse they stood,
 Ejected prisoners but not escaped,
 The angels in dead ominous silence led
 Back to their mother earth, where waited each
 His ruin'd spirit's tenement, made fit 510
 To' endure the terrors of the wrath to come,
 The body of his sin, and from this hour
 The body of his everlasting woe.
 Thus clothed with shame not glory, came they forth
 From graves innumerable by land and sea,
 And took their station, so the Judge ordain'd,
 Behind the accursed angels, who first sinn'd
 And, as was meet, must first receive their doom.

Hades was empty. Not a sound or sigh
 Or whisper of a living thing was heard 520
 In the sepulchral air. That gloomy prison
 Had done its work. And suddenly, behold,
 What seem'd its floor of solid adamant
 Heaved,—as in Zembla's seas at summer prime
 A mighty floe of ice disrupted heaves
 Beneath the chafing tide, and in an hour
 Its glens and bergs and frozen fastnesses
 Break in a thousand fragments, the vex'd waves
 Betwixt them washing to and fro. So now,
 As it appear'd, the keystone of that crypt, 530

Which overarch'd the fiery gulf below,
 Was crush'd: and, like a sinking dome, the vault
 With rout insufferable and hideous noise
 Fell sheer into the bottomless pit. But huge
 As was that ruin, loom'd more huge, more vast
 That shoreless fathomless abyss of fire,
 Which swallow'd up in its remorseless waves
 Whatever lay beyond the mighty gulf
 Coasting the triple wall of Paradise.

Meanwhile on earth the quick tempestuous flames,
 That overthrew the rebel armies, spread [540
 From fell to forest, and from clime to clime,
 From shore to shore, from island on to isle,
 And burning continent to continent;
 While from beneath the ocean lava floods
 Surged up until the very waters roll'd
 Aflame; and clouds of smoke and seething steam
 Darken'd the sky—a space: then I beheld,
 And lo, the firmamental heavens themselves
 Were kindled, and the primal elements 550
 Melted with heat, and one vast sea of fire,
 Its waves darting their hungry tongues aloof,
 Baptized the unregenerate earth in flame.
 One land alone,—like Goshen, when the shroud
 Of palpable darkness wrapt the Memphian plains,
 Sunning its pastures in the smile of God —
 One land remain'd unscathed, and over the
 Nor firebrand shot, nor smell of burning pass'd.

And there in heaven, immediately above
 The holy hills of Zion as it seem'd, 560
 Though peradventure airy semblance veil'd
 A distance greater than the solar orb,
 When now the blasts of lightning wrath were spent,
 From out the dazzling glory' at last emerged
 The likeness of a great white throne, more bright
 (If time may render such similitude
 To mysteries not born of time) than when
 A vaporous sea of mist, shrouding the Alps
 From Viso to the far Tyrol, an hour 570
 Ere sunset, lifts its giant gloom, and melts
 In showers, save where the victor king of day
 Rides on the uppermost ravine of cloud
 And brightens it to brightness till it glows
 Whiter than light itself. And on the throne,
 When strengthen'd by the Spirit I look'd, behold
 One seated, from whose unveil'd face the earth
 As mantled with its former robes, and heaven,
 Its azure curtains shrivelling like a leaf,
 Melted as melts a dream o' the night. But lo, 580
 Before the throne in countless millions stood
 New risen the dead, all of them, small and great,
 Speechless with terror, by the angels soon
 Far to the left reduced: while on the right
 Advanced the saints in blissful multitudes;
 And round about the throne were seraphim
 And cherubim of glory, and the chiefs
 Of the celestial host; meanwhile the rest
 Stretch'd like a fringe of light beyond the saints,

Beyond the ruin'd dead, beyond the spirits
Accursed in concentric walls of flame.

590

And then and there the likeness as of books
Before the awful Presence of the Judge
Was seen, the massive chronicles of time,
The law, the Gospel, and the book of life.

This the last open'd was first read. And as
The names engraven on its crystal leaves
Fell singly from Messiah's lips, the saints
From martyr'd Abel to the youngest babe
Caught heavenward for the joy of His espousals
Stood forth apparent in that holy light,
Their blood-wash'd robes purer than driven snow,
Palms in their hands, and woven in their hair
Garlands of amaranth. And one by one
The beams o' the Divine glory seem'd to rest
On each: and in the twinkling of an eye,
In sight and audience of the universe,
That one became the object, whereon all,
Forgetful of themselves and all besides,
Gazed. Not the faintest film of guilt remain'd
Beneath the scrutiny of Perfect Love,
Such was the virtue of His blood, and such
The lustre of His seamless robe of light.

600

But every thought, and word, and act of grace,
Writ in the book of His remembrance, shed
A halo of such radiant holiness
O'er every member of the mystic Bride,
That all, not saints alone but seraphim,

610

590

With shouts of lofty joy congratulant,
 Nor seraphs only, but the lost perforce,
 Both men and devils, as the Son of God
 Proclaim'd the righteousness of saints, and placed
 A crown of glory on the brow of each,
 Echoed the verdict of the Throne, Amen.

620

Those numbers had no number: but ask not
 How long their judgment lasted; for methinks
 Time and its ages then were felt to be
 Creatures of the Eternal, in whose Eye
 And Presence moments are as years, and years
 As moments. But to me at least it seem'd
 Only the fragment of a day, before
 The latest saint received his blest award;
 And the King stooping from the snow-white throne
 Held forth the sceptre of His grace, dove-tipp'd
 (As once of yore Ahasuerus calm'd
 Young Esther's beating heart), and bade us touch
 The symbol, and draw nearer while He spake:

630

610

"Come, all ye blessed of My Father, come
 Inherit ye the royalties and realms,
 Ere the foundations of the world were laid
 For you prepared and destined. Heirs of God,
 Joint heirs with Me, receive your heritage;
 Come ye, who bore My cross, and wear My crown;
 Come share My glories ye who shared My griefs;
 But first assessors to My throne abide,
 The while I judge Mine enemies and yours."

640

So saying, He drew us nearer to His side,
 And placed us on His glorious right. O scene
 Of solemn unimaginable awe!
 Ere this, though nurtured in Millennial wonders,
 The saints were with themselves absorb'd, nor dared 650
 Look otherwhere than on their peers and Judge.
 But now it seem'd we were again the Bride,
 And seated by the Bridegroom's side; for lo,
 The likeness as of countless thrones appear'd
 On that unutterably radiant cloud
 Which was Messiah's judgment-throne—nor think
 Room wanting in that vast sidereal dome—
 Each in its order'd place, tier above tier,
 Rank above rank, so marvellously set,
 Or such the virtue here of sight and sound, 660
 We saw the shades that pass'd on every brow,
 We heard the whisper of the faintest sigh.
 Before us first the hosts of rebel spirits
 Under angelic wardens: next to these
 Their miserable victims, of mankind:
 And still beyond them angels numberless:
 Beside us, to the right hand and the left,
 The diverse glories of the stars: and far
 Below our feet our mother planet, earth,
 Glow'd in the embers of her final fire, 670
 Except the solitary land conceal'd
 Beneath the shadow of the hand of God.

And now the Anointed Judge, fronting the left,
 Summon'd the apostate spirits one by one

Before Him. Face to face with us they stood,
 Whom they had wrestled with in dubious fight
 And plied with hellish crafts in pilgrim days.
 Dreadful it was to see them now unmask'd,
 And, as the story of each appear'd, to learn
 What poisonous arrows they had shot, what snares
 Had strew'd, what pitfalls of iniquity [680
 Had digg'd for us, albeit Heavenly Love
 Led our unwary footsteps safely home.
 Now we beheld the secret springs of ill
 Which moved the mighty drama of the world,
 And saw how often proud infatuate men,
 Like Ahab by the lying fiend beguiled,
 Were dupes of hell. On each the judgment fell :
 As he had sinn'd, so was to each the weight
 And measure of eternal punishment, 690
 Weigh'd in the scales of Perfect Equity,
 Proportion'd to the small dust of the balances,
 And meted to a gossamer's viewless breadth ;
 And with such clear necessity adjudg'd
 By One, whose long forbearance had been drain'd
 To the last drop, by Love, Almighty Love,
 Uttering its slow irrevocable words
 In tones of wrath so strangely blent with grief,
 So calm, so true, so just, that even the damn'd
 Could only answer, " Thou art righteous, Lord : " 700
 And, as the awful sentence fell on each
 Of chains and everlasting banishment
 To his own portion in the lake of fire,

As by the Spirit of holiness compell'd
 We and the blessed angels said, Amen.

The Arch-tempter was reserved for judgment last.
 Silent he stood. Upon his haggard brow
 Nor hope nor fear was visible, nor guile,
 Nor lust, nor hate: an utter blank it seem'd,
 A passionless vacuity of thought: 710
 But when the concentrated light of God,
 As sunbeams in a burning-glass condensed,
 Fell on his naked spirit, it touch'd, it woke
 The dormant sense within him; and a moan
 Stifled was heard; and mighty shudderings
 Shook his colossal frame: for in that light
 His pride was despicable littleness,
 His wisdom idiot folly, and his lies
 Rent cobwebs in the torturing glare of truth.
 And now the strong was weak, the haughty' abased,
 The rebel crouching at his Conqueror's feet, [720
 The shameless clothed with everlasting shame.
 Prostrate he fell before the throne; and there,
 In sight of all, Messiah on his neck
 Planted His burning heel, and in the act
 For ever crush'd the accursed Serpent's head:
 Life not extinet, but crush'd; and sin not slain,
 But bruised and ready for the second death:
 I look'd again; and lo, among his own,
 Convict and chain'd, the strengthless Arch-fiend lay.
 And for a space no sound was heard. But then [730

It seem'd the crystal empyrean clave
 Beneath them, and the horrid vacuum suck'd
 The devil and his armies down (as once
 Korah and all his crew, quick as they were,
 Sank from amid the camp of Israel)
 To bottomless perdition. None escaped.
 And, as their cry of piercing misery
 From out that yawning gulf went up to heaven,
 Standing upon its rugged edge we gazed 740
 Intently' and long down after them ; and there
 They sank and sank, the forms more indistinct,
 The cries more faint, the echoes feebler, till
 The firmamental pavement closed again :
 And silence was in heaven.

Nor longer pause,

For now the everlasting Son of God
 Summon'd the millions of the dead, the lost,
 Each to appear before the great white throne.
 And lo, the angels round about them urged,
 Urged and compell'd obedience, or they 750
 Had gladlier sunk that hour to utter night,
 And all the other angels, from their charge
 Of the rebellious spirits for aye released,
 Disposed themselves around the judgment-seat
 In fashion of an emerald rainbow, built
 Of loftiest arch what time the sun is low ;
 Or intermingling with the saints communed
 In whispers to the rest inaudible
 Of the dread issues of this last Assize.

Of these was Oriel. To my side he flew 760
 And press'd my hand for gladness at my crown,
 And, like an elder brother, by my side
 Half leaning, ever and anon he spake
 With tears of that which pass'd beneath our feet.

Yes, there was Cain the fratricide, the brand
 Of murder still upon his brow; and they
 Who mock'd the saintly Enoch; and the brood
 Begotten of the fallen sons of light,
 Giants in sin as size; and they who sank
 Blaspheming heaven around the ark they built; 770
 And they who in another deluge found
 Untimely burial, Pharaoh and his chiefs;
 The rebel sons of Reuben; and the seer
 Who loved the wages of unrighteousness,
 The son of Bosor; multitudes of slain
 From the polluted homes of Canaan;
 And he who fell upon the bloody heights
 Of Mount Gilboa, Saul the son of Kish;
 And crowds of miserable idolaters,
 Of whom I mark'd lascivious Jezebel: 780
 Sinners of every age and every type;
 The proud, spiteful, fierce, implacable,
 Unthankful, and unholy, and unclean;
 And they who lived in pleasure, dead the while;
 Haters of God; and whosoever loved,
 And whosoever wrought the devil's lie.

Time's river in that awful retrospect

Was flowing swiftly by; when lo, I heard
 The traitor's name, and from among the dead
 He stagger'd shuddering to the judgment bar,
 And eye to eye met Him whose sacred life
 He sold for lucre: infinite contempt
 Was branded on his brow, who knew at last
 Good were it for him had he ne'er been born.
 Nero was there; and none appear'd to shrink
 More terror-stricken from the face of God;
 In vain: and many, who with lighter guilt
 Had yet imbued their hands in holy blood,
 Nor wash'd them in the only fount: and when
 The persecuting priests of Carthage came
 For judgment forth, my guardian touch'd my hand
 And pointed to a rank of glorious saints,
 Far, far aloof, and nearer to the throne.
 Where sate the beautiful Perpetua clothed
 In amaranthine bloom, though pity fill'd
 Her heart with tenderness, her eyes with tears.

800

Thus pass'd the centuries with ruin vex'd
 And visited with wrath: when lo, a name
 Startled me, so familiar was the sound;
 And Oriel faintly whisper'd, "It is he,"
 As Theodore approach'd the throne, and stood
 Trembling at that tribunal. Not a trace
 Of pride or blasphemous despite survived
 Upon his hopeless brow, only despair,
 Who now beneath the terrors of God's Eye
 For two Millennial days and half a third

810

Had lain submiss. One hurried glance he stole
 Upon a form below us,—could it be
 His mother?—but no breath of useless prayer
 Escaped his lips, compress'd in agony ; 820
 Until the irrevocable sentence fell
 Upon him, and methought I caught the words,
 "O God, I bow beneath Thy rod for ever."
 And Oriel whisper'd in my ears, "Amen.
 Omniseient Love ordains it. All is well."

But who of saints or angels could revive
 All the dread scenes of that tribunal? Time
 In that judicial retrospect appear'd
 To bare itself before eternity ;
 Though as the ages onward roll'd, they each 830
 Yielded an ever larger harvest-field
 To the keen seythe of death. But when at last
 The period of my mortal pilgrimage
 Arrived for judgment, I beheld the forms
 Of many I had known from youth to prime,
 Sheep, wayward sheep whom I had vainly sought,
 Now fronting the Chief Shepherd face to face.
 And now the fold was closed : and it was mine
 To witness I had call'd in vain. O God,
 Thou know'st, Thou only, what sustain'd me then.
 Still the dark plots grew darker, as the end [840
 Drew near, and tangled labyrinths of crime
 More intricate : all were unravell'd now ;
 And deeds, scarce trusted to the subtle winds
 And whisper'd in the ear with bated breath,

Were now in presence of the universe
 Proclaim'd. Rebel ingratitude had kept
 Its worst, its *blackest* for the close of all :
 But when the last impenitent, who died
 With devils leagued and devilish arms in hand 850
 Fighting against apparent Deity,
 Had all received the terrible award
 Of Justice, and among their comrades slunk,
 Once more was silence for a space in heaven ;
 Until the Judge arising from His throne
 Bent on the countless multitudes convict
 His visage of eternal wrath, and spake
 In tones which more than thousand thunders shook
 The crumbling citadel of every heart,—
 " Depart from Me, ye cursed, into fire, 860
 Fire for the devil and his hosts prepared,
 Fire everlasting, fire unquenchable ;
 Myself have said it : let it be : Amen."
 And from the upper firmament there came
 A Voice Almighty, " Let it be : Amen."
 And all the trembling angels said, " Amen."
 And the pale Bride repeated, " Yea, Amen."

God spake, and it was done. Again the floor
 Of solid crystal where the damned stood
 Open'd its mouth, immeasurable leagues ; 870
 And with a cry whose piercing echoes yet
 Beat through the void of shoreless space, the lost
 Helplessly, hopelessly, resistlessly,
 Adown the inevitable fissure sank,

As sank before the ruin'd hosts of hell,
 Still down, still ever down, from deep to deep,
 Into the outer darkness, till at last
 The fiery gulf received them, and they plunged
 Beneath Gehenna's burning sulphurous waves
 In the abyss of ever-during woe.

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All shook except the Throne of Judgment. That,
 Built on the righteousness of God, nor shook
 Nor faintest tremour of vibration felt:
 The Hand that held the scales of destiny
 Swerved not an hair's breadth: and the Voice which
 spake

Those utterances quail'd not, falter'd not.
 But when the fiery gulf was shut, and all
 Look'd with one instinct on the judgment-seat
 To read His countenance who sate thereon,
 He was in tears—the Judge was weeping—tears 890
 Of grief and pity inexpressible,
 And straightway we remember'd who had wept
 Over Jerusalem, and is the same
 For ever as to-day and yesterday;
 And in full sympathy of grief the springs
 Gush'd forth within us; and the angels wept:
 Till stooping from the throne with His own hand
 He wiped the tears from every eye, and said,
 "My Father's will be done; His will is Mine;
 And Mine is yours: but mercy' is His delight, 990
 And judgment is His strange and dreadful work.
 Now it is done for ever. Come with Me,

Ye blessed children of my Father, come ;
 And in the many mansions of His love
 Enjoy the beams of His unclouded smile."

So saying, as once from Olivet, He rose
 Majestically towards the heaven of heavens
 In the serenity of perfect peace :
 And we arose with Him.

But what of those

Who, from the place of final judgment hurl'd,
 Had each his portion in the lake of fire ?
 No Lethe roll'd its dark oblivious waves,
 As some have feign'd, betwixt that world of woe
 And ours of bliss. But rather, as of old
 Foreshadow'd in the prescient oracles,
 The smoke of their great torment rose to heaven
 In presence of the holy seraphim,
 And in the presence of the Lamb of God,
 For ever and for ever. At the first
 Nothing was heard ascending from the deep
 Save wailings and unutterable groans,
 Wrung from them by o'ermastering agony ;
 But as His Eye, who is consuming fire,
 Unintermittently abode on them,—
 Truth, cleanness, justice fastening like flame
 On all that was untrue, unclean, unjust,
 And thus to each awarding his due meed,—
 The outbreaks of the rebel will were quell'd,
 The quick activities of sin were crush'd,

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That,

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No word of wrathful blasphemy was heard, 930
 No violence was wrought ; but order rose
 From that profound confusion unconfused,
 Order and forced submission ; and ere long
 Swaying her sceptre through the lurid gloom,
 And curbing every utterance but truth,
 Silence assumed her adamantine throne.

Now were the works of Satan brought to nought ;
 His vast conspiracy dissolved for ever ;
 Pride, the first fatal lure, abased for ever ;
 Hell's transient eminence destroy'd for ever ; 940
 The haughtiness of man bow'd down for ever ;
 The lips of idle falsehood seal'd for ever ;
 Tyrant oppression now oppress'd for ever ;
 Hatred was still ; and murder was no more ;
 And lust had wrought its latest shame. The germs
 Of evil, ineradicable germs
 (Grace only in the day of grace has power
 To purge the ill, and recreate the good),
 Could never strike one poisonous root again
 Beneath the curse of God, nor germinate 950
 In that devouring atmosphere of fire :
 And, being that repressive fire was there
 For ever, Sin the vanquish'd monster lay
 For ever powerless in the jaws of Death ;
 And to our eyes, who saw the light of life
 And stood upon the shore of glory, Death
 Itself was swallow'd up in victory.

Well I remember,—ages then had roll'd
 Out of a measureless eternity,—
 Standing with Oriel on that outmost verge
 Of Paradise, the lowest court of heaven,
 Where once to me a bodiless spirit he spake
 Of yesterday: the morrow now long since
 Had dawn'd: there standing, suddenly we heard
 A voice from an unfathomable depth
 (And Oriel touch'd me saying, "It is the voice
 Of hell's dethroned monarch") as it seem'd,
 In shame and humiliation infinite,
 Making confession to himself and God:

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"For ever lost: this is the second death:
 Meet end for me who whisper'd in the ear
 Of fragile man, Ye shall not surely die.
 So flattering falsehood spake to me. Man fell;
 And falling, as I knew too well, he died.
 The Lord is righteous; I have sinn'd and die.
 Lost, lost: nor could I crave it otherwise.
 What would I otherwise? escape from chains?
 Were not we loosed from prison, I and mine,
 And only madly heap'd upon ourselves
 Fresh torment by fresh crime? Nay, in our death
 Eternal Justice hath alone fulfill'd
 The equal sentence of Eternal Love. [980
 Me miserable! freedom were worse than bonds;
 And life to me more terrible than death.
 Myself alone am cause of all my woe.
 Mercy constrain'd the stroke. Left to itself,

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My maniac suicidal wickedness
 Had still inflicted worse upon itself,
 And upon all beneath its cruel rule.
 Goodness has hung these chains around my limbs.
 O God, I bow for ever at Thy feet, [990
 The only Potentate, the only Lord.
 I see far off the glory of Thy kingdom
 Basking in peace, uninterrupted peace :
 But were I free, and were my comrades free,
 Sin mightier than myself and them would drag
 Our armies to perplex those fields with war.
 Only thus fetter'd can we safely gaze
 On that the final victory of love,
 Virtue and goodness triumphing, and grace 1000
 Evolving out of darkness light in heaven.
 Thus only to the prisoners of despair
 Can Mercy, which is infinite, vouchsafe
 Far glimpses of the beauty' of holiness,
 Albeit a beauty which can never clothe
 Ourselves, the heirs of everlasting wrath.
 Woe, woe, immedicable woe for those
 Whose hopeless ruin is their only hope,
 And hell their solitary resting-place.
 Lost, lost : our doom is irreversible : 1010
 Power, justice, mercy, love have seal'd us here.
 Glory to God who sitteth on the throne,
 And to the Lamb for ever and for ever."

The voice was hush'd a moment : then a deep
 Low murmur, like a hoarse resounding surge,

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XI.]

THE LAST JUDGMENT.

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Rose from the universal lake of fire :
No tongue was mute, no damned spirit but swell'd
That multitudinous tide of awful praise,
"Glory to God who sitteth on the throne,
And to the Lamb for ever and for ever."

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END OF THE ELEVENTH BOOK.

Book Twelfth.

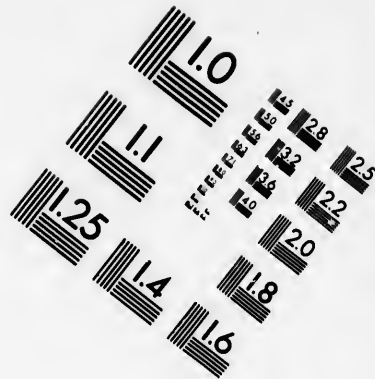
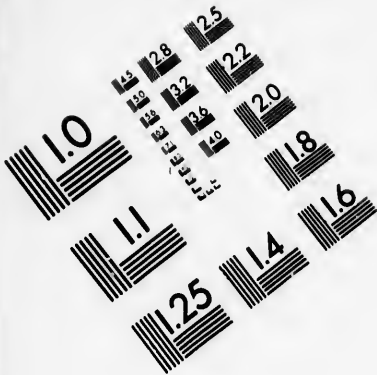
THE MANY MANSIONS.

YET once more, Harp of prophecy, once more
 Fondly I come soliciting thine aid ;
 By whose celestial minstrelsy inspired
 The saintly Enoch walk'd with God and sang
 At cloudy morning-tide of evening light.
 Thine were the strains that floated o'er the waves
 From Miriam's timbrel and from Moses' tongue ;
 And thine the suasive melodies, that made
 The royal shepherd on his lute forecast
 The golden morrow from the vex'd to-day. 10
 Nor was he in thy tuneful lore unlearn'd,
 Who interwove the lyrics of the Bride
 And idylls of the Bridegroom. Taught by thee,
 Isaiah gazed with eagle eye athwart
 The conflicts of a thousand years thrice told ;
 And Jeremy, and rapt Ezekiel,
 And all the prophets prophesied ; and chief
 The seer who, moated by the fretting waves
 In Patmos, open'd his responsive breast
 To the pure impulses, which only thou 20

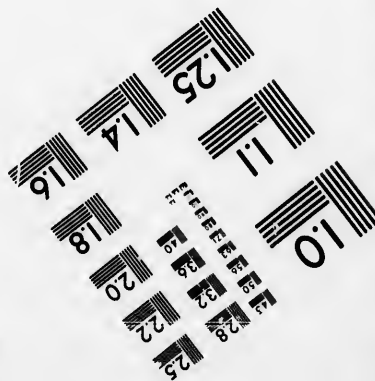
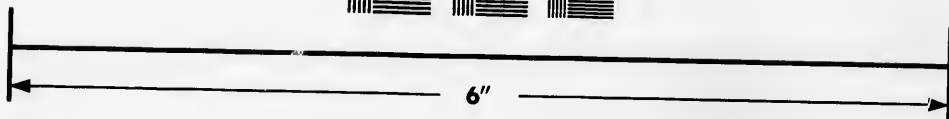
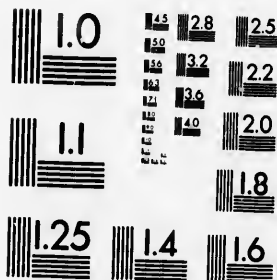
Canst echo from eternity to time.
 But not, as these great masters of the lyre,
 Invoke I thee: for they at God's own voice
 Came near and laid their fingers on thy chords,
 And by the Spirit empower'd drew forth tones
 Immediate from the sacred fount of song,
 And I would only sit beneath their feet,
 And earnest catch the echo of their strain,
 And with faint imitative notes attempt
 To win the pilgrim's ear, who listening me 30
 Haply may ask whence I such music drew,
 And so become a votary of thine,
 As I am. From a boy I loved to sit
 The while thy numbers thrill'd my soul, and since
 Life with its ruder noises and rough eares
 Has somewhat dull'd mine ear, thine, preseiect harp,
 Thine oftentimes has been the only spell
 Of virtue to arouse my laggard spirit.
 And now once more in this my last assay, 40
 Only this once, I ask thy heavenly aid
 (My task is almost done, a task, and yet,
 When thou hast breathed, a sweet necessity),
 That I may catch, if few and far away,
 Some glimpses of the infinite To be.

The Judgment had an end. The great white throne
 Was hidden in excess of light. And lo,
 The earth, emerging from her flood of fire
 Baptismal, by a new and heavenly birth
 Arose regenerate. The dews of God,





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As once in Eden, cool'd the ardent soil ; 50
And rivers from innumerable springs
Flow'd intersecting every gorgeous clime
With living waters. Like a smile of light
The Sun of Righteousness in rising shed
Healing from His benignant wings ; and earth,
Who came forth naked from her bath of flame,
Felt His rich blessing at her heart, and smiled
Responsive, and in blushing haste put on
Her beautiful robes of immortality.
Her late apparel was not found. But now 60
The azure hyaline, in which she moved,
Was not more pure than was her virgin dress.
No trace of her great sufferings remain'd ;
No wrecks of time were strewn upon her shores ;
No monuments of ruin ;—saving one :—
Where Satan with his rebel peers had erst
Built on the mystic Babylon his throne,
There rose a solitary mountain peak,
The one volcano of that new-born world,
Thrust from beneath by struggling fires, and thence 70
Ever by day and night, world without end,
A thin white wreath of smoke went up to heaven,
And quickly melted in the golden beams
Which ever from the height of Zion flow'd :
Symbol of deeper things. The sea was not :
Its salt and barren waters were consumed
In that last fire ; and all its fruitless wastes,
Once fruitless, now with profuse verdure clad,
In undulating hills and valleys, bared

Untrodden landscapes to the light. Nor deem
 Because the ocean was no more, earth lack'd
 Her noblest type of the profound and free,
 Nor heaven its mirror. For the streams of life,
 Flowing incessant, stored their crystal wealth
 In countless pools and lakes and inland seas,
 Wherewith the sportive breezes wantoning
 Drave billows crested with their diamond foam
 On emerald shores, or in whose lucid calm
 The stars slept imaged. Earth from pole to pole
 Was one illimitable Paradise ;

Albeit Emmanuel's land was as that spot
 In Eden, where the blossoming tree of life
 Grew with the tree of knowledge intertwined,
 The presence-chamber of the King of kings,
 The temple of the world. And thence the saints
 (As sometime from Armenian Ararat,
 The sons of Noah) spread o'er every clime,
 Good without fear of evil beckoning them,
 Life without fear of death embracing them,
 All pleasure without pain refreshing them,
 All sunshine without sorrow in their hearts,
 All music without discord in their homes.

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So they on earth: but where were we the while?
 When from the judgment-throne Messiah rose
 To glory, we arose with Him; the heavens
 Pealing their jubilant welcomes as we pass'd;
 And all the armies of the sons of God
 Clapping their wings of fire before the Bride,

And shouting for the Bridegroom's voice, with sound
 Of trumpets and melodious harps; until 110
 The everlasting arches rang again,
 And that Light-sea which floods the universe
 Trembled with its impulsive waves for joy,
 And Heaven in ecstasy of rapture ask'd,
 What were those echoes of triumphant mirth
 That thrill'd creation from the central throne
 To its remotest bound. So pass'd we on,
 Until the ramparts of the heaven of heavens
 Stretch'd like a wall of fire along the expanse,
 And those great portals carved of solid pearl 120
 (Through which had flown no wing unhallow'd, since
 The Son of God ascending cleansed with blood
 And seal'd the Holiest) now wide open thrown,
 Nor henceforth closed, for foes were now no more,
 With songs received our singing multitudes;
 And through the provinces of light we swept
 On towards the city of the living God.

Before us now it rose, builded aloft
 Upon the heavenly Zion. Never eye
 Of mortal man had seen, nor ear had heard, 130
 Though ravish'd with the distant fame thereof,
 Glory like this; the handiwork of God,
 And fashion'd of heaven's choice material, light,
 Through which the Light of Light translucent shone;
 The mansion of Creation's Architect;
 The palace of the Everlasting King:
 Its gates of pearl, its edifice of gold;

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Its very streets of pure crystalline gold ;
 Its walls on twelve foundations superposed
 (Of which divine realities the earth
 Can only lend its feeble semblances),
 The jasper streak'd with many a tender dye,
 The sapphire of celestial blue serene,
 The agate once Chalcedon's peerless boast,
 The fathomless repose of emerald,
 The ruby, and blood-tinctured sardonyx,
 The chrysolite like amber sheathing fire,
 The beryl emulous of ocean's sheen,
 The opal-tinted topaz clear as glass,
 The soft pale purple of the chrysoprase,
 The Melibœan hyacinth, and last
 The lucid violet of amethyst.
 But not of pearly gates, or golden streets,
 Or bulwarks, or foundations built of jewels
 Thought we that day, or linger'd to admire ;
 For we were on our way to meet our God.

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The city had no temple ; for itself
 From wall to wall, from base to pinnacle,
 Was one harmonious veilless sanctuary,
 One Holiest of all : of which the shrine
 Reveal'd amid the clouds of Sinai
 Yielded the earliest pattern. This the house
 Which Israel's royal seer in symbol saw,
 And by the Spirit's hand on his described.
 This the beloved apostle, rapt in spirit
 To some high watch among the lasting hills,

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Beheld. Most blessed, beatific sight!
 Here veil'd in radiant clouds, clouds only call'd
 From the supreme of brightness they enfolded,
 Was set the throne of Majesty in heaven. 170
 In front seven ever-burning lamps of fire,
 Which are the Spirits of God: and round about
 Mysterious cherubim, instinct with eyes,
 Fourfold in glory, symbolized in forms
 Of lion-like imperial royalty,
 Of patient sacrificial ministry,
 Of human, more than human sympathy,
 Of soaring eagle-plumed intelligence,
 Most highest of all creatures, whereof each
 Caught and reflected some peculiar rays, 180
 Some distinct aspect of his Lord; but all
 Uniting in one everlasting song,
 Cried, "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord of hosts."
 And here around were four-and-twenty thrones
 In wider circuit, like a starry belt,
 And on them four-and-twenty hierarchs
 In priestly' apparel, but with kingly crowns,
 Sitting sublime. And in mid view, behold,
 What seem'd the likeness of a sea of glass.
 But not on glassy sea, or royal priests, 190
 Or cherubim of glory gazed we then;
 For we were on our way to meet our God,
 Children about to see their Father's face.

Parent and child, O purest fount that flows!
 Earth, fallen earth, had known thy heavenly spell:

In whose deep waters selfishness dissolved
 And was not, like the sicknesses that fled
 At touch of angel-moved Bethesda's pool,
 Though tintured then by many a noxious plant
 That grew upon its trampled marge, of power 200
 To dim but not destroy its healing life.
 A babe upon its mother's breast, a child
 Lock'd in a father's arms—oh, things that are!
 Love coming forth of love and meeting love;
 Love resting in its love and satisfied.
 And knew the earth such mysteries? what now
 When through the temple courts fragrant with praise
 The Bridegroom led His own, His only Bride,
 Into His Father's presence, His and ours?
 Were they the parted wings of cherubim, 210
 Or opening clouds of glory which disclosed
 Such lineaments of love unutterable,
 Attemper'd as the spirit of each could bear?
 No pain, no shrinking from excessive bright,
 No sense of discord, no tormenting fear
 (For filial love had cast out servile fear),
 The Spirit's grace within us meeting grace
 Unfathomable, and we His holy ones
 Drinking our fill of perfect holiness.
 Yet seem'd it every thought in one was lost,— 220
 Whether the words were audible to those
 Who stood around in endless ranks of light
 I know not, but they echoed in my heart,—
 It was my Father's voice saying, "My child:"
 And every power within me vibrated

To those divinest words,—whether I spoke,
 Or whether others spoke, I never knew,—
 “My Father, O my Father!” Beams of love,
 The repercussion of His beams of love,
 Fill’d every chamber of my soul with light, 230
 As in pure waves face answers back to face ;
 Nor though eternity unfold the powers
 Of knowledge,—and to know Him is to love,—
 Can beatific blessedness transcend
 The rapture of that welcome, that response,
 “My child . . . My Father.” Heaven has nothing
 higher.

The angels gazed in silent ecstasy :
 For now it seem’d as if Jehovah turn’d
 The glory of His countenance full-orb’d
 Upon the Son ; that glory, which on us 240
 Shone only as each child could bear its light,
 Resting upon the Everlasting Son
 In all unveil’d effulgence : not one beam
 Of its unmitigated splendour lost,
 But from His face reflected, beam for beam
 In the One Spirit’s communion infinite,
 Uninterrupted fellowship. And then
 (Alas ! the feebleness of words to tell
 Those wonders passing wonder) but it seem’d
 The Eternal Father slowly rising placed 250
 A crown, which in itself was many crowns,
 Upon the head of the Eternal Son :
 And from amidst the throne a Voice was heard

Commanding Hallelujah. And forthwith
 From cherubim and burning seraphim,
 And from the hierarchal presbytery,
 And from the Bride low at her Bridegroom's feet,
 And from the principalities and powers,
 And hosts of angels rank'd in endless files,
 As sounds the roar of mighty multitudes, 260
 Or rush of many waters in still night,
 Or thunders echoing from hill to cloud,
 Arose that pealing coronation hymn—
 "Crown Him for ever, crown Him King of kings;
 Crown Him for ever, crown Him Lord of lords;
 Crown Him the glorious Conqueror of hell;
 Crown Him the Everlasting Prince of Peace;
 Crown Him Jehovah, Jesu, Lamb of God,
 Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Amen."
 But, ere the sound of their great anthem sank, 270
 In waves of rapture on the walls of heaven,
 The Son Himself appear'd on bended knee
 Stooping before His Father's throne to kneel,
 And place that diadem of many crowns
 Upon that radiant footstool, then and there
 Presenting us and all the ransom'd Church,
 Yea and Himself as Man, to God submit,
 Filial obedience as conspicuous now
 As had been filial power, His Father's gift.
 This adoration paid as man, as God 280
 He at His Father's bidding re-assumed
 His session on the throne of Majesty,
 Radiance with radiance interfused, great depths

Of light, known only to the Spirit of light.
 And as in silent awe we knelt and gazed,
 And gazing worshipp'd, we beheld no more
 The glory of the Father, Son, and Spirit,
 Each by itself distinct, but all Triune,
 The Trinity in Unity express'd,
 One Uncreated, One Almighty, One 290
 Eternal, One Incomprehensible,
 One Lord, One God. And God was all in all.

Time measured not such raptures. But at last
 It seem'd as rising from the sapphire throne
 Messiah led us forth at large to view
 The city' Himself had builded and prepared
 After His Father's counsel for His Bride,
 A city, or a temple, or a home,
 Or rather all in one. Enrich'd it was
 With every exquisite design of love, 300
 And every form of beauty. Not a film
 Stain'd its bright pavement of transparent gold;
 Not a harsh murmur vex'd its silences,
 Or with the melodies of angels jarr'd.
 No cloud darken'd its empyrean. Joy
 Held court here in its own metropolis.
 And through the midst the crystal river flow'd
 Exhaustless from the everlasting throne,
 Shaded on either side by trees of life
 Which yielded in unwearying interchange 310
 Their ripe vicissitude of monthly fruits
 Amid their clustering leaves medicinal;

Of fruits twelve manner; for eternity,
 Measured by ages limitless to man,
 Has intervals and periods of bliss
 And high recurring festivals that stand
 On the sidereal calends mark'd in light.
 Through these celestial groves the Lamb of God
 Led us delighted. Every sight and sound
 Ravish'd the sense: and every loving heart
 Reflected joy to joy and light to light,
 Like crystals in a cave flashing with fire,
 And multiplied our bliss a million-fold.
 O blessed royal priesthood! priests and kings
 Under the Great High Priest and Prince of Peace,
 Who now in tender grace assign'd to each
 His priestly' abode within the House of God
 (So Solomon around his temple built
 The chambers for its stated ministries)
 Where each might be alone with God, or mix
 In converse with his fellow-saints at will,
 Adorn'd with those peculiar gifts He knew,
 Who knows us better than we know ourselves,
 Would gratify those tastes and feelings most
 Himself had planted: delicate delights;
 If little, loving from their littleness,
 Which nought but Love could ever have devised;
 If rich and large, more precious from the love
 That gave them than from excellence or cost;
 The bounties of a Father's thoughtfulness,
 The tokens of the Bridegroom's tenderness,
 Gifts of the Spirit and with His love instinct.

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Oft in my mansion would some elder saint
 (For dignity was there humility)
 Linger and tell his story, or ask mine :
 Or I would listen from an infant's lip
 A tale of such delight-fulness as pour'd
 New meaning into words henceforth. And oft
 A group of the beatified, enlink'd
 In all the bonds of holy lineage, 350
 Would eluster underneath the trees of life,
 One eye kindling another, one deep thought
 Waking another thought, and this another,
 Until all bosoms overflow'd with love,
 And all perforce would hasten to the throne,
 And at their Father's footstool pour their hearts
 In one full tide of common rapture forth.

Sweet was the intercourse of saint with saint ;
 Nor less of saints with angels. Now appear'd
 The lustrous promise which ordain'd at first 360
 That in Messiah's Bridal angelhood
 Should find its perfected felicity :
 Whether rejoicing in the Bridegroom's joy ;
 Or drinking in the beauty of the Bride ;
 Or with some ward, as Oriel oft with me,
 Retraeing in astonish'd retrospect,
 How good from evil, light from darkness sprang
 By counsel of All-wise Almighty love.

Nor wanted heaven its hours of such repose
 As added zest to ministry, or walks 370

Of patient meditative solitude,
 Thought following thought through links of argument,
 The heart retiring in itself to muse
 On God, His works and ways. Much as we knew,
 Infinite marvels were unknown. As one
 Who climbing some far height at break of day
 Among the Alps or lonely Apennines
 Sees ever at his feet new landscapes spread,
 New vales, new glittering lakes, new summits piercing
 The roseate sky with pinnales of snow, 380
 The air still purer crystal, and the arc
 Of fresh horizons widening every step,
 Yet at the highest touches not the fringe
 Of heaven's blue curtain, and when seeing most
 Sees but a narrow fragment of God's world :
 So ever learning more we never stood
 Nearer the limits of His love, whose name
 Is always through all ages Wonderful,
 And, as it has been, shall be : things reveal'd
 Only discovering more beyond our ken : 390
 There, as on earth, experience working hope,
 Celestial hope who knows no blush of shame,
 The child of patience. Hence they err'd, who taught
 That in His presence faith and hope are lost
 Who is the God of patience and of hope.
 Things once invisible were visible ;
 Things hoped for present : but beyond them all
 Illimitable fields untravell'd lay ;
 And over these faith saw God's rainbow cast,
 And young-eyed hope wing'd many an airy flight. 400

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With these dwelt love, by men call'd charity,
 And of the peerless sisterhood herself
 Was chief; her sweet pre-eminence then seen,
 When unawares, as oft, the Prince Himself
 Gladdening our lonely meditation came,
 And from things past would teach us things to be,
 Till in the sunshine of His smile we saw
 Darkly no more, no longer in a glass,
 But gazing face to face, and eye to eye,
 Knew the Beloved as ourselves were known.

410

By such delicious solitude refresh'd,
 Not loth we sought society again;
 For here we never from His Presence went
 Who is the glory of heaven's light; but chief
 What time the trump of God, by Michael blown,
 Summon'd our glad rejoicing multitudes
 To holy convocation. And had hearts
 Of weary pilgrims in the wilderness
 Oft fainted for His courts of prayer, and found
 His earthly tabernacles amiable,
 Uttering their wants in broken sobs and sighs,
 And listening the story of His love
 From tremulous lips? Had many a spot appear'd,
 Where two or three thus gather'd in His Name,
 The house of God and very gate of heaven?
 O far exceeding weight of glory, when
 Angels and saints, commingling hosts of light,
 No laggard heart, no voice unmatch'd or mute,
 We knelt before our Father's visible throne,

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And saw the Sevenfold Spirit as lamps of fire, 430
 And read our names upon Messiah's breast,
 And heard the music of His robe (the while
 He pass'd the crystal sea bearing aloft
 The incense of His meritorious love),
 And saw Him touch the golden mercy-seat,
 And worshipp'd, as the Oracle of God
 Came, from amid Cherubic wings, proclaiming,
 "This is My Son Belov'd—hear ye Him."
 And when the Prince, the Prophet of His Church,
 Spake of His Father in our ears, and show'd 440
 The unfathomable glories of His Name,
 Until the love which dwelt in the Triune
 Dwelt in our hearts,—Emmanuel, God with us;—
 And oftentimes, Chief Minstrel as Chief Priest,
 While every heart was vibrating with love,
 Himself sang Hallelujah, to the sound
 Of thousand times ten thousand angel harps
 Which instantly in perfect unison
 Roll'd from the golden floor their waves of joy 450
 Against the empyrean's crystal roof;
 Then who could choose but swell the mighty tide
 Of music with concerting harp and voice,
 Until the courts of Zion were fulfill'd
 With fragrance of delight and songs of praise?

From such a Sabbath festival it was
 (After what blissful ages know I not),
 Messiah from the Bridal city led
 Down through the starry firmament His Bride,

Not unaccompanied with angel choirs
 And gorgeous trains of seraphim and thrones, 460
 Towards her native earth. Flushes of joy
 Suffused her cheek with gladness. To compare
 Celestial and terrestrial things, as when
 The consort of some mighty Emperor,
 Raised by his sovereign will to share his throne
 After long years revisits with her lord
 The sweet home of her childhood, and with all
 A child's first ecstacy and bloom of joy
 Wanders from room to room, and walk to walk,
 And each dear spot indelibly engraved 470
 On memory's tablet, saying, "Here it was
 My father taught me first to lisp his name:
 Here first my mother clasp'd my hands in prayer;
 This was my favourite knoll; and in this glen,
 Well I remember, thou didst speak to me
 That summer evening what was in thy mind,
 And win this timid heart,—O foolish heart!
 Fearing to trust its happiness with thee,
 My lord, and better than my lord, my love."
 Not otherwise, nor less delightful seem'd 480
 To us returning from the heaven of heavens
 Our birthplace earth. And easily we found
 Each haunt to memory dear of pilgrim days,
 Each hill and valley; for the flood of fire
 Which wrapt the earth in its baptismal robe,
 Had purged, not changed its lineaments: as once
 The deluge of great waters overwhelm'd
 All life, except the cradled Church, but left

Creation's landmarks and the river beds
 Coasting the land of Shinar undisturb'd. 490
 The wastes of ocean only were no more,
 Nor wastes of sand, nor aught of barrenness ;
 And yet the earth through all her vast expanse
 Of golden plains and rich unbrageous hills
 Already seem'd too narrow for the growth
 Of her great human family ; so quick
 The virtue of her Maker's law, when once
 Sin's crushing interdiction was disannull'd,
 That primal law, " Be fruitful ; multiply
 Your joys ; replenish and subdue the earth." 500
 Blest mandate ! blest obedience ! Earth was full
 Of goodness, full of glory, full of grace :
 A perfect image of high heaven : the globe
 One temple, all mankind for worshippers,
 Israel for priests : and now the prayer we used
 To pray, " Our Father, Hallow'd be Thy Name ;
 Thy kingdom come ; Thy will be done in earth,
 As by Thy angel ministries in heaven,"
 Was turn'd into a thousand forms of praise,
 And sung from hill to hill, from clime to clime, 510
 Innumerable infant choristers
 Swelling the deeper tones of youth and age,
 In holy matins and in vesper hymns.

Great thoughts were stirring in the hearts of men,
 And hopes too big for utterance : yet were none
 Who deem'd their present rapture capable
 Of such enlargement as was theirs, when now

Messiah, who had heretofore reveal'd
 His Presence in Jerusalem alone,
 Came with His Virgin Bride and angel choirs, 520
 And tabernacled upon earth again,
 And visited not only His own land,
 But every country, every home, and left
 Some token of His love in every heart,
 The Son of Man among the sons of men.
 Not least their rapture when as He was wont
 He touch'd their eyes with heavenly balm; and lo,
 They saw in heaven the city of His Bride,
 Its gates of pearl, its streets of limpid gold,
 Its walls on bright foundations built, and walks 530
 By crystal streams shaded by trees of life.
 Nor, if the rebel Regent of the air
 Once had such power to represent the world
 Comprised as in a moment to His eye,
 Marvel that He the rightful Prince had power
 To show His children that Jerusalem
 Of glory, which is mother of us all,
 Descending out of heaven from God it seem'd,
 Though distant far. And, while He show'd it them,
 He told them of its undeclining light, 540
 And blessed vision of His Father's face,
 And royalty of service, promising,
 Their earthly ministry approved, to' enrol
 Their names among the citizens of heaven
 And freemen of His sinless universe.
 Haply such perfectness of earthly bliss
 And such far vistas of celestial light

Had overcharged their hearts. But not in vain
 The awful chronicles of time. And oft,
 When dazzled with the glory and the glow
 That stream'd from Zion's everlasting hills,
 Messiah or His ministers would tell
 Rapt auditors how Satan fell from bliss,
 The story of a ruin'd Paradise,
 The foughten fight, the victory achieved,
 But only with the endless banishment
 Of damned spirits innumerable and men
 From heaven and heavenly favour which is life.
 Nor seldom He, who strengthen'd human sight,
 As with angelic telescope, to read
 The wonders of the highest firmament,
 Would bid them gaze into the awful Deep
 Couching beneath; and there they saw the lost
 For ever bound under His dreadful Eye
 Who is eternal and consuming fire,
 There in the outer darkness. And the view
 So wrought in them, that perfect self-distrust,
 With pity not unmix'd and tender tears,
 Lean'd ever on their God for perfect strength.

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That which men witness'd of the damn'd in hell,
 By unction of the Spirit at God's command, [570
 Was in our gaze at will, whene'er the smoke
 In mighty volumes rising from the Deep,
 Blown devious by God's breath athwart the void,
 Dispersed. Nor turn'd we always from the sight,
 Although it touch'd the inmost spirings of grief,

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And stirr'd our bosoms from their depths. Hell was:
 The fact, and not our vision of the fact,
 Was their unending anguish and our grief,
 A grief which chasten'd but not jarr'd our bliss. 580
 Should not the children share their Father's thoughts?
 Should not the Wife her Husband's counsels learn?
 Learn ever more and more? Let it suffice
 That in the depth, as in the height above,
 God was Supreme; His righteousness confess'd
 In dread Gehenna as His love in heaven;
 Absolute order reigning; of the lost
 Some scourged with many stripes, with fewer some,
 All underneath the footstool of His throne
 Subdued, submiss. This we beheld and knew. 590
 And in the cloudless joys of heaven and earth
 Haply this sight and knowledge were to us
 The needful undertones of sympathy
 With Him, who was in days of mortal flesh
 A man of sorrows conversant with griefs,
 The necessary fountain-spring of tears,
 The sign and sacrament of pride abased
 And creature humiliation without end.

Cloudless indeed our joys in earth and heaven,
 Ceaseless our ministry, and limitless 600
 The increase of that government and peace,
 Messiah's heritage and ours. For as
 Our native orb ere long too strait became
 For its blest habitants, not only some
 Translated without death, for death was not,

As Ench, join'd the glorified in light ;
 But at the voice of God the stars, which roll'd
 Innumerable in the azure firmament
 By thousands and ten thousands, as He spake
 Six words of power, the seventh, it was done, 610
 Were mantled and prepared as seats of life :
 And it was ours to bear from earth and plant,
 Like Adam, in some paradise of fruits
 The ancestors of many a new-born world ;
 Like Adam, but far different issue now,
 Sin and the curse and death for ever crush'd.
 And thus from planet on to planet spread
 The living light. As when a white-robed priest
 Himself, surrounded by his acolytes,
 In some vast minster, from the altar fire 620
 Lighting his torch, walks through the slumb'rous
 aisles,
 And kindles one by one the brazen lamps
 That on the fluted columns cast their shade
 Or from the frescoed ceiling hang suspense,
 Until the startled sanctuary is bathed
 In glory, and the evening chant of praise
 Floats in the radiance : so it was in heaven :
 God's temple, the expectant firmament,
 Hung with its lamps, innumerable stars ;
 The Priest, Messiah ; earth, the altar flame ; 630
 Angels and saints, the winged messengers ;
 And that great choral eucharist the hymn
 Of all creation's everlasting praise.

Such are the many kingdoms of God's realm;
And in these boundless provinces of light
We who once suffer'd with a suffering Lord
Reign with Him in His glory, unto each
According to his power and proven love
His rule assign'd. But Zion is our home;
Jerusalem, the city of our God.
O happy home! O happy children here
O blissful mansions of our Father's house!
O walks surpassing Eden for delight!
Here are the harvests reap'd once sown in tears:
Here is the rest by ministry enhanced:
Here is the banquet of the wine of heaven,
Riches of glory incorruptible,
Crowns, amaranthine crowns of victory,
The voice of harpers harping on their harps,
The anthems of the holy cherubin,
The crystal river of the Spirit's joy,
The Bridal palace of the Prince of Peace,
The Holiest of Holies—God is here.

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THE END.

NOTES.

BOOK I.

THE SEER'S DEATH.

ST. PAUL'S adoption of the word *prophet* to describe the Cretan bard Epimenides (Titus i. 12) appears to justify the use of *seer* in an equivalent sense. Compare 1 Sam. ix. 9.

Line 1. *The last day of my earthly pilgrimage.*

From Homer downward, it has been usual for those who would picture the unseen world to imagine the descent of a living man to Hades. This, so far as we know, has never happened, and cannot happen. And it seemed to me more natural to make the attempt at least of conceiving that which is taking place almost every breath we draw, I mean the passage of a disembodied spirit to the world of spirits.

Line 25. *I was scarcely more, &c.*

See Dante, Inferno, Canto 1, line 1.

Line 78. *Its true gauge.*

"In His unerring sight who measures life by love." Keble.

Line 321. *Of him who call'd his son "a stranger here."*
Compare Exod. ii. 22 with Ps. xc. 1.

Lines 327—334.

See John xiv.—xvii.

Lines 335—346.

See 1 Cor. xv. 20—57.

Line 350. *The vision, &c.*

Rev. xxi. 2—xxii. 5.

Line 392. *A Presence.*

See Isa. xliii. 2.

Line 406. *They err who tell us, that the spirit unclathed, &c.*

The historic narratives of Samuel's disembodied spirit appearing and speaking to Saul (1 Sam. xxviii. 14), and of Moses, whose body was buried by God (Dent. xxxiv. 6), being seen by the three Apostles, and discoursing with our Lord on the Mount of Transfiguration (Luke ix. 31), may confirm the statements here made.

Line 438. *Saintly apparel.*

See 1 Sam. xxviii. 14. Rev. vi. 11.

Line 446. *All ear, all eye, all feeling, and all heart.*

See Paradise Lost, Book vi., line 350.

Line 499. *The angelical convoy.*

Luke xvi. 22.

Line 505. *Ere we set forth, rise brother, and look round, &c.*

The numerous and well authenticated appearances of the human spirit, within a few hours of death, seem to indicate that God does sometimes permit such a lingering on earth as is here described, ere the soul enters the unseen world.

Line 518. *There were more spirits than men, &c.*

Compare the following Scriptures: "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him" (Ps. xxxiv. 7). "The mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha" (2 Kings vi. 17). "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation?" (Heb. i. 14.) "We wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers (*τοὺς κοσμοκράτορας*) of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places" (*τὰ πνευματικὰ τῆς πονηρίας ἐν τοῖς ἐπουρανίοις*, "the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly regions." Ellicott) (Eph. vi. 12). Also 1 Cor. iv. 9. 2 Cor. ii. 11. 1 Thess. ii. 18.

Line 533. *The fallen wore, &c.*

"Satan himself also is transformed into an angel of light." 2 Cor. xii. 14.

Lines 559—567.

Compare 2 Tim. ii. 26.

Line 571. *An angel stooped, &c.*

See Ps. xci. 11.

Line 625. *Distemper'd phantasies, or spirits unblest.*

One or other of these disastrous alternatives must, I fear, explain the reputed wonders of spiritualism, wherever they are not wilful impostures.

Line 671. *The road to Paradise a long descent*

The almost uniform testimony of Scripture points to Hades as a region below. The dying are spoken of as "going down to the pit," or "going down into silence." Samuel's spirit said to Saul, "Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?" (1 Sam. xxviii. 15.) So we read "David is not yet ascended into the heavens" (Acts ii. 34). Our Lord says of Himself, "The Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth" (Matt. xii. 40). And St. Paul writes of Him, "He descended first into the lower parts of the earth" (Eph. iv. 9).

From these and similar Scriptures, some have thought that the Paradise of the Blessed Dead, as well as the prison of the Lost, was actually situate within the crust of our terrestrial globe. But this Divine language may only be an accommodation to our earthly thoughts of height and depth. And there is one deeply interesting passage of Holy Writ, which appears to indicate that the Hades to which our Lord's disembodied human spirit went betwixt His death and resurrection is as much to be regarded *below* our earth, as the heavens of glory to which He ascended from Olivet are to be regarded *above* it. I refer to 1 Pet. iii. 18—22. As the local structure of my poem in some measure depends upon it, I may be permitted to make an extract from my Commentary on the New Testament—"Because even Christ suffered once on account of sins (*περὶ ἀμαρτιῶν*—i. e. an atoning sacrifice for sins, the usual name for the sin-offerings in the LXX version being τὰ *περὶ ἀμαρτιῶν*), the just on behalf of the unjust—a Sinless Victim in the stead of sinful mankind—having been put to death in (His human) flesh, but quickened in spirit (*πνεύματι*, omit τῷ with best MSS.)—i. e. His disembodied human spirit—in which (human spirit) also He went a journey (*πορεύθεις*,

compare *προευθελς ες ούρανόν*, ver. 22) and *preached* (*ἐκήρυξεν*, as a herald proclaiming tidings) to the spirits in prison (*φυλακή*, compare Job xiv. 13; *ἐν ἔδρῳ με ἐφύλαξας*, LXX), which (spirits) were sometime disobedient—refusing to repent before the door of the ark was shut—when the long-suffering of God was waiting (*ἀπεχεδέχετο*, so the best MSS.) in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, whereinto (*εἰς ἣν*) entering—few persons, that is eight souls, were saved (*διεσώθησαν*, ‘thoroughly saved,’ perhaps implying both in body and soul) by means of water—for the water which buried the rest of the world upbore the ark of their salvation.

“That the time here spoken of is the interval betwixt the death and resurrection of our Lord, during which His human spirit was separated from His human flesh, appears from the emphatic contrast of His death with respect to one, and His life in the other (*θανάτωθελς μὲν σαρκί, ζωοποιηθελς δὲ πνεύματι*). Compare Rom. i. 3, 4, and 1 Tim. iii. 16. That an actual journey from place to place is described (ver. 19) is evident from the use of the same word (*προευθελς*, ‘having travelled’) there, and in ver. 22, where it must signify a local transition from earth to heaven. The comparison of one verse with another precludes any metaphorical adaptation of the term ‘journeyed.’ That this mission of Christ to the souls in Hades is nowhere else recorded by the Holy Spirit will never stagger those who believe that every word of God is true. That by the phrase ‘He preached’ (*ἐκήρυξεν*) is intimated the announcement of the work of redemption, is almost certain from other passages where it thus stands by itself, and from a comparison of the answering term (*εὐγγε- λίσθη*, ch. iv. 6). That the day of grace, the time of salvation, is every where in Holy Scripture limited to the brief space of life is true; but this hinders not such a proclamation of mercy to those who, after the door of temporal safety was shut, may have truly repented of their guilt, and found forgiveness with God before they were overwhelmed with the rising waters. That the destruction of the body is not inconsistent with the salvation of the soul, in the case of repenting sinners, we know from other instances of Divine compassion. And, finally, that the descent of Christ to Hades, a fact which, like His death, stands alone and admits not of repetition, should be illustrated with signal acts of royal clemency, is only in accordance with those miracles of mercy which ever attended His steps.

atched (*ἀκρωξεν*, as
a prison (*φυλακή*,
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"For further notes upon this difficult, but most interesting, portion of Holy Writ I must refer the reader to Wordsworth's cautious and reverent exposition—an exposition entirely in harmony with the third article of the Church of England as first published, viz., 'That the body of Christ lay in the grave till His resurrection, but His spirit which He gave up was with the spirits which are detained in prison, or in hell, and preached to them, as the place in St. Peter testifieth.' These words were afterwards omitted, but our Church sufficiently indicates her interpretation of this Scripture by appointing it to be read as the epistle on Easter even."

From this it appears that the Divine Spirit describes our Lord's descent to Hades by the same word (*πορευθεῖς*) which relates His ascent to heaven. In both cases He went a journey, first descending, afterwards ascending. And as in the latter case our thoughts travel upwards with Him who passed through the heavens (*διελθὺν ἅθρα τοὺς οὐρανοῦς*, Heb. iv. 14) to the throne of glory, so in the former they travel downwards with Him to the Deep into which He descended for our sakes.

Line 676. *Oriel*, i. e. "Light or flame of God."

The Hebrew word might be indifferently rendered *Uriel* or *Oriel*: but I have selected this modification, the name "Uriel" having been traditionally appropriated to one of the seven chief angels; which tradition I observe, Book iv., line 192.

Line 787. *One world, but widely sunder'd by a gulf.*
Compare Luke xvi. 22, 23.

BOOK II.

Line 23. *Back with melodious sound they softly flew.*
See Paradise Lost, Book vii., line 207.

Line 149. *Without Him heaven were but a desert rude.*
See Keble's Christian Year, Fourth Sun. after Easter, line 9.

Line 166. *His brightness shone, &c.*
Dan. viii. 15—18; and x. 5—17.

Line 169. *The Apocalyptic seer.*

Rev. i. 17.

Lines 181—188.

"We shall be like Him; FOR (*ὅτι*) we shall see Him as He is."
1 John iii. 2.

Line 354. *A babe in glory is a babe for ever.*

This seems a necessary inference from such Scriptures as declare that the harvest hereafter is according to the seed sown here; Gal. vi. 7. 2 Cor. ix. 6, &c.

Line 372. *A link betwixt mankind and angelhood.*

This thought, and the one below of infants in glory resembling the lilywork in Solomon's temple, were suggested by a friend.

Line 462. *The strange salute of father.*

See 1 Cor. iv. 15. 1 Thess. ii. 19, 20. The joy of this spiritual relationship has its earnestness on earth, which we may well believe will be deepened in Paradise, though awaiting the resurrection for its full glory.

Line 554. *While words, &c.*

Rev. i. 5, 6.

Line 587. *The Increate alone is self-sustain'd.*

See Paradise Lost, Book v., lines 401—433, and especially the words,

"For know whatever was created needs
To be sustain'd and fed."

The passage had escaped my memory while writing my lines, which were probably an unconscious echo of Milton's.

Line 600. *They who weep on earth shall laugh, &c.*

Luke vi. 21.

Line 623. *A cloud of witnesses.*

Heb. xii. 1.

Line 642. *He knew who spake of trees.*

1 Kings iv. 33.

Line 667. *Saints wait their bright apparelling.*

2 Cor. v. 4.

Line 786. *All are not equal there.*

"For orders and degrees
Jar not with liberty, but well consist."
Paradise Lost, Book v., line 792.

Line 801. *Many first were last, &c.*

Matt. xix. 30.

Line 828. *Of such babes as these, &c.*

Matt. xix. 14. When we remember what multitudes of little children, not only from Christian but also from heathen lands, are gathered home before they have committed actual sin, and are thus saved in Christ for ever, may we not believe that there is a direct historic fulfilment of these words of our Lord, as well as a spiritual meaning underlying them?

Line 839. *A mystic time and times and half a time.*

Compare Dan. vii. 25 with Rev. xi. 3.

Line 852. *Antipas.*

Rev. ii. 13.

Lines 875, 876.

See Eph. iii. 18, 19.

Line 884. *The voice.*

Matt. iii. 3.

Lines 890—892.

"No wonder that even the holy mother when she gazed on that august assemblage, when she saw, as perchance she might have seen, the now aged Hillel the looser, and Shammai the binder, and the wise sons of Betirah, and Rabban Simeon, Hillel's son, and Jonathan the paraphrast, the greatest of his pupils, when she saw these and such as these, all hanging on the lips of the Divine Child, no wonder she forgot all." Ellicott's Historical Lectures, p. 92.

Line 934. *The matins of the Church.*

Gen. iv. 26.

Line 980. *They are not perfect here.*

For the testimony of Scripture to the state of the disembodied saints before the resurrection, the writer would venture to refer his readers to a little work of his called "The Blessed Dead."

Line 1002. *Two diverse from the rest.*

It appears from the words of our Lord to Nicodemus (John iii. 13), that, when they were uttered, no man had ever ascended to the heavens of glory; and, if Enoch and Elijah had not then ascended, we may well believe they still await this lofty privilege with all the other saints of God. See note on Book vii. 595.

BOOK III.

Line 21. *Tartarean night.*

I have throughout this poem attempted rigidly to abstain from interweaving classical mythology with Scriptural realities. It has not been always easy to observe this restriction with phrases and stories familiar from childhood. But the above expression is no exception to the rule I imposed upon myself, of only introducing those terms for the usage of which I could appeal to Holy Writ; for St. Peter, speaking of angels who sinned, says, that "God having cast them down to Tartarus (*ταρταράσας*), delivered them into chains of darkness." (2 Pet. ii. 4.)

Line 25. *Yet deignest in the contrite heart to' abide, &c.*
See Paradise Lost, Book i., lines 17—23.

Line 77. *A horrid chasm.*
See Luke xvi. 26.

Line 93. *Darkness alone, &c.*
"A land of darkness, as darkness itself; and of the shadow of death, without any order, and where the light is as darkness." (Job x. 22.)

Line 131. *Needs not the shining of created light.*
In this, as in some other points, I have ventured to believe that Paradise will anticipate the glory that is to be revealed, for in Paradise we shall be with Him who is the true, the archetypal Light.

Line 142. *A shield, &c.*
See Exod. xiv. 20.

the rest.

Nicodemus (John iii. 18) had ever ascended the mountain. Elijah had not then this lofty privilege on Book vii. 595.

to abstain from carnal realities. It has been expressed in various phrases and the expression is not only introducing the subject to Holy Writ; but, says, that "God has delivered them

to abide, &c.

of the shadow of death is as darkness."

ed light.

to believe that the archetypal

Line 144. *Who fain would pass, &c.*
See Luke xvi. 26.

Line 149. *Listening we might catch, &c.*
So Abraham is represented by our Lord as hearing the words of the rich man in Hades.

Line 191. *Those angels who forsook their high estate.*
See note on Book v., lines 807—817.

Line 225. *God's gift.*
See Gen. xxv. 21. Esau and Jacob were both of them given by God to Isaac in answer to prayer.

Line 230. *The moated fortress of a faithful house.*
See Ps. xci. 9—11. Prov. iii. 33.

Line 253. *Maxentius hurried, vowing to his gods, &c.*
"When Maxentius went forth to battle, he went fortified by heathen oracles, the champion of heathenism against the champion of the cross." Elliott's *Horæ*, Vol. i., p. 243.

Line 286. *Not circumvented, &c.*
See 1 Tim. ii. 14.

Line 310. *The labarum emblazoned with the cross.*
"From as early a date as that of the great battle with Maxentius, according to the testimony both of Lactantius and Eusebius, Constantine adopted the cross as his distinctive military ensign. That object of abomination to the heathen Romans was seen glittering on the helmets, engraved on the shields, and interwoven with the banners of his soldiers. The Emperor's own person was adorned by it, wrought of richest material and of finest workmanship. Above all, in his principal banner, the *labarum*, he displayed the same once accursed emblem, with a crown of gold and gems above it, and the monogram of the name of Him who after bearing the one now wore the other." Elliott's *Horæ*, Vol. i., p. 239.

Line 514. *With ponderous noise, &c.*
See Paradise Lost, Book ii., line 880.

Line 536. *And then and there upon that guilty man, &c.*
This thought was first suggested by Southey's *Kehama*, xxiv. 18.

Line 579. *Know that Omnipotence can but perform, &c.*

From the words, "He cannot deny Himself" (2 Tim. ii. 13), we learn there is that the Almighty cannot do. He cannot deny Himself, either falsifying His word, or acting contrary to the counsels of His own infinite wisdom and righteousness. Omnipotence, therefore, is not the power of doing whatever blind man may conceive possible, but of accomplishing all that Omniscient Goodness sees to be right. I would refer the reader to some noble thoughts on this in Birks' *Difficulties of Belief*.

Line 596. *And not in utter solitariness.*

Compare Job iii. 18. Ps. xlix. 14. Isa. xiv. 16.

Line 624. *He caught a glimpse, &c.*

Luke xvi. 23.

Line 700. *Doth not consume in thee the secret spring.*

On the request of the rich man to Abraham that Lazarus might be sent to his brethren, lest they also should come to that place of torment (Luke xvi. 27—31), Matthew Henry writes, "He desired the preventing of their ruin, partly in tenderness to them for whom he could not but retain a natural affection; he knew their temper, their temptations, their ignorance, their infidelity, their inconsideration, and wished to prevent the destruction they were running into; partly in tenderness to himself, &c." Holy Scripture does not oblige us to believe, with some theologians, the utter extinction of all natural feelings in the lost, but rather leads us to infer that, in proportion as they have depraved and vitiated those feelings on earth, do they suffer everlastingly. So Milton says—

"For neither do the spirits damned

Lose all their virtue."

Paradise Lost, Book ii., line 482. And doubtless that Perfect Equity which distinguishes on earth the right acts of evil men (see for example, Jehu, 2 Kings x. 30, 31), must ever distinguish degrees of guilt.

Line 750. *Of this I will relate hereafter.*

Book viii. 291—594.

Line 762. *The seven last angels, &c.*

Rev. xv. and xvi.

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Line 780. *Announcing to the prisoners of wrath, &c.*
 I have ventured to believe that the Advent cry, "Behold He cometh with clouds," which has been so often raised in Christendom during the last half-century, has not been without its echo in the under-world of spirits. Such reverberations seem to be according to the analogy of Providence.

Line 831. *God would, but could not save me 'gainst my will.*
 Compare "The Pharisees rejected (*ἠθέτησαν*, in margin 'frustrated') the counsel of God" (Luke vii. 30); and also the pathetic words, "How often would I (*ἠθέλησα*) . . . and ye would not (*οὐκ ἠθέλησατε*)," Matt. xxiii. 37.

Lines 862 to 874 beginning *If here, &c.*
 See Book xi., where this thought is further unfolded.

Line 875. *For God Himself has sworn, &c.*
 See Phil. ii. 9-11, where we read, "That in (*ἐν*) the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth, and THINGS UNDER THE EARTH (*καταχθονίων*), and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." The expression "the things under the earth" Wordsworth, in his Notes on the Greek Testament, interprets "especially of Death and the Grave . . . and Satan himself and all the powers of darkness;" and says, "The sense is best explained by Rev. v. 13, where the creatures beneath the earth join in ascribing honour to the Lamb." The momentous addition here of the things under the earth, compared with their equally notable absence in the parallel passages, Eph. i. 10. Col. i. 20, seems to import that, while lost angels and men are never reconciled to God or gathered together in Christ, but are consigned at the judgment to everlasting punishment, they will be for ever reduced to compulsory submission, and in this state of absolute order will ascribe glory to God. There will be no anarchy even in that world of outer gloom. The days of regnant rebellion are numbered. Christ must reign, till He hath put all enemies under His feet. See further notes on Book xi.

Line 891. *Silence reigned.*
 Compare "The wicked shall be silent in darkness," 1 Sam. ii. 9.

Line 910. *As they had sinn'd, they suffer'd.*
 Luke xii. 47, 48.

Line 1024. *What time a mighty conqueror, &c.*
Compare Isa. xiv. 4—20.

Line 1042. *The captive angels, &c.*
See note, Book v. 807—817.

Line 1052. *Such were those who sought, &c.*
See Luke viii. 31, "They besought Him that He would not command them to go out into the deep" (*εις την ἀβυσσον*, rendered "bottomless pit," Rev. xx. 3). The entreaty betokens, as expressed by another Evangelist, their fear of "torment before the time" (Matt. viii. 29).

BOOK IV.

Line 11. *A babe of more than human beauty wept.*
Exod. ii. 6. In Acts vii. 20, we read the infant Moses was "exceeding fair" (*ἀστρείος τῷ Θεῷ*, "fair to God," or "fair in God's sight").

Line 15. *Rivalry of hearts.*
1 Sam. xx. 41.

Line 18. *Who wash'd her Saviour's feet.*
Luke vii. 37, 38.

Line 37. *Let David witness.*
Ps. lvi. 8.

Line 46. *Blind and bereft.*
Paradise Lost, Book iii., lines 51—55.

Line 49. *And he, who touch'd, &c.*
"The Winter Walk at Noon." Cowper.

Line 56. *He wept with agonizing groans.*
Heb. v. 7.

Line 93. *Of evil overcome, &c.*
1 Cor. xv. 25, 26. 54. Rev. xx. 14.

Lines 136—138.

Compare Heb. i. 2 and xi. 3, "He made the worlds" (τοὺς αἰῶνας), or "the ages."

Lines 171, 172.

See Gen. xviii. 1, 2; xix. 1; and Acts i. 10, &c.

Line 182. *No angelic parentage.*

Hence angels are called the sons of God (Job xxxviii. 7), as is Adam (Luke iii. 38).

Line 186. *Lucifer, the first.*

Isa. xiv. 12.

Line 189. *Michael the prince.*

Dan. x. 13; xii. 1.

Line 190. *Gabriel, God's swift winged messenger.*

Dan. ix. 21.

Lines 191, 192. *Raphael and Uriel.*

These, with the two last named, were according to the rabbins the four angels who surround the throne of God. R. Bechai: the book Zohar.

Lines 192—194. *Barakiel, Ramiel and Raamiel.*

Among the angels whose names have come down to us by Jewish tradition. Layard's Ruins of Nineveh and Babylon, pp. 509—523.

Lines 195, 196.

Dumah or *Duma* (silence) the angel who presides over the dead: *Lailah* (night) the angel who presides over conception: *Torekemo*, the angel who is lord over the hail: and *Suriel* (access to God), an angel called "prince of the face," because he is continually in the presence of God. I am indebted for these Talmudic names to my learned friend, the Rev. John Ayre, whose kind interest in this poem, before its publication, I must take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging.

Line 201. *Thrones, virtues, principalities, and powers.*

"Whether they be thrones (θρόνοι), or dominions (κυριότητες), or principalities (ἀρχαί), or powers (ἐξουσίαι)," Col. i. 16.

Line 220. *I found myself alone.*

See Milton's exquisite description of Adam awaking to life, *Paradise Lost*, Book viii., lines 250—337.

Line 233. *An Angel among angels.*

"The angel of His Presence saved them." Isa. lxiii. 9.

Lines 295—301.

On the interpretation of the living creatures and crowned elders, as being angelic, not human, I must venture to refer to the notes in my commentary on Rev. iv. 4—6 and v. 9, 10, the reading now generally approved of the last passage running thus, "Thou redeemedst *them*, i. e. the saints, to God by Thy blood, and hast made them (*αὐτούς*) unto our God kings and priests, and they reign (*βασιλεύουσιν*) on the earth." If this reading be adopted, the testimony of Scripture elsewhere is uniform in favour of their angelic nature.¹

Line 306. *Envy was unknown.*

So Plato, "Envy stands aloof from the celestial choir" (*φθόνος γὰρ ἔξω θεῶν χοροῦ ἵσταται*). Phædrus, iii. 247.

Line 322. *Our earliest name.*

Deut. xxxiii. 2. Jude 14.

Line 336. *Mark'd by sidereal orbits.*

"The same principles of the intersections of the solar and lunar periods, by which the units of the ordinary calendar are determined, when carried further up the ascending periods of time, produce even from the abstract relations of the celestial periods, the larger but corresponding units of 30 and 360 years, or the prophetic month and time. . . . A Divine ladder of time is set before us, and, as we rise successively from step to step, days are replaced by years, and years by millennia; and these perhaps, hereafter, in their turn by some higher unit from which the soul of man may measure out cycles still more vast, and obtain a wider view of the immeasurable grandeur of eternity." Birks' *Elements of Prophecy*, pp. 371, 372.

Line 383. *Firmament of morning stars.*

Job xxxviii. 7.

Line 390. *Which saith to Me, Thou art My only Son.*

See Ps. ii. 6, 7. "Yet have I set ('anointed' *Hebrew*) My

King upon My holy hill of Zion. I will declare the decree: the Lord hath said unto Me, Thou art My Son; this day have I begotten Thee." Here the words "Thou art My Son" appear to proclaim the Eternal Godhead of the Word as being from everlasting to everlasting the coequal Son of the Father; and the words "This day have I begotten Thee" to declare His manifestation as the Christ IN TIME, a manifestation crowned and consummated by His resurrection (Acts xiii. 33). Thus in Hebrews xiii. 8, where we read "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever," *yesterday* seems to respect the infinite past, *to-day* the course of time, and *for ever* the ages of an eternity to come.

Lines 403—409.

"God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows" (Ps. xlv. 7). And the Second Psalm quoted in the last note appears to point to some declaration of the Eternal Father's sovereign pleasure respecting the Eternal Son, the Heir of all things, as the occasion, or at least one occasion, of such anointing.

Lines 422—449.

See Birks' Difficulties of Belief, "On temptation in free agents," and "On the creation and fall of angels."

Lines 534—545. *Made of the dust, &c.*

"Man in virtue of his original creation occupies a central place among all the works of God. His immortal spirit links him with the hosts of angels, and he is only a little lower than they. Yet his animal life links him equally with the whole circle of animated and organized being, while his body, formed of the dust, is linked with all the planetary spheres by the laws of material gravitation. . . . The nature thus assumed [by the Son of God] in its original constitution admits of a perpetual increase, by which it may reflect, in the largest measure any created being is capable of doing, the absolute infinitude of the Uncreated Being." Birks' Ways of God, "On the Incarnation," pp. 108—111. And with respect to man's central position, see the corresponding truth regarding his terrestrial home, as sketched by Dr. Whewell in his most convincing essay, where he proves, "The Earth is really the domestic hearth of this solar system, adjusted between the hot and fiery haze on one side, the cold and watery vapour on the other." Of the Plurality of Worlds, p. 320.

Line 625. *Wrapt in impervious mists, &c.*

Geology seems to have established (1) that the earth has existed for vast periods of time before the creation of man; (2) that each period terminated with an epoch of convulsion; (3) that each period was an advance on the condition of the one preceding it; (4) that the last great convulsion, by which the mountain chains of the Alps and Andes were thrust from below, occurred probably not more than ten thousand years ago. Now such a convulsion must have reduced our planet to the state described in the words "The earth was (or rather 'had become') without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep" (Gen. i. 2). I believe, therefore, in common with many, that the first verse of Holy Scripture narrates the original creation of the heavens and earth; that the second verse describes the state of confusion to which our globe had been reduced by the last great terrestrial convulsion which preceded the history of our species; and that the narrative which follows is an optical description of six literal days' creative work (each day probably corresponding to some vast geological period) during which our world, as it now is, was fashioned by God in the sight of the angelic hosts. See Hitchcock's *Geology*; Birks' *Bible and Modern Thought*; McCnul's *Essay in Aids to Faith*; McCausland's *Sermons in Stones*.

Lines 648—652.

See Hugh Miller's "Vision of Creation," *Testimony of the Rocks*.

Line 949. *God of the world and guardian of mankind.*

The titles ascribed to Satan and his angels appear to me too explicit to be understood of merely usurped dominion, "the prince of this world" (John xii. 31, &c.), "the god of this world" (2 Cor. iv. 4), "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), "the rulers of the darkness of this world" (Eph. vi. 12), &c. The devil probably veiled a falsehood under a garb of truth, when he said to our Lord, "All this power will I give Thee, and the glory of them: for that is delivered unto me; and to whomsoever I will I give it" (Luke iv. 6).

Line 967. *The Bridegroom's friend.*

See John iii. 29.

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BOOK V.

Line 23. *Nor odds appear'd, &c.*

See Birks' Difficulties of Belief, pp. 91, 92.

Line 61. *Ufsalten had Lucifer received his charge.*

When our Lord says, "He (the devil) was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth" (John viii. 44), the word rendered "murderer" (*ἀνθρωποκτόνος*), strictly "man-slayer," indicates that no time anterior to the creation of man is intended, and seems to prove not only that the devil was the first sinner, but that the murder of our first parents' innocence was his first overt act of successful rebellion. Compare 1 John iii. 8.

Line 67. *Earth had not kept her circling birthday yet.*

This seems probable from the birth of Cain being subsequent to the expulsion of Adam and Eve from paradise.

Line 118. *For ever in our God immutable, &c.*

See Dante, Paradiso, Canto xxix., lines 55—63.

Line 177. *Another imag of Omnipotence.*

"Ita fornicatur anima, cum avertitur abs te, et querit extra te ea que pura et liquida non invenit, nisi cum redit ad te. Perversè te imitantur omnes qui longè se à te faciunt, et extollunt se adversum te. Sed etiam sic te imitando indicant creatorem te esse omnis nature; et ideo non esse quòd à te omni modo recedatur. Quid ergo in illo furto ego dilexi: et in quo Dominum meum vel vitiosè atque perversè imitatus sum? An libuit facere contra legem saltem fallacià, quia potentatu non poteram, ut maneam libertatem captivus imitater faciendo impunè quod non liceret, TENEBROSA OMNIPOTENTIS SIMILITUDINE. Ecce est ille servus fugiens Dominum suum, et consecutus umbram. O putredo, o monstrum vitæ, et mortis profunditas. Potuitne libere quod non licebat, non ob aliud, nisi quia non licebat." S. Augus. Confes. liber ii. 14.

Line 235. *Who, if prolific as foretold, shall fill, &c.*

Gen. iii. 15. Matt. iii. 7. John viii. 44. 1 John iii. 8.

Line 438. *Then first I saw, then spake I.*

See Paradise Lost, Book ix., lines 549—732. Whether Milton

was the first to suggest that the serpent ascribed its own power of speech to the virtue of the fruit of the forbidden tree, I know not. But when once suggested, the thought appears so natural and necessary that any other method of approach would seem constrained and unlikely.

Lines 506—525.

See *Paradise Lost*, Book ix., lines 900—916.

Lines 538—547.

See *Paradise Lost*, Book ix., lines 163—171.

Line 601. *First altar, and first holocausts.*

"It is extremely probable that some beasts, sacrificed by Divine appointment, furnished the skins with which Adam and Eve were clothed." Scott.

Line 626. *The mercy-seat.*

The cherubim are always represented in Holy Writ as in immediate attendance on the Divine Majesty when God stoops to communion with His creatures, or succours them in their hour of need. Thus the flaming sword appears symbolic of the Divine justice, and the cherubim of the Divine mercy. See this subject ably discussed in Duns' *Biblical Natural Science*, who states in confirmation of his own view, "The most eminent expositions left in the world, which are the two Jewish Targums, paraphrase the verse thus, 'And He thrust out the man, and caused the glory of His presence to dwell of old, at the East of the garden of Eden, above the two cherubim.'" Vol. i., p. 146.

Line 651. *Myriads have fall'n : myriads twice told are firm.*

"And his (the dragon's) tail drew a third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth." Rev. xii. 4. This Scripture, though as I believe describing events subsequent to our Lord's ascension, may afford some clue to the relative numbers of the elect and fallen angels. Compare *Paradise Lost*, Book v., line 710.

Lines 682—694.

Compare Job ii. 3.

Line 707. *Patient because Eternal.*

Æternus est, tardat, longanimis est. S. Aug. in Ps. xci. 6.

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Lines 719—730.
Compare Dan. x. 13. 20. 2 Pet. ii. 11. Jude 9.

Line 781. *Clasp'd as the promised Seed.*
"Some render the words 'I have gotten a man from the LORD' (Gen. iv. 1), 'I have gotten a man, the LORD.' This sense is grammatically the most natural one. Eve may have supposed that the promise (Gen. iii. 15) was now fulfilled." Wordsworth.

Lines 790—797.
Compare Gen. v. 24 with Jude 14, 15.

Lines 807—817. *Uziel and Samchasai his mate.*

These were the traditional names of the angels who fell and intermarried with the daughters of men (Targum Jonathan). See Gen. vi. 1—4. The judgment of the Jewish Church and of the most ancient fathers was express, that by "the sons of God," there named, angels were intended. Thus Josephus writes, "For many angels of God accompanied with women, and begat sons that proved unjust, and despisers of all that was good, on account of the confidence they had in their own strength." To which statement Whiston appends the note, "This notion, that the fallen angels were in some sense the fathers of the old giants, was the constant opinion of antiquity." And such, as Wordsworth, who is not himself of this opinion, says, was the view of Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Irenæus, Athénagoras, Cyprinus, and others. Since their time the current of interpretation has set in the opposite direction, and these "sons of God" have been held to be the godly descendants of Seth. But of these judgments, I am persuaded the old was better.

In the first place, sons of God was then a distinctive name for angels. See Job i. 6; ii. 1; xxxviii. 7. The last is most emphatic, for it states that at the creation, when men were not, "All the sons of God shouted for joy." Secondly, in the passage itself the contrast is marked and express betwixt the spiritual nature of the sons of God and the complex nature of those with whom they mingled in unholy wedlock. Thirdly, it is to this lapse of angels that in all probability both St. Peter and St. Jude refer. The former writes, "God spared not angels" (*ἀγγέλων*, there is no article) "that sinned, but having cast them into hell, delivered them to chains of darkness, reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 4). The latter, "And angels" (again there is no article,—

angels, not men only), those who kept not their own principality (*ἀρχήν*), but left their proper habitation, He hath kept under darkness with everlasting chains unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6).

Other Scriptures, which speak of evil angels as having still free range over our fallen world (Job i. 7. 1 Kings xxii. 21. Zech. iii. 1. Matt. iv. 3. Mark v. 9. Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12. Rev. xii. 9—12), preclude our referring the words of St. Peter and St. Jude, quoted above, to all the angels who have fallen from their allegiance. And it seems most probable that the allusion is to Gen. vi. 1—4; for St. Jude proceeds to refer to Sodom and Gomorrah. Of which cities he says that they "in like manner to these" (*τούτοις*, i. e. these angels) "having given themselves over to fornication, and having gone after strange flesh, undergo the vengeance of eternal fire." The angels that fell debased their high original by commingling with the daughters of men: the inhabitants of Sodom not only lived in unnatural crimes (Rom. i. 27), but burned in their lust towards the celestial visitants who came under the shadow of Lot's roof. The rebel angels were cast down to Tartarus. The cities of the plain were overwhelmed with fire and brimstone, an awful type of the doom of their inhabitants. Thus like sin was visited with like indig- nation.

Faber, in his *Many Mansions*, speaks very contemptuously of this view, as "sundry strange incongruous fables," and says, "such idle tales the masculine mind of Milton rejected as forming no meet subject for poetry to any one who revered the Scriptures: he (Milton) rightly views the Mosaic *sons of God* as *men*, the once grave and holy posterity of Seth. See *Paradise Lost*, xi. 556—627." Be it so: but what were Milton's later and more matured thoughts, as expressed in *Paradise Regained* (Book ii., lines 178—181)?

"Before the flood, thou [Belial] and thy lusty crew,
False titled sons of God, roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them, and begot a race," &c.

Milton's masculine mind, therefore, veered to the view here advocated, which can however only be decided by the general analogy of Scripture, and this seems to me decisive in its favour. See *Birks' Difficulties of Belief*, p. 95; and the question argued under "Giants," *Smith's Dictionary of the Bible*.

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Line 836. *Grieved within His heart, &c.*
 See Gen. vi. 6.

Lines 900—920.

See note on Book i., line 671: to which I would only add a few words from Wordsworth's Commentary, who writes on Gen. vii. 21, "We may well believe that, as the flood increased very gradually, many may have repented who were not able to reach the ark; and the Holy Scriptures reveal to us that the death of Christ and His descent into the place of departed spirits were not without benefit to them." And again on 1 Pet. iii. 20, "St. Peter says that the rest disobeyed while the ark was preparing. He uses the aorist tense, ἀπειθήσασι. He does not say that when the ark *had been prepared*, and when the ark was *shut*, and when the flood came, and it was too late for them to reach it, they all remained impenitent. Perhaps some were penitent at the eleventh hour, like the thief on the cross."

BOOK VI.

Line 45. *Some obscure suppliants.*
 Gen. iv. 26.

Lines 96—118, and 160—179. *Baalim* and *Ashtaroth*.
 "Ashtoreth was the principal female deity of the Phenicians, as Baal was the principal male deity. It is a peculiarity of both names that they frequently occur in the plural, and are associated together in this form (Judg. x. 6. 1 Sam. vii. 4; xii. 10). Gesenius maintained that by these plurals were to be understood statues of Baal and Astarte; but the more correct view seems to be that of Movers, that the plurals are used to indicate different modifications of the divinities themselves. In the earlier books of the Old Testament only the plural Ashtaroth occurs, and it is not till the time of Solomon, who introduced the worship of the Sidonian Astarte, and only in reference to that particular goddess Ashtoreth of the Sidonians that the singular is found in the Old Testament (1 Kings xi. 5. 33. 2 Kings xxiii. 13)." Smith's Dictionary of the Bible, under Ashtoreth. My suggestion explains the plural form as in the parallel case of the holy cherubim and seraphim, described indifferently

in the singular or plural number (Ps. xviii. 10; lxxx. 1. Ezek. x. 15, 20.)—whose association, however, is not represented as precluding distinct and separate action (Isa. vi. 6. Rev. xv. 7).

Lines 100—106.

See Herschel's *Outlines of Astronomy*, Sec. 833—851.

Lines 119—139.

See Gen. xi. 1—9.

Line 141. *Apollyon*.

See Rev. ix. 11.

Line 151. *Ourselves o'er them presiding*.

Dan. x. 13. 20.

Line 171. *Mylitta call'd*.

"Among the groups of winged figures was a curious representation of the Assyrian Venus, Mylitta or Astarte, in an indecent posture, which indicated the peculiar nature of her worship." Layard's *Nineveh*, Vol. ii., p. 7.

Lines 215—219.

See Prov. vii. 26, 27.

Lines 233—263.

See *Paradise Lost*, Book i., lines 678—688.

Line 265. *Moloch*.

This fire-god was the tutelary deity of the children of Ammon: see 1 Kings xi. 7. And it is of this god Moses writes "Thou shalt not let any of thy seed pass through the fire to Molech" (Lev. xviii. 21).

Line 381. *O subtle Sammael*.

Sammael (*blindness, or ignorance of God*), the angel of death (Targum Jonathan).

Lines 420—424.

See Ps. ii. 4; xxxvii. 13. Prov. i. 26.

Lines 464—474.

*In symbol of the great leviathan,
The dragon, &c.*

Compare the words of the prophet, "O arm of the Lord, awake,

; lxxx. 1. Ezek. x.
represented as pre-
Rev. xv. 7).

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as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab (Egypt), and wounded the dragon? Art thou not it which hath dried the sea, the waters of the great deep; that hath made the depths of the sea a way for the ransomed to pass over?" (Isa. li. 9, 10) with the earlier prediction of a still future triumph, "In that day the Lord with His sore and great and strong sword shall punish leviathan, the piercing serpent, even leviathan, that crooked serpent; and He shall slay the dragon that is in the sea" (Isa. xxvii. 1); and with the description of leviathan, "He beholdeth all high things: he is a king over all the children of pride" (Job xli. 34).

Line 493. *Twice ten thousand chariots.*

Ps. lxxviii. 17.

Line 502. *Moloch's shrine and Remphan's star.*

Acts vii. 43.

Line 521. *Gaunt altars rose, &c.*

1 Kings xi. 7.

Line 562. *And slept.*

This may be inferred from "the secret being revealed in a night vision" (Dan. ii. 19).

Line 608. *Chaldea's monarch, brooding o'er his dream.*

It seems probable that the image of gold which Nebuchadnezzar set up in the plain of Dura was a perversion of his dream; and possible that the furnace, into which the three children were cast, was that in which the metal had been fused for the gigantic idol.

Line 640. *Descending with the speed of seraphim.*

"Whiles I was speaking in prayer, the man Gabriel, . . . being caused to fly swiftly, touched me," &c. (Dan. ix. 21.) These words appear to prove that intervals of space, however swiftly traversed, are not annihilated for angels.

Lines 644—650.

See Dan. x. xi. xii.

BOOK VII.

Line 23. *Of Jacob's dream.*

Gen. xxviii. 10—22.

Line 25. *Funereal rites on Pisgah's brow.*

Compare Dent. xxxiv. 6 with Jude 9.

Line 27. *Of that Arch-fiend, &c.*

Job i. 6, and ii. 1.

Line 32. *Of David moved by him, &c.*

1 Chron. xxi. 1.

Line 33. *Of the strife on Carmel, &c.*

1 Kings xviii. 19—40.

Line 36. *Of the car, that fiery car, &c.*

2 Kings ii. 11.

Line 40. *Of that false emissary, &c.*

1 Kings xxii. 21.

Line 42. *Of Joshua, son of Josedeck, &c.*

Zech. iii. 1.

Line 62. *Watchman, what of the night?*

Isa. xxi. 11.

Line 94. *Finding the rigid interdict relax'd, &c.*

"That whole period was the hour and power of darkness, of a darkness, which then immediately before the dawn of a new day was the thickest. . . . It was exactly the period for such soul-maladies as these [demoniacal possessions], in which the spiritual and the bodily should be thus strangely interlinked, and it is nothing wonderful that they should have abounded then: for the predominance of certain spiritual maladies at certain epochs of the world's history, which were especially fitted for their generation, with their gradual decline and disappearance in others less congenial to them, is a fact itself admitting no manner of question." Trench on Miracles, p. 162.

Line 113. *A heavenly cohort arm'd, &c.*

"And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host" (*σπαρτιαῖς*, army) (Luke ii. 13). In the word "army" we may discern an intimation that this hour was not without peril from the hosts of darkness, who we know crowded in their malignity round the death of the Saviour (Luke xxii. 53), and would doubtless have gladly disturbed His birth.

Line 133. *Took of the lamps, &c.*

The words of St. Matthew, "And lo, the star which they saw in the East went before them till it came and stood over where the young child was" (Matt. ii. 9), seem to decide that this miraculous appearance was some luminous meteor, like a star, which was not so distant, but that it seemed to move, and thus beckon the wise men to follow its leading. If so, it was probably through angelic agency.

Line 150. *Mary kept her secret close.*

Luke ii. 19.

Line 153. *His brethren, for they err, &c.*

In Matt. xiii. 55, 56 we read, "Is not this the carpenter's son? is not His mother called Mary? and His brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? and His sisters, are not they all with us?" Many have sought to prove that by the brethren and sisters here named *cousins* are intended: but the simplest and fairest interpretation is, that they were the younger brothers and sisters of our Lord, the children of Mary and Joseph after the birth of Christ. They are mentioned after the marriage in Cana as going down with *His mother* to Capernaum (John ii. 12). They came *with His mother* to speak with Him (Matt. xii. 46. Mark iii. 31. Luke viii. 19). The only place in the Gospels where they are spoken of without Mary, is John vii. 3-10; but there it is added, "they did not believe on Him," which could not be said of her. And, when next we read of them, it is again with His mother (Acts i. 14). Such is the witness of the New Testament; and there is a verse in the Old Testament (Ps. lxxix. 8) which is strongly corroborative of this view. It is eminently a Messianic Psalm. And here we find not only "I am become a stranger unto *my brethren*," which might admit of a wider interpretation, but also, "and an alien unto *my mother's children*," which allows of but one meaning. The virginity of Mary before

the birth of Christ is a great truth taught us by God Himself: her perpetual virginity afterwards is, I believe, a fiction of man without any warrant of Holy Scripture. See Alford's note on Matt. xiii. 55.

Line 177. *Their father sank.*

It seems almost certain from Joseph appearing in no incident of our Lord's public ministry, that he had died previously.

Line 264. *Eastward towards the wilds of Araby.*

That the scene of the temptation was not the region between Jerusalem and Jericho, but the wilderness of Arabia, appears probable from the incident mentioned by St. Mark, that our Lord "was with the wild beasts;" and from the typical histories of Israel, Moses, and Elijah. See Wordsworth's note on Mark i. 13.

Line 345. *For on these very rocks, &c.*

Deut. viii. 3.

Line 352. *The dizzy porch, &c.*

"The most probable opinion is, that 'the pinnacle of the temple' was the topmost ridge of the *στοὰ βασιλική*, on the south side of the temple." Ellicott.

Line 413. *To me committea, &c.*

See note on Book iv., line 949.

Line 534. *The crest of snowy Hermon.*

"Standing amid the ruins of Cæsarea, one does not need to ask where the Mount of Transfiguration is. Hermon, the grandest and most beautiful of all the mountains of Palestine, has established its claim to the title of THE HOLY MOUNT." (The Giant Cities of Bashan, p. 103.) Hermon's perennial snows may have suggested the words of the Evangelist, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow" (Mark ix. 3). The traditional mountain, Tabor, was at that time probably crowned with a castle, and therefore almost certainly not the site.

Line 543. *Brought them, one bodiless, embodied one.*

See note on Book ii., line 1002.

Lines 574—590.

Luke x. 17—20.

Line 592. *The lonely Ephraim.*
John xi. 54.

Line 595. *Whose disembodied spirit we sometime kept.*

The words "Christ is risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept" (1 Cor. xv. 20), seem to indicate that although others had been raised from the dead before the resurrection of our Lord (1 Kings xvii. 22. 2 Kings iv. 35; xiii. 21. Matt. ix. 25. Luke vii. 15. John xi. 44), His human spirit was the first which repassed the gates of Death, and re-ascended from Hades to earth. Hitherto, *vestigia nulla retrorsum.*

Line 606. *The ride of lowly triumph, &c.*
Luke xix. 28—44.

Line 612. *The lonely curse.*
Matt. xxi. 19.

John xii. 20—33. Lines 619—628.

Line 630. *He made the widow's heart, &c.*
Mark xii. 41—44, and xiii. 1.

Line 631. *As once Ezekiel saw, &c.*
Ezek. x. 4. 19, and xi. 23.

John xiii. 1—17. Lines 650—659.

Line 674. *Now readily assumed the ready throne.*
Luke xxii. 3. John xiii. 2. 27.

John xvii. 1—26. Lines 678—692.

Lines 822—837.

"Having spoiled (*ἀπεκδυσάμενος*, *having stripped away from Himself*) the (hostile) principalities and powers, He made a show of them with boldness, having triumphed over them in it (i. e. in the cross)" (Col. ii. 15). "The expression *having stripped away from Himself* most probably implies that our Lord by His death stripped away from Himself all the opposing hostile powers of

evil that sought, in the nature which He had condescended to assume, to win for themselves a victory." Ellicott.

Lines 838—859.

See note on Book i., line 671. (1) That our Lord in His disembodied human spirit descended to the Hades of departed souls seems demonstrable from the words of David, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell" (Ps. xvi. 10), as expounded of Christ by St. Peter (Acts ii. 27. 31). See Pearson on the Creed. (2) That He visited the deep, not Gehenna, but that region of Hades, on the nether side of the great gulf (Luke xvi. 23), in which the lost await the judgment of the great day, appears most probable from such Scriptures as the following: "Let not the waterflood overwhelm me, neither let the deep swallow me up, and let not the pit shut her mouth upon me" (Ps. lxi. 15): and again, "Free among the dead, . . . they are cut off from Thy hand: Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness and in the deeps" (Ps. lxxxviii. 4—7): see also Ps. xviii. 5—15, quoted below: and from the significant type of Jonah, who was cast into the deep before he was swallowed by the great fish. (3) That He gained the region of the Blessed Dead in Hades, betwixt the ninth hour, when He yielded up the Ghost, and the close of that Jewish day three hours after, may be regarded as certain from His words to the dying thief, "To-day shalt thou be with Me in Paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). Thus while His atoning sacrifice was completed for ever on Calvary, it appears that His self-abasement was not ended on the cross, nor indeed until His resurrection.

Lines 860—901.

The Eighteenth Psalm seems expressed in language too majestic and august to bear the burden of a less mystery than that of the death and resurrection of David's Son and David's Lord. The close of the Psalm is quoted by St. Paul (Rom. xv. 9), as fulfilled in Christ: and this appears to justify a similar application of the magnificent poem.

Line 914. *He came not to the dead, &c.*

All the Scriptures which bear upon our Lord's going down to Hades, such as Ps. xvi. 9—11. Eph. iv. 9. 1 Pet. iii. 18, 19, represent it as an unprecedented act of Redeeming love and condescension. Nor are there wanting intimations in the Word of God that the accomplishment of Christ's work on earth was a

mighty promotion in the bliss of those saints who had already fallen asleep in Him. Then and not till then, are they called "the spirits of just men made perfect" (Heb. xii. 23). See Alford on Heb. xi. 40, who, comparing the two verses, says, "The writer seems to testify that the advent and work of Christ have changed the estate of the Old Testament fathers and saints into greater and perfect bliss, an inference which is forced on us by many other passages in Scripture." Indeed it could hardly be otherwise, when we remember that the mystical body of Christ is one whole family in heaven and earth (Eph. iii. 15).

Lines 929—937.

See notes on Book i., line 671, and Book v., lines 900—920.

Lines 1066—1086.

Ps. xxiv.

Line 1097. *Advancing with His precious blood.*

Heb. ix. 12.

Lines 1099—1105.

See Eph. i. 20, 21.

Line 1111. *Cleaved with the virtue of His blood those courts, &c.*

Compare "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell; and, having made peace by the blood of His cross, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or THINGS IN HEAVEN" (Col. i. 19, 20), with "It was necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but THE HEAVENLY THINGS THEMSELVES with better sacrifices than these" (Heb. ix. 23). On these passages I venture to refer the reader to my Commentary on the New Testament.

BOOK VIII.

Line 49. *Jehovah is a man of war.*

Exod. xv. 3.

Line 54. *The Sevenfold Spirit.*

Rev. iv. 5.

Line 80. *Scatter'd for a week of years.*

See note on Book vii. 822—837. The discomfiture of the hosts of darkness by the death and resurrection of Christ, synchronizing with the Pentecostal effusion of the Spirit, may afford another clue to the marvellous triumphs of the Gospel betwixt the ascension of our Lord, and the martyrdom of St. Stephen (Acts ii. 46, 47, and vi. 7).

Line 108. *As foreshadow'd, &c.*

See John xii. 32.

Line 163. *The Great High Priest of God.*

Can this sacerdotal office explain why our Lord is here represented as *standing* at God's right hand? (Acts vii. 55.)

Line 172. *For nine long months of years.*

See below, note on lines 270—287.

Lines 185—202.

For the historical interpretation of these symbolic horses, I must refer the reader to Elliott's *Horæ Apocalyptice*, of which I have given a brief *résumé* in my Commentary. I here only add my opening words:—

“As the four successive empires of Babylon, Persia, Greece, and Rome were prefigured in vision to the prophet Daniel by the emblems of a lion, a bear, a leopard, and a fourth beast, dreadful and strong exceedingly, and as in another vision the kingdoms of Persia and of Greece had been respectively foretold by the symbols of a ram and a goat, so here the Roman empire is depicted under the emblem of a war-horse, an animal sacred to Mars, the reputed father of their nation, and as such emblazoned on their coins and standards. The compound symbol of the horse and its rider signifies the empire and its imperial government. This was the great antagonistic power to Christ and His kingdom in the Apostle's days. And as in this prophecy we have two cities set before us in vivid contrast—Babylon and Jerusalem; two women—one the mother of harlots, the other the Bride, the Lamb's wife; two armies—those of hell and of heaven; two thrones—that of Satan and that of God, so at the close we read of another white horse and its rider, the true King of kings and Lord of lords. But here, as is evident, whatever this composite emblem

signifies under the first seal, it must signify under the second, third, and fourth."

Line 226. *Perpetua.*

See Milner's Church History, Vol. i., pp. 304—309.

Lines 253—259.

The historical fulfilment of the fifth seal (Rev. vi. 9—11) is doubtless to be found in those fierce and sanguinary persecutions of the Church of Christ, which, breaking out from time to time during the first three centuries, reached their terrible climax in the reign of Diocletian. It was the last convulsive effort of heathendom to crush Christianity. For ten dreadful years the waves of fiery trial rolled successively over the provinces of the Roman empire. Every province yielded its contingent to the noble army of witnesses for the truth. And this period is distinguished in history as "the era of martyrs."

Lines 260—269.

The sixth seal (Rev. vi. 12—17) prefigures, as I believe, the overthrow of Paganism throughout the Roman Empire at the time of Constantine. That the figurative language employed is not too strong to foreshadow that mighty revolution, will appear from comparing with it the emblematic prefigurements in Scripture of other national catastrophes. See Isa. xiii. 9—13. Jer. iv. 23. Ezek. xxxii. 7.

Lines 270—287.

On the significance of the mystic Bride, and of the dragon (Rev. xii. 1—6), I venture to make the following extracts from my Commentary:—

"*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven*—the Roman firmament of political power and ascendancy—*a woman clothed with the sun, &c.* This woman, who is spoken of as the mother of 'those who keep the commandments of God' (ver. 17), is without doubt the true visible Church of Christ on earth. Her clothing with the sun imports her investiture with imperial favour; the moon, which, as the faithful witness in heaven (Ps. lxxxix. 37), reflects the light of the sun, being under her feet, signifies her ecclesiastical supremacy in a Christian empire: her coronal of twelve stars may well represent her glory as upholding a faithful pastorate, the pastorate of those who cleave to the

doctrine of the twelve apostles; and her pregnancy and travail denote a period of oppression and agony before a crisis of deliverance, and fruitfulness, and joy. So it is said of Jerusalem, 'Before she travailed, she brought forth; before her pain came, she was delivered of a man child. . . . Shall a nation be born at once?' (Isa. lxvi. 7, 8. Cf. Mic. v. 3.)

"Such was the state of the Church when the Emperor Constantine first embraced the faith of Christ, and threw over her the mantle of his imperial protection. Purified in the furnace of the Diocletian persecution, 'she looked forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners' (Song vi. 10). Moreover, it has been observed that 'as the time of gestation from the conception to the birth in women with child is known to be forty weeks, or two hundred and eighty days, so, from the first rise of our Saviour's kingdom, at His resurrection and ascension, A.D. 33, till the famous edict for the universal liberty and advancement of Christianity by Constantine and Licinius, A.D. 313, which put an end to the pangs of birth in the heaviest persecution that ever was then known, was exactly two hundred and eighty years.' Whiston.

"*And there appeared another wonder in heaven*—i. e., as before, in the firmament of the Roman empire—and *behold a great dragon, fiery red, &c.* The great dragon is the devil (see ver. 9), the god of this world. In the Old Testament the power of Egypt, as the enemy of God and of His Church, is thus described (Isa. xxvii. 1; li. 9. Ezek. xxix. 3). But here the devil is represented as animating the pagan empire of Rome; for the seven heads of the dragon signify the seven hills on which Rome was built, and the seven forms of government which successively prevailed there. (See Rev. xvii. 9—18.) The ten horns denote the ten kingdoms into which the western empire was at length divided (Dan. vii. 23—27), which had as yet received no sovereignty."

In the rapture of the woman's new-born child to God and His throne, we may not only trace the political ascendancy of Christianity, but, followed as it is by her own flight into the wilderness for 1260 years, we are reminded that during the time of the Church's warfare, her kingdom is not of this world.

Lines 292—594.

The following extract will show the terrestrial meaning. I

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attach to the celestial warfare described Rev. xii. 7—12. One thing only I would add, that if, as I humbly conceive, there has been a real counterpart to the conflicts of the Church militant here on earth in the heavenly places themselves, such war, I am persuaded, took place, not as our great poet describes it, before the creation of man, but after the ascension of our Lord.

"And there was war in heaven, &c. This war in the firmament of the Roman empire seems to embrace all the conflicts between heathenism and Christianity for political ascendancy, A.D. 311—363, from Constantine's first avowal of the faith of Christ to the death of Julian the apostate. How far the hosts of darkness and the angels of light intermingled in these conflicts is one of those deep mysteries upon which the light of Scripture shines but dimly. We know that St. Paul, describing the daily warfare of the saints, says, 'We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in the heavenly places' (Eph. vi. 12). We know that when Elisha was in danger, 'the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about him' (2 Kings vi. 17). Nor, if such are the foes and such the guardian spirits of every servant of God, is it unlikely that the eventful contest on the Roman earth had its counterpart in a yet more terrible struggle betwixt the armies of the archangel Michael and the legions of the prince of the power of the air (Eph. ii. 2). This is confirmed by Dan. x. 13. 21; xii. 1, and Jude 9. But, deeply interesting as are these glimpses into the world of spirits, the terrestrial conflict betwixt Paganism and Christianity seems mainly prefigured in this symbolic language. The warfare was long and sharp, but it ended in the total defeat of heathenism, and in the deposing of idolaters from all rule and authority. They never regained their supremacy. The saints of God thought indeed that the predicted triumph of Messiah's kingdom had arrived. The end was not yet. But it was in itself a true and glorious victory, and the paeans of the Church on earth were re-echoed by the loftier hallelujahs of exulting angels and of the spirits of the just made perfect in heaven. They saw therein a pledge of the final dethronement of Satan. They rejoiced that he could no longer prefer his ceaseless and bitter accusations, as of old. They ascribed all the victory to the blood of the Lamb, and to the word of the martyrs' testimony. They called on all the in-

habitants of heaven to swell the tide of gratitude and joy. While a deeper note of warning, perhaps issuing from the throne of God, predicted the yet bitterer and more deadly wrath of the ejected spirit of evil, during the short time of his permitted devastations. The time might seem long to the weary and waiting Church, but it was short as recorded in the annals of heaven, and in prospect of the eternity to come."

Line 597. *A strange refrain of woe.*

See Rev. xii. 12.

Line 659. *First let us loose, &c.*

Rev. xii. 15.

Line 670. *Now let us counterfeit Himself, Triune.*

Such a threefold conspiracy, the master-piece of hell, is described in the Apocalypse, where St. John says, "I saw a wild beast rising up out of the sea, having seven heads and ten horns, . . . and upon his heads the name of blasphemy: . . . and the dragon gave him his power, and his throne, and great authority. . . . And I saw another wild beast coming up out of the earth, and he had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon, and he exerciseth all the power of the first beast in his presence (*ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*), and causeth the earth and them that dwell therein to worship the first beast" (Rev. xiii. 1, 2, 11, 12). Here the dragon, as appears from ch. xii. 3, represents Pagan Rome; the first wild beast, Rome Papal; the second wild beast, who is described as "the false prophet who wrought miracles in the beast's presence" (ch. xix. 20), the Papal hierarchy. The Paganism of ancient Rome was merged in the great Antichristian apostasy, and this was supported to the utmost by the hierarchy of that corrupt Church.

But not only did the dragon represent the persecuting power of Pagan Rome, but we are expressly told that the dragon is "that old serpent, called the devil and Satan" (Rev. xii. 9). There was a spiritual agent animating Paganism, none other than the prince of hell. Hence by analogy we may infer there was another spiritual agent animating Papal Rome, to whom the dragon tendered his power, and yet a third spiritual agent animating the Papal hierarchy. Such an hypothesis is strongly confirmed by the intense personality which breathes in the words "These both (the beast and the false prophet) were cast alive into

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ere cast alive into

a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. xix. 20; and see xx. 10). Such an association of evil spirits is not without parallel, as appears from the words of our Lord (Matt. xii. 43—45), and might be well anticipated from the malignity of the powers of darkness in their last conspiracies against the truth.

Line 712. *His we beloved, by us betray'd, debauch'd.*

For proof that the man upon whose forehead was a name written "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. xvii. 5) is none other than the Papal Church, I would refer the reader to Archdeacon Wordsworth's masterly essay "Is not the Church of Rome the Babylon of the Apocalypse?" an essay which is in my view altogether unanswerable.

Line 743. *The bride is hidden in the wilderness.*
Rev. xii. 6 and 14.

Lines 751—793.

See Rev. vi. and vii.; which I believe embrace the history of the fourth, fifth, and six centuries.

Line 797. *Baalim, heal'd of his wound, &c.*

See Rev. xiii. 1, and xvii. 8, where we read, "The beast that thou sawest was and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and shall go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names are not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is." The beast as an imperial Pagan power was slain by the sword of Constantine, but yet ascended out of the abyss, as popery, born of hell, ascended to reanimate the sinking empire of Rome, and shall go into perdition when its destined reign of 1260 years is finished. This is an infernal counterfeit of the resurrection of the Lord of life.

Lines 830—852.

See Rev. ix., which by a marvellous consensus of interpreters is allowed to describe the rise and progress of Mohammedanism. Almost simultaneously at the beginning of the seventh century, Popery in the West, and the religion of the false prophet in the East, arose to try to the uttermost the faith of God's elect.

Line 889. *Lo, from the heavens descended One, &c.*
See Rev. x. 1—7, which describes the blessed Reformation.

Line 914. *According to His word.*

Matt. x. 23.

Lines 933—954.

See Rev. xv. and xvi., which I believe delineate those preparative judgments of the last and present century, that usher in the Advent of the Prince of Peace.

Line 979. *As he had open'd things unknown by me, &c.*

See Paradise Lost, Book viii. lines 203—205.

Line 1019. *The first portends our tryst.*

See Num. x. 1—10.

BOOK IX.

Line 67. *Not spouse, but what is symbolized by spouse.*

The words of our Lord are express, "The children of this world marry and are given in marriage; but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; neither can they die any more; for they are equal unto the angels, and are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection" (Luke xx. 34—36), and for ever close the door against any theories of a Mohammedan Paradise.

Line 71. *A reflex glory' and image of myself.*

1 Cor. xi. 7.

Lines 120—148.

There are many intimations in Holy Scripture that the latest conflicts of the Church will be the worst, her last birth-pangs the most severe. (Isa. lix. 19, 20. Dan. xii. 1. Luke xviii. 8. Rom. viii. 19—22.)

Lines 156—205.

If the Paradise of the Blessed Dead is *below* (see note on Book i., line 671), it follows that there must be an ascent of the disembodied saints to earth before, at the voice of God, they are raised from the grave and before their spirits, reunited to their glorified bodies, rise to meet the Lord in the air.

Lines 216—246.

See Ezek. i. 1—28. These lines are transferred, with some modi-

fictions, from my Seatonian Prize Poem "Ezekiel." The prophet's sublime vision of the chariot of Deity is the alone source from which any writer could venture to draw. See Milton's admirable paraphrase, *Paradise Lost*, Book vi., lines 746—766.

Line 298. *The Lord Himself descended with a shout.*
See 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17.

Line 306. *The incandescent sky from East to West.*
Matt. xxiv. 27.

Line 312. *Save on the hills of Zion, &c.*
Compare Dan. x. 7, and Acts ix. 7.

Lines 367—391.

It appears that the fall of Babylon (Rev. xiv. 8; xvi. 19; xviii. 1—24) takes place at the Advent of our Lord, when He comes for *His saints*, but that the destruction of the Papal Antichrist and the binding of Satan do not occur, however short the interval may be, until He returns, after the marriage supper, with *His saints*. See Rev. xix. 19—21; xx. 1, 2.

Lines 392—414.

See Zech. xii. 10—14; xiii. 1. Mal. iv. 5, 6. Although John Baptist came in the spirit and power of Elijah, our Lord's words are express, that Elijah himself "shall come and restore all things" (Matt. xvii. 11).

Lines 440—462.

Ezek. xvi. 1—14.

Line 472. *My love, my dove, &c.*
Song of Solomon i. 15; ii. 16; iv. 7; v. 2.

Line 572. *The marriage supper of the Lamb.*
Rev. xix. 9, and Luke xxii. 30.

Line 621. *Half a week of years.*

There are many who think that the duration of Israel's last fiery trial will be for three years and a half, from Dan. ix. 27 and other Scriptures.

Lines 634—685.

Rev. xix. 11—16, and Ps. xiv. 2—17.

BOOK X.

Line 43. *There remains a Sabbath, &c.*

"There remaineth, therefore, a rest" (*σαββατισμός*, a sabbath rest) "for the people of God" (Heb. iv. 9).

Line 45. *But not, as many thought.*

So Cowper in his exquisite lines—

"Six thousand years of sorrow have well nigh
Fulfill'd their tardy and disastrous course
Over a sinful world; and what remains
Of this tempestuous state of human things
Is merely as the working of a sea
Before a calm, that rocks itself to rest,"

Winter Walk at Noon.

Lines 59—103.

See Ezek. xxxviii. 1—16. Dan. xii. 1. Zech. xiv. 1—3.

Lines 106—110.

The last form of the abomination of desolation (Matt. xxiv. 15): the last usurpation of the Papal Antichrist who "exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God" (2 Thess. ii. 4): the last development of the mystery of iniquity, the triple conspiracy of hell (Rev. xix. 19). See note on Book viii., line 670.

Lines 121—133.

The solemn words of our Lord, "How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end" (Mark iii. 23—26), suggest that at the time of the end there will be such a dissolution of the conspiracy of hell, such a rupture in the empire of darkness, such a suicidal strife amid the principalities of evil.

Line 161. *Behind Elijah's mantle.*

See note, Book ix., lines 392—414.

Lines 163—182.

See Ps. l. 3. The last clause of Zech. xiv. 5. 2 Thess. i. 7—9.
Rev. i. 7.

Lines 187—201.

"These both (the beast and the false prophet) were cast alive
into a lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. xix. 20).

Lines 201—215.

Rev. xx. 1—3.

Lines 219—247.

"For behold the Lord will come with fire and with His
chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and
His rebuke with flames of fire: for by fire and by His sword will
the Lord plead with all flesh, and the slain of the Lord shall be
many" (Isa. lxvi. 15, 16). This is parallel with Rev. xix. 21.
On the discriminative character of this fiery judgment, see an
earlier prophecy in the Apocalypse (Rev. xiv. 9—11).

Lines 248—259.

See Isa. xiv. 9—20.

Line 284. *His feet rested on Olivet.*

Zech. xiv. 4.

Lines 288—298.

Compare "When thou passest through the fire thou shalt not
be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee" (Isa. xliii. 2),
with the remarkable words, "I have covered thee in the shadow
of Mine hand, that I may plant the heavens, and lay the founda-
tions of the earth, and say unto Zion, Thou art My people"
(Isa. li. 16).

Line 307. *The mountain of the Lord had risen sublime.*

Isa. ii. 2. Micah iv. 1.

Line 308. *Olivet was cleft.*

Zech. xiv. 4.

Line 319. *A river of perennial waters flow'd.*

Ezek. xlvi. 1—12. Zech. xiv. 8.

Line 336. *Zion rose.*

Isa. lx. 1.

Line 338. *Entering His temple courts.*

Compare Ezek. xliii. 1—5.

Line 368. *Words of grateful praise.*

“And then shall every man have praise of God” (1 Cor. iv. 5).

Line 415. *For full fruition of the light of God.*

That the beatific vision of the face of the Eternal Father is possible for created beings, if unfulfillen, appears from the words of our Lord respecting the angelic guardians of the little ones who believe in Him, “In heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven” (Matt. xviii. 10): but that this loftiest privilege is not vouchsafed to the Church Universal until after the Millennium and after the final judgment, may be perhaps inferred from the reservation till then of this glorious promise in the Apocalypse, “They shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads” (Rev. xxii. 4). If so, the Millennial Sabbath, as we might have surmised, will be in this respect also an education for that which is to come.

Lines 418—438.

Ps. lxxvii. 1, 2. Isa. xxxii. 15; lii. 7. Matt. xi. 11.

Lines 439—464.

Isa. xxxv. 1—10; xli. 18—20; lv. 12, 13.

Lines 465—489.

Isa. xi. 6—9; lxxv. 25.

Lines 490—505.

Joel ii. 21—27. Isa. xxx. 26.

Line 505. *War was unknown, &c.*

Isa. ii. 4.

Line 510. *Babel's confusion was unlearn'd, &c.*

Not only “In that day shall there be one Lord,” but it is added “And His name one” (Zech. xiv. 9). “Tongues shall cease” (1 Cor. xiii. 8). One song arises from every creature on the earth (Rev. v. 13).

Line 514. *No labour now was lost, &c.*

See Ps. lxxii. Isa. lx.

Line 520. *David, vicegerent, &c.*
Ezek. xxxvii. 25.

Line 522. *The Twelve, &c.*
Matt. xix. 28.

Line 527. *A royalty of priests.*
Isa. lxi. 6.

Line 546. *Evil lurk'd unseen, &c.*

This appears from the remarkable prophecy which, describing the Millennial state, says, "The child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed" (Isa. lxxv. 20). Here we read of sin and curse and death; whereas, after the Millennium and the judgment, death shall be destroyed, and there shall be no more curse (Rev. xxi. 4 and xxii. 3).

Line 556. *Nor prophecy was mute.*
Rev. xx. 7.

Line 567. *Nor wounds though rare, &c.*
Ezek. xlvi. 12.

Line 585. *And angels up and down those radiant stairs, &c.*
Compare John i. 51 with Gen. xxviii. 12.

BOOK XI.

Lines 1—11.

"The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth" (Matt. xiii. 41, 42).

Line 19. *Oppressive silence, &c.*
"The wicked shall be silent in darkness" (1 Sam. ii. 9).

Line 25. *Silence but no sleep, &c.*
Isa. lvii. 21. Rev. xiv. 11.

Line 41. *The Lord is righteous.*
Exod. ix. 27.

Line 80. *Shall we humbly sue, &c.*
See Paradise Lost, Book iv., lines 80—104.

Lines 148—157.
“That he should deceive the nations no more till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season” (Rev. xx. 3).

Lines 191—195.
“And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom is as the sand of the sea” (Rev. xx. 7, 8).

Lines 198, 199.
See Paradise Lost, Book x., lines 410—414.

Lines 206—215.
See Paradise Lost, Book ix., lines 58—68.

Line 220. *The sparse and rare remains of ill.*
See note, Book x., line 516.

Line 233. *Penuel.*
See Book iv., lines 456—469.

Lines 334—344.
See Isa. lxvi. 23, and Zech. xiv. 16.

Lines 432—458.
“And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city” (Rev. xx. 9).

Line 460. *Which shook the first fell council of the damn'd.*
See Book vi., lines 420—424.

Line 469. *The dreadful storm of fire, &c.*
“And fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them” (Rev. xx. 9).

Line 474. *A whisper ran, &c.*

See Exod. xiv. 25.

Lines 492—518.

"And Death and Hades delivered up the dead that were in them" (Rev. xx. 13). "All that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation" (John v. 28, 29). From Rev. xx. 4, 5, we learn that a thousand years intervene betwixt the resurrection of the just and that of the unjust, although in the perspective of prophecy they are often presented simultaneously to our view.

Lines 519—539.

"And Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire" (Rev. xx. 14). It is only of the Hades of the lost St. John is here speaking.

Lines 540—558.

See 2 Pet. iii. 7—10. That the camp of the saints and the beloved city will be exempted from this final fire, having been already purified at the beginning of the Millennium, seems clear from Rev. xx. 9 and Isa. li. 16.

Lines 559—594.

"And I saw a great white throne, and Him that sate on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God: and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life" (Rev. xx. 11, 12). And compare Dan. vii. 9, 10.

Lines 595—623.

Matt. xxv. 31—33. Rom. xiv. 10—12. 1 Cor. iv. 5. See also Matt. x. 42. 2 Cor. ix. 6. 2 Tim. iv. 8. Rev. xxii. 12.

Lines 637—645.

Matt. xxv. 31.

Lines 646—672.

"Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" (1 Cor. vi. 2.)

Lines 673—705.

"Reserved unto judgment" (2 Pet. ii. 4). "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" (1 Cor. vi. 3.)

Lines 706—745.

"It shall bruise thy head" (Gen. iii. 15). "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are" (Rev. xx. 10).

Lines 787—794.

Matt. xxvi. 24.

Lines 800—806.

See Book viii., lines 226—252.

Lines 832—840.

"They watch for your souls as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you" (Heb. xiii. 17).

Lines 855—867.

Matt. xxv. 41. Rev. ii. 26, 27.

Lines 868—880.

"And these shall go away into everlasting punishment" (Matt. xxv. 46).

Line 881. *All shook except the Throne of Judgment.*

See Paradise Lost, Book vi., lines 831—834.

Line 890. *He was in tears.*

Compare Gen. vi. 6. Exek. xviii. 32. Luko xix. 41—44.

Line 901. *And judgment is His strange and dreadful work.*

"That He may do His work, His strange work; and bring to pass His act, His strange act" (Isa. xxviii. 21).

Lines 909—919.

Rev. xiv. 10, 11, and xix. 3.

Lines 919—927.

Heb. x. 31; xii. 29.

Lines 928—957.

See note, Book iii., line 875. On this most solemn and awful theme, I would only add that Holy Scripture supplies us with the most express assurances that the powers of evil shall be for ever subjugated under the feet of the Son of God. His enemies shall be made His footstool (Ps. cx. 1). "He must reign till He hath put all enemies under His feet" (1 Cor. xv. 25). "For this

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purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy (*ἀσθ*) the works of the devil" (1 John iii. 8). These Scriptures stand inflexibly opposed to that medieval tradition, which pictures devils tormenting men, and men blaspheming God for ever, and assure us of the eternal repression of every act of evil, and of the eternal silencing of every word of rebellion.

Lines 970—1020.

Nor is the repression of evil the only result of the Divine judgment which the Word of God reveals. It also declares that even the lost shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 9—11. Rev. v. 13). So of Pharaoh, the most signal example of obturacy which earth has seen, God says, "I will at this time send all My plagues upon thine heart . . . that thou mayest know that there is none like Me" (Exod. ix. 14): for a time Pharaoh did know and confess, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked" (Exod. ix. 27): but the judgment being relaxed, he rebelled again and again. In that future world of woe, the punishment is ETERNAL (Matt. xxv. 46. 2 Thess. i. 9), and the enforced submission and confession will be eternal likewise. And then shall the marvellous words of the Psalmist be acknowledged by all, "God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this; that power belongeth unto God: also unto Thee, O Lord, belongeth MERCY; for Thou renderest to every man according to his work" (Ps. lxxii. 11, 12).

BOOK XII.

Line 47. *The earth, emerging from her flood of fire, &c.*

St. John says, "I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away" (Rev. xxi. 1). Our first impression from these words, which introduce the glories of the eternal ages beyond the millennium, might be that the present heavens and earth would be utterly brought to nought. Other scriptures, however, prove that not the annihilation, but the renovation of our world, is here foretold. Thus the land of promise was given to Abraham and his seed for an "everlasting possession" (Gen. xvii. 8). Zion, we read, shall be "an eternal excellency" (Isa. lx. 15). Jesus Christ "upon the throne of His

father, David, will reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke i. 33). God will not "un-create," but "re-create" that which He has made for His glory. That the terms here used do not compel us to interpret them as signifying "annihilation," appears from a comparison of the language used by St. Peter in describing the deluge, "the world that then was perished" (2 Pet. iii. 6. 13), and from the yet more striking parallel of the new birth of the soul to God, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creation: old things are passed away; behold all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). The world, though it "perished" in the deluge, was not annihilated; and the soul, that is born of God, though renewed, does not lose its identity with its former self. This will be the perfected "regeneration," of which our Lord spoke (Matt. xix. 28). The renewal, which commences at the second advent, and continues during the millennium, will be consummated after the final judgment. The millennial heavens and earth will be *new*, compared with those which are now (See Isa. lxv. 17—25); but this renovation will only be completed in those which are to last for ever and can never be shaken or removed.

Line 60. *Her late apparel was not found.*

Ps. cii. 25, 26.

Lines 65—75.

See Rev. xix. 3.

Lines 91—102.

See Isa. liv. 1—10.

Lines 103—127.

"God is gone up with a shout, the LORD with the sound of a trumpet" (Ps. xlvii. 5). See the whole of this exultant Psalm.

Line 128. *Before us now it rose, builded aloft, &c.*

The question has been keenly controverted whether the new Jerusalem (Rev. xxi. xxii.) is actually the abode of the heavenly citizens, or only a representation of the Church Triumphant under the emblem of a city. The advocates of a purely symbolical meaning maintain, "The bride is a city, and the city is a bride: both expressions are therefore figures to describe the glorious community of ransomed souls, the mystical body of Christ, and blessed company of all faithful people." But to this it may be sufficient to reply that, in the contrasted case of

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Babylon (Rev. xvii. 1—3, 18), the woman is a city, and the city is a woman. Both expressions are figures to denote the apostate Papal Church. But this does not prevent the existence of the actual city of Rome, a material structure, which shall be consumed with material fire. The site and the buildings are, indeed, of very secondary importance to the character of the harlot Church who occupies them; for it is her faithlessness which gives them all their disastrous significance. But there they are, seven hills crowned with edifices on the banks of the Tiber. So of the new Jerusalem: the city, it is true, is a type of a spiritual building compacted of living stones, which is growing in holy temple unto the Lord (Eph. ii. 21). But this does not preclude the possibility of an actual fabric, composed of heavenly material, which shall never be destroyed. Here, too, the site and the structure are of inferior moment to the virgin bride who shall dwell therein; for it is her saintliness which gives all its significance to her palace home. That home, however, exists, a glorious reality, an abiding city yet to come—a city which hath foundations, whose designer and builder is God. (See Heb. xi. 10, 16; xiii. 14, which Scriptures strongly confirm this view.) We are thus irresistibly led to the conclusion that the heavenly Jerusalem here described is both real and typical—an actual city, of which every part typifies the spiritual temple of living stones. For as the glorified body will be the worthy habitation of the perfectly regenerate spirit—a building of God, un house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens (2 Cor. v. 1)—so the celestial city will be the meet dwelling-place of the saints for ever, and their spiritual characteristics will each and all find a counterpart in that marvellous structure prepared for them by their God. Hence it is by no means easy, nor perhaps is it always desirable, to interpret the various details here given. They awaken conceptions of delight which we cannot always define or describe. But let us suffer those images of glory to float through our mind, and to rest in our heart, until we exclaim—

"Jerusalem! Jerusalem! would God I were in thee!
 When shall my labours have an end, thy joys when shall I see?"

And perchance this unveiling of the glories to come has accomplished its chief intent: it has weaned us from earth; it has drawn us to heaven.

Line 144. *The agate once Chalcedon's peerless boast.*
The chalcedony was a striped agate found at Chalcedon.

Lines 160—164.

See Heb. viii. 5; ix. 23, and the important words regarding Solomon's temple, which are often forgotten when those regarding the Mosaic tabernacle are remembered, 1 Chron. xxviii. 11, 12, 19. Regarding the temple likewise we are there assured "the pattern of all was BY THE SPIRIT," and was, we cannot doubt, only a more elaborate revelation of the heavenly sanctuary.

Line 166. *Some high watch among the lasting hills.*
Rev. xxi. 10.

Lines 168—189.

See Rev. iv. 1—11, and note on Book iv., lines 295—301.

Lines 194—236.

See note, Book x., line 415, and compare Col. i. 22 with Jude 24.

Lines 237—252.

Matt. xi. 27. Heb. i. 3. Rev. xix. 12

Lines 253—269.

Ps. xvii. 7, as unfolded Heb. i. 6. Eph. i. 20—22. Phil. ii. 9—11.

Lines 270—292.

In these lines I have attempted to express thoughts contained in the following notes from my Commentary on 1 Cor. xv. 24—28:—

"And then, when the whole creation is thus subjected to the Son, who is the Creator and Heir of all things, then shall the Son also Himself be manifestly subordinate, by His own willing and holy self-presentation of Himself and the ransomed universe to the Eternal Father. And so God will be all in all—not the Father without the Son, nor the Father and the Son without the co-eternal Spirit; but Father, Son, and Spirit in the unity of the Godhead, being worshipped and adored by things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.

"Of this profound mystery, when in the future glory the clouds of sin and sorrow shall be for ever swept away, perhaps the experience of saints in their access to, and communion with,

God on earth, may afford some faint adumbration. When in prayer they are most conscious of the struggle with unbelief and sin, how vividly they realize the mediatorship of the man Christ Jesus! they seem to come first to Jesus, and, through Him, they have access by One Spirit unto the Father. But when God in Christ lifts up the light of His countenance in clearest effulgence upon them, as they kneel at the footstool of the throne of grace, then it is often rather the Unity of Essence in the Godhead than the Trinity of Persons which fills and absorbs their souls; they are in the presence of Him who is Love; they dwell in God, and God in them. And at such an hour God to them is 'all in all.'

Line 327. *His priestly' abode within the House of God.*

Such appears to be the primary meaning of the words of our Lord, "In My Father's house are many mansions" (John xiv. 2); for He had already consecrated this name "My Father's house" to describe the temple at Jerusalem (John ii. 16). Heaven is thus revealed under the similitude of a temple, containing mansions for all the members of the royal priesthood.

Lines 358—368.

See Eph. iii. 10.

Lines 369—393.

"That in the ages to come He may show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 7).

Lines 393—410.

St. Paul's words (1 Cor. xiii. 13) are express, "*And now* (*νυν*) *δέ*, not referring to *time*, but to *reality*, "as the case really is," "*abideth faith, hope, love.*" These three Divine graces are not like our imperfect knowledge, and imperfect utterance, which will vanish away. These are imperishable and eternal. These abide for evermore. It is true that those things, which are now objects of faith and hope, will be objects of sight and of blessed fruition then; but to a finite being, however wide the expanse which is his own, there must ever be an infinite unknown beyond, and all that lies beyond the limit of his intuition will exercise faith and hope. These graces then *abide*. But love will ever have a supremacy over faith and hope, for it is the immediate reflection of Him who is love.

Lines 411—454.

Compare the prophetic Psalm, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise Thee" (interpreted of our Lord, Heb. ii. 12). also His own words, "The time cometh when I shall no more speak unto you in parables; but I shall show you plainly of the Father" (John xvi. 25): and the apocalyptic vision of the white-robed multitudes whom no man could number, "who are before the throne of God, and serve Him day and night in His temple" (Rev. vii. 15).

Lines 455—482.

See Rev. xxi. 2.

Lines 482—490.

If the earthly Zion is "an eternal excellency" (Isa. lx. 14, 15), and the holy land of promise is "an everlasting possession" secured by an everlasting covenant to Abraham and his seed (Gen. xvii. 7, 8), may we not humbly from analogy infer that other terrestrial localities likewise will be recognized?

Lines 491—500.

See Isa. xlix. 19, 20.

Lines 501—513.

"The earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Hab. ii. 14).

Lines 514—525.

See Rev. xxi. 3.

Lines 526—545.

"And the nations" ["of them which are saved," these words are omitted in the best MSS.] "shall walk in the light of it" (Rev. xxi. 24).

Lines 546—569.

Compare Isa. lxvi. 24 with the solemn revelations of the end of the ungodly introduced once and again amid the glories of the eternal kingdom (Rev. xxi. 8, 27; xxii. 15).

Lines 570—598.

"Ye shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, saith the Lord God" (Ezek. xiv. 23).

Lines 599—633.

For the proof from Holy Scripture that the human family, when sin and death are for ever overcome, shall go on multiplying its blessed generations without end, these notes are too limited to afford space. I must refer to the abundant evidence collated, in Birks' *Daniel*, vol. i, ch. xvi., and in his *Outlines of Unfulfilled Prophecy*, ch. xv.; and also to a most thoughtful and suggestive work, recently published, Shephard's *Tree of Life*. This we may well believe, that whereas it is recorded "God formed the earth and made it, He created it not in vain, He formed it to be inhabited" (Isa. xlv. 18), the same untiring Goodness will in His own time people with intelligent worshippers the countless orbs of the heavens. Of the whole ransomed Church we are assured it is but "a kind of firstfruits of His creature" (James i. 18). The illimitable harvest is yet to be gathered in. May our hearts only be in unison with the inspired doxology (Eph. iii. 20, 21), "Now unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus unto all the generations of the age of the ages! Amen."

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YESTERDAY, TO-DAY, AND FOR EVER:

A Poem in Twelve Books.

By EDWARD HENRY BICKERSTETH, M.A.
VICAR OF CHRIST CHURCH, HAMSTEAD,
AUTHOR OF "THE TWO BROTHERS, AND OTHER POEMS."

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it after a fashion of his own; and, while embodying in it the type of religious thought and feeling which belongs distinctively to his time, has impressed on the whole work his own intellectual and moral image as completely as either of his illustrious predecessors did on his.

"Beginning with the death of the Seer, and his entrance into Paradise, the poem recounts the whole drama of earth's moral history, in the form of a narrative from the lips of Oriël, his guardian angel. Our limits will not allow us to go into any analysis of the action represented. We can only say that it exhibits a rich and creative imagination, an exquisite purity of taste, and a power of delineation that leaves little to be desired. In a poem of such length, here and there a feeble line or a questionable expression must almost necessarily occur. But nothing is vague and half-conceived, or indistinctly told. The language is simple and precise, rarely turgid, or strained, or marred with affectations of any sort. In the mode of conceiving and describing the scenery and life of the invisible world, there is a felicitous medium between the grossness of sheer materialism on the one hand, and the shadowy tenuity of an unreal spiritualism on the other. Aside from the brief and simple statements of the Scriptures themselves, we have read nothing, to our thought, at all comparable to these pictures of the intermediate state of departed souls. In the progress of the dramatic development of the plan, the interest is well sustained, and holds the unflinching attention of the reader to the last.

"If, along with a power to appreciate the charming language and the harmonies of verse, one has also a heart warm with devout affection and in quick sympathy with what is truly spiritual and divine, he cannot but find pleasure, absorbing and intense, yet altogether healthful, in this noble contribution to English sacred literature. No Christian heart, it would seem, can fail to be refreshed and made permanently better by finding itself borne up, as on mighty wings, into the highest regions of religious thought, and enabled to study, in one comprehensive view, the great scheme of eternal Providence for the recovery of the human race to holiness and life. We have felt, on laying down this volume, as if we had been for some time wandering through the bewildering loveliness of Paradise, breathing its vital air, communing with angels and the spirits of the just made perfect, and beholding the face and hearing the voice of the Blessed One whom the holy in all worlds adore. Such, we can hardly doubt, will be the experience of many who will read and re-read its quickening and inspiring pages."—*From a Review by the Rev. Roy Palmer, D.D., New York.*

By the same Author.

THE TWO BROTHERS, AND OTHER POEMS.

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THE TWO BROTHERS.	THRESHOLD OF THINGS UNSEEN.
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EZEKIEL (Seatonian Prize Poem).	THE WALK TO EMMAUS.
JOHN BAPTIST.	THE WILDERNESS GARDEN.
FAVOURITISMS OF HEAVEN.	THE SUFFERER'S COUCH.
LINES ON A SUFFERING SISTER.	And other Poems.

“We do not believe in the common cant which tells us that we live in an unpoetical age. The true poet will find any age poetical so long as human nature is what it always has been, and so long as creation teems with that marvellous and inexhaustible store of beauty, of which the sublimest of singers have told us but the smallest portion. Yet what has been already achieved in the Victorian age by the votaries of the Muses is enough to mark it as an age of poetry, and we have no hesitation in declaring that during the last twenty-five years more genuine poetry, and a larger amount of it, has been produced in England than was produced during the whole of the last century. Mr. Bickersteth is already known to fame as the author of a very successful and beautiful epic poem on the difficult subject of “Yesterday, Today, and For Ever.” His verses have the genuine ring of poetry, and his touch is often delicate and masterly, always truthful and tasteful. The more recent poems of Mr. Bickersteth are instinct with the spirit of true poetry, full of original power and conception, and are often imbued with a delicate sweetness and truth of feeling all their own. Like Keble, Mr. Bickersteth is essentially a Christian poet, and the greater part of these poems appeal, and with success, to the deepest and most devotional sympathies of the soul. In many of the more recent poems we

find much that reminds us of Tennyson, and much that does not. Many of the blank verse lines are modelled after the marvellous music of Tennyson, while a few of the metaphors remind us of the Laureate, as for example, in 'My heart was going *out towards them*,' and 'Fragile as the foam on slippery waves,' we are reminded of the Tennysonian, 'My heart went forth to meet him coming ere he came;' 'As tremulously as *foam* upon the beach, ready to *break*.' In these poems, however, we have more heat than in Tennyson, who has more light; we have more feeling, and less passion; more grandeur, and less grace of diction. In Tennyson we admire the workmanship, which there absorbs our attention; but in these delightful breathings of Mr. Bickersteth's muse we admire the work rather than the workmanship. 'The Two Brothers' is a very touching tale of mingled sweetness and sadness, and pointed with a fine moral. 'Things that are,' 'Samson,' 'Nineveh,' and 'Ezekiel,' are all poems which will be read with interest and pleasure from their masterly treatment and the graphic power which pervades them. They abound in such fine touches, for example, as the following:—

"What of the dews
And summer rivulets of life, its fresh
And fond affections have been withered up
Untimely in thy spirit's inmost depths,
Unseen the springs of heavenly love gush forth,
And make low music in the ear of God."

"'Samson' is written in a strain of unwonted vigour and beauty, and, though gleaming in the same field with Milton, our poet in passages appears not far behind the author of 'Samson Agonistes.'"—*Standard*, March 29, 1871.

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