

LUCIFER

JOOST VAN
DEN VONDEL



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1990

absolute classics

*translated and
adapted by
NOEL CLARK*

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LUCIFER

Joost van den Vondel

Translated by Noel Clark

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FOR MARIANNE

LBS 2571584



INTRODUCTION

Joost van den Vondel (1587–1679) has long been honoured by his compatriots as Holland's national playwright and "Prince of Poets". Though scarcely known outside the Netherlands, he was the literary counterpart of his celebrated contemporaries – the painters Rembrandt, Vandyke, Rubens and the rest, to whom we owe our concept of the Dutch and Flemish Golden Age.

Poet, dramatist, satirist, patriot and tireless campaigner for political and religious freedom, Vondel was the author of thirty full-length dramas, of which LUCIFER is generally regarded as the most profound and accomplished. In addition, he produced a great deal of lyrical, polemical and religious poetry as well as translations of Greek and Latin classics. As Desmond Christy remarked in the *Guardian*, after attending LUCIFER's London première at the Bloomsbury Theatre in June 1988, "If Vondel was French, we would probably all have heard of him".

Vondel was born in Cologne, whither his Anabaptist forbears had fled from persecution during the Spanish domination of the Netherlands. While the poet was still a child, the family returned to Holland and settled in Amsterdam. Vondel's father, a prosperous hatter, wanted the boy to follow in his footsteps. But Joost was determined to be a writer. At the age of thirteen, he was already attracting the attention of the Amsterdam *literati* with his rhymes. When he later married the daughter of a Flemish clothier, it was his wife who looked after the family business while Joost studied and wrote.

His first major work, HET PASCHA (1612) brought him fame and, in 1637, it was natural for the booming city of Amsterdam to celebrate the opening of its new theatre with Vondel's historic drama GIJSBRECHT VAN AEMSTEL. In an age of bitter political and religious feuding, Vondel was frequently in hot water with the authorities. Many of his plays, though printed, were judged too controversial for the stage. Moreover, his conversion to Roman Catholicism in middle life lost him a number of friends, as well as the sympathy of many reviewers.

Much of the poet's long life was over-shadowed by family tragedies, including the early death of two of his children and of his wife. A further blow was the death at sea of a profligate son, banished to the East Indies after ruining both himself and his father.

Though an inveterate dedicator of odes to the rich and mighty, Vondel's pen was probably too sharp ever to win him a permanent patron or a pension. At the age of seventy, with the help of relatives and friends, he managed to obtain a humble post in the municipal small loans bank, where, it is said, he spent more time writing poetry than pawn-tickets. He was retired ten years later, but allowed to continue drawing his salary.

When at last Vondel died – very peacefully – aged ninety-one, it was left to his fellow-poets to honour his memory with fulsome orations. But he was buried, it seems, without monument or epitaph – not even the wry, two-line obituary suggested by Vondel himself, during his last freezing winter on earth:

Here lies Vondel, uncondoled;
He was struck down by the cold.

LUCIFER, written when the poet was in his sixties, opened at the Amsterdam City Theatre on February 2, 1654 but was banned by the civic authorities after the second performance. Calvinist zealots, outraged by Vondel's unorthodox treatment of Scripture, denounced the play as "impious, lewd, godless and full of the most false and arrogant notions ever to spring from the mind of man." Though the action is set in Heaven, Vondel's celestial beings were all too human in their frailty.

Despite the stage ban, the text of the play was published and at once enjoyed an immense *succès de scandale*. But it was not until 1910 that LUCIFER was rescued from obscurity with a memorable stage production directed by Willem Royaarts. Since then the play has frequently been performed, both by leading Dutch companies and student groups.

Some critics have seen in Vondel's depiction of the Archangel Lucifer as a reluctant rebel – torn between loyalty to God, personal ambition, pride and the will to fight presumed injustice at all costs – the prototype of Milton's Lucifer in PARADISE LOST, which was published thirteen years later. Milton understood Dutch, once thought of writing PARADISE LOST as a drama and would doubtless have known of the theological furore touched off by Vondel's play. But nowadays, British as well as Dutch scholars seem agreed that both poets, to quote Professor Peter King, the leading British authority on Vondel, "were independently contributing to a common tradition."

Though Vondel was a deeply religious man, his play is characterised by flights of artistic imagination, irony and wit – as exemplified by his piquant, tongue-in-cheek explanation of what it was about Man that frightened the Angels, even before God's controversial decree revised their duties. The decree itself – admittedly only half the story, hence misunderstood, gives rise to what we might nowadays call a public relations fiasco, leading in turn to war.

In essence, this is a play about human nature, the clash between obedience and free will, the motive springs of revolt against tyranny, the horrors of war and, not least, the challenge posed by life itself to man's faith in his own destiny and the goodness of God.

I was so fascinated by LUCIFER that I began to translate the play even before I had finished reading it. Later I discovered that earlier translations existed – notably those of L.C. Noppen, New York, 1898, J.P.R. Mody VONDEL AND MILTON, Bombay, 1942 and W. Kirkconnell in his CELESTIAL CIRCLE, University of Toronto, 1952. Still, it seemed, Vondel had remained a stranger to all but specialists and LUCIFER unstaged. Intending no disrespect, I nevertheless decided not to read these earlier versions for fear I might lose heart.

My aim was to bring LUCIFER out of the study and on to the stage in an actable form, readily comprehensible to a modern audience. Vondel's heroic couplets were majestic alexandrines; mine are pentameters, which I judge more merciful to actors schooled in the British tradition. I have kept the rhymes – not only because Vondel delighted in rhymes and so do I, but because they seem to me essential to the texture and "feel" of the original.

For the shortcomings of my version, I alone am responsible. But I am deeply grateful to many friends and supporters, Dutch and British, who helped my translation of LUCIFER on to the stage and now into print. In particular, I would like to thank Hans Jonkman, the former Royal Netherlands Ambassador in London and Dolf Simonsz, formerly Cultural Counsellor, for their enthusiasm; Paul Vincent for encouragement and expert advice; Peter Benedict of Oracle Productions, who directed LUCIFER in London with sympathy and imagination, and all members of the first cast for a performance much praised by Dutch as well as British reviewers.

To the STICHTING DR HENDRIK MULLERS
VADERLANDSCH FONDS in The Hague, my publishers and I
owe a special debt of gratitude for the Fund's sponsorship.

NOEL CLARK

LUCIFER was first performed in this translation, abridged and adapted
by the translator, at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London, in June 1988.
The cast was as follows:

BEELZEBUB	Roland Curram
BELIAL	Jason Cunliffe
APOLLION	Bill Boycott
GABRIEL	Jerome Willis
LUCIFER	Mark Greenstreet
URIEL	Peter Helft
MICHAEL	Chris Gilbert
RAPHAEL	Vincent Worth
DIRECTOR	Peter Benedict (Oracle Productions)
SET & COSTUMES	Greta Clavadetscher
LIGHTING	Roger Simonsz

CHARACTERS

BEELZEBUB

BELIAL

APOLLION

GABRIEL

LUCIFER

MICHAEL

RAPHAEL

URIEL

FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD REBEL ANGELS

FIRST, SECOND AND THIRD LOYAL ANGELS

REBEL CHORUS

LOYAL CHORUS

The play is set in the heavens.

ACT ONE

Beelzebub, Belial, Apollion.

BEELZEBUB: Good Belial, I charged you wing your way
To check the reason for Apollion's delay.
Prince Lucifer himself decreed *his* mission:
To visit Earth and study Man's condition -
That blissful state, assigned by the Almighty
To Adam . . . But he's overdue . . . By right he
Should be back by now - or close at hand;
A trusty servant heeds his Lord's command,
Unsparing in his master's throne's defence.

BELIAL:

Beelzebub, Lucifer's grey eminence!
He's climbing, sphere by sphere and into sight,
The wind outpacing and a streak of light
Left shining in his wake. His eager wings
Sunder the clouds. Each stroke now brings
Him scent of our air, sun's brighter shine,
Its glow reflected from blue crystalline -
While, from below, the planets track his course,
Amazed by grace so godlike - and such force!
He seems to them, ascending ever higher,
Less like an angel than like flying fire!
Faster than any shooting star! He's coming now,
Scaling steep paths in haste, a golden bough
For staff, aiding his steps . . .

Apollion, what word?

APOLLION: Swift as I could, Beelzebub, my lord,
Earth's scene I have surveyed. These fruits I bear,
Nurtured below in alien light and air!
Judge by these samples of that distant land
And of the Garden, by God blessed and planned
For Man's delight.

BEELZEBUB:

Look at these golden leaves -
Where dew, like pearls of air, still cleaves!
How sweetly scented is this foliage, still green!
Such gold-and-crimson orbs were never seen!
Pity it were to desecrate by touch -
Enchanting sight! What mouth, assailed by such

Could fail to water for Earth's sweets? Who's tasted
These, on him celestial manna would be wasted!
Our Heaven he'd forswear in Eden's favour
And jettison our bliss, Man's joy to savour!

APOLLION: Indeed, Beelzebub! Heaven looks high:
But truth to tell, we're lower. Trust my eye!
I've seen Earth's luscious gardens and I swear,
This Paradise with Eden can't compare . . .

BEELZEBUB: Come, tell us what you saw! We're listening, tell!

APOLLION: Upon my journey thither, I'll not dwell:
How swift I plunged through nine concentric spheres,
Each whirling faster than an arrow shears!
Imagination's wheel could not keep pace
As, gliding beneath the Moon, through clouds' embrace,
I paused an instant, on my pinions resting,
That eastern landscape for the Garden questing -
Scanning the Earth-ball, laved by oceans deep,
Wherein all kinds of Monsters heave and creep.
From far off, I espied a looming mountain,
Whence rushed a waterfall, which seemed the fountain -
Head of four fast-flowing rivers. Like a plummet,
Downwards I swept and landed on the summit
Of that tall peak, from whose commanding height,
All Earth's luxuriant landscapes spread in sight.

BEELZEBUB: Go on, describe the Garden and its girth! |

APOLLION: It slopes away on every side, like Earth,
About its central peak, whence flows a spring
That feeds four streams, the whole land watering:
Trees, meadows fair, plantations all it slakes
And, from translucent crystal, fashions lakes.
The streams yield mud to fecundate the ground.
There gems like onyx and bdellian abound.
Up in the sky, by night, stars blazed and twinkled;
Those diamond galaxies, by Nature sprinkled,
Snuff out our own. There, rocks are golden-veined,
As though all Nature's wealth one womb contained!

BEELZEBUB: What of the air Man breathes in his retreat? |

APOLLION: No Angel's breath, my lord, is half as sweet

As is the gentle zephyr Man possesses -
Freshening both cheeks and soil with its caresses,
So that Earth's bosom swells with colourful plants,
While blossoms, buds and flowers the eye entrance,
Drinking the dew at eve. Measuring the days,
The sun twixt dawn and dusk adjusts his rays
To each plant's need, so that the whole year round,
On Earth, both fruit and vegetables abound.

Now, tell us what Man looks like - and his nature! |

No Angel but must envy human stature,
At sight of creatures who surpass us all -
Beneath whose sway all other creatures fall!
A hundred thousand of them met my eye,
Walking on land or sporting in the sky,
Or swimming in the rivers, each to its bent,
Luxuriating in its element.
Adam alone could tell their separate species:
He named them all - birds, animals and fishes.
The mountain-lion at Adam wags its tail
And smiles. At Adam's feet, fierce tigers quail.
He's King and Lord. The bull its horns dips low;
The elephant his trunk. Bears rage forgo.
Griffin and eagle hearken unto Man -
Dragon, Behemoth and Leviathan!
As for the warbling of the birds, you'd be amazed:
From every leafy bower, Adam's praised.
While rustling trees and rippling brooks at play
Rejoice the heart with music all the day.
Did duty not compel me to return,
I'd quit this realm, in Adam's to sojourn!

BEELZEBUB: What thought you of the pair you saw below? |

APOLLION: None that I've seen up here has charmed me so.
Who so ingeniously could intertwine
Body and soul - male and female define?
Twin Angels, shaped of clay and bone, whose grace
The Creator's art best mirrors in the face -
The window of the mind: to my surprise,
I saw the soul depicted in their eyes . . .
All beauty flesh may have was there displayed -
Divine effulgence humanly conveyed.
Reason shines forth in Man, exclusively:

Surrounded by unreasoning beasts, does he,
While they look down, proudly his head upraise
And God, his heavenly Creator, praise.

BEELZEBUB: Given such rich rewards, Man could do worse!

APOLLION: He rules, god-like, a subject universe.
His soul's a spirit, not a thing - that's plain -
Quickening each limb, residing in the brain;
The soul's immortal, fears no rust nor blight -
Intangible; both knowledge and foresight,
Free will and virtue in its province lie.
Faced with such majesty, Angels turn shy!
The whole wide world with Men will soon be creeping,
Rich crops of souls from human seedlets reaping:
And that's the reason God gave Man a Wife!

BEELZEBUB: Yes, what about that Rib? How's married life? /

APOLLION: I hid my face and eyes beneath my wings
To curb my urge to gross imaginings,
When first I glimpsed them walking in the green:
Her hand in his - no happier sight I've seen!
Then I observed how Adam made a pause,
Gazed upon Eve - which study seemed to cause
A sacred fire to kindle in his breast.
He kissed her then, she him - and with such zest!
They coupled on the spot, in tenderness,
Blazing with love, much easier to guess
Than to report . . . From details I refrain:
'Twas greater bliss than any we attain!
We're poorly off, alone and celibate -
Denied the joys of sex, the married state;
Deprived of consort, starved of loving tryst:
Some heaven, this - where women don't exist!

BEELZEBUB: Thus will the world in time be populated?

APOLLION: Through love of beauty in Man's mind created,
Profoundly etched on every sharpened sense.
The pair are bonded by a love intense -
Unfailingly renewed by shared desire -
Which, though it slakes, can never quench the fire!

BEELZEBUB: Paint me that bride from life, Apollion!

APOLLION: Why, Nature's brush I'd need: not paint but sun-

Beam! They're a perfect pair, from head to toe!
If Adam wears the crown, it's rightly so
For one selected to command Creation.
Noble of form and regal in his station.
And Eve is shaped all his desires to meet:
Tender of limb, soft hair, expression sweet,
Fair skin and eyes, alluring and profound.
Her lovely lips breath forth a charming sound;
Her breasts, twin towers of ivory! But stay!
No more, lest I lead anyone astray!
The most exquisite Angels, to my mind,
Are monsters in the dawn of Womankind!

BEELZEBUB: This female's fired your passion with her ways!

APOLLION: I singed my feathers in that pleasant blaze
And had great difficulty gaining height;
To Angelmountain's peak - a weary flight!
I soared reluctantly and looked back thrice,
For not a Seraph in all Paradise
Could match the glory of Eve's golden hair,
In waves cascading from her visage fair
About her shoulders, and, when Eve advanced,
Her radiance the very day enhanced!
Pearls, mother-of-pearl, praise as you will -
But Eve, than any pearl, is lovelier still!

BEELZEBUB: What use is that, if looks to time must yield,
Wither and die, like flowers of the field?

APOLLION: So long as Adam's trees their harvest bear,
One of these apples will sustain the pair -
Fruit of that central tree, hard by a stream
Which nourishes its roots. This, it would seem,
Is called the Tree of Life and lives for ever;
Man eats of it and he will perish - never!
Immortal and eternal, like the Angels, Man
Will finally outstrip the heavenly clan,
His kingdom everywhere extend. Who'll say him nay?
Angels are not endowed in any way
To sire unnumbered thousands in their wake!
I beg you, ponder well on what's at stake!

BEELZEBUB: From what you say, Man threatens to displace us? ↙

APOLLION: His rapid growth will frighten, then - disgrace us!

At present, Man holds sway beneath the Moon;
 His power is limited but all too soon,
 He'll set his throne on Heaven's topmost peak,
 And if God lets him - who are we to speak?
 God loves this Man! For Man, God made Creation -

BEELZEBUB: Was that a trumpet? *Not* a delegation!
 Just look and see who's coming. Is it for us?

APOLLION: Archangel Gabriel is here - complete with chorus,
 In the Almighty's name, from His High Throne,
 As herald, God's intentions to make known.

BEELZEBUB: We'll gladly hear what Gabriel commands . . .

Enter Gabriel and Chorus of Angels.

GABRIEL: Harken ye Angels! All ye Heavenly bands!
 The Supreme Godhead from whose bosom flows
 All that is good and holy, who no respite knows
 From mercy, but whose store of grace grows greater -
 (No creature yet can fathom the Creator!)
 This God, in His own image, fashioned Man
 So he, together with the Angels can,
 By honouring God's laws with zealous care,
 His everlasting Kingdom hope to share.
 Earth's universe God wrought - a wondrous sight,
 Both Man and his Creator to delight . . .
 As Eden's ruler, Man should multiply,
 With all his offspring serve the Deity,
 Knowing and loving Him, Earth's stairs ascending
 Towards perpetual light and bliss unending.
 Long did the Spirit-world all else outshine,
 Now, to exalt Mankind is God's design:
 Preferred to Angels even, Man will be shown
 A path to splendour equalling God's own.
 Bedecked in flesh and blood, anointed Lord
 And Master, passing judgement on the horde
 Of Spirits, Angels and Mankind, you'll see
 The King of Heaven come in majesty.
 There stands His Throne, already sanctified!
 Let Angels all in earnest prayer abide
 Till He appears, whose choice of human stature
 Sets Him above all beings of our nature!
 Then shall the Seraphim less brightly shine,

In human light and radiance divine.
 God's grace puts Nature's brilliance in the shade:
 That is the future. The decision's made!

CHORUS: With Heaven's will the heavenly Hosts accord!
 GABRIEL: Therefore, serve faithfully Man and the Lord!
 The Godhead's love for Adam is so plain:
 Who honours Man, the love of God shall gain.
 Man and the Angels sprang from a single tree -
 They're brothers, partners, linked by destiny
 With God's own glorious Son and Heir;
 So act together: love and wishes share!
 You know how we the Angel-Realm define:
 Hierarchies three, embracing Orders nine -
 Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones - the highest three -
 Advise the Godhead, strengthen His decree;
 Dominions, Virtues, Powers - the second layer -
 Receive the Council's word. It's their affair
 To help Man and do good, as God may please;
 The third consists of Principalities,
 Archangels, Angels - subject to the rest,
 Appointed at the middle-rank's behest,
 Beneath the vault of purest crystalline,
 To do set tasks, as far as star may shine.
 But as Man's world in time extends its borders,
 There'll be some change for Heaven's Angel Orders:
 Each charged to watch a town, a house, a soul,
 Will honour God in more exacting role.
 Now, my immortal brothers, off you go!
 To Lucifer, to God - obedience show!
 Proclaim to Man the bliss of Heaven's Host:
 Each to his region, each one to his post!
 Let some before the Lord burn incense sweet -
 Man's offerings be set about His feet;
 Man's prayers, pleas, paeans unabating
 In Heaven's joy-filled courts be heard vibrating!
 One, turn the stars, revolving Heaven's spheres,
 Another clear the skies! If cloud appears
 To shade the light with gloom, Earth's Garden bless
 With sunshine, letting fall in rich excess
 Manna and honey for Mankind to feed on,
 Worshipping God, the blameless Sons of Eden!
 And who, through air, fire, earth and water's sent,

Let him take care to curb each element
 To Adam's taste: the lightning flare restrain,
 Bridle the tempest, yoke the stormy main!
 Let one watch over Man with special care,
 For God has numbered every single hair!
 He's to be borne up by hand if he should fall . . .
 Should Seraphim charge one of you to call
 On Adam, let the messenger pay heed!
 Those are my orders, as by God decreed!

CHORUS

OF ANGELS: Who sits in this exalted place,
 Bathed in unfathomable light,
 Immeasurable in time or space -
 No counterpart in rank or might?
 Who on no other power depends,
 A self-sufficient entity,
 Whose nature fully comprehends
 Of all things the identity,
 That in and round it all rotate -
 The pivot, hub and central strand,
 Sun of all suns - life, spirit, state
 And soul of all we understand,
 Or seek to grasp but never shall:
 The heart, the ocean and the spring,
 The origin of blessings all
 That flow from Him unwavering,
 By virtue of His mercy, might
 And wisdom, shaped from nothing, ere,
 Above the spheres, on topmost height,
 This heavenly palace glittered fair,
 Where we, wings crossed to shade our eyes,
 That gleaming Majesty revere,
 Arousing Heaven with our cries
 Of praise, submission or, in fear,
 Fall on our faces at the sight!
 Describe Him! What is He or Who?
 His Name with quill seraphic write -
 Or do both mind and tongue eschew?

CHORUS OF
SERAPHIM:

'Tis God, the ageless Being, ever-
 Lasting Source of what exists!
 Forgive us if our praise is never

Adequate! His Might resists
 Our puny powers of acclamation;
 Pardon us, we're not to blame!
 No symbol, word, imagination
 Can define Him, who the same
 Ever was, is, and will be!
 Angels' paeans - weak, inept -
 Border on profanity:
 Which of us would breathe, except
 For Him - and who would dare address
 Him by His Name or make so bold
 As to His secrets claim access?
 For what He is - unique, age-old -
 Only the Godhead is aware -
 The stream-bed of Eternity!
 Such knowledge none of us may share:
 Impenetrable Mystery!
 What eye the Light of Lights dare face?
 Such privilege, more wondrous yet
 Than we've been blessed with through His grace,
 Would overtax our limits set!
 We age in immortality,
 But God does not! He stays the same!
 Without His Being, we'd not be:
 So let us glorify His Name!

Hymn of Praise:

Holy, holy, holy Lord!
 Three times be the Godhead blest!
 He alone is our true ward.
 Sacred, then, be His behest!
 By its mystery be bound;
 His command receive with trust!
 Everywhere, His word let sound,
 As Gabriel decreed it must -
 And blew his trumpet loud and clear.
 So let us God in Adam revere -
 For all that God ordains is just!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Lucifer, Beelzebub.

LUCIFER: You Spirits swift! Our chariot's flight is halted!
 Our banner "Day-Star" overlong exalted -
 Too proudly flown! It's time for Lucifer
 To set, before this rising double-star
 Shoots from below to seek a place on high
 Where earthly gleam will dazzle Heaven's eye!
 No more embroider crowns on my attire,
 Nor gild my brow with day-break's lustrous fire
 Of sunbeams, which Archangels reverence!
 The Godhead's light another radiance
 Invades, snuffing our brilliance, as below,
 The rising sun forbids the stars to glow.
 The future's black for Angels here above,
 Since Man has captured God Almighty's love.
 In this new Paradise Man takes first place:
We Angels shall be slaves to this new race -
 Lackeys to honour, pamper, serve Man's whim!
 This Man was made for God - and we for *him*!
 He'll walk all over us but, lest he fall,
 We're there to bear him up and to instal
 Him regally on Heaven's highest throne,
 While he usurps our birthright for his own.
 The first-born in this Kingdom shall be last;
 The sixth-day son - so like his Father cast -
 Shall wear the royal crown and rightly take
 The sceptre before which all first-born quake!
 Gabriel you heard, at Heaven's golden gate?
 No argument! His trumpet sealed our fate!

BEELZEBUB: O Lucifer, the Viceroy of the Lord!
 We heard him all too well, and at his word,
 Gloom fell upon our Angels' endless feast!
 He spoke explicitly - no call, at least,
 For Cherubim to clarify the sense.
 What need Apollion to brave the elements
 By flying down below the Moon's bright sphere
 To study Adam's homestead? It's quite clear
 How generously God's gifts have been extended

To Man - by hosts of bodyguards defended -
 Angels' respect more surely guaranteed
 Than had our subject status been *decreed*!
 For Adam, Heaven's gates wide open stay:
 This earthworm, sliding from its hunk of clay,
 Your power dares challenge and this Man you'll see
 So high above you that you'll bend the knee,
 And, eyes downcast and humble in his sight,
 Worship his glory, grandeur and his might!
 By God ennobled, at the Godhead's side,
 Shall man in all his majesty abide,
 His rule transcending the confines of space
 Eternal, neither bound by time nor place,
 Which God encompasses - centre and rim -
 In ceaseless revolution . . . As for Him,
 Could God His aim more clearly demonstrate:
 Man to honour, us to humiliate?
We're born to serve and *Man* is born to reign!
 Your sceptre lay aside, for now it's plain -
 A commoner is he who wears the crown -
 Or shortly will. So lay your mantle down,
 Your Day-Star quench and hail this rising Sun,
 In godlike pomp, with song and orison.
 Heaven's about to change. The stars burn low,
 Made weak by yearning to salute the glow!

LUCIFER: That, they will not, as long as I'm alive!

BEELZEBUB: There speaks our Lucifer, whose power can drive
 The shadow of black night from Heaven's face!
 When he appears, the day grows light apace;
 His waxing radiance at God's right hand
 Shall never wane! His word is our command:
 His will, his wish - our Law, by none ignored!
 By Lucifer is God well served, by him adored,
 With incense lauded. Now above his head,
 Is Man to thunder from God's Throne instead?
 Shall then a younger son, of Adam's race,
 Out-rank you and the first-born's place
 Usurp and rob your post of honour due?
 For next to God, was none so great as you,
 In glory seated at the Godhead's foot!
 Let no man dare our Orders to uproot,

LUCIFER:

Our fealty's rights revoke without a reason -
Or all of Heaven will combat the treason!

 You judge aright! Ordained by law to rule,
Who would let slip his kingdom, but a fool?
 Since God's own law constrains the Godhead's might,
Change should become Him least. As Son of Light
And Lord of Light, my status I'll protect -
Yield to no force, no tyrant leave unchecked!
 Succumb who will, I'll not be budged as Master!
 This is my Fatherland! No set-back or disaster,
No curse shall frighten me, still less restrain:
 Either I'll perish, or dominion gain!
 If fall I must - rank stolen, honour shed -
 Then let me fall with crown upon my head,
 This sceptre in my grip, stout hearts about me -
 And thousands more besides, who'll never doubt me!
 So glorious a death wins fame undying.
 Better be first in some kingdom lower-lying
 Than second - if that - in this Realm of Radiance!
 Fearing no hurt or pain, I'll take my chance . . .
 But here comes Heaven's mouthpiece, Gabriel:
 God's Book of Secrets, his - to keep or tell!
 It might repay to find out what he knows . . .
 I'll just dismount and catch him as he goes.

Exit Beelzebub. Enter Gabriel.

GABRIEL:

How now, my Lord Lieutenant, roving yet?

LUCIFER:

In search of Heaven's spokesman - so, well met!

GABRIEL:

I think I guess the subject from your looks -

LUCIFER:

You, whose keen brain can light the darkest nooks
Of God's deep secrets and His aim attest,
Enlighten me, I pray -

GABRIEL:

I'll do my best!

LUCIFER:

The Godhead's last decision, which the worth
Of Heaven rated less than that of Earth,
Oppresses us! Earth, in some puddle grown,
Is lifted to the stars, Man on the throne
Of Angels set; we're robbed of our possession
And bidden slave and sweat at Man's discretion!
We Spirits, long assigned as Heaven's court -

Officials, are now called on to support
 An earthworm, bred of matter and to serve it -
 Worse, while it overshadows us, preserve it!

Why did the Source of Grace downgrade our state?
 Some slothful Angel came on duty late?
 How came the Godhead to select Mankind -
 The nature of His chosen Angels find
 Disposable? His life and soul inject
 Into a body - birth and eternity connect -
 Highest with lowest linking: God with Man?
 Could anyone make sense of such a plan?
 Shall now perpetual light succumb to night?
 Shall I, Lieutenant of the Godhead's might,
 To this unnatural being - this dwarf - kow-tow?
 Unnumbered, fleshless, godlike Spirits bow
 To such a creature - sinister and crude -
 With God's own grace and majesty imbued?
 Mystery too deep for Angelkind to measure!
 You hold the key to the Almighty's treasure -
 Resolve for us this hidden contradiction:
 From Holy Writ, explain God's jurisdiction!

GABRIEL:

As far as I'm allowed to quote, I will . . .
 But too much knowledge often serves one ill.
 God lets us know what seems enough to Him:
 Too bright a flash could blind the Seraphim!
 True wisdom keeps its goal in part concealed,
 While part disclosing. To obey and yield,
 As Laws prescribe, befits a faithful servant,
 At all times, of his master's will observant.
 Reason and aim a mystery must remain,
 While family-trees, unnumbered, wax and wane!
 The Lord, who'll rule in time, as God and Man
 Made one, and whose authority will span
 The Earth, stars, oceans and all life we know,
 Heaven hides from you. Why? . . . Time will show.
 Meanwhile, obey! God's edict you have heard!

LUCIFER:

Why, then, it's true! This foreign earthworm's word
 Shall here prevail and Heaven's Sons be faced
 With alien domination, Man be placed
 So high above our God?

GABRIEL:

Accept your fate!

Your dignity's God-given, like your state.
 Above all Angelkind, the Lord set you -
 But not to grudge another glory due!
 A rebel hazards crown and head the day
 He flouts the Lord's commandments! Need I say,
 Your brilliance stems from that of God alone?

LUCIFER: I've bowed to none save God upon His Throne!

GABRIEL: Then bow to God's decision! He made all
 From nothing, all that lives or ever shall!
 He steers all towards a goal beyond our knowing.

LUCIFER: Exalting Man - God's light on him bestowing!
 To see this Man, God-equal - and so soon,
 Enthroned in clouds of incense, to the tune
 Of umpteen thousand choirs intoning praise,
 Drowning the majesty and diamond-rays
 Of Day-Star, Lucifer - no longer shining -
 While heavenly bliss gives way to sad repining!

GABRIEL: True blessedness from calm content derives:
 On glad acceptance of God's will, it thrives!

LUCIFER: God's majesty is being severely slighted
 If nature divine with human blood's united -
 United and constrained! We Spirits, rather,
 Approach God's nature, than do sons a father,
 Bred by and like him. Is it not unfair -
 Like with unlike in this way to ensnare -
 Finite with infinite, power circumscribed
 With boundless power? What if the Sun described
 A faulty orbit, mantled itself in clouds
 To light the world, or steamy shrouds
 Of vapour black? No cause for joy on Earth!
 Man's paltry glow would be of little worth!
 Sun's progress robbed of all its majesty,
 The heavens blind, the stars in jeopardy,
 Order dispelled, legality expunged,
 If once the source of light its brilliance plunged
 Into a swamp! Forgive me, Gabriel!
 You speak for the Almighty, I know well:
 So, if I quibble or resistant seem,
 Zeal to preserve God's rights and His esteem

Alone emboldens me thus far to stray
 From pure obedience -

GABRIEL: I'll not gainsay
 Your valour in God's cause; but, bear in mind,
 God's a far better judge than Angelkind
 Of where His glory lies! In vain you look . . .
 When God's made Man, shall He His secret book -
 All seven seals - unlock, His secrets tell:
 Taste then the nut, where now you bite the shell!
 Then only, reason and cause - no longer guesses -
 For all this secrecy we'll learn. The far recesses
 Of Heaven's Holy of Holies we'll explore.
 Till then, we must believe, respect, adore
 In gratitude, till knowledge by its might,
 Doubt overcomes, as daylight conquers night!
 The Godhead's Wisdom, towards which, through the
 ages,
 We reverently advance, enlightens us in stages
 With scientific learning, but requires us,
 Each at his post, to honour what inspires us:
 Be first, my Lord Lieutenant, to comply!
 I go where God ordains -

Exit Gabriel.

We can but try!

Enter Beelzebub.

BEELZEBUB: You've heard what lies behind this whole affair,
 So proudly trumpeted by Gabriel back there?
 He told you God's objective, near enough -
 To clip your wings and power; the rest is bluff!

LUCIFER: It won't be all that easy, as they'll see:
 Let no one think to lord it over me!

BEELZEBUB: He warned the rebel's head and crown would fall -

LUCIFER: Then, by my crown, I swear to stake my all.
 And hoist my Throne to Heaven's highest place -
 Through all the spheres and starry twinkling space!
 My palace shall be Heaven's lofty sky;
 My Throne - a rainbow; stars for canopy!
 To use the Earth as footstool, I'll make shift,
 Then, in a chariot of clouds, borne high and swift,

By light and air, with lightning and with thunder –
 Who dares oppose us, I will tear asunder,
 Utterly destroy – God's General no exception!
 Heaven's blue vault, so vast in its conception,
 So proud, so overwhelming in its splendour –
 We'll blast to pieces, rather than surrender!
 We'll leave Earth's Kingdom a dismembered ruin!
 God's wondrous universe we'll leave to stew in
 The Chaos which once ruled it, far and wide!
 I'll teach them to insult the Day-Star's pride!
 Summon Apollion!

BEELZEBUB:

He's just in time!

Enter Apollion.

APOLLION: Lieutenant of the Godhead's will sublime,
 Sage spokesman for His Councillors of State!
 Yours to command, your orders I await:
 So, may your subject know his lordship's pleasure?

LUCIFER: Your insight and opinion I would treasure
 Upon a plan that brooks of no mistake!
 Archangel Michael's mainspring we must break,
 So that his strength our goal shall not deny.
 As many an edict as the Deity
 Incribes, his arm is charged to implement.
 The latest whisks Man from his element
 To Heaven's topmost heights, beyond the Spheres,
 Whence Angeldom, so far below, appears
 A carpet at his feet, where midgets swarm!
 That pinnacle I mean to take by storm!
 Counting upon success in that adventure,
 Status, star and crown – my all, I'll venture!

APOLLION: A noble undertaking! May your crown
 Thereby grow mightier yet – and your renown!
 I'm honoured to advise on such a deed,
 Whether or not success is guaranteed.
 The aim is worthy, even if it's frustrated.
 Our struggle, though, must be well-calculated –
 Not reckless. How best broach so tough a foray –
 Most safely try conclusions with our quarry!

LUCIFER: With cunning! Turn the flank to strike the van!

APOLLION: Well reasoned! For, if borrowed power you plan
 To pit against the Almighty's, you could fail
 By proving somewhat light to tip the scale . . .

BEELZEBUB: Not all that light! We'll make the pointer quiver!

APOLLION: But who? How? Where shall we the blow deliver?
 The very thought offends God's Majesty!

LUCIFER: Perish the thought, then! Let's act cautiously:
 Not well-worn paths, but precipices scale!
 Over all dangers, nerve and guile prevail.

APOLLION: But challenge not the Almighty's Crown or State,
 Unless prepared to feel remorse too late!
 To greater power, a lesser must submit.

LUCIFER: Leave God aside! Like against like, we'll pit.
 You'll see who wins the day with greater might:
 I see the Heavens empty, foes in flight,
 Routed by our assault . . . Our forces, decked
 With victory's palm, take counsel and reflect . . .

APOLLION: You know the strength the General can command:
 God's regiments at his disposal stand!
 He holds the key to Heaven's weapon-store;
 Security is his concern, what's more.
 Under his watchful eye, no sentry dare
 In all the cosmos sleep, and stars beware
 Of shifting but an inch from constellation!
 Easy to start a war, but its continuation
 Would be beyond us and an endless trail
 Of troubles bring. What engines could prevail
 Against him, his battalions decimate?
 Wide open stands the Heavenly castle's gate,
 Of stratagem or treason unafraid.

BEELZEBUB: If we our purpose strengthen with the blade,
 I see the Day-Star's banner fluttering high –
 The heavenly order changing by and by!

APOLLION: God's blessed Name, Archangel Michael bears
 Upon his standard and his flag-staff wears
 The sun on top!

LUCIFER: A name writ large in light?
 What use is that? Heroic deeds requite,

Not pompous words, but courage and resource,
Craft, cunning, common-sense – combined with force!
You understand the art of roping Spirits in –
Of instigation and incitement; you could win
Over even the staunchest guards, I'll warrant –
Implanting doubt, where doubt was once abhorrent!
God's army in two parts will be divided –
The head and limbs in uproar, undecided;
The greater part blindfolded, deaf, confused,
With Colonels shouting, leaderless, bemused!
If you can lure a quarter to our cause,
Honours and high appointments shall be yours
For leadership. Go, hear what Belial has to say!
However dark the night, he'll find a way . . .
That face of his, smooth varnished with deceit,
Is matchless in the art of counterfeit!
I'll take my chariot. You and he discuss.
The Council's met and waiting now for us.
When you arrive we'll call you in, of course!
Commander, guard the main-gate with your force!

Exeunt Lucifer and Beelzebub. Belial and Apollion confer.

- BELIAL : God's Deputy counts on us to help him grow . . .
- APOLLION : We'll fly together – arrows from his bow!
- BELIAL : Aimed at a target dangerous to attack . . .
- APOLLION : Courage! Under our onslaught, Heaven will crack!
- BELIAL : Maybe so . . . We'll see . . . It all depends.
- APOLLION : How can we best contrive to gain our ends?
- BELIAL : Weapons we need – with the Army let's begin . . .
- APOLLION : Commanders first; the stoutest hearts let's win . . .
- BELIAL : With something harmless – easy to digest –
- APOLLION : Indeed, quite so! But what would you suggest?
- BELIAL : Our Angels' Charter, rank and honour to protect!
Let them all choose a leader they respect.
- APOLLION : Well said, I know no finer stuff or seed
For mutiny: nobles or commoners guaranteed

To egg each other on, in factions banding,
Determined to preserve their rank and standing –
Those legal rights, conferred by the Creator,
Before he made Mankind – a good deal later!
This heavenly palace is our promised heirloom.
Spirits who, winged and bodiless, through the air
zoom.

Unburdened by the force of gravity,
Are here far more at home than Man could be,
Too slothful such unnatural habitat
To choose: our light's too bright. The radiance that
We're long accustomed to would blind him!
So let Man stay below where God assigned him,
Like other creatures. Let him be content
With that rich Garden as his element
Where, rising and setting, sun and moon
Divide the months and years. Let him attune
His life-style to the stars' bold revolution,
Enjoy his harvest and the distribution
Of plant-life; travel North, South, East and West
To pass the time. What more could Man request?
We want no Earth-Lord here! To be precise –

- BELIAL : We mean to keep Man out of Paradise!
- APOLLION : The word will spread through Angeldom like fire –
Leaping from mouth to ear, from choir to choir,
Through all nine Orders and the Hierarchies!
- BELIAL : That way, we'll not be slowed by sophistries:
For safety and success, speed's of the essence!
- APOLLION : Courage, no less, and thoughtful prescience!
- BELIAL : Both will increase as we gain more supporters!
- APOLLION : They're grumbling now; let's fish these troubled
waters,
Discreetly mix, inciting to dispute . . .
- BELIAL : Beelzebub – so great is his repute –
Could take up arms as champion of their pleas . . .
- APOLLION : Not right away – obliquely . . . by degrees . . .
- BELIAL : The Day-Star's presence would in Angels' eyes,
Lend powerful backing to the enterprise!

APOLLION: His plans and thoughts in Council he'll present:
He'd best pretend reluctance, then, consent,
When all, in turmoil, vainly seek a chief.

BELIAL: That's all-important. It's my firm belief,
Without a leader, madness to begin!

APOLLION: But what's already won, no need to win!
Who's suffered loss of status most sublime -
Has every right to lead and beat the time
For all the countless thousands -

BELIAL: Reason, fairness
Confer the crown on him, but full awareness
Of all the dangers we'd do well to savour -
Nor act unless the Council votes in favour!

STROPHE.

CHORUS OF

ANGELS:

Why are the starry outposts glowing
Red? Why shines the Holy Light
So crimson in our sight,
Through clouds of murky vapour flowing?
What fog and mist obscure
The silver once so pure -
Incomparable sapphire -
The flame, the gleam, the fire
Of God's serenity?
Why does the Godhead's light instead
Now stream towards us here blood-red,
Which, until recently,
All eyes rejoiced? Who can explain
This mystery to Angeldom,
Which, far removed from Man's domain,
In songs and chants of praise has swum,
In fragrant air and radiance, gilding
Pinnacle, battlement and building,
Vaulted choirs and garden fair -
Joy inspiring everywhere
To all that here above belong!
Pray, who can tell us what is wrong?

ANTISTROPHE

When we, by Gabriel's trumpeting
Aroused, poured forth with fresh acclaim,

New hymns to laud God's Name,
Rose-gardens, pastures surfeiting
The length and breadth of Heaven,
With such sweet dew and leaven
Of praise and gladsome trill,
It seems that envy's ill
From down below seeped through,
And many Spirits, silent, cowed
And deathly pale - a motley crowd -
In discontent withdrew.
Their eyelids drooping in dismay,
Smooth foreheads wrinkled in disgust,
These doves of Heaven, once so gay,
So innocent and full of trust,
Now seem in disaffection sunk,
As though our Paradise had shrunk;
Since God chose Adam for preferment,
His love for Man has caused a ferment.
The Light, impaired by such disgrace,
Has crimsoned the Almighty's face.
In brotherly love, we'll seek the malcontents
And calm restore amid this turbulence.

END OF ACT TWO

*angels vs. y
Loyalist needs to join N.Y.*

ACT THREE

*Rebel and Loyalist Angels debate. Hubbub, groaning, cries of distress:
Noise gradually subsides.*

REBEL 1: How can one's hopes so soon be disappointed?
How wrong we were to judge our place, appointed
In this most blissful realm bar none -
Secure in status, like the Highest One -
Changeless, more blest by far than those on Earth,
Till Gabriel's trumpet blast reversed our worth,
Proclaiming, from the Golden Gate, God's dread
decree,

Depriving Angels of that high degree
He once, so bountifully bestowed on us.
We've been struck down! No longer glorious,
Our shining presence thrust into the shade -
The Hierarchies uneasy and dismayed:
Man, in his power and station so preferred
That we, like slaves, must tremble at his word!

REBEL 2: What a reverse, delivered without warning!
Gather around, companions in our mourning;
Let us sit down together, sigh and make moan,
Rending our festive garments as we groan!
None will begrudge us that, at any rate!
Sorrow has overwhelmed our happy state.
Woe and alas, Brothers and Angels all -
Away with garlands, festive robes let fall!
Don sober raiment! Eyes cast down! Our plight
Bids us seek shade, for sorrow shuns the light!

REBEL 3: All voices raise in fearful lamentation:
Let's drown in grief, in woeful meditation!
For grieving helps from grief to free the heart!
So weep to your hearts' content and heal the smart!
As one, our clamour swell, the echoes waken:
Alas, alas - why have we been forsaken?

LOYALIST 1: What dismal plaint is this distasteful sound?
It strikes a chill in Heaven, where resound
Within our joyous halls, no songs like these!
Palms, garlands, harps and strings - not threnodies -

Are what our Heaven's used to! What's amiss?
These huddled shapes, bowed heads? What is all this?
Downcast, abandoned, such unhappiness!
What ails them? What gave rise to such distress?

LOYALIST 2: Companions, follow me! Let's clear the air,
Inquire what caused their pain, this black despair
That robs the Heavens' splendour of its gloss
And clouds our festive jubilance with dross?
Abundance, freedom, joy the Heavens know:
This is no place for heartache or for woe!
Come, let's console them! They are sadly shaken . . .

REBELS: Alas, alas, why have we been forsaken?

LOYALIST 1: Companions, Brothers in our bliss, what ails you?
O Sons of Light, what misery assails you?
Who gave you cause to sorrow and lament?
You, who did flourish in the firmament,
Illumined by the radiance of God's power:
Bred, swift to flit from pinnacle to tower,
Garden to garden, weaving, soaring, gliding,
In light unshaded, joyfully residing -
Tasting, in our serene sodality,
The manna of God's immortality
With fellow-celebrants! Such dire distress
Becomes ill commoner-Angels, Lords no less -
Powers or Thrones or Principalities!
Don't sit there dazed, counting your miseries!
Tell us what's wrong! Don't just endure it!
Reveal your discontent that we may cure it!

REBEL 1: Brothers, how could you possibly not know?
Did you not, too, hear Gabriel's trumpet blow -
The latest edict which reduced our roles
To slavery for Earth's unnumbered souls,
Sprung from a drop of blood, a little seed?
What did we wrong, committed what misdeed?

REBEL 2: That God this flimsy bubble should inflate,
The Angels - His own Sons - to denigrate!
A bastard being, formed from clay and dust!
Were we not pillars of His court, deserving trust?
Doing our duty, faithful servitors?
To stand belittled, banished without cause,
Demoted suddenly and sore chastised!

REBEL 1: Our God-given Charter, once so dearly prized,
Has been revoked! Instead of our dominion –
With and beneath the Lord – Adam, this minion,
Shall reign, all-powerful, and kings beget!
On Angels, all too soon, the sun has set!
Comrades, lament with us our bliss mistaken!
Alas, alas, why have we been forsaken?

LOYALIST 1: You're shocked by God's and Gabriel's command?
That's madness! Who dares flout or countermand
An order from on high and God resist?
We're bound to worship Him, for we exist
Within His law. Would anyone oppose
Almighty God, whose will, word, sign impose
On us strict rules and moderation?

LOYALIST 2: To contradict defies God's dispensation!
This Kingdom's Ruler rates obedience
Higher than sacred music or incense!
So be less arrogant and less demanding:
Service is what you're bred for – not commanding!
Stop grieving, brothers; no more dismal pleas!
Bow to God's yoke, for He alone decrees!

REBEL 3: Yoked to a swarm of ants! Why don't you say it?

LOYALIST 1: If it's the will of God, you must obey it!

REBEL 1: But how have we transgressed? What rhyme or reason?

LOYALIST 2: You're questioning God's will; that smacks of treason!

REBEL 2: We're voicing grief, that's all – dissatisfaction –

LOYALIST 1: Compliance with God's will's the sole reaction!

REBEL 1: We claim our rights, as legally conferred –

LOYALIST 1: Your rights, your Charter hang upon God's word!

REBEL 3: How can the greater to the lesser be subjected?

LOYALIST 2: To serve God is to rule, where God's respected.

REBEL 2: Agreed. Then let Man rule down there on Earth!

LOYALIST 2: Man's happy with his lot, of lesser worth.

REBEL 1: But Man's assured a nobler fate awaits him . . .

LOYALIST 1: It'll be centuries before God elevates him!

REBEL 1: A century on Earth? The twinkling of an eye!

LOYALIST 2: What God ordains will happen, by and by!

REBEL 2: Better it were, this secret had stayed hidden!

LOYALIST 1: God bares His heart for love of you – unbidden!

REBEL 1: He favours Man, has set him here above –

LOYALIST 1: With God made One: a miracle of love!

REBEL 1: Had God but deigned with Angels to unite –

LOYALIST 2: What God deems fit is lauded, as of right!

REBEL 2: Why set Man's tide-mark up so high, so soon?

LOYALIST 1: What God ordains is well and good – a boon!

REBEL 1: Our Angel-Crown to tarnish is Man's aim –

LOYALIST 2: When God's made Man, Angels will bless His Name!

REBEL 1: And worship clay, with foreheads in the dust?

LOYALIST 1: God's Name be censed with fragrance, praise and trust!

REBEL 2: And Man revered because it *must* be so?

Enter Apollion, Belial.

APOLLION: The grumbling's started. Hear the tumult grow!

BELIAL: Who are these hordes of Angels sunk in grief?
Sackcloth and ashes? It's beyond belief
That here, mid endless feasts and celebration,
So lamentably large a congregation
Should be in mourning – but, it's clearly so!
What accident, catastrophe, I'd like to know,
Befell them? Come, explain your plight!
Unjustly treated? We'll protect your right!
Brothers, what is it? What has caused your pain?

LOYALIST 1: Man's estate has triumphed, they complain –
By Gabriel's account, outpacing Angelkind:
Since God His own with Adam's being entwined,
Man has become the Angels' Lord and Master:
That is their grievance; they foresee disaster.

APOLLION: So great a wrong's most painful to endure –

BELIAL: Perhaps beyond our ways and means to cure . . .

LOYALIST 2: We beg you, nonetheless, assuage these slights –
 APOLLION: What can we offer? They demand their rights . . .
 LOYALIST 1: What rights? Does law allow its own transgression?
 APOLLION: But how can justice tolerate oppression?
 LOYALIST 2: Indeed, the Lord condemns it, so has ruled –
 BELIAL: The child in father's footsteps should be schooled –
 LOYALIST 1: To follow the father means to wish the same –
 APOLLION: God's change of mind's the reason for their claim!
 LOYALIST 2: One He's dethroned, while raising up the other:
 Let son less-favoured yield to more favoured brother!
 BELIAL: God's grace were best bestowed with even hand:
 Now Heaven's Light shall darkness not withstand
 And children of the Night shall mock the Day!
 LOYALIST 1: All things that breathe should God with thanks repay
 For life and love, the lesser and the greater!
 Earth's element, should it so please the Creator,
 Into air, fire or water, He can transform –
 Heaven to Earth, Angel to Beast, and Angel-form –
 By miracle unknown – on Man bestow!
 Almighty God can raise or overthrow!
 His lowliest creatures he endows with grace:
 Choice or discrimination have no place.
 God's glory shines in differences galore:
 Take heavy and light – what's heavier weighs more.
 Beauty may be outshone and colours, too –
 Perfumes and gems – diamond and turquoise blue;
 Weak yields to strong, lone stars to constellations.
 Our meddling upsets these dispensations,
 Disrupts the balance of God's universe.
 Creatures create monstrosities and worse,
 In every least respect. Cease these laments!
 LOYALIST 2: The Godhead can with Angeldom dispense.
 He's self-sufficient. His eternal reign
 No incense needs, nor music to sustain
 It – no puffs of fragrant smoke or tuneful songs.
 Ungrateful Spirits, curb your wicked tongues!
 Accept your lot! God's mind you cannot read;
 Subject yourselves to what God has decreed!

APOLLION: If Angels' state and fate are that unsteady,
 We're on a slippery slope and doomed already!
 LOYALIST 1: Because a lesser Being is made King?
 Our status hasn't changed . . . so where's the sting?
 BELIAL: God was the Angels' father, no one dearer –
 None closer to His heart – Now, Man is nearer!
 LOYALIST 2: Dismay at someone else's happy lot
 Smacks not of love but envy! Let this blot
 From Angeldom's escutcheon be effaced
 And jealousy by concord be replaced,
 In tune with God's harmonious Creation!
 BELIAL: Angels, as Heaven ordained, observe their station –
 But fail to grasp why they should slave for Man . . .
 LOYALIST 1: 'Tis disobedience to thwart God's plan!
 You've seen, in gold cuirassed, the starry Hosts
 In line abreast, on duty at their posts:
 When one star sets, while waiting its successor,
 Mark how the brighter stars eclipse the lesser,
 How orbits vary, some immense, some small –
 How low stars fast, and high stars slowly fall.
 Yet notwithstanding such disparity
 Of function, sphere, light, orbit and degree,
 There's no dissent. The cosmic Helmsman's voice
 Conducts the choir. All hearken and rejoice!
 BELIAL: Fixed are the constellations, as God made them;
 Had He let Angels be – and not betrayed them,
 They'd not be rousing Heaven, charging malice,
 Or, with their plaints, disturb our peaceful palace!
 LOYALIST 2: Take care! Don't make their disaffection worse!
 APOLLION: We only wish these storm-clouds might disperse
 Before they burst and Heaven set alight!
 Their numbers grow and louder voice their plight.
 REBELS: Alas, alas, where has our concord fled?
 Enter Beelzebub.
 BEELZEBUB: (*To Apollion.*) Our ranks are swelling. Good, the news
 has spread!
 They swarm excitedly, all heads bent low . . .

(Addressing the Rebels as Apollon and Belial melt into the crowd.)

What's moved our Angeldom to such a show
Of discontent? Has bliss begun to pall?
A bountiful God has lavished on you, all
That Angel could desire: won't that suffice?
Yet, here you sit and weep in Paradise!
The cause of such dismay I cannot guess.
Why rend your mantles and insignia in distress?
Cheer up! Let's see those surly faces bright,
Those foreheads shining, O you Sons of Light!
Clear-voiced Seraphim, hymning their gratitude,
Look round in anguish at these discords crude.
Your bitter moan disrupts their songs of praise,
And Heaven's measured harmony damps.
Echoed by crystal vaults, your wails ring clear
And ever louder, leap from sphere to sphere!
Such dissonance, unless it were no crime,
Must shed dishonour on God's Name sublime!

REBEL 1:

Our Colonel, at whose word picked legions
Take up their arms, you're timely in these regions
To right our wrongs, our undeserved disgrace
To parry with your might! Shall Gabriel place
On Adam's head, our Angels' holy crown
And God's first-born by Adam's be thrust down?

REBEL 2:

Better we'd not been made, before the sun
To lighten Heaven's dark had even begun!
In vain, we Angels were by God befriended -
His bodyguards at Court - if He intended
To flout the right of Spirits without fault,
Compelling them to counter His assault!
Brought up to praise the Lord, we all rejoiced -
We worshipped, censed Him, bowed our heads and
voiced
Our songs of praise and Heaven hearkened well,
Charmed by the sound of dance and choral swell,
Melting with joy at the music of tongue and harp,
When, like a thunder-clap, so loud and sharp,
Gabriel's trump disturbed God's adoration . . .

REBEL 3:

We were amazed, distraught! Sheer indignation
Put happiness to flight, full throats struck dumb . . .

Crown, sceptre, blessing - stripped from Angeldom -
Unjustly to the youngest Son, God gave -
Branding the elder brother Adam's slave!
Obedience, piety, love and trust
Were swift transformed to anger, woe, disgust,
And vengeful wish that Man we abominate
Should choke in his own blood before our State
Is shackled and Man's slaves assigned their lot:
To serve his will and whip-lash - at the trot -
Just as he holds the beasts on earth in thrall!

REBEL 1:

Colonel, you can prevent the Spirits' fall:
Invoke the Angels' Charter to preserve us!
Your strength deploy . . . Lead on! We're at your
service!
Under your standard, loyal to your command -
For Honour, Right and Crown, we'll take our stand!

BEELZEBUB: Your wrong afflicts me! Lord of Hosts, prevent
Calamity! Fuel neither mutiny nor dissent,
And let rebellion cease for want of cause!
How can I serve the Angels and God's laws?

REBEL 1: The Godhead's set aside our prior claim -

BEELZEBUB: Enough His subjects' temper to inflame
And stoke a furnace fit to roast the air!
A poor reward, indeed, for zealous care!
In such dire straits, how best can we advance?

REBEL 2: By acting boldly! We must take a chance . . .

BEELZEBUB: Why risk ourselves? Let's chart a subtler course.

REBEL 1: Violence it has to be! Revenge by force!

BEELZEBUB: 'Twere best, I think, some safer way to choose . . .

REBEL 2: Delay won't help, unless we want to lose!

BEELZEBUB: Why not take stock, present a reasoned case?

REBEL 1: The reason's clear: *Man has usurped our place!*

BEELZEBUB: Ought you not first to tender a petition?

REBEL 3: And sell the pass by stating our position?

BEELZEBUB: Such an assault is difficult to hide . . .

REBEL 1: We have the strength to match the other side!

BEELZEBUB: They've got God's General - greatly in their favour!

REBEL 2: Look, we'll get nowhere if we wilt and waver!

BEELZEBUB: What did Apollion and Belial advise?

REBEL 1: They've faith in us; they've joined our enterprise!

BEELZEBUB: They have? So soon? We're far advanced, it seems.

REBEL 3: From Heaven's farthest reach, they come in streams!

BEELZEBUB: To trust an army of defectors isn't wise . . .

REBEL 1: Profit outweighs the danger in our eyes!

BEELZEBUB: Don't talk of profit! Nothing has been planned . . .

REBEL 2: How can we judge results till they're at hand?
Our army longs to see you at its head -
Command us -

BEELZEBUB: Who'd be mad enough to shed
Suspicion on the justice of your cause
By testing Heaven's strength? Be wise; take pause!
Don't count on me. I opt for neither side:
I think negotiation should be tried.

LOYALIST 1: Brothers, give ear! Begin by prayerful pleading
To God on high, with others interceding . . .
Discussion will achieve more than sedition!
Be calm, reflect, consider your position.
We, too, value our Rights, have no illusions!
But with the Lord of Hosts, don't try conclusions!

REBEL 3: Nor you, with our legality! Enough we've heard!
Lead us Beelzebub, we're not deterred!
Rally our force, we'll follow you as one!

BEELZEBUB: Reflect, you zealots! Think what you've begun:
I'll state your case before the Godhead's Throne,
Beseeching justice - in a peaceful tone -
Through joint accord, as mutually accepted . . .

REBEL 1: Quiet! Here's Michael! You've been intercepted!
Enter Michael.

MICHAEL: Where are we? What's this turbulence I hear?
There's discord, violence in the atmosphere -
Not peace, obedience and trust! Beelzebub,

How is it you've become rebellion's hub?
Urging these upstarts on to wicked treason
Against God, our only refuge? What's the reason ?

BEELZEBUB: Prince Michael, have the grace to hear us first,
Lest zeal on God's behalf suggest the worst!
Then judge . . . You'll find that we are not to blame.

MICHAEL: Speak then! I hope that you can clear your name . . .

BEELZEBUB: These many thousand soldiers on parade,
By Gabriel's pronouncement deep dismayed,
Besought an audience to ventilate their woe.
I came to listen to complaints and so,
By all means possible, revolt pre-empt.
But they, aflame with anger and contempt,
Went ranting on. Transported by their rage,
They pressed me as their leader to engage . . .
I deprecate all violence, so demurred -
These loyal angels here will back my word -
I counselled them before God's Throne to state
Their case . . . In vain my plea, the uproar of debate
Surged, like a stormy sea, in Heaven's face!
Step forward, General! Take your rightful place!
We'll follow, if you've something to suggest . . .

MICHAEL: Who dares presume God's Holy Will to test?
Who, in this Realm of peace, the flag of war
Makes bold to raise? If an ambassador
You would depute to plead your case on high,
To reconcile you all with God, I'll try . . .
If not, you risk your necks! You're doomed to fail!

REBEL 1: Our sacred Rights with weapons you'd assail?
You weren't appointed General to do us wrong!
We stand upon our Rights! Justice is strong!

MICHAEL: Conspiracy 'gainst God scant justice shows!

REBEL 2: We've served Him worthily, as well He knows!

REBEL 1: But let the heavenly order not be changed -
Officials of our Fatherland not ranged
Below Mankind! For Heaven's Hierarchies,
Thrones, Powers and Principalities,
Spirits, Angels, Archangels never would
Endure such ignominy - even should

Your lightning spear transfix devoted breast:
By Adam's offspring, we'll not be oppressed!

MICHAEL : Let all disperse upon my given sign!
Who breaks his oath to me, our King Divine
Betrays as well . . . At once, back to your posts,
Like faithful soldiers of the Heavenly Hosts!
What frenzy made you act in such a manner?
Who goes to war – unless beneath my banner –
Makes war on God and war on His domain!

REBEL 1 : Who fights for Right, no tyrant can restrain!
Each must protect his Rights . . . That's nature's way!

MICHAEL : I order you: disarm without delay!
Honour and oath you've shamed by your designing!

REBEL 2 : We Angels, bound by nature, are combining
In mutual defence. Not one alone –
All Heaven's angels have been overthrown!

MICHAEL : Were you equipped with arms to fight in Heaven?
The Godhead to attack, were weapons given?
If you misuse your strength, beware God's power!

REBEL 1 : God's Deputy's due here within the hour,
Having been summoned to appear most urgently.
We'll hazard all in an emergency:
Sooner see Angel fighting Angel than subject
Our Rights to tyranny –

MICHAEL : I'd not suspect
God's Deputy of foolishness so grave . . .

REBEL 2 : Foolish is what I'd call it to enslave
The elder brother to the younger son –
That Angels, their true nature forced to shun,
Should battle – like with like, in rank and kind –
That's foolish beyond measure, to my mind!

MICHAEL : You stubborn souls! You're Sons of Light no more!
The misbegotten who God's will ignore,
His lightning and implacable rage provoke,
Likewise, their own destruction – at a stroke!
You heed no counsel or command – so, wait,
And God, upon His Throne, will legislate!
Meanwhile, all Angels who are loyal and pious,
Stand well apart from those who would defy us!

REBEL 1 : Fall out, who will! Our strength shall not decrease!

MICHAEL : Loyalists, follow me!

Silence, then, with mocking laugh:

REBEL 1 : Go you in peace!

Exit Michael.

BEELZEBUB : Michael will tell God all about the plot.
Take courage! Lucifer in his chariot,
Is speeding hither. Wait till he's arrived:
(*Sound of great wind, rumbling chariot wheels, shouts of "Lucifer".*)
No leaderless army ever yet survived;
As for myself, the task would be too great!

LUCIFER : All Heaven's rumbling with this debate –
Picked troops at odds and bitterly divided!
Revolt is spreading fast, so I've decided
That action's needed to forestall a rout!

REBEL 1 : Lucifer, refuge of the true devout!
Unlike Prince Michael, you will not, we trust,
See Angels' necks prostrated in the dust,
As footstool for Man's progeny intended –
Nor let this pill be sweetened and commended
With specious talk, nor yet devote your might
To hastening this Earthling's upward flight!
Who knows what honours he'd accord those sons?
Why should we serve a worm and be the ones
To bear it up and hearken to its voice?
Did God make Heaven and Angels to rejoice
Men only? Better He'd not created us at all!

REBEL 2 : Lucifer, mercy! Don't let our Order fall
So low we drown, though wholly innocent,
While Man, the Angels' master, bathes content
In light divine and Seraphim, in fear,
Stand trembling or, like shadows, disappear!
If you'll but deign injustice so immense –
As champion of our cause – to recompense,
We swear that we'll support you to the end!

REBEL 1 : Receive this broad-axe – and our Rights defend!
By force of arms, we'll seat you on that Throne,

Whose majesty's reserved for Man alone!
We swear that we'll support you to the end -
Take up this battle-axe, our Rights defend!

LUCIFER:

Sons - fidelity unblemished in God's sight -
All that He wishes and requires is right.
Knowing no other Law - God's Deputy -
I second His every order and decree.
My hand received this sceptre which I hold
From the Almighty - gauge of his manifold
Blessings, grace and love for Angelkind.
If Adam he now favours, heart and mind,
And means to grant Man full authority
In Heaven over you and over me,
Though we've not failed and do our duty still:
What can we do? For who would cross His Will?
Had He intended, Adam to invest
With Angel-form, in Angel's glory vest,
The scions of Heaven and the Sons of Light
Would not complain. But they detect a slight!
Being critical's not in itself a crime:
It all depends on where it leads in time -
To meek submission or to stout resistance.
I pray that God may pardon your persistence!

REBEL 1:

We pray *you*, Lucifer: accept this mace!
Champion our Rights! Lead on! You set the pace!
We'll follow you, swift-winged and glorious -
Either we'll perish or emerge victorious!

LUCIFER:

That flouts our oath and Gabriel's decree . . .

REBEL 2:

But God is flouted by Man's majesty!

LUCIFER:

Let *God* protect His glory and His Throne!

REBEL 1:

But we're with *you*! Consider well your own!
The whole of Angeldom is on your side:
We'll not let Man our Crown - God's Crown - deride!

LUCIFER:

Prince Michael, armed by God and blest by Him,
Will soon be here with Hosts of Seraphim;
Between your force and his, the gap is wide!

REBEL 1:

But, once they know that you are on our side,
A third of all his Angels will defect.

LUCIFER: By then, the die'll be cast - my credit wrecked
With your oppressors -

REBEL 1: Courage, stout-heartedness,
Shame, sorrow, caution, scorn, profound distress,
A thirst for vengeance, baulked of satisfaction -
All these will help to stiffen us in action!

Beelzebub approaches Lucifer.

BEELZEBUB: The Holy Kingdom is as good as ours:
Whatever we decide, armed might empowers!
So, let us range ourselves as if for war -
And let the waverers waver no more!

LUCIFER: Then . . . force with force to parry, I will dare!

BEELZEBUB: Good Lord Lieutenant, brave beyond compare,
Ascend the Throne, that we may pledge allegiance!

LUCIFER: Bear witness, Beelzebub - all heads of legions -
Apollion, Belial - witness the fact
That, taking command, reluctantly I act
God's Kingdom to defend, our Rights to shield!

BEELZEBUB: Raise up the standard, swear a compact sealed
In loyalty to God and Morning-Star!

REBEL 1: We swear alike - by God and Lucifer!

BEELZEBUB: Bring incense here, God's faithful Sons of Light,
With fragrant bowls and candles burning bright.
Let Lucifer be censed, his glory shine
By torchlight's glow. Let's honour him with fine
Poems and songs, music of shawm and trump,
'Tis fitting we salute him with great pomp!
Clear let your voices ring
In honour of ~~our~~ King . . .

CHORUS OF
REBEL

ANGELS: Upwards and onwards, Lucifer's files,
Follow his lead!
Gather your forces, muster your wiles
To meet our need!
Follow the Spirit and by him stand,
Guarding your Rights and Fatherland!

Help him Michael's host repel,
 Bravely proceed!
 Adam for ever from Heaven expel -
 And all his breed!
 Follow our hero with trumpet and drum -
 To save the Crown of Angeldom!
 See how the Day-Star's banner shines!
 Awed by the sight,
 The enemy's standard swift declines,
 Lost in the night!
 Triumphant, we crown our Lucifer,
 Censing him and Morning-Star!

STROPHE.

CHORUS OF

LOYAL

ANGELS:

How virtue's been corrupted!
 That civil war should split
 Our regiments close-knit,
 And violence have erupted!
 What blind and senseless sin!
 For, which of us, as brothers,
 Whether he die or win,
 Can revel in another's
 Suffering or defeat -
 All citizens of Heaven . . .
 To see one's kin retreat,
 Or into exile driven!
 Sons in one image made,
 How have your footsteps strayed!

ANTISTROPHE.

Alas! Why should they wander.
 These Spirits, so misled.
 Security to shed
 Angelic bliss to squander
 And battle without need?
 Hazarding all they treasure -
 Too great our wealth, indeed -
 Too vast it is to measure!
 Yet Heaven won't suffice
 To satiate ambition:
 Their anger, in a trice,
 Has turned to rank sedition

In peaceful Fatherland.
 Whose is the guiding hand?

APOSTROPHE.

Can the furnace not be damped
 By the power of greater Might,
 Anxious to preserve its Right?
 All's at stake! Ambition rampant,
 Heaven, Earth, both sea and shore,
 Will engulf in flames of war!
 Such ambition, victories gaining,
 Counterfeit respect may win -
 God and all restraint disdaining:
 Envy knows no God, nor kin!

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

Gabriel and Michael.

GABRIEL : All Heaven's flickering with the lurid flame
Of treason and revolt. I urge you, in God's name
And for His Throne, to start without delay,
Zealously to burn out and sweep away
This blight on God's renown and Angeldom!
Lucifer's raised a force with trump and drum!

MICHAEL : Has Lucifer his sacred oath betrayed?

GABRIEL : A third of Heaven, by his standard swayed,
Have pledged their troth to Morning-Star, enthroned
And censed, as he were God, while they intoned
Blasphemous songs of praise and flattery!
They're heading this way, bent on battery,
Threatening to force the arsenal's main door
And loot the contents of the weapon-store.
It's like a tempest, raging above, below:
Lightning flickering, thunder crashing, skies aglow!
The palace trembles, pillars all but rent.
The silent Seraphim, all praises spent,
Sit, each lamenting and in deep travail;
The Angel-choirs are still, then shriek and wail
A chorus full of bitter woe and grief
At the apostasy beyond belief
Of their blind Angel-brothers. It's high time
To do your duty, heed the oath sublime
You swore, as General, on a lightning bolt,
By God and His great Name -

MICHAEL : But what could jolt
God's Lord Lieutenant so outrageously
That he'd command this base conspiracy?

GABRIEL : I'm forced, as Heaven knows, God's righteous cause
In this way to defend: for stern the laws
That Lucifer's broken, dread the punishment!
No means was found to stifle the dissent -
To lead these mad, blind wretches back to reason!
I saw God's joy cloud over at their treason . . .
Desire to be revenged at last gave rise

To flames of anger in the Almighty's eyes,
Before he ordered action. Arguments
Between God's Mercy and Justice were intense,
As they expounded their respective cases;
I saw the Cherubim fall on their faces,
Crying repeatedly "Have mercy, Lord!"
One might just possibly have reached accord -
God seemed inclined to reconciliation . . .
But then, the reek of incense fuelled vexation -
The rising fumes of Lucifer's enthronement,
Trumpets and songs of praise. Hope of atonement
Vanished, for Heaven frowns on idolatries,
Condemned by God and all the Hierarchies.
No mercy, then! Arise! Your armour don!
God charges you, before we're set upon,
To tame the wild Behemoths with your might
And impious Leviathans put to flight!

MICHAEL : Shield-bearer, Uriel, bring lightning here!
God's banner fetch! My armour, helm and spear!
Let sound the trumpets! Swift to arms! Make haste,
You Powers and Thrones, all Angelkind that's graced
With faith and loyalty! Troops of the line,
Prepare for battle! Heaven's given the sign!
Flourish the trumpets, beat the hollow drum!
Summon all Angelkind and let them come
Armed - as I now arm myself - for war!
God's glory is at stake - no less, no more!

GABRIEL : That suit of armour fits you like a skin!
Here is your standard with God's crest, wherein
His shining Name, the sun on top, augur success!
Waving God's flags, cornets about us press,
Saluting your command of Heaven's might:
Courage, Prince Michael! It's God's war you fight!

MICHAEL : Commend me well on high! Now let's away!

GABRIEL : Our hearts go with you, while we watch and pray!

Exit Michael and Gabriel.

The rebel camp. Lucifer and Beelzebub.

LUCIFER : What of our army? How are things progressing?

BEELZEBUB: The army's ready and eager, with your blessing,
To plunge upon the van of Michael's force!

REBEL 1: We wait Lord Lucifer's command, of course,
To sweep them, wings and weapons, from the sky -
Wind, air and space our enemy we'll deny,
And, when he's powerless, bind him in chains!

LUCIFER: How many are we? Have we made some gains?

BEELZEBUB: They're flooding in from battlement and spire
To join our ranks - a shimmering sea of fire!
I'd say a third of Heaven's on our side -
If not a half! Archangel Michael's tide
Is clearly on the ebb, and fast receding.
Half of the sentinels, as well as leading
Privy Councillors from each Hierarchy,
Prince Michael have rejected - as have we!
Cherubim one sees, Archangels, Seraphim -
All waving standards. Paradise is grim,
Prostrate with grief; the only colour, grey:
Nothing but signs of imminent decay,
While overhead the sable storm-clouds flurry.
It augurs well for us. No need to worry -
The Heavenly Crown upon your brow, I see . . .

LUCIFER: That's better news than Gabriel's decree!
All of you, listen, clustering at my feet:
Commanders, gallant knights! Hear, short and sweet,
My message to you all! Pay close attention!
Seeing how far we've travelled in dissension,
By thirst for vengeance on the Godhead driven -

Retreat were madness! We'll not be forgiven!
Let none suppose this irremediable stain
God's grace will cleanse! Therefore, we must remain
Determined to fight, neither to yield nor waver:
By force - betraying neither fear nor favour -
This standard and my Star's ascent assure,
That our free state of Angels may endure!
So, come what may, be bold and undeterred!
Your Angel-nature, centuries past conferred,
No might - albeit almighty - can destroy!
If, with a will, our strength we now deploy,
Strike at the enemy's heart and win the fray -
Why! Heaven's tyranny has had its day!

The Angels shall stay free and Adam's seed,
Reigning supreme in consort with his breed,
No slave-chains round your necks shall ever set,
Nor force you in Man's interests to sweat,
Half-throttled by the captive's yoke for ever!
You've chosen me to lead your free endeavour -
Sworn by this standard to revere your choice -
Now, swear your oath again, with single voice -
Pledging your loyalty to Morning-Star!

REBELS: We swear alike, by God and Lucifer!

BEELZEBUB: Raphael has flown down - with anguish but goodwill -
Bearing an olive-branch. He's hoping still
That we'll negotiate an armistice!

Enter Raphael. On a sign from Lucifer, Beelzebub withdraws.

RAPHAEL: Lord Deputy, mouthpiece of God's Law, what's this?
What's driven you to stray from duty's path,
To scorn your glory's well-spring, brave His wrath,
Irresolute and wavering in allegiance?
I'm shocked! I can't conceive such disobedience!
I hang upon your words, in lamentation . . .

LUCIFER: Good Raphael . . .

RAPHAEL: Joy of my life! My inspiration!
Hear me, I beg . . .

LUCIFER: As long as you desire!

RAPHAEL: For pity's sake! Wherefore in war-attire
Should you confront me? I am sore distraught
With grief on your account! Medicine I've brought -
The salve of Holy Grace, freely provided
By God who, with His Counsellors, decided
You to anoint - above a thousand peers -
As His crowned Deputy in all the spheres.
What lunacy has so confused your mind?
You, on whose holy brow the Godhead signed
His likeness and His seal, on you bestowing
Beauty and wisdom, favours ever-flowing
From His great treasure-fount in copious streams?
Next God in Paradise, you cast your beams,
As from a cloud of dew and roses fresh;

Your festive raiment was a solid mesh
 Of pearls and rubies, emeralds, gold-encrusted;
 The heaviest sceptre to your hand was trusted;
 When you appeared, trumpets and drums resounded -
 The echoes from the very stars rebounded!
 You'd recklessly reject such pomp and pride -
 Beauty and splendour lightly cast aside?
 Your radiance which adds to Heaven's lustre,
 Eclipsing ours, you'd hazard for a cluster
 Of beasts and crude monstrosities instead:
 A griffon's razor-claws, a dragon's head?
 These horrors you'd prefer to put on show?
 That Heaven's stars should see you brought so low!
 For oath betrayed, all power and glory gone!
 May God forbid, whose face I gaze upon
 In light perpetual, as we Blessed Seven,
 Trembling, wait upon the Throne of Heaven -
 Before that Majesty that gilds our brows
 And every living thing with life endows!
 Lord Deputy, I pray you, do not spurn
 My plea. My aim is pure and my concern
 Heartfelt! Put off your armour, doff your crest,
 Fling down your shield and war-axe lay to rest!
 No longer strive! Surrender, I implore!
 Lower your standard, fold your wings before
 The Godhead's glittering omnipotence,
 Lest from this pinnacle He cast you hence,
 And grind you all to powder for your pains,
 So that no trace of Angelkind remains:
 No root nor branch, no memory of life -
 Not even one of misery and strife -
 Of death, despair, remorse, eternal shame
 And gnashing teeth - unworthy of life's name!
 Here, seize this olive-branch! Capitulate!
 Accept God's mercy now - else it's too late!

LUCIFER:

Hold, Raphael! Threats and rage I don't deserve.
 Both God and Lucifer, my heroes serve!
 This flag they raised, by oath to Heaven bound!
 Say what they like up there, I stand my ground
 Under God's aegis, fighting to protect
 The rights of Angels, promised God's respect
 Before Man even saw the light of day,

Or sun on Adam's garden cast its ray!
 No Angel's neck shall to Man's yoke succumb,
 Nor Adam's throne be propped by Angeldom,
 Nor free-born Angel toil as Adam's slave -
 That's if we're not assigned a common grave,
 Our sceptres, God-given crowns and brave display
 All sepulchred for ever and a day!
 Befall what may, I honour Holy Right -
 Driven, by utmost need alone, to fight -
 And only with reluctance overcome
 By thousand-tongued complaints from Angeldom!
 Go, tell the Father under whom I stand,
 That I'm still loyal to Flag and Fatherland!

RAPHAEL :

Think you with flowery phrases to disguise
 Your true intent from God's all-seeing eyes?
 His piercing light all darkness penetrates.
 It's lust for power inordinate inflates
 A womb in labour with a monstrous child!
 Where can I hide in terror? Thoughts run wild:
 O Morning-Star mistaken! Swift, retreat!
 You cannot lull the Godhead by deceit!

LUCIFER :

What lust for power? Where did my duty fail?

RAPHAEL :

Your inmost heart would tell a different tale:
 "I'll scale the Heavens' topmost peak! I'll rise
 Above the clouds, bestride God's star-filled skies,
 Like God Himself! No living creature known
 But will not owe his fiefdom to my Throne!
 All majesties, all crowns and sceptres golden
 To my High Kingship equally beholden!"
 Cover your face, kneel down and fold your wings,
 Pay homage to the Lord and King of Kings!

LUCIFER :

How so? Do I not represent the Lord?

RAPHAEL :

You do. To you, the Almighty did accord
 Specific power to function in His Name -

LUCIFER :

But only till Prince Adam, to our shame,
 Was set above all Angels, for it's planned
 That Man shall take his place at God's right hand!

RAPHAEL :

If God with lesser beings shares His might -
 To crown Man King of Angels deems it right -
 And orders that this Man be consecrated

Above all Rulers who to rule are fated,
Then - with good grace - accept the plan God's laid!

LUCIFER: That plan's the stone on which I whet my blade!

RAPHAEL: You sharpen it in peril of your neck!
Think what you're doing! Heaven will no flock
Admit of envy, arrogance or hate -
Such gross dishonour will obliterate!
Deceit won't help. It's not worthwhile to try
To hide misdeeds from that all-seeing Eye.
O Lucifer, how is your glory fled?

LUCIFER: For Adam and his offspring, long since shed!
Let me no more be called the foremost heir,
The eldest son -

RAPHAEL: Lord Lucifer, beware!
Conform to the Almighty's will abiding!
Let me the bearer be of this glad tiding,
Which those above all yearn to hear from me!
Most humbly, I entreat your majesty:
For love of God, don't spur this rebel herd -
As round a pivot - moving at your word!
Would you, opposing Heaven's will sublime,
This sacred air of peace - for the first time -
Disrupt with thousands armed, here on parade,
With trump and drum, the flag of war displayed -
To turn on God, most mighty Adversary?

LUCIFER: He turned on us. Had Adam's progeny
Been granted status equal to our own -
That, we could bear. But now the sparks have flown,
From this dispute in Heaven, far and wide.
Be silent, Angeldom! Swallow your pride!
Yield all that's yours to Adam and his like!
Deny them - and at God Himself you strike!
How could God bear so to humiliate
Creatures He made to rule the Heavenly State?
Those, who to reign are chosen and anointed,
Cannot revere a lesser being appointed -
Glory and power resign to an opponent;
Rather they curse the day of their enthronement,
Would sooner far have never been selected,
Remaining shadows - lifeless, grey, neglected:
Better be nothing, any day, than relegated!

RAPHAEL: Authority's not owned; it's delegated!

LUCIFER: Sooner not have it, if it's just on loan!

RAPHAEL: Be mindful of your duty to the Throne.
The post of Deputy, your wisdom gained -
That Heaven's law and peace might be maintained!
And now, you take up arms against the Lord -
A traitor captaining a rebel horde?

LUCIFER: We armed in self-defence and direst need:
Who'd wish against the Godhead to proceed?
The facts speak clearly, were no spear in sight:
We will be free and victory is our right!

RAPHAEL: No victory's sweet when, in the self-same State,
Armed troops their kith and kin must extirpate.
Most grievous when the combatants are brothers
And victory for some's defeat for others!
For all our sakes, to spare the Godhead's vengeance -
Lord Deputy, disperse your troops and engines!
By earnest pleading let your heart be melted!
I hear the dreadful sound of chains being smelted,
To drag you, shackled in defeat, across the skies
In triumph. If I can trust my ears and eyes,
Michael's close by, with many a battalion:
High time, my Lord, to end this mad rebellion!

LUCIFER: No good being sorry now . . . It is too late!
No hope of peace . . .

RAPHAEL: There is! I'll mediate;
I warrant you that mercy shall be found.

LUCIFER: To see my Star disgraced, in darkness drowned,
Proud enemies usurp my Throne and rule . . .

RAPHAEL: Lord Lucifer! I see the sulphur-pool,
With throat agape in grisly expectation!
Shall you, most handsome being in God's Creation,
Be cast as prey, that greedy maw to stuff -
The fire that can't be quenched or fed enough?
May God forbid! I beg of you to cease!
Accept this olive-branch! Receive God's peace!

LUCIFER: So wretchedly, did creature ever veer
Between faint hope and overwhelming fear?

If victory's doubtful, is defeat in store
 For him who with the Godhead hazards war?
 Who, for the first time ever, takes a stand
 Against God's Holy Will and high command,
 Leads insurrection 'gainst the Godhead's Throne
 To change the laws of Heaven for his own -
 Bearing the curse of base ingratitude,
 Spurning the love, grace and beatitude
 Of bounteous Father, source of all that we've
 Been blest with in the past, or shall receive?
 My steps have strayed too far from duty's path!
 I have abjured my Maker, scorned His wrath!
 How can my blasphemous arrogance be concealed?
 There's no way back! I've climbed too high to yield!
 What shall I do? How act in my despair?
 Time brooks no pause. Had I a minute spare,
 That were not time enough - if time at all -
 The instant twixt Salvation and the Fall!
 Too late! No cure for blemish so profound!
 All hope is lost. I hear God's trumpet sound!

Apollion rushes in to join Lucifer and Raphael.

APOLLION: Lord Deputy, to arms! No indecision!
 God's General, with many a division
 Approaches, summoning you to take the field!
 It's time to demonstrate the power you wield.
 Dispose your forces, march! The battle's won!

LUCIFER: You speak too soon; the battle's not begun!
Let none of conflict or of war make light!

APOLLION: I saw Archangel Michael, pale with fright -
 His followers cast many a backward glance!
 Doubt not, we'll slaughter them as they advance!
 Here are your Colonels, with the standard, ready -

LUCIFER: Take up your posts and hold your units steady!
 Let bugles blow and trumpets lustily!

APOLLION: We wait your word -

LUCIFER: I give it . . . Follow me!

Raphael alone.

RAPHAEL: Alas, he was already undecided!

Despair now drives him. Angeldom misguided
 He has condemned to woe in what abyss!
 No more shall he appear in heavenly bliss,
 Unless God's pity otherwise ordains.
 You Heavenly choirs, come, raise your prayerful
 strains!
 Entreaties might yet hold both sides apart:
 An ardent prayer can melt the stoniest heart!

CHORUS OF
ANGELS:

O Father, who no incense-bowl,
 No gold, no paean would extol
 More highly than serene submission
 By humble creatures who accept
 The justice of Divine precept -
 And to Your Will their hearts condition -
 Behold, Creator of the Universe,
 Your wish opposed by Lucifer's
 Defiance of Your dispensation:
 How, chariot-born, with trump and drum,
 By blind ambition overcome,
 He challenges Your proclamation.
 Forgive this blasphemous mistake
 And, for so many thousands' sake,
 Prevent the imminent destruction
 Of those who, grievously misled,
 Inspired by their rebellious head,
 Have taken arms at his instruction!

RAPHAEL: With mercy, O good Lord, look down
 On Lucifer, who would the crown
 Of Crowns upon his brow see resting,
 Beside You sit and over all
 In Heaven preside. But now, who shall
 Absolve him from such sinful questing?

CHORUS: Let not that beauteous soul, surpassed
 By none whereon Your eye was cast,
 From Paradise be driven!
 His misdeeds let him expiate,
 Confirmed in Archangelic state -
 His sin by God forgiven!

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

Raphael and Uriel.

RAPHAEL: The Heavens all, from ground to topmost sphere,
Are overjoyed at Michael's chanticleer
And bravely fluttering flag. The battle's won!
Each glittering shield reflects the rising sun,
With rays betokening triumphant day.
Here's Uriel himself, fresh from the fray,
Wielding his fiery sword, whose double blade -
Sharpened by Heaven's wrath and vengeance - made
Short work of chainmail, shield and stoutest helm
And, slicing left and right, did overwhelm
All those who dared lock horns with Heaven's might!
Stern Uriel, empowered by celestial right,
With single blow, deservedly to fell
All who against the eternal Law rebel -
Blest be your weapons, blessed be those arms
Safeguarding Angeldom from all alarms
And earning God's most bounteous recompense!
Relate the battle, tell us the events
Of Heaven's first campaign. We long to hear!

URIEL:
Your wish inspires me to attempt a clear
Account of that horrendous fratricide!
Blessed are they who fight, with God allied!
Archangel Michael, our Commander, knew
By word of heavenly messenger who flew
From above, more speedily than shooting star,
That a revolt was planned by Lucifer,
Leading a mob who, flouting God's decree,
To Morning-Star had sworn fidelity.
So Michael, at loyal Gabriel's behest,
Donned coat of mail, his officers addressed,
Colonels, Commanders, Cornets briefed for action -
In God's great Name, to purge the rebel faction
From heavens blue and pure celestial light,
Drowning the upstart scum in darkest night
Before they had a chance to realize
Their plan to capture Heaven by surprise.
Accordingly, God's Hosts, in utmost haste,

Like arrows swift, to action stations raced.
Unnumbered hordes of troops in armour gleaming,
Were ranged in three enormous wings, so seeming
A force triangular that met the eye -
Like triple-pointed star athwart the sky,
Smooth as a mirror or some polished stone -
Of strength conceivable to God alone!
Michael, about whom lightning flashes dart,
Raises God's banner, at the army's heart:
To foster courage and success ensure,
That heart must be sustained and rest secure!

RAPHAEL: What of the upstart host that planned to storm us?

URIEL: Why, they advanced with confidence enormous:
Obedience, honour, loyalty cast aside,
Hating both God and us, and flushed with pride!
Their force grew swiftly, crescent shape assuming,
With two sharp horns in our direction looming -
As does fierce Taurus, in the sky by night,
Threaten all heavenly beasts that heave in sight,
With starry horns . . . To Beelzebub's direction -
That he might clip our wings - the righthand section
Was entrusted . . . Belial led the other -
In armour fit to dazzle one another!
God's Lord Lieutenant - now the chief dissenter -
Field Marshal Lucifer, controlled the centre -
Their army's focal point in his design.
His standard proud - for daylight seemed to shine
From Morning-Star - Apollion held high,
Riding behind him, catching every eye,
Resplendent in his chariot of war.

RAPHAEL: How dared that great Archangel covet more?
Had I but timely forced him to refrain!
But tell me, nonetheless, of the campaign:
How did the Prince command his rebel rout?

URIEL: Green-clad retainers ringed him all about
While he, implacable with rage and spite,
His golden breast-plate seeming to ignite
Against a purple vest, his chariot mounted,
With wheels of gold, inlaid with gems uncounted.
Leo and Draco fierce, primed for attack.
Each lit by glittering stars upon its back -

Harnessed between the shafts with pearly thongs,
Scented the prey. Each for destruction longs . . .
His battle-axe in hand, round buckler raised -
Embossed on which, the Day-Star's emblem blazed -
Proud Lucifer rode forth to take his chance.

RAPHAEL:

O Lucifer, you'll rue your arrogance!
You Phoenix, glorified by God on high,
How - mid the Heavenly Host you caught the eye:
Noble of bearing, head and helm, with armour-plate
So neatly wrought, it might have been innate!
O sovereign Angel, strive no more! Draw back!

URIEL:

There stood the opposing legions, poised for attack;
All aerial strongpoints held, all warriors tied
By orders from the chiefs on either side.
As frenzied drums and clarions commingle,
Making all weapons and their bearers tingle -
The mounting clamour reached the Source of Light,
Whereat a bellying cloud of bolts in flight
Bursts and a myriad fiery shafts descend -
A storm that Heaven sweeps from end to end,
Shattering palaces . . . Spheres and Stars, perplexed,
Pause in their endless round and falter, vexed,
Swooning on duty, lost for where to go -
Whether to East or West? Above? Below?
No sight nor sound, but lightning flash and thunder!
Nothing is safe. The storm tears all asunder.
The troops, reacting to the Godhead's dudgeon,
Clash hand to hand, with halberd, pike and bludgeon.
They slice and stab with sabre, spear and dirk!
Who's bent on slaughter, gaily sets to work -
Disfiguring, destroying, mutilating!
No longer brothers, fellow-citizens, but hating
Each other. Head-dress of mother-of-pearl,
Stray braids of hair fly wild! Wing-feathers swirl
And smouldering flicker, singed by lightning blast -
Gold, diamonds, turquoise, in confusion cast -
All manner of gems and pearls to grace the hair,
Smashed arrows, severed wings, cluttered the air,
When, all at once, a gruesome war-cry rose
From out the ranks of Heaven's green-clad foes.
The hard-pressed rebel host had fallen back,
But Lucifer three times renewed the attack,

Putting fresh heart into his battered force -
Which, like a tide by cliffs refused its course
Time and again, at last could rise no more.

RAPHAEL:

No easy task to beat despair in war!

URIEL:

Bold Michael sounds his trumpet "Praise the Lord!"
His regiments, encouraged and restored
By the watchword, join in swift ascent,
Seizing fair winds their foes to circumvent.
They, too, make swift to climb - but wearily -
And, outmanoeuvred, fall upon the lee:
As when a hungry falcon heavenward rises
Before the hapless heron realizes,
Which, trembling with fright, in wood or meadow,
When it at last perceives the threatening shadow,
Fearing those talons, screaming, quits the nest,
With beak upraised to stab the falcon's breast,
As earthward it plunges to destroy its prey.

RAPHAEL:

Woe unto Lucifer! For him, no way!
Here, in the open plain, no gate . . . no wall!
That fearsome tempest must engulf them all -
The rebels drown in bottomless abyss!

URIEL:

The prospect that confronted us was bliss!
Half-moon below, three-pointed star above:
Our units joining up, or on the move,
As signalled by their captains - posts defined,
Defences firm, like walls of steel aligned.
It seemed some airy balance held the ring,
With gun, siege-engine, catapult and sling,
Safely suspended, like some cloud imagined
Wherein the sun's rays staged a pretty pageant
Of rainbows pied, with colours ever-changing.
Michael, the heavenly Eagle, upward ranging,
Surveyed God's enemy in flight below
And bravely clapped his wings to let him know.
He grudged the gesture not, before attack,
Though yearning to bestride that feathered back
And pluck that once-proud plumage in disgrace!
Curved beak and claw must hurtle down through space
And seize the prey before it's lost to sight!
So down we poured, like water from great height,
Much like an inland lake in vast cascade,

Foaming through rocks, so great the noise we made,
As would affright dumb beasts in valleys deep,
Where torrents gush and mighty boulders leap
And trees, uprooted, shatter, smash and twist -
What force can water, wood and stone resist?
Thus did our vanguard fierce, the navel gore
Of their half-moon, and flaming sulphur pour,
While bombards rained upon them without rest.
Their screaming filled the skies. Robbed of all zest,
The rebel nerve at last began to wane.
The crescent-bow was cracking with the strain -
Both horns already drawn so tightly back,
The middle could not hold, unless let slack,
And must collapse were not some respite given.
Lucifer, boldly backwards and forwards driven,
Answered all calls, risking his neck, indeed,
To cheer the fainthearts in their hour of need -
For all to see, athwart his chariot:
No blow, no bolt too sharp for him to parry it,
Saving the heads of his ferocious team -
The raging Lion, Dragon blue which seem
To fly at their Lord's command in wild pursuits:
One roars, bites, tears; the other, poison shoots
With its forked tongue, infecting as it goes,
And fouls the air with smoke, puffed from its nose!

RAPHAEL:

The flood must seize him, Lucifer must drown!

URIEL:

He plied his axe, God's standard to strike down -
In vain! God's Name shone forth the fairest yet.
Still brighter rays the rebel's glances met,
Which happy omen doubtless fuelled his spite.
Swinging his axe, he darted left and right,
A hail of bolts deflecting with his shield,
Till, suddenly, Prince Michael stood revealed,
In gleaming breast-plate, god-like, 'gainst the sun!
"Dismount, O Lucifer, for God has won!
Lay down your arms and standard! Bend the knee!
Dismiss these impious mobs of soldiery!
Or - look to your head!" So Michael cried on high.
The Arch-foe, at God's Name, stung to reply,
More stubbornly than ever did attack.
Wielding his battle-axe, he made to hack
The diamond shield and God's device to shear.

But he who taunts his God must vengeance fear!
The war-axe struck the General's shield and flew
To bits. Right hand outstretched, Prince Michael threw
A lightning-bolt, augmented by God's grace,
Which seared the Rebel's helmet, head and face
And sent him reeling backwards, burned and blinded,
To tumble from his chariot which, upended,
With Master, Lion and Dragon sank from sight -
Whereat, the Day-Star's banner doused its light . . .
Apollion scarce felt my flaming sword,
Than he let go the flag, while thousands poured
In fiery retinue, after their Lord infernal,
To save the standard from disgrace eternal.
Here, Beelzebub fought on; there - Belial -
Their strength, however, vanished with the fall
Of Lucifer. The crescent's bow snapped sheer!
Yet did Apollion once more appear
With every monster Heaven's globe contains:
Orion, set on beating out our brains,
Brandished his club and bellowed many a threat -
But neither giant nor cudgel caused us fret!
The Great and Little Bears on tip-toe sway,
Hoping to kill us in their clumsy way,
While fifty-throated Hydra poison spews.
I can foresee a gallery of martial views,
Culled from this battle and our victories!

RAPHAEL:

Praise ye the Lord! Give thanks upon your knees!
Alas, for Lucifer and trust misplaced!
How does he look now, finally disgraced:
Whither that glory, once surpassing bright?

URIEL:

As when clear day succumbs to darkest night,
Sun having set, so gold forgets to shine -
Thus did his beauty, as he fell, decline.
A hateful transformation came about:
That noble visage grew a monstrous snout,
With fangs that iron bars might well have gnawed.
His hands and feet were talons multi-clawed;
Once pristine skin, a hide of scaly black,
While dragon-wings sprang from his bristly back!
Lucifer, honoured once by all his kind
Completely changed and seven beasts combined,
In one foul shape that mirrored all their traits:

The lion's Pride, the Glutton's swinish ways,
 The donkey's Sloth, rhinoceros mad with Ire,
 The ape consumed with Lust and lewd desire -
 Both fore and aft, indecent and obscene -
 The dragon Envious; the wolf, surpassing Mean.
 What once was fair's now horrid and defiled,
 To be by Angels, God and Man - reviled!
 Spying himself, the Monster sought to cloak
 His gruesome countenance in steam and smoke!

RAPHAEL: Thus God rebukes those who'd usurp His Seat!
 What of Apollion?

URIEL:

Seeing the tide retreat
 With Lucifer's fall, he and the others fled.
 Heaven's artillery, firing from overhead.
 With crashing thunder, lightning flickering white,
 Contrived to speed the Monsters in their flight
 And revelled at their rout. Whirlwind and squalling
 Rain beat on their backs! What caterwauling!
 How brisk the flood-tide ran! Our forces blest
 By God, randomly striking, onwards pressed,
 While they, forlorn, attempted to escape.
 What desolation broke as they changed shape -
 Body and soul! We heard their barks and roars,
 The howls and yelps of creatures on all fours
 And, as they fled, Hell-bent, what dire grimaces
 Disfigured all those once angelic faces!
 But here comes Michael, with the spoils of war -
 An Angel-Chorus marching on before,
 Strewing the victor's laurels, chanting praise,
 While cymbals, shawm and drum their voices raise!

Enter Angel Chorus, Michael.

CHORUS:

On him all blessings shower,
 Who fought the godless power -
 And his might, and his right, and his standard
 Laid low and forced to cower!
 Who reached for God's High Throne
 Has now been overthrown -
 With his might, into night, he's been banished.
 Now shines God's Name alone!
 Fierce burned the rebel blaze

ACT FIVE

But Michael, whom we praise,
 Every flame, in God's Name, did extinguish.
 All upstarts he dismays!
 God's Flag he's bravely borne;
 With laurels him adorn!
 Now shall peace never cease, nor our State
 By enmity be torn!
 To God all praise we bring,
 Unconquerable King!
 Glory be unto Thee, Lord of All -
 Who's given us cause to sing!

MICHAEL:

Thanks be to God for changes here in Heaven:
 The Arch-Fiend from among us has been driven,
 Leaving his banner, Day-Star, helm and shield
 As trophies which before you stand revealed,
 Mid canticles of praise, triumphant cries,
 Bugle and trumpet-blast to symbolize
 How rebellion and ambition did combine
 To challenge God, the steadfast Source Divine,
 Father, Creator of all things that be,
 Who gave to each, nature and quiddity.
 No more we'll see God's shining Majesty
 Veiled by the fumes of thankless travesty!
 They're tumbling now, head over heels through space -
 Into the nether depths, far from this place -
 Blinded and fog-bound, fearlessly deformed -
 As they deserve, God's Heaven having stormed!

CHORUS:

So perish all who dare usurp God's Throne
 And Man - in God's own image made - disown!

Enter Gabriel.

GABRIEL:

(Deeply distressed.)
 Alas, alas! We've been played false by fate!
 Our triumph's vain! No cause to celebrate!
 Boast not of weapons or of standards won -

MICHAEL:

What's this I hear?

GABRIEL:

Adam has sinned! God's Son!
 The Founding Father of the human race -
 Already fallen - and in deep disgrace!
 Adam's been conquered!

MICHAEL:

Surely, it can't be so!
I'm overcome! Tell me - I must know -
Did the accursed Rebel Earth attack?

GABRIEL:

The battle lost, he made to rouse his pack:
Chiefs first, appalled at sight of one another!
The light of God's all-seeing gaze to smother,
They sought a hollow cloud, a murderer's cave
Of mist to huddle in, dull-eyed and grave . . .
Infernal counsellors to left and right,
Lucifer then held forth, consumed with spite:
"You Powers, who in our righteous cause sustained
Grave injury, it's time revenge we gained
For all we've suffered! Heaven, let's persecute
With hate implacable and wiles astute . . .
God's chosen creature and the human clan
We'll smother in the crib, before they can
Grow strong enough their birthright to enjoy:
My aim is - Adam and his offspring to destroy!
By tempting Man, God's first command to flout,
A stain so deep that nought can wash it out,
I'll plant in Adam and his progeny,
So poisoning them, that they will never be
Admitted in our stead to Heaven's court -
Though just a few might, in the last resort,
To seize the Crown and State they covet, rise
Through travail, pain and death in varied guise.
Undreamt of ills shall spread in Adam's wake
Throughout the whole wide world! Nature shall quake,
Thrown out of balance, harmony destroyed,
Revert towards the Chaos of the Void!
I see Man, in God's image first created,
Forfeit that likeness and, alienated,
His will, imagination, wits grown dim -
Bereft of that inborn light God gave to him -
Loath, in his mother's pangs, to draw first breath,
Knowing he can't escape the jaws of death!
Ever more bold, I'll spread my rule of fear . . .
Henceforth, my sons, idols we shall revere,
From temple-altars in the sky extolled,
With offerings of livestock, incense, gold -
And humans so numerous, none could keep the score -
Mankind entire, condemned for evermore,

God's Name with deeds atrocious to besmear . . .
His victory and my Crown shall cost God dear!"

MICHAEL:

Accursed wretch! The Lord you still defy?
We'll bring you to your senses by and by!

GABRIEL:

Thus Lucifer spoke and sent Count Belial,
Without delay, to engineer Man's Fall!
Evil itself he donned, the guise of snake,
Sublest of beasts. With honeyed words to make
The lure appeal to innocent Mankind,
His coils about the Tree of Knowledge twined.
"Did God on pain of death, free will deny?
Forbid you this - the sweetest fruit - to try?
No, surely, Eve - fair dove - you are confused!
I beg you, look upon this Apple, all suffused
With lustrous sheen of crimson and of gold.
A feast awaits you! Daughter, come, be bold!
No venom lurks in this immortal Tree . . .
Exquisite fruit! Taste it! I guarantee
Knowledge and Light you'll share. You shrink from
sin?
Take it, if Glory and Wisdom you would win
To equal God's omniscient Majesty!
He may resent it - but that's how you'll see
That all things differ - nature, type and form."
At this, the young bride's heart began to warm
And she for this most precious fruit to yearn.
Her eye was charmed, then lips and mouth in turn
Her trembling hand, commanded by desire,
Did pluck and eat, with Adam: trespass dire
For all their offspring! Both at once enlightened,
Perceived their nakedness, then, shocked and
frightened,
With fig-leaves clothed the shame of that first Sin.
They sought a shady wood to shelter in,
Striving in vain to cheat the All-seeing Eye.
The heavens frown . . . a rainbow spans the sky,
Which God's great wrath betokens and portends.
Angels bewail their fate, but no amends,
No wringing of hands, no pleas can save the pair.
The thunder crashes, lightning flashes flare!
They moan in terror, racked by misery;
They flee their shadows, but they cannot flee

The worm of guilt that gnaws through heart and head,
As, stumbling and staggering, they plunge ahead,
Both pale as death and blinded by their tears,
They see no light, no refuge from their fears,
Who lately walked in pride, with blameless poise,
Whom now a rustling leaf, the slightest noise,
Affrights. When, suddenly, a mighty cloud swoops low,
Splits open to emit a gleam - a glow -
Whence God appears and speaks with thunderous
sound
That strikes the hapless couple to the ground.

CHORUS/
MICHAEL:

Better had Man not seen the light of day,
Than for a bite of apple lose his way!

GABRIEL:

"O Adam," thunders God, "What means this flight?"
"Lord, I was naked, so I fled your sight!"
"Who told you nakedness was shameful?" God demands,
"You plucked forbidden fruit with sinful hands!"
"Alas, the Woman tempted me to eat!"
Said Eve: "The serpent lured me by deceit!"
Thus did they each attempt to shift the blame.

CHORUS/
MICHAEL:

What sentence did God pass upon their shame?

GABRIEL:

Woman, who misled Man, by God's decree,
Shall suffer birth-pangs and Man's subject be;
While Man must toil and moil, must sweat and slave.
The earth he tills - and, in the end, his grave -
Thistle and thorn shall grow; the snake, meanwhile,
For having so misused its fork-tongued guile,
Shall on its belly creep and live on dust!
But, to give wretched Man firm grounds for trust,
God promised that, in future there should spring
From Woman's blood and Woman's seed, a King -
A Saviour, who should crush the Serpent's head
In enmity, through centuries unshed.
Although the snake the Saviour's heel may bite,
Yet shall He be victorious in the fight . . .
I've come at God's behest to tell you all
And bid you act, worse mischief to forestall!

MICHAEL : Shield-bearer Uriel, watchman for the Lord,

Scourge of the reckless, grip your fiery sword,
Fly down to Eden, cast the sinners out,
Who blindly dared, God's first command to flout!
Upon their Paradise profaned, mount guard;
By force, ensure the banished pair are barred
From all approach to that Eternal Tree,
The fruit of which grants immortality.
I post you sentry over Tree and Gate!
Let Adam work outside, early and late,
Ploughing the fields and clay of which he's made.
Ozias, in whose fist the Godhead laid
That heavy diamond hammer, sculpted fair -
Go forth, with ruby-chains and sharp-toothed snare,
And overcome those hellish beasts of prey -
The Lion and Dragon who, amid the fray,
Raged at our banners! Sweep them from the plains!
Bind the foul beasts, both neck and claw, with chains!
The key to the Pit of Hell, its caverns deep,
You, Azarias, I will trust to keep!
Consign to the Abyss all who resist our might!
Maceda, take this torch and set alight
The lake of sulphur, deep within the Earth!
Torment the Fiend, who gave all Evil birth,
With ever-lasting fire and freezing cold,
Woe, horrors, hunger, thirst, distress untold,
Hopeless despair and conscience-pangs allied
With isolation, curse of sinful pride,
From God's bright presence hid, in smoke and scum:
Sentence is passed on rebel Angeldom,
Till, pacifying God, the promised Christ,
With love redeems what Adam sacrificed!

CHORUS/
GABRIEL:

Saviour, whose foot the Serpent's head shall cleave
And fallen Man from Adam's Sin retrieve,
Who, to Eve's children - for so long denied -
The Gates of Paradise shall open wide -
The centuries we'll count, year, day and hour -
Until, by virtue of Your grace and power -
Nature revived, bodies and souls made well,
Man mounts the Throne from which the Angels fell!

THE END

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