

Paradise Lost BOOK 8
John Milton (1667)

THE ARGUMENT

Adam inquires concerning celestial Motions, is doubtfully answer'd, and exhorted to search rather things more worthy of knowledg: Adam assents, and still desirous to detain Raphael, relates to him what he remember'd since his own Creation, his placing in Paradise, his talk with God concerning solitude and fit society, his first meeting and Nuptials with Eve, his discourse with the Angel thereupon; who after admonitions repeated departs.

THE Angel ended, and in Adams Eare
So Charming left his voice, that he a while
Thought him still speaking, still stood fixt to hear;
Then as new wak't thus gratefully repli'd.
What thanks sufficient, or what recompence [5]
Equal have I to render thee, Divine
Hystorian, who thus largely hast allayd
The thirst I had of knowledge, and voutsaf't
This friendly condescention to relate
Things else by me unsearchable, now heard [10]
With wonder, but delight, and, as is due,
With glorie attributed to the high
Creator; something yet of doubt remaines,
Which onely thy solution can resolve.
When I behold this goodly Frame, this World [15]
Of Heav'n and Earth consisting, and compute,
Thir magnitudes, this Earth a spot, a graine,
An Atom, with the Firmament compar'd
And all her numberd Starrs, that seem to rowle
Spaces incomprehensible (for such [20]
Thir distance argues and thir swift return
Diurnal) meerly to officiate light
Round this opacous Earth, this punctual spot,
One day and night; in all thir vast survey
Useless besides, reasoning I oft admire, [25]
How Nature wise and frugal could commit
Such disproportions, with superfluous hand
So many nobler Bodies to create,
Greater so manifold to this one use,
For aught appeers, and on thir Orbs impose [30]
Such restless revolution day by day
Repeated, while the sedentarie Earth,
That better might with farr less compass move,
Serv'd by more noble then her self, attaines

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Her end without least motion, and receaves, [35]
As Tribute such a sumless journey brought
Of incorporeal speed, her warmth and light;
Speed, to describe whose swiftness Number failes.

So spake our Sire, and by his count'nance seemd
Entring on studious thoughts abstruse, which *Eve* [40]
Perceaving where she sat retir'd in sight,
With lowliness Majestic from her seat,
And Grace that won who saw to wish her stay,
Rose, and went forth among her Fruits and Flours,
To visit how they prosper'd, bud and bloom, [45]
Her Nurserie; they at her coming sprung
And toucht by her fair tendance gladlier grew.
Yet went she not, as not with such discourse
Delighted, or not capable her eare
Of what was high: such pleasure she reserv'd, [50]
Adam relating, she sole Auditress;
Her Husband the Relater she preferr'd
Before the Angel, and of him to ask
Chose rather: hee, she knew would intermix
Grateful digressions, and solve high dispute [55]
With conjugal Caresses, from his Lip
Not Words alone pleas'd her. O when meet now
Such pairs, in Love and mutual Honour joyn'd?
With Goddess-like demeanour forth she went;
Not unattended, for on her as Queen [60]
A pomp of winning Graces waited still,
And from about her shot Darts of desire
Into all Eyes to wish her still in sight.
And *Raphael* now to *Adam's* doubt propos'd
Benevolent and facil thus repli'd. [65]

To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav'n
Is as the Book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous Works, and learne
His Seasons, Hours, or Dayes, or Months, or Yeares:
This to attain, whether Heav'n move or Earth, [70]
Imports not, if thou reck'n right, the rest
From Man or Angel the great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets to be scann'd by them who ought
Rather admire; or if they list to try [75]
Conjecture, he his Fabric of the Heav'ns
Hath left to thir disputes, perhaps to move
His laughter at thir quaint Opinions wide
Hereafter, when they come to model Heav'n

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And calculate the Starrs, how they will weild [80]
 The mightie frame, how build, unbuild, contrive
 To save appeerances, how gird the Sphear
 With Centric and Eccentric scribl'd o're,
 Cycle and Epicycle, Orb in Orb:
 Alreadie by thy reasoning this I guess, [85]
 Who art to lead thy ofspring, and supposet
 That bodies bright and greater should not serve
 The less not bright, nor Heav'n such journies run,
 Earth sitting still, when she alone receaves
 The benefit: consider first, that Great [90]
 Or Bright inferrs not Excellence: the Earth
 Though, in comparison of Heav'n, so small,
 Nor glistening, may of solid good containe
 More plenty then the Sun that barren shines,
 Whose vertue on it self workes no effect, [95]
 But in the fruitful Earth; there first receavd
 His beams, unactive else, thir vigour find.
 Yet not to Earth are those bright Luminaries
 Officious, but to thee Earths habitant.
 And for the Heav'ns wide Circuit, let it speak [100]
 The Makers high magnificence, who built
 So spacious, and his Line stretcht out so farr;
 That Man may know he dwells not in his own;
 An Edifice too large for him to fill,
 Lodg'd in a small partition, and the rest [105]
 Ordain'd for uses to his Lord best known.
 The swiftness of those Circles attribute,
 Though numberless, to his Omnipotence,
 That to corporeal substances could adde
 Speed almost Spiritual; mee thou thinkst not slow, [110]
 Who since the Morning hour set out from Heav'n
 Where God resides, and ere mid-day arriv'd
 In *Eden*, distance inexpressible
 By Numbers that have name. But this I urge,
 Admitting Motion in the Heav'ns, to shew [115]
 Invalid that which thee to doubt it mov'd;
 Not that I so affirm, though so it seem
 To thee who hast thy dwelling here on Earth.
 God to remove his wayes from human sense,
 Plac'd Heav'n from Earth so farr, that earthly sight, [120]
 If it presume, might erre in things too high,
 And no advantage gaine. What if the Sun
 Be Centre to the World, and other Starrs
 By his attractive vertue and their own

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Incited, dance about him various rounds? [125]
 Thir wandring course now high, now low, then hid,
 Progressive, retrograde, or standing still,
 In six thou seest, and what if sev'nth to these
 The Planet Earth, so stedfast though she seem,
 Insensibly three different Motions move? [130]
 Which else to several Spheres thou must ascribe,
 Mov'd contrarie with thwart obliquities,
 Or save the Sun his labour, and that swift
 Nocturnal and Diurnal rhomb suppos'd,
 Invisible else above all Starrs, the Wheele [135]
 Of Day and Night; which needs not thy beleefe,
 If Earth industrious of her self fetch Day
 Travelling East, and with her part averse
 From the Suns beam meet Night, her other part
 Still luminous by his ray. What if that light [140]
 Sent from her through the wide transpicuous aire,
 To the terrestrial Moon be as a Starr
 Enlightning her by Day, as she by Night
 This Earth? reciprocal, if Land be there,
 Fields and Inhabitants: Her spots thou seest [145]
 As Clouds, and Clouds may rain, and Rain produce
 Fruits in her soft'nd Soile, for some to eate
 Allotted there; and other Suns perhaps
 With thir attendant Moons thou wilt descrie
 Communicating Male and Femal Light, [150]
 Which two great Sexes animate the World,
 Stor'd in each Orb perhaps with some that live.
 For such vast room in Nature unpossesst
 By living Soule, desert and desolate,
Onely to shine, yet scarce to contribute [155]
 Each Orb a glimps of Light, conveyd so farr
 Down to this habitable, which returnes
 Light back to them, is obvious to dispute.
 But whether thus these things, or whether not,
 Whether the Sun predominant in Heav'n [160]
 Rise on the Earth, or Earth rise on the Sun,
 Hee from the East his flaming rode begin,
 Or Shee from West her silent course advance
 With inoffensive pace that spinning sleeps
 On her soft Axle, while she paces Eev'n, [165]
 And beares thee soft with the smooth Air along,
 Sollicit not thy thoughts with matters hid,
 Leave them to God above, him serve and feare;
 Of other Creatures, as him pleases best,

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Wherever plac't, let him dispose: joy thou [170]
In what he gives to thee, this Paradise
And thy faire *Eve*; Heav'n is for thee too high
To know what passes there; be lowlie wise:
Think onely what concernes thee and thy being;
Dream not of other Worlds, what Creatures there [175]
Live, in what state, condition or degree,
Contented that thus farr hath been reveal'd
Not of Earth onely but of highest Heav'n.

To whom thus *Adam* cleerd of doubt, repli'd.
How fully hast thou satisfi'd me, pure [180]
Intelligence of Heav'n, Angel serene,
And freed from intricacies, taught to live
The easiest way, nor with perplexing thoughts
To interrupt the sweet of Life, from which
God hath bid dwell farr off all anxious cares, [185]
And not molest us, unless we our selves
Seek them with wandring thoughts, and notions vain.
But apt the Mind or Fancy is to roave
Uncheckt, and of her roaving is no end;
Till warn'd, or by experience taught, she learne, [190]
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life,
Is the prime Wisdom, what is more, is fume,
Or emptiness, or fond impertinence, [195]
And renders us in things that most concerne
Unpractis'd, unprepar'd, and still to seek.
Therefore from this high pitch let us descend
A lower flight, and speak of things at hand
Useful, whence haply mention may arise [200]
Of somthing not unseasonable to ask
By sufferance, and thy wonted favour deign'd.
Thee I have heard relating what was don
Ere my remembrance: now hear mee relate
My Storie, which perhaps thou hast not heard; [205]
And Day is yet not spent; till then thou seest
How suttly to detaine thee I devise,
Inviting thee to hear while I relate,
Fond, were it not in hope of thy reply:
For while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav'n, [210]
And sweeter thy discourse is to my eare
Then Fruits of Palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
And hunger both, from labour, at the houre
Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,

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Though pleasant, but thy words with Grace Divine [215]
Imbu'd, bring to thir sweetness no satiety.

To whom thus *Raphael* answer'd heav'nly meek.
Nor are thy lips ungraceful, Sire of men,
Nor tongue ineloquent; for God on thee
Abundantly his gifts hath also pour'd [220]
Inward and outward both, his image faire:
Speaking or mute all comliness and grace
Attends thee, and each word, each motion formes.
Nor less think wee in Heav'n of thee on Earth
Then of our fellow servant, and inquire [225]
Gladly into the wayes of God with Man:
For God we see hath honour'd thee, and set
On Man his Equal Love: say therefore on;
For I that Day was absent, as befell,
Bound on a voyage uncouth and obscure, [230]
Farr on excursion toward the Gates of Hell;
Squar'd in full Legion (such command we had)
To see that none thence issu'd forth a spie,
Or enemie, while God was in his work,
Least hee incenst at such eruption bold, [235]
Destruction with Creation might have mixt.
Not that they durst without his leave attempt,
But us he sends upon his high behests
For state, as Sovran King, and to enure
Our prompt obedience. Fast we found, fast shut [240]
The dismal Gates, and barricado'd strong;
But long ere our approaching heard within
Noise, other then the sound of Dance or Song,
Torment, and loud lament, and furious rage.
Glad we return'd up to the coasts of Light [245]
Ere Sabbath Eev'ning: so we had in charge.
But thy relation now; for I attend,
Pleas'd with thy words no less then thou with mine.

So spake the Godlike Power, and thus our Sire.
For Man to tell how human Life began [250]
Is hard; for who himself beginning knew?
Desire with thee still longer to converse
Induc'd me. As new wak't from soundest sleep
Soft on the flourie herb I found me laid
In Balmie Sweat, which with his Beames the Sun [255]
Soon dri'd, and on the reaking moisture fed.
Strait toward Heav'n my wondring Eyes I turnd,
And gaz'd a while the ample Skie, till rais'd
By quick instinctive motion up I sprung,

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As thitherward endeavoring, and upright [260]
 Stood on my feet; about me round I saw
 Hill, Dale, and shadie Woods, and sunnie Plaines,
 And liquid Lapse of murmuring Streams; by these,
 Creatures that livd, and movd, and walk'd, or flew,
 Birds on the branches warbling; all things smil'd, [265]
 With fragrance and with joy my heart oreflow'd.
 My self I then perus'd, and Limb by Limb
 Survey'd, and sometimes went, and sometimes ran
 With supple joints, as lively vigour led:
 But who I was, or where, or from what cause, [270]
 Knew not; to speak I tri'd, and forthwith spake,
 My Tongue obey'd and readily could name
 What e're I saw. Thou Sun, said I, faire Light,
 And thou enlight'nd Earth, so fresh and gay,
 Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plaines, [275]
 And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell,
 Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
 Not of my self; by some great Maker then,
 In goodness and in power præeminent;
 Tell me, how may I know him, how adore, [280]
 From whom I have that thus I move and live,
 And feel that I am happier then I know.
 While thus I call'd, and stray'd I knew not whither,
 From where I first drew Aire, and first beheld
 This happie Light, when answer none return'd, [285]
 On a green shadie Bank profuse of Flours
 Pensive I sate me down; there gentle sleep
 First found me, and with soft oppression seisd
 My droused sense, untroubl'd, though I thought
 I then was passing to my former state [290]
 Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve:
 When suddenly stood at my Head a dream,
 Whose inward apparition gently mov'd
 My Fancy to believe I yet had being,
 And livd: One came, methought, of shape Divine, [295]
 And said, thy Mansion wants thee, *Adam*, rise,
 First Man, of Men innumerable ordain'd
 First Father, call'd by thee I come thy Guide
 To the Garden of bliss, thy seat prepar'd.
 So saying, by the hand he took me rais'd, [300]
 And over Fields and Waters, as in Aire
 Smooth sliding without step, last led me up
 A woodie Mountain; whose high top was plaine,
 A Circuit wide, enclos'd, with goodliest Trees

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Planted, with Walks, and Bowers, that what I saw [305]
 Of Earth before scarce pleasant seemd. Each Tree
 Load'n with fairest Fruit, that hung to the Eye
 Tempting, stirr'd in me sudden appetite
 To pluck and eate; whereat I wak'd, and found
 Before mine Eyes all real, as the dream [310]
 Had lively shadowd: Here had new begun
 My wandring, had not hee who was my Guide
 Up hither, from among the Trees appeer'd,
 Presence Divine. Rejoycing, but with aw,
 In adoration at his feet I fell [315]
 Submiss: he rear'd me, and Whom thou soughtst I am,
 Said mildely, Author of all this thou seest
 Above, or round about thee or beneath.
 This Paradise I give thee, count it thine
 To Till and keep, and of the Fruit to eate: [320]
 Of every Tree that in the Garden growes
 Eate freely with glad heart; fear here no dearth:
 But of the Tree whose operation brings
Knowledg of good and ill, which I have set
 The Pledge of thy Obedience and thy Faith, [325]
 Amid the Garden by the Tree of Life,
 Remember what I warne thee, shun to taste,
 And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
 The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
 Transgress, inevitably thou shalt dye; [330]
 From that day mortal, and this happie State
 Shalt loose, expell'd from hence into a World
 Of woe and sorrow. Sternly he pronounc'd
 The rigid interdiction, which resounds
 Yet dreadful in mine eare, though in my choice [335]
 Not to incur; but soon his cleer aspect
 Return'd and gracious purpose thus renew'd.
 Not onely these fair bounds, but all the Earth
 To thee and to thy Race I give; as Lords
 Possess it, and all things that therein live, [340]
 Or live in Sea, or Aire, Beast, Fish, and Fowle.
 In signe whereof each Bird and Beast behold
 After thir kindes; I bring them to receave
 From thee thir Names, and pay thee fealtie
 With low subjection; understand the same [345]
 Of Fish within thir watry residence,
 Not hither summon'd, since they cannot change
 Thir Element to draw the thinner Aire.
 As thus he spake, each Bird and Beast behold

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Approaching two and two, These cowering low [350]
With blandishment, each Bird stoop'd on his wing.
I nam'd them, as they pass'd, and understood
Thir Nature, with such knowledg God endu'd
My sudden apprehension: but in these
I found not what me thought I wanted still; [355]
And to the Heav'nly vision thus presum'd.

O by what Name, for thou above all these,
Above mankinde, or aught then mankinde higher,
Surpassest farr my naming, how may I
Adore thee, Author of this Universe, [360]
And all this good to man, for whose well being
So amply, and with hands so liberal
Thou hast provided all things: but with mee
I see not who partakes. In solitude
What happiness, who can enjoy alone, [365]
Or all enjoying, what contentment find?
Thus I presumptuous; and the vision bright,
As with a smile more bright'nd, thus repli'd.

What call'st thou solitude, is not the Earth
With various living creatures, and the Aire [370]
Replenisht, and all these at thy command
To come and play before thee; know'st thou not
Thir language and thir wayes? They also know,
And reason not contemptibly; with these
Find pastime, and beare rule; thy Realm is large. [375]
So spake the Universal Lord, and seem'd
So ordering. I with leave of speech implor'd,
And humble deprecation thus repli'd.

Let not my words offend thee, Heav'nly Power,
My Maker, be propitious while I speak. [380]
Hast thou not made me here thy substitute,
And these inferiour farr beneath me set?
Among unequals what societie
Can sort, what harmonie or true delight?
Which must be mutual, in proportion due [385]
Giv'n and receiv'd; but in disparitie
The one intense, the other still remiss
Cannot well suite with either, but soon prove
Tedious alike: Of fellowship I speak
Such as I seek, fit to participate [390]
All rational delight, wherein the brute
Cannot be human consort; they rejoyce
Each with thir kinde, Lion with Lioness;
So fitly them in pairs thou hast combin'd;

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Much less can Bird with Beast, or Fish with Fowle [395]
 So well converse, nor with the Ox the Ape;
 Wors then can Man with Beast, and least of all.
 Whereto th' Almighty answer'd, not displeas'd.
 A nice and suttle happiness I see
 Thou to thyself proposhest, in the choice [400]
 Of thy Associates, *Adam*, and wilt taste
 No pleasure, though in pleasure, solitarie.
 What think'st thou then of mee, and this my State,
 Seem I to thee sufficiently possest
 Of happiness, or not? who am alone [405]
 From all Eternitie, for none I know
 Second to mee or like, equal much less.
 How have I then with whom to hold converse
 Save with the Creatures which I made, and those
 To me inferiour, infinite descents [410]
 Beneath what other Creatures are to thee?
 He ceas'd, I lowly answer'd. To attaine
 The highth and depth of thy Eternal wayes
 All human thoughts come short, Supream of things;
 Thou in thy self art perfet, and in thee [415]
 Is no deficiencie found; not so is Man,
 But in degree, the cause of his desire
 By conversation with his like to help,
 Or solace his defects. No need that thou
 Shouldst propagat, already infinite; [420]
 And through all numbers absolute, though One;
 But Man by number is to manifest
 His single imperfection, and beget
 Like of his like, his Image multipli'd,
 In unitie defective, which requires [425]
 Collateral love, and deerest amitie.
 Thou in thy secresie although alone,
 Best with thy self accompanied, seek'st not
 Social communication, yet so pleas'd,
 Canst raise thy Creature to what highth thou wilt [430]
 Of Union or Communion, deifi'd;
 I by conversing cannot these erect
 From prone, nor in thir wayes complacence find.
 Thus I embold'nd spake, and freedom us'd
 Permissive, and acceptance found, which gain'd [435]
 This answer from the gracious voice Divine.
 Thus farr to try thee, *Adam*, I was pleas'd,
 And finde thee knowing not of Beasts alone,
 Which thou hast rightly nam'd, but of thy self,

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Expressing well the spirit within thee free, [440]
My Image, not imparted to the Brute,
Whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike,
And be so minded still; I, ere thou spak'st,
Knew it not good for Man to be alone, [445]
And no such companie as then thou saw'st
Intended thee, for trial onely brought,
To see how thou could'st judge of fit and meet:
What next I bring shall please thee, be assur'd,
Thy likeness, thy fit help, thy other self, [450]
Thy wish, exactly to thy hearts desire.

Hee ended, or I heard no more, for now
My earthly by his Heav'nly overpowerd,
Which it had long stood under, streind to the highth
In that celestial Colloquie sublime, [455]
As with an object that excels the sense,
Dazl'd and spent, sunk down, and sought repair
Of sleep, which instantly fell on me, call'd
By Nature as in aide, and clos'd mine eyes.
Mine eyes he clos'd, but op'n left the Cell [460]
Of Fancie my internal sight, by which
Abstract as in a transe methought I saw,
Though sleeping, where I lay, and saw the shape
Still glorious before whom awake I stood;
Who stooping op'nd my left side, and took [465]
From thence a Rib, with cordial spirits warme,
And Life-blood streaming fresh; wide was the wound,
But suddenly with flesh fill'd up and heal'd:
The Rib he formd and fashond with his hands;
Under his forming hands a Creature grew, [470]
Manlike, but different sex, so lovly faire,
That what seemd fair in all the World, seemd now
Mean, or in her summ'd up, in her containd
And in her looks, which from that time infus'd
Sweetness into my heart, unfelt before, [475]
And into all things from her Aire inspir'd
The spirit of love and amorous delight.
Shee disappeerd, and left me dark, I wak'd
To find her, or for ever to deplore
Her loss, and other pleasures all abjure: [480]
When out of hope, behold her, not farr off,
Such as I saw her in my dream, adorn'd
With what all Earth or Heaven could bestow
To make her amiable: On she came,

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Led by her Heav'nly Maker, though unseen, [485]
And guided by his voice, nor uninformed
Of nuptial Sanctitie and marriage Rites:
Grace was in all her steps, Heav'n in her Eye,
In every gesture dignitie and love.
I overjoyd could not forbear aloud. [490]

This turn hath made amends; thou hast fulfill'd
Thy words, Creator bounteous and benigne,
Giver of all things faire, but fairest this
Of all thy gifts, nor enviest. I now see
Bone of my Bone, Flesh of my Flesh, my Self [495]
Before me; Woman is her Name, of Man
Extracted; for this cause he shall forgoe
Father and Mother, and to his Wife adhere;
And they shall be one Flesh, one Heart, one Soule.

She heard me thus, and though divinely brought, [500]
Yet Innocence and Virgin Modestie,
Her vertue and the conscience of her worth,
That would be woo'd, and not unsought be won,
Not obvious, not obtrusive, but retir'd,
The more desirable, or to say all, [505]
Nature her self, though pure of sinful thought,
Wrought in her so, that seeing me, she turn'd;
I follow'd her, she what was Honour knew,
And with obsequious Majestie approv'd
My pleaded reason. To the Nuptial Bowre [510]
I led her blushing like the Morn: all Heav'n,
And happie Constellations on that houre
Shed thir selectest influence; the Earth
Gave sign of gratulation, and each Hill;
Joyous the Birds; fresh Gales and gentle Aires [515]
Whisper'd it to the Woods, and from thir wings
Flung Rose, flung Odours from the spicie Shrub,
Disporting, till the amorous Bird of Night
Sung Spousal, and bid haste the Eevning Starr
On his Hill top, to light the bridal Lamp. [520]
Thus I have told thee all my State, and brought
My Storie to the sum of earthly bliss
Which I enjoy, and must confess to find
In all things else delight indeed, but such
As us'd or not, works in the mind no change, [525]
Nor vehement desire, these delicacies
I mean of Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits and Flours,
Walks, and the melodie of Birds; but here
Farr otherwise, transported I behold,

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Transported touch; here passion first I felt, [530]
 Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else
Superiour and unmov'd, here onely weake
 Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance.
 Or Nature faild in mee, and left some part
 Not proof enough such Object to sustain, [535]
 Or from my side subducting, took perhaps
 More then enough; at least on her bestow'd
 Too much of Ornament, in outward shew
 Elaborate, of inward less exact.
 For well I understand in the prime end [540]
 Of Nature her th' inferiour, in the mind
 And inward Faculties, which most excell,
 In outward also her resembling less
 His Image who made both, and less expressing
 The character of that Dominion giv'n [545]
 O're other Creatures; yet when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
 And in her self compleat, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
 Seems wisest, vertuousest, discrettest, best; [550]
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
 Looses discount'nanc't, and like folly shewes;
 Authority and Reason on her waite,
 As one intended first, not after made [555]
 Occasionally; and to consummate all,
 Greatness of mind and nobleness thir seat
 Build in her loveliest, and create an awe
 About her, as a guard Angelic plac't.
 To whom the Angel with contracted brow. [560]
 Accuse not Nature, she hath don her part;
 Do thou but thine, and be not diffident
 Of Wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou
 Dismiss not her, when most thou needst her nigh,
 By attributing overmuch to things [565]
 Less excellent, as thou thy self perceav'st.
 For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so,
 An outside? fair no doubt, and worthy well
 Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love,
 Not thy subjection: weigh with her thy self; [570]
 Then value: Oft times nothing profits more
 Then self esteem, grounded on just and right
 Well manag'd; of that skill the more thou know'st,
 The more she will acknowledge thee her Head,

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And to realities yield all her shows: [575]
Made so adorn for thy delight the more,
So awful, that with honour thou maist love
Thy mate, who sees when thou art seen least wise.
But if the sense of touch whereby mankind
Is propagated seem such dear delight [580]
Beyond all other, think the same voutsaft
To Cattel and each Beast; which would not be
To them made common and divulg'd, if aught
Therein enjoy'd were worthy to subdue
The Soule of Man, or passion in him move. [585]
What higher in her societie thou findst
Attractive, human, rational, love still;
In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
Wherein true Love consists not; love refines
The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat [590]
In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
By which to heav'nly Love thou maist ascend,
Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found.

To whom thus half abash't *Adam* repli'd. [595]
Neither her out-side form'd so fair, nor aught
In procreation common to all kindes
(Though higher of the genial Bed by far,
And with mysterious reverence I deem)
So much delights me as those graceful acts, [600]
Those thousand decencies that daily flow
From all her words and actions mixt with Love
And sweet compliance, which declare unfeign'd
Union of Mind, or in us both one Soule;
Harmonie to behold in wedded pair [605]
More grateful then harmonious sound to the eare.
Yet these subject not; I to thee disclose
What inward thence I feel, not therefore foild,
Who meet with various objects, from the sense
Variously representing; yet still free [610]
Approve the best, and follow what I approve.
To Love thou blam'st me not, for love thou saist
Leads up to Heav'n, is both the way and guide;
Bear with me then, if lawful what I ask;
Love not the heav'nly Spirits, and how thir Love [615]
Express they, by looks onely, or do they mix
Irradiance, virtual or immediate touch?

To whom the Angel with a smile that glow'd
Celestial rosie red, Loves proper hue,

Answer'd. Let it suffice thee that thou know'st [620]
 Us happie, and without Love no happiness.
 Whatever pure thou in the body enjoy'st
 (And pure thou wert created) we enjoy
 In eminence, and obstacle find none
 Of membrane, joynt, or limb, exclusive barrs: [625]
 Easier then Air with Air, if Spirits embrace,
 Total they mix, Union of Pure with Pure
 Desiring; nor restrain'd conveyance need
 As Flesh to mix with Flesh, or Soul with Soul.
 But I can now no more; the parting Sun [630]
 Beyond the Earths green Cape and verdant Isles
Hesperian sets, my Signal to depart.
 Be strong, live happie, and love, but first of all
 Him whom to love is to obey, and keep
 His great command; take heed lest Passion sway [635]
 Thy Judgment to do aught, which else free Will
 Would not admit; thine and of all thy Sons
 The weal or woe in thee is plac't; beware.
 I in thy persevering shall rejoyce,
 And all the Blest: stand fast; to stand or fall [640]
 Free in thine own Arbitrement it lies.
 Perfet within, no outward aid require;
 And all temptation to transgress repel.
 So saying, he arose; whom *Adam* thus
 Follow'd with benediction. Since to part, [645]
 Go heavenly Guest, Ethereal Messenger,
 Sent from whose sovran goodness I adore.
 Gentle to me and affable hath been
 Thy condescension, and shall be honour'd ever
 With grateful Memorie: thou to mankind [650]
 Be good and friendly still, and oft return.
 So parted they, the Angel up to Heav'n
 From the thick shade, and *Adam* to his Bowre.

The End of the Eighth Book.

Notes:

doubtfully. OED2: In a doubtful, uncertain, or ambiguous manner; hesitatingly, ambiguously, indistinctly.

So *Charming*. The charming effect Raphael's voice has in Adam's ears may echo the arguments that Socrates hears ringing in his ears and obeys at the close of

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Plato's *Crito*. In the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton tries to redefine marriage as principally a relationship based on a man's "rational" desire for conversation rather than passionate desire for sex or for procreation, though, of course, sex remains a secondary aspect of marriage. Adam's responses to conversation with Raphael indicate Adam's erotic pleasure in discourse with an angel. Does he get more conversational pleasure from the angel than from Eve? See below line 210.

gratefully repli'd. The original (1667) book 7 continued well past line 640 and continued right up to what is now the last line of book 8. In the 1674 (second) edition, Milton ended book 7 at line 640 and began book 8 with three new lines, adapting the fourth line from the original line 641 of book 7 which read, "To whom thus Adam gratefully replied."

this goodly Frame. Creation, the universe. See 5.154. Adam's speech, lines 15-27, resembles that of Hamlet in *Hamlet* 2.2.306-15. For a discussion of the significance of this allusion see Judith Scherer Herz's article "*Paradise Lost* 8: Adam, Hamlet and the Anxiety of Narrative."

thirst. Although a common enough metaphor for intellectual desire even in Milton's day, it also reminds us of Raphael's earlier warnings about intellectual temperance and the analogy between bodily desires (sex, food, and drink) and intellectual desire (7.126-130). This analogy is explicitly denied any argumentative force by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics* 3.10.

Earth a spot. Though Adam does not share the deprecating tone of the Attendant Spirit in *A Mask* 5-6, their expressions are similar.

numberd. Intended to mean "numerous," but note the resemblance to Psalm 147:4: "He telleth the number of stars: He calleth them by their names." The entire speech also displays the influence of Psalm 8.

officiate. Supply.

opacous. Opaque, shadowy, dark.

punctual. Point-like. Copernican astronomers often stressed the tininess of earth compared to the universe. Ptolemy had declared the earth a dot in comparison with the heavens. To Dante as he saw earth from the heaven of fixed stars, earth seemed like a "little threshing floor" (*Paradiso* 22.150).

admire. Wonder, question.

sedentarie Earth. Motionless Earth. Adam assumes that the earth stands still and the whole universe whirls around it. Compare Adam's questions about cosmology (addressed to Raphael) to Eve's (addressed to Adam) in book 4.

sumless. Immeasurable.

incorporeal. Unbodied, as heavenly spirits may be when they wish; this matches "spiritual" in line 110 below.

she sat retir'd. Eve, we are invited to imagine, has sat close by ("in sight"), but a little ways away ("retir'd") from Adam and Raphael throughout this conversation which began in book 5. Only now, does she move out of sight and hearing altogether.

that won who saw. This phrase complicates interpretation of the entire book. If Eve's grace is such that whoever saw her rise from her seat would naturally wish her to stay, then we are tempted to conclude that neither Adam nor Raphael sees her rise and depart, for neither of them expresses any wish to have her stay. The only way around this conclusion is to think that Adam sees her rise and wishes her to stay, but says nothing, never expresses his desire in word or gesture. Lines 62-63 repeat this observation about the power of Eve's "Winning Graces." Again, the likely interpretation is that Adam does not see Eve leave, or he would have expressed his desire for her to stay. See William Blake's illustration of the relevant lines of sight during the dinner scene.

conjugal Caresses. That is to say, Eve prefers to hear of these things directly from Adam rather than from the angel because, unlike the angel, Adam will intermix with his rhetoric "conjugal caresses" and kisses, and so settle difficult concepts with the power of sensual touch. Does this mean that Eve prefers discourse that includes sensual elements over purely rational discourse? Is her desire the "rational desire" Milton describes as the prime reason for marriage (see *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*)?

pomp. Procession. See 7.564.

wish her still in sight. See note above.

doubt propos'd. Question raised. See line 13 above.

facil. Takes its Latin meaning of "easy of access," "gracious."

Book of God. "The Book of God" or the "Book of the Creation" (or "of the Creatures") served as a traditional metaphor among theologians. Calvin, in the early chapters of the *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, also employs this metaphor of creation as God's book and elaborates upon it by speaking of the

Bible as the "spectacles" or eyeglasses required to read the book of nature correctly (*Institutes* 1.5-6).

Imports not. Doesn't matter; is of no importance.

wide. That is, wide of the truth.

To save appearances. "Or to 'save the phenomena'" were traditional terms for the attempts of astronomers to explain the movements of the heavenly bodies systematically. Their efforts seemed to John Donne only to have warped the globe of heaven and forced

Men to finde out so many Eccentrique parts,
Such divers downe-right lines, such overthwarts,
As disproportion that pure forme: It teares
The Firmament in eight and forty sheires . . .
(*The First Anniversary* 255-58)

Centric and Eccentric. Circular or eccentric orbits. Johannes Kepler proposed eccentric rather than circular orbits in order to explain how planets moved about the sky.

Epicycle. "A small circle, having its centre on the circumference of a greater circle. In the Ptolemaic system . . . each of the 'seven planets' was supposed to revolve in an epicycle, the centre of which moved along a greater circle called a deferent" (*OED2*). This device was used by Copernicus as well.

Officious. Serviceable. See "officiate" in line 22 above.

Line. In the book of Job, God asks this question concerning the earth: "Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?" (Job 38: 5).

What if. Milton's Raphael introduces a Copernican version of the universe strictly as a speculation, without any endorsement.

other Starrs. Read in conjunction with "their wandring course" (line 126), we must understand "Starrs" here as referring to planets. The word planet derives from the Greek word for "wanderer." In *Doctor Faustus*, Mephistophiles refers to the literal meaning of the word "planet" by calling Saturn, Mars, and Jupiter "erring starres."

attractive vertue. Power of attraction. See the sun's Magnetic beam in 3.583.

In six thou seest. That is, the six planets other than the sun, known in Milton's day. Seventeenth-century astronomical terminology differs significantly from our

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own usage. Any heavenly body was referred to as a "star," including the moon, stars and planets. The word, "planet," which means "wanderer," was reserved for those stars that appeared to move across the sky; the others were called fixed stars. From a Ptolemaic perspective, then, the sun was considered a planet, but the earth was not. Seven planets leant their names to the seven days of the week. (No Earth day then!) So the "six" to which Raphael refers are the moon, Mars, Mercury, Venus, Jupiter and Saturn. In this conversation, the Sun's status as a planet, a wandering star, is at issue, so Raphael concerns himself with the other "six."

Planet Earth. Modern readers will have some difficulty registering just how odd an idea it was in Milton's day to refer to Earth as a planet. In the Ptolemaic model of the cosmos, earth was the fixed center, the fixed stars formed the outer shells of the cosmos and the planets were those "stars" that wandered. Though Raphael refuses to settle the issue of Earth's status, by naming it Planet Earth, he sends to Milton's readers, though not to Adam, a strong signal endorsing Copernicus and Galileo.

Insensibly. Imperceptibly. The three motions are rotation, orbital revolution, and the very slow revolution of the earth's north pole around that of the ecliptic, causing the precession of the equinoxes or "Trepidation" of 3.483.

thwart obliquities. "The transverse movements of the spheres conceived as oblique to one another in the Ptolemaic system" (Hughes 366).

Nocturnal and Diurnal rhomb. In Ptolemaic cosmology, the outermost or tenth invisible sphere or *primum mobile*. A rhomb, in this sense, is a lozenge-shaped orbit or sphere of motion.

industrious. Active, that is, moving, not stationary.

transpicuous. Transparent.

terrestrial Moon. That is, Earth's moon; the orbit of Earth's moon was believed to mark the boundary between the celestial and the terrestrial regions.

Male and Femal Light. Raphael already has designated the first created light as feminine in book 7.243-48. Male and female here must refer to the two sources of the light, the sun is masculine and the moon feminine (as in 7.359-380), following the ancient practice of figuring the sun as a god (Apollo) and the moon as a goddess (Diana).

Only to shine. Or, just to twinkle.

this habitable. That is, this habitable planet, Earth.

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obvious to dispute. Open to dispute. That is, whether or not the rest of the planets and moons have inhabitants of their own.

be lowly wise. Du Bartas advised:
Be sober wise; so, bound thy frail desire:
And, what thou canst not comprehend, admire.
(*Divine Weeks* 447)

Intelligence. Angelic being. Angels, Raphael has said, are pure intelligence, one step above Adam's more discursive nature (book 5.488-90).

Fancy. Adam defines "Fansie" in 5.100-113.

fume. Like vapor; unsubstantial, transient, imaginary (*OED2*.) See also Raphael's image of irrelevant knowledge as farts in book 7.126-130.

fond impertinence. Foolish irrelevance. See "fond" in line 209.

still to seek. Always seeking (never finding) solutions.

suttly to detain thee. Is Adam being a little coy here, suggesting that the chief reason he offers to tell his story is to keep Raphael nearby and hear him speak again? Why is he so eager to extend Raphael's visit, but never seemed to notice when Eve rose to leave? Is conversation with Raphael more pleasurable than conversation with Eve? See also Philippians 3:20.

from labour. After labor.

satietie. For Adam, one distinction between eating and learning (explicitly compared in 7.126-130) is that desire for learning, and in this case conversation with Raphael, is never sated. Should we suppose that Adam's desire for conversation with Eve (lines 52-57 above) is similarly insatiable? See also 9.248.

lips ungraceful. See Psalm 45:2. Apparently Raphael appreciates Adam's appearance as much as he does his eloquence.

his image fair. See the emphasis on man as God's image in 7.519 and 627.

uncouth. Unfamiliar.

Squar'd. See the military use of the term "squar'd" in 1.758.

For state. To preserve the dignity of God's state, for his honor.

enure. Discipline, train, inculcate.

rage. See the "rage" of the demons in 1.666-69.

no less then thou with mine. And Adam expressed the greatest pleasure listening to Raphael; see above lines 210-16.

I found me. It is well worth the effort to compare the details of Adam's story here with Eve's account of her first conscious moments in book 4. 449-491.

fed. See 5.415-416. Plato's *Timaeus* 49c teaches that the basic elements often transform into one another.

upright. See 7.505-11, for the significance of Adam's "upright" posture.

went. Walked.

Thou Sun. Adam addresses himself first to the sun and Earth and creatures as if he expected they could tell him "from what cause" he came. In a way, of course, as the Book of Creation, nature can inform him about God. So most people thought, including Jean Calvin (*Institutes* 1.5). Addressing created things, however, also makes one think of pagan animistic rites and religions.

move and live. See Acts 17:28.

dream. Compare this to Adam's discussion of dreams in 5.100-13.

Mansion. A dwelling-place; in this case the garden planted by God in the east of Eden (Genesis 2:8). See the word used in John 14:2.

call'd by thee. Though Adam addressed his speech to the sun, the earth, and other creatures, God responds as if Adam had called on him specifically.

seat. Estate; country establishment, with an overtone of political geography, as in a county seat or capital.

Mountain. See the account of the mountain of Paradise in 4.133-49.

lively shadowd. Made appear like the living reality. The quality of Adam's dreams stands in contrast to Eve's in book 5.30-93. Adam wakes to find everything just as the dream shadowed it; Eve awakes glad to find her nightmare but a dream.

submiss. "Submiss" has its Latin force as a participle meaning "cast down."

Knowledge. See Genesis 2: 15-17.

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purpose. Speech. See 4.337.

Possess. See Adam's rule of the beasts in 7.520-43.

two and two. See Genesis 2:19-20 for the story of naming the animals, but note that the phrase "two by two" recalls the story of Noah and his ark in Genesis 7.

I wanted still. See Genesis 2: 20.

presum'd. Dared speak.

play before thee. See Proverbs 8:30 for a sense of God's notion of entertainment. See also how Milton uses the passage in *Tetrachordon*.

offend thee. Abraham also feared trying God's patience in Genesis 18:30.

societie. Adam's language echoes that of Milton in *The Doctrine of Discipline and Divorce*. Adam's emphasis on what is "mutual" and his need for "fellowship" and "rational delight" are in accordance with what Milton believes to be the proper ends of marriage.

sort. Be appropriate or satisfying.

rational delight. In *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* 1.4, Milton interprets Paul's injunction to marry rather than "to burn" (1 Corinthians 7:9) as referring to "rational burning" or desire for conversation, not for sensual satisfaction. The anonymous (but in all likelihood, Presbyterian) answerer to Milton's *Doctrine and Discipline*, directly challenges his interpretation of Paul's phrase, "it is better to marry than to burn" in *An Answer to a book intituled, The doctrine and discipline of divorce*, page 31 (from *Early English Books Online*). See also Paul's statement in Greek from the Blue Letter Bible's Concordance, and Raphael's advice to Adam at 8.587 below.

converse. "Consort, keep company" (*OED2*); the original senses include "dwell" and "have sexual intercourse." Milton, however, spends a lot of effort in *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* trying to distinguish between carnal and rational conversation. The anonymous answerer in *An Answer to a book intituled, The doctrine and discipline of divorce*, page 32 (from *Early English Books Online*) taunts Milton by saying, "we desire the next time you write, to tell us the meaning of this fit conversing soule."

nice. Refined, particular, fussy.

in pleasure. Literally, "Eden" means "pleasure" or "delight." The speaker in Andrew Marvell's poem, "The Garden," understands manly happiness in a manner quite opposite to Milton's Adam: "Two Paradises 'twere in one/ To live in Paradise alone."

His single imperfection. His incompleteness in being single, and his single aspect of incompleteness. Rachel Trubowitz brilliantly draws out the nuances of this phrase and its (probably deliberate) echoes of Shakespeare in "'The Single State of Man': Androgyny in Macbeth and Paradise Lost".

beget. This word cannot help but remind us of the Father "begetting" the Son (3.80 and John 3:16), but this, apparently, Milton does not consider propagation.

for Man to be alone. See Genesis 2:18 and Milton's elaborate interpretation of it in Tetrachordon.

fit help, thy other self. Alongside the biblical term for wife, ("help-meet," fit help) Milton puts the classical term for an ideal friend — "another self" (see Aristotle on friendship in Nicomachean Ethics 1166a). In Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce 1.2.707, interpreting "God's intention" in creating Eve, he wrote: "A meet and happy conversation is the chiefest and the noblest end of marriage." Laurie Shannon's Sovereign Amity explains just how crucial classical discourses of friendship were to the politics, poetry and dram of Reformation England. For an old but useful collection showing Renaissance authors' keen interest in Aristotelian and Ciceronian theories of friendship, see Charles G. Smith, Spenser's Theory of Friendship.

My earthly. That is, his earthly shape as opposed to heavenly shape. See much the same expression in 9.1083. Adam is exhausted by the stress of conversation with God, the strain of being raised up to the height required for conversation with God (lines 430-431).

Fancy. Adam explains the role of "Fansie" in dreams in 5. 102-109.

Abstract. Abstracted, drawn into a trance.

From thence a rib. As Mary Nyquist points out ("The Genesis of Gendered Subjectivity in the Divorce Tracts and in Paradise Lost") the poem weaves together two accounts of the creation of human beings: Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7-22. See also Tetrachordon.

wide was the wound. Does Milton intend to evoke an image of birthing or of caesarian birth? In book 4, Adam addresses Eve as "Daughter of God and Man" (4.660) and again in 9.291.

a Creature grew. See William Blake's 1808 watercolor illustration of these lines.

what seemd fair. Fair, or beautiful, is a tricky term in this poem. See Eve's lesson in what is "truly fair" in 4.489-91 See also John Guillory's brilliant article on this, "Milton, Narcissism, Gender: On the Genealogy of Male Self-Esteem."

guided by his voice. Eve admits that when she first heard God's voice, she didn't know whose it was (4.467-476). Adam indicates that he recognized Eve was led by God, since he has already seen a vision of God.

marriage Rites. On the "Rites mysterious" of marriage, see 4.741-49.

When out of Hope. When I had given up hope.

could not forbear aloud. Could not resist crying aloud.

fairest this. Adam's designation of Eve as "fairest" stands in apparent contradiction to the lesson Eve says she learned from Adam at just this moment — "how beauty is excelld by manly grace/ And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (4.490-91). May we suppose that Adam, since he "taught" Eve the lesson about the true fairness of manly grace and wisdom, has erred a bit in his esthetic judgment, led astray, perhaps, by the subsequent sensuality of his relationship with Eve (see below, lines 530-559).

nor enviest. Does not offer the gift grudgingly, as Greek gods were often known to do.

Bone of my bone. Matthew 19:4-6 and Mark 10:6-8 both repeat Genesis 2: 23-24. See 4:440-43.

conscience. Awareness.

obvious. Bold, forward.

seeing me, she turn'd. Milton invites us to compare Adam's assessment of Eve's motivation for turning away after first sight of him to Eve's statement that she wanted to return to her own image in the lake because it seemed fairer (4.476-480). Has Adam forgotten Eve's statement, or are we to think Adam understands her motivations better than Eve herself, or is Adam adjusting the story a bit as he tells it to Raphael?

Honour. Refers perhaps to Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage is honorable unto all." See 7.529-31, and 4.741-47.

Shed thir selectest influence. See the dance of the stars, "shedding sweet influence," as an indication of the happiness of the universe at its creation in 7.375.

amorous Bird of Night. The nightingale. See 5.39-41. See also *A Mask* 234.

Eevning Starr. Venus. "Its appearance was the traditional signal for lighting nuptial torches from Catullus' *Epithalamium* (62) to Spenser's:

Long though it be, at last I see it gloome
And the bright evening-star with golden crest
Appeare out of the east.

(*Epithalamion* 285-87)" (Hughes 374).

Superior and unmov'd. Adam feels he is "superior" to and "unmoved," or not overly disturbed in mind, by all other pleasures except the pleasure of encountering Eve's beauty by touch. Did he not, however, faint from the strain of an extended colloquy with God?

resembling less. See *Tetrachordon* and *Samson Agonistes* 1025-30.

absolute. Perfect, superior. Eve was made chiefly to remedy Adam's original solitude; she, therefore does not suffer the desire, originally part of Adam's nature, for companionship. She does not have that "single defect," so she must appear more "compleat" than Adam. What is Eve's constitutive desire?

vertuosest. Perhaps the ugliest word in all of Milton's poetry.

Occasionally. For an occasion, that is, to satisfy Adam's desire for a companion.

Lines 547-559. Milton appears to suggest that the Petrarchan tradition of hyperbolic praise for the female beloved has its roots in Adam's passion-driven errors about Eve's beauty.

Thy cherishing. The 1559 *Book of Common Prayer* rite for marriage says, in part: "I take thee to my wedded wife . . . to love and to cherish."

Not thy subjection. See God's rebuke to Adam in 10.145-56. Unlike Hermes' warning to Odysseus to beware of Circe's charms (*Odyssey* 10.275), and Mercury's mission to Aeneas to move him to abandon Dido (*Aeneid* 4.238-48), Raphael warns Adam to stay with Eve but avoid being subdued by her "out-side" charms; see Adam's fall in 9.999.

skill. Power or faculty, that is, of self-esteem. For a further discussion of the virtue and power of self esteem, see *The Reason of Church Government* 2.3.

Head. See 1 Corinthians 11:3.

to realities yield all her shows. Presumably this yielding to what is truly fair takes place in the episode Eve narrates at 4.489-91.

heav'nly Love. See Spenser's *An Hymne of Heavenly Love*. See also Diotima's teaching on love in Plato's *Symposium*.

genial. Procreative. See 4.712.

mysterious. See "mysterious" in 4.743, and 750.

decencies. Graces.

not therefore foil'd. Not subdued (by the objects of sense).

virtual. Virtual: "In essence or effect, though not formally or actually" (*OED2*).

Immediate: without mediation; in this case without flesh and so without touching.

Cape and verdant Isles. The Cape Verde Islands, off the west coast of Africa.

blest. The "Blest" are the blessed angels.