

Fallen Faith: Satan as Allegory in Milton's *Paradise Lost*

Margaret Johnson

Abstract

In Paradise Lost, Satan falls from the heavenly spheres, plunging through nightmarish limbo for nine days, and landing in the depths of Hell. Yet, prior to his descent into Hell, Satan belonged in Heaven, an archangel named Lucifer, a rational and perfect being created by God. John Milton depicts him as a powerful angelic being; as Archangel Raphael tells Adam, Lucifer is "of the first, / If not the first Arch-Angel, great in Power, / In favor and preeminence" (I.659-660). Lucifer dwells in heavenly paradise, where angels dance and sing, drink "rubied Nectar" and eat "Angels' Food" (V.633), and live on verdant lands covered with flowers and "delicious Vines, the growth of Heav'n" (V.635). So why would this favored angel choose to deny his Creator?

In Raphael's elucidation to Adam about Satan's fall, we learn that God favors his mighty Archangel Lucifer but not as much as His begotten Son, whom God anoints Messiah. God decrees that all heavenly beings must bow before His Son "and shall confess him Lord" (V.607-8). Milton renders Lucifer as envious, with a hardened heart, one who refuses to bow before the Son, and by extension, God, his Creator. By denying God, Lucifer seals his doom and is cast from Heaven, "Ordain'd without redemption, without end" (V.615). While it may appear that the Satan of Paradise Lost is destined to be banished from Heaven—to be used by God as a tool, if you will, to effect the salvation of the world in Christ—another conception of Satan's role exists. Milton uses the Satan character to argue against the prevailing Calvinist doctrine of his time—double predestination—and to espouse the less damning Arminian model of predestination, thus making Satan an allegory for a fallen faith in God.

*That with reiterated crimes he might
Heap on himself damnation, while he sought
Evil to others, and enrag'd might see
How all his malice serv'd but to bring forth
Infinite goodness, grace and mercy shown
On Man by him seduc't, but on himself
Treble confusion, wrath and vengeance pour'd.*
(*Paradise Lost* I.214-220)

In *Paradise Lost*, Satan falls from the heavenly spheres, plunging through nightmarish limbo for nine days, and landing in the depths of Hell, where

[. . .] now the thought
Both of lost happiness and lasting pain
Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes
That witness'd huge affliction and dismay
Mixt with obdurate pride and steadfast hate. (I.54-58)

Yet, prior to his descent into Hell, Satan belonged in Heaven, an archangel named Lucifer, a rational and perfect being created by God. John Milton depicts him as a powerful angelic being; as Archangel Raphael tells Adam, Lucifer is “of the first, / If not the first Arch-Angel, great in Power, / In favor and preeminence” (I.659-660). Lucifer dwells in heavenly paradise, where angels dance and sing, drink “rubied Nectar” and eat “Angels’ Food” (V.633), and live on verdant lands covered with flowers and “delicious Vines, the growth of Heav’n” (V.635). So why would this favored angel choose to deny his Creator and suffer in Hell for eternity?

Some readers of *Paradise Lost* believe Satan’s purpose, his destiny if you will, is to be banished from Heaven in order to be used by God as a tool to effect the salvation of the world in Christ, but another conception of Satan’s role exists. In Raphael’s elucidation to Adam about Satan’s fall, we learn that God favors his mighty Archangel Lucifer, but not as much as His begotten Son, whom God anoints Messiah. God decrees that all heavenly beings must bow before His Son “and shall confess him Lord” (V.607-8). Milton renders Lucifer as envious, with a hardened heart, one who refuses to bow before the Son, and by extension, God, his Creator. By denying God, Lucifer seals his doom and is cast from Heaven, “Ordain’d without redemption, without end” (V.615). So in his epic poem, Milton uses the Satan character to argue against the prevailing Calvinist doctrine of his time—double predestination—and to espouse the less damning Arminian model of predestination, thus making Satan an allegory for a fallen faith in God.

Puritan Milton lived in a highly religious time, but one fraught with deep divisions within Protestantism, for he was born less than 100 years after Martin Luther challenged the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church; denied the Papacy; and circulated his famous treatises that emphasized faith and grace over works. In those turbulent years of the Reformation, numerous ecclesiastical men struggled to distinguish elements of Protestant

belief to form a “proper” doctrine. Luther identified one aspect of the Christian faith—predestination—that would later become not only a doctrinal vexation in seventeenth-century England but a political one as well.

Predestination generally can be defined as “the divine decree according to which certain persons are infallibly guided to eternal salvation” (“Predestination”). Predestination presupposes that God’s will alone determines one’s salvation. St. Augustine asserted that man’s mind could not comprehend God’s divinity, nor could he fully understand how or why God chose those for salvation; therefore, man must trust in the mystery of predestination and have confidence that God’s choice, “nevertheless, is made in perfect justice.” Luther agreed with St. Augustine’s tenet but added the dictum of the total depravity of man, in essence decreeing that God predestined some for salvation and some for damnation. This became known as double predestination (“Predestination”). Other churchly men formulated their own reformed theologies of predestination, among them Ulrich Zwingli and John Calvin. But it was Calvin’s theology that “proved for several generations the driving force of the Reformation in parts of Germany, France, Hungary, the Netherlands, England and Scotland” (“Reformation”).

England embraced Calvinism, which is also known as Reformed theology, and its doctrine of double predestination. Historian Peter White asserts that Calvinism became the “theological cement’ which held the Elizabethan and Jacobean church together” (1). Yet schisms in doctrine occurred within Calvinism itself, creating supralapsarian and sublapsarian believers. Supralapsarians believed that “God decreed the election and non-election of individual men *before* the Fall of Adam” (“Supralapsarian”). Sublapsarian believers stated that God’s decree came *after* the Fall of Adam (“Sublapsarian”). Milton, as we shall see, believed in the supralapsarian concept of predestination. And the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries saw even more dramatic doctrinal controversies centering on Reformed theology’s doctrine of double predestination, resulting in nothing less than political shifts in both the English monarchy and parliament.

During this time, the writings of Dutch Reformed theologian Jacobus Arminius gave rise to what has become known as Arminianism. According to the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, Arminius began to question the theological interpretations of Calvin, especially those about double predestination; Arminius’ ideas became doctrine only after his death. Put simply, Arminians renounced the “deterministic logic of Calvinism,” instead decreeing “that the Divine sovereignty was compatible with a real human free will.” And as can be seen throughout *Paradise Lost*, Milton fully embraces this Arminian view of free will—man chooses whether to sin or not. As to predestination, Arminian believers proclaimed that Christ died for all, not just the elect, and that no person was predestined to damnation; Milton also rejected the Calvinist concept of some people being predestined to Hell while others were chosen for Heaven. Followers of Arminian doctrine further contended that both the supralapsarian and sublapsarian notions of predestination were not biblically based (“Arminianism”). Here, Milton parted ways with Arminianism because, as will be detailed later, he believed in the supralapsarian concept of predestination

insofar as God's edict occurred prior to the Fall. To contemporary thinkers, Arminianism represents a kinder, gentler Protestantism, but to Calvinists living in early seventeenth-century England, Arminianism was heresy.

Despite its status as heresy, however, Arminianism continued to grow in popularity in England, even within Oxford and Cambridge and the bishopric, and it became increasingly politicized as well. Religious historian Dewey D. Wallace Jr. reports that near the end of his reign, King James I saw little difference between Calvinism and Puritanism and thought the believers of both sects challenged his divine right to rule (83). Clearly, a religious and political shift was beginning to take place. Campbell and Corns assert that while James I kept a balance between Calvinists and Arminians, his son, Charles I, "allowed and promoted the [. . .] Arminians in general, and William Laud in particular" (30). Laud, an Arminian believer, became Archbishop of Canterbury under Charles I and is considered to be the "architect of an 'Arminian' church renewal in theology, liturgy, and administration" (Wallace 84). However, Bishop Laud came under attack by those who believed he promoted Arminianism over Calvinism, especially concerning the doctrine of predestination. David Como asserts that in enforcing Charles' "royal edicts against discussion of predestination . . . [Laud did so] in an unbalanced manner, attacking Calvinists while apparently leaving their anti-Calvinist opponents untouched" (263). Arminians, seemingly under the protection of King Charles and Bishop Laud, considered the King's decrees to be "a proper and fair means of concluding the debate" about predestination. Yet those who believed in double predestination felt obligated to continue preaching what they considered to be the "central part of the gospel of grace" (Wallace 91), thus becoming dissenters within their own State Church, a situation that further increased religious and political tensions.

John Milton attended university at Cambridge during the Laud years, but despite the archbishop's enforcement of the king's decrees, Milton appears to have been "broadly aligned with Laud on major issues," at least theologically speaking (45). And as he aged, Milton's theology became less Calvinistic and increasingly Arminian, especially concerning predestination. This theological shift can be seen in his posthumously published *Christian Doctrine*, wherein Milton uses biblical proof-texts to support his clearly Arminian theology.

In the *Christian Doctrine* chapter entitled "Of Predestination," Milton states, "It has been the practice of the schools to use the word predestination, not only in the sense of election, but also of reprobation. This is not consistent with the caution necessary on so momentous a subject, since where it is mentioned in Scripture, election alone is uniformly intended." He goes on to cite Romans, I Corinthians, Ephesians, Acts, Timothy, and I Thessalonians to support his contention and then writes that "it does not follow by implication that there are others who are appointed to wrath." The entire chapter is an exercise in deductive reasoning regarding election and predestination over double predestination, as is clear in his definition of predestination: "The principal special decree of God relating to man is termed Predestination, whereby God in pity to mankind, through foreseeing that they would fall of their own accord, predestinated to eternal salvation before the foundation of the world those who should believe *and continue in the faith*" (emphasis added 916). In this

succinct definition, he espouses a supralapsarian belief, a doctrine considered unbiblical by Arminius, but Milton acknowledges mankind's free will, a hallmark of Arminianism. Obviously, Milton chooses to follow his very own theology in this definition. But what sets this passage apart is the phrase "and continue in the faith." Throughout his *Christian Doctrine*, Milton emphasizes that belief alone does not merit salvation, continuing to believe constitutes an essential component of saving grace, and falling from faith brings reprobation.

Milton includes a subsection in his discussion of predestination—"Those who should believe, and continue in the faith." In this subsection, he asserts that God's decree of election is immutable, and that "the mutability is entirely on the side of them who renounce their faith." In other words, God grants mankind a free will, and God will damn those who stop believing in Him, though they had faith prior to that time. He further explains that "the privilege [of salvation] belongs to all who heartily believe and continue in their belief. . . and that thus the general decree of election becomes personally applicable to each particular believer, and is ratified to all who remain steadfast in the faith" (919). Milton here implies that free will determines whether or not a person remains true to his/her faith in God. God predestines all to salvation; individuals choose to continue in their faith or fall from grace.

While predestination may not be the sole focus of *Paradise Lost*, it certainly plays a weighty part in the poem, especially concerning the character of Satan. For centuries, critics have plunged themselves into the rich and vast language of Milton's epic more fully to understand its characters and meaning. One would think tremendous scholarship would involve Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden, and to be fair, much has been written about these two. However, Milton's Satan appears to be the most controversial character of his poem and the locus of the dispute involves the doctrine of predestination. Did God predestine Satan to rebel in heaven so Adam and Eve would fall and God's Son could then redeem the world? Or did Satan choose to rebel, thus setting the stage for the first couple to sin, fall, and then be redeemed by the Son?

Those who focus on the theology of the poem tend to think of Satan in terms of duality, that is, God used Satan merely as a tool to realize his grand plan of salvation, or Satan is solely responsible for his own fall. Critics who study Satan from a literary viewpoint also tend to see the character in dual form. John Carey refers to these groups as "Satanist" (or "pro-Satanist") and "anti-Satanist" (161, 167). In his essay, "Milton's Satan," Carey discusses whether or not Satan is the hero of the poem. He states that the view of Satan-as-hero began with Dryden and continued throughout the eighteenth century, including the Romantics like "Blake, Byron, Shelley, and Hazlitt [who] championed Satan" (161). Andrew Escobedo asserts that "post-Renaissance interpretations of Milton's Satan" show the character as having "psychological depth and dramatic autonomy the romantics frequently interpreted as exemplary of the sublime will" (787). However, many critics believe the Satan character to be ill-conceived or an artistic failure, like "Johnson, who declared Satan's speeches 'big with absurdity'" and "Coleridge [who] identified him with Napoleonic

pride and sensual indulgence” (Carey 161). More current scholars, too, fall into these two specific camps: “anti-Satanists such as Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis, S. Musgrove, and Stanley Fish have been opposed by A. J. A. Waldock, E. E. Stoll, G. Rostrevor Hamilton, William Empson, and others” (161). So did Milton write Satan to be the hero, a type of sympathetic character, or did he mean for the character to be the epitome of pure evil?

Carey himself considers Satan an ambivalent character, one whose very ambivalence “is a precondition of the poem’s success—a major factor in the attention it has aroused” (161). This theory makes sense in that Milton’s Satan has been interpreted over the years in dual terms, as either hero or villain, sympathetic or hardhearted. Obviously, there can be no consensus about the nature of Satan, but perhaps Milton intended it this way. Maybe Milton wrote Satan to be approachable to readers, making him sympathetic enough for readers to self-identify with Satan’s turmoil and fallen nature while at the same time portraying Satan as self-deceived and willful, an author of his own damnation through his arrogance and free will. In this case, then, Satan becomes exemplar for Milton’s Arminian doctrine of predestination and allegory for fallen faith.

Book III of the poem shows most overtly Milton’s doctrine of predestination. In it, God watches as Satan flies from Hell to Earth. He shows the Son His new creation, Earth, and tells him of mankind’s fall and the subsequent need for divine justice. The Son offers himself as savior of the world, while Satan tricks the angel Uriel into giving him directions to Earth. The book contains two crucial passages about predestination and free will. The first occurs when God tells his Son about the fall of Adam and Eve:

So will fall
Hee and his faithless Progeny: whose fault?
Whose but his own? ingrate, he had of mee
All he could have; I made him just and right,
Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
Such I created all th’ Ethereal Powers

And Spirits, both them who stood and them who fail’d. (III.95-99)

Here, Milton clearly ascribes to the Arminian principle of free will, telling the Son that despite Adam’s “just and right” nature, he chose to disobey God of his own will and thus must fall. But in the next two lines, Milton shows that all his heavenly beings, too, were created “just and right . . . though free to fall,” which means Satan chose his path of self destruction.

The second passage in Book III related to predestination occurs at lines 173-202. Critic Maurice Kelley asserts that “perhaps no passage . . . is more important than Book III, 173-202, for in these lines Milton expounds his doctrine of predestination and its concordance with the mercy, grace, and wisdom of God” (75). Kelley compares this passage from the epic poem to Milton’s *Christian Doctrine* to conclude that the entire poem of *Paradise Lost* represents an Arminian, not Calvinist, view, thus exhibiting Milton’s theology of single, not double, predestination. Kelley also construes that this section represents Milton’s conception of free will as it relates to salvation and reprobation: “*Paradise Lost* . . .

does accord with the Arminianism of the *De doctrina*, which argues that God elects men to everlasting life on the condition of faith and repentance, and rejects only those who refuse to believe and repent" (76). Kelley succinctly and sufficiently proves his case that Milton's predestination doctrine is Arminian rather than Calvinist, but it must be noted that the passage centers on the fall of mankind, not Satan's fall. However, if we combine both parts of Book III, then a picture of Milton's Arminian doctrine of predestination, with the concomitant principle of free will, becomes complete: Milton's Arminian predestination belongs to mankind and Satan.

While the theology surrounding Satan and his fall continue to intrigue, perplex, and vex readers and critics alike, the literary aspect of the character, too, proves complex and challenging. Slotkin declares that "since Blake's infamous comment that Milton was of the Devil's party 'without knowing it,' critics have tended to see Milton's theological and poetic impulses as mutually antagonistic and to associate these impulses with the characters of God and Satan, respectively." Slotkin suggests Milton's poetry makes Satan "attractive," but that his theology creates an "unattractive" Satan (101). However, the theological Satan and literary Satan do not have to be at odds at all. If we read Satan as allegory for fallen faith, Milton's theology and poetry blend nicely, indeed.

In Book V, the angel Raphael recounts to Adam Satan's fall from Heaven. Michael Leib contends that his fall represents an "uncreation" and that "the immediate act which motivates Satan to disobey God is the 'begetting' of the Son by the Father" (81).

This day I have begot whom I declare
My only Son, and on this holy Hill
Him have anointed, whom ye now behold
At my right hand; your Head I him appoint. (V.603-606)

Yet, Milton does not show Satan's immediate reaction. Instead, he provides a narrative wherein the angelic beings spend the remainder of the day singing, dancing, eating, and drinking. When twilight comes, they all retire "where they slept / Fann'd with cool Winds" (V.654-55). Amidst this tranquil scene, Milton inserts Satan, describing him as "fraught / with envy against the Son of God" and so prideful of his own superiority in Heaven that he cannot stand to think of the Anointed One (V.661-62). In fact, "Through pride . . . [Satan] thought himself impair'd" (V.664). Thus,

He resolv'd
With all his Legions to dislodge, and leave
Unworshipt, unobey'd the Throne supreme,
Contemptuous. (V.668-671)

Milton's narrative delay in showing Satan's envy signifies a person who broods on a perceived affront and concludes he has been treated unjustly. How very human! Satan ponders his superior position in Heaven and feels, apparently for the first time, pride in his heavenly renown. But his pride leads him to jealousy, to "[d]eep malice," and finally to disobedience (V.666). Once again, Satan's feelings and actions resemble those of human beings. Although Milton does not specifically record Lucifer's time before his fall, we

know through Raphael that he was a highly placed and mighty archangel. Therefore, readers can infer that at one time, Lucifer adored and glorified God. But, as Stanley Fish suggests, Satan thinks himself into impairment and by doing so, “the qualities that now constitute him (malice, disdain, envy) are qualities he conceives.” In essence, Satan “made himself less by his thoughts” (512). As a result, he resolutely chooses to disobey God, and more importantly, to deny Him adoration and glory. In other words, Satan loses his faith in God. And Satan’s disobedience and loss of faith increase his wickedness as he gathers other heavenly beings to his side through lies and deceit and prepares to battle God’s angels. By the end of Book V, readers see Satan’s impending doom, and his fate symbolizes the reprobation of those who lose their faith in God. Readers can easily identify with Satan’s feelings of envy and jealousy, and we all understand how wrath compels some to act malignantly. We can, therefore, read Satan allegorically—he represents human fallibility but also mankind’s free will and the consequences of a fallen faith: damnation.

In Book I, we encounter a fallen Satan, a creature at once malevolent and sympathetic. He retains some of his angelic luminescence—“his form had yet not lost / All her Original brightness” (I.591-92)—suggesting there may remain some semblance of his heavenly temperament. To further enhance Satan’s complexity, Milton unites human worry and woe with feelings of vengeance and bravery:

but his face
Deep scars of Thunder had intrencht, and care
Sat on his faded cheek, but under Brows
Of dauntless courage, and considerate Pride
Waiting revenge: cruel his eye, but cast
Signs of remorse and passion to behold
The fellows of his crime. (I.600-606)

Milton complicates his character even more when, as Satan begins to address his fellow fallen angels, he begins to weep: “Thrice he assay’d, and thrice in spite of scorn, / Tears such as Angels weep, burst forth: at last / Words interwove with sighs found out thir way” (I.619-21). Here, Milton again uses Satan as allegory. He intends his readers to empathize, at least somewhat, with Satan’s emotional condition. Most people identify with the combined feelings of anger and remorse, and readers understand Satan’s muddled and confused state. It could be argued that the mere fact it is Satan crying means no sympathy should be shown him. Satan does, after all, embody evil, and his weeping could easily be a sort of manipulation. Yet, in the passage, no apparent reason exists for Satan to garner sympathy. True, the passage continues wherein Satan briefly recounts their lost war in Heaven, which could be interpreted as Satan feeling sorry for himself. But lines 605 and 606 indicate Satan specifically mourns for his fallen angels, not himself. Carey reports that pro-Satanist critics see Satan’s tears “as magnanimous compassion” (167) and that “by weeping ‘tears such as angels weep’ he seems more grief-stricken than mere human weepers” (168). Milton characterizes Satan as a mixture of anger and anguish, pride and anxiety to resemble not only the fallen human condition but also as an allegory for those

who do not continue in the faith. Satan's tears indicate the hopelessness for his fallen state. Satan chose to deny God and war against Him in heaven, thus his future holds nothing but reprobation and eternal damnation. And that future awaits all who follow in Satan's path.

Another passage in *Paradise Lost* reveals Satan as sympathetic and capable of remorse, although his regret and sorrow cannot save him from his state of damnation. Once again, his character can be read as an allegory for fallen faith and the consequences associated with that fall. In Book IV, when Satan spies Adam and Eve in Paradise, the first humans he has ever seen, Satan, in the guise of a cormorant, sits in the Tree of Life and watches them, "Two of far nobler shape erect and tall / Godlike erect" (IV.288-89). He sees that "in thir looks Divine / The image of thir glorious maker shone" (IV.291-92). He continues to observe them as they walk, hand in hand, through the garden, and then he finally speaks to himself, "at length fail'd speech recover'd sad" (IV.357):

O Hell! What do mine eyes with grief behold,
[. . .]
Creatures of other mould, earth-born perhaps,
Not spirits, yet to heav'nly Spirits bright
Little inferior; whom my thoughts pursue
With wonder, and could love, so lively shines
In them Divine resemblance, and such grace
the hand that form'd them on thir shape hath pour'd. (IV.358, 360-65)

In pensive sadness, Satan compares them to the angelic beings he once knew (and used to be himself). Readers can see Satan's current shape—a cormorant, which is hardly the heavenly being he once was—and imagine how he must feel seeing Adam and Eve's gloriously tall, erect bodies compared to his squat sea bird form. He acknowledges God's divine presence in Adam and Eve, and admits that he, too, could have loved them like he once loved God; however, Satan knows his fall from faith prevents him from ever sharing that love with them or anyone else. Thus, he continues to plot the couple's sin and fall from grace. As allegory, we see Satan symbolizing lost love—for his past magnificent life and his Creator God—which must be bracketed with fallen faith, for to deny God is to deny love.

Book IV also contains one of Satan's soliloquies that Carey suggests reveals the "true Satan." Milton shows Satan's internal debate in which "he vacillates between remorse and defiance" (163). Satan begins by calling to God:

But with no friendly voice, and add thy name
O Sun, to tell thee how I hate thy beams
That bring to my remembrance from what state
I fell, how glorious once above thy Sphere. (IV.36-39)

Readers see Satan's anguish at remembering his former angelic self; yet anger fills him as well, anger he directs at God. In the next lines, Satan takes responsibility for his emotions as well as his actions against God and acknowledges that service to The Holy One had not been difficult.

Till Pride and worse Ambition threw me down

Warring in Heav'n against Heav'n's matchless King:
Ah wherefore! He deserv'd no such return
From me, whom he created what I was
In that bright eminence, and with his good
Upbraided none; nor was his service hard. (IV.40-45)

Milton makes a vital point in this section when Satan says, "whom he created what I was," because we can infer that God created Satan unblemished and devout. But we also know through Milton's epic that God also created all beings with free will. Therefore, this passage illustrates that Satan's own emotions of pride and ambition compelled him to rebel that God did not create him to sin and rebel. As allegory, we see that his choice to sin, deny God, and rebel caused the dire consequence: his damnation.

The soliloquy continues as Satan affirms God's goodness and admits He deserves adoration. And Satan also confesses that his boundless ambition further engendered in him a profound desire to achieve greatness, perhaps to be as exalted as God himself, and that in such a narcissistic state, he chose to forget God's righteousness. Ironically, Satan immediately laments he had not been created "some inferior Angel" so that his ambition would not have been so great (IV.59), thus illustrating his complete egotism. And soon he starts rationalizing his poor choices, positing that if he had not rebelled, surely another angelic being would have done so. Once again, Milton constructs an all too human character, one that readers can easily recognize in themselves or others, one filled with ambition, inflated ego, and excuses. Yet Satan at once turns melancholy again, bewailing his sorry state. "Me miserable! which way shall I fly / Infinite wrath, and infinite despair? / Which way I fly is Hell; myself am Hell" (IV.73-75). Here, Satan nears his lowest emotional point, a misery with which many readers can relate, for most have felt demoralized at one time or another. He then asks if "there no place / Left for Repentance, none for Pardon left?" (IV.79-80), and he answers his question: "None left but by submission; and that word / Disdain forbids me" (IV.81-82). Satan's willfulness prevents him from repenting, which once again illustrates his free choice to deny God. Near the end of his inner debate, he expresses his utter hopelessness: "So farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear, / Farewell Remorse: all Good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my Good" (IV.108-109). But readers see that his hopelessness instantly transforms into a lack of repentance and then willful evil. As allegory, this passage serves as a warning to readers: If you do not continue in your faith, you cannot feel remorse and thus repent; therefore, your fate will be to fall from grace and continue to sin without any hope of salvation.

Perhaps the most serious warning about fallen faith occurs in Book V, when Satan challenges Abdiel about his creation, denies that God formed him, and claims his own power above God's:

who saw

When this creation was? remember'st thou
Thy making, while the Maker gave thee being?
We know no time when we were not as now;

Know none before us, self-begot, self-raiſ'd
By our own quick'ning power [. . .]
[. . .]
Our puissance is our own, our own right hand
Shall teach us highest deeds. (V.856-61, 864-65)

This passage, above all others in *Paradise Lost*, expresses what, in contemporary terms, we label the arrogant self-made man. Satan unequivocally separates himself from God, his Creator, his Guide, his true Source of power. Instead, Satan claims his life as his own to live as he sees fit, not as God would wish him to do. Read as allegory, Milton presents a cautionary tale about losing faith in God, the result of which is self-exaltation and total separation from God. The self-made man may glory in his industrious, even magnanimous, nature, but in reality, he only appears this way; Satan seems extraordinary, totally in control, when, in fact, he suffers mightily because of his separation from the Divine. Stanley Fish describes this type of empty arrogance: “That is what being Satan or any other agent cut off from God means: there is no longer anything in you that corresponds to the virtues you claim to admire or the knowledge from which you have turned away” (49).

But Milton provides another warning about the allegorical pompous self-made man. Near the end of Book I, the fallen angels build their version of a heavenly palace in Hell, called Pandaemonium. They use all the precious metals and materials from the earth to construct “the high Capitol / Of Satan and his Peers” (I.756-57), a vision of hellish beauty and the devils’ belief in material riches. Obviously, the fallen angels desire to emulate God’s realm, and in building Pandaemonium, they attempt to fill their spiritual void with material possessions. Read as allegory, the arrogant self-made man, in order to feed his tremendous narcissism, must continually exhibit his prosperity. Leib asserts that “Satan’s material creations are illusory (nonsubstantial), whereas God’s spiritual creations are real (substantial). In Satan’s mode of thought, wealth becomes the substitute for divinity” (91). The arrogant self-made man’s mode of thinking clearly matches that of Satan. If we understand this passage to be an allegory, we can easily see how Milton might have written this as a warning to his audience to place their whole beings in God’s hands, to give Him alone credit for their good fortune.

In his epic poem, Milton offers readers the opportunity to see themselves not just in the human characters of Adam and Eve but in Satan as well. He creates the Satan character as a sympathetic one so his audience may readily identify with the turmoil he feels at having lost his faith. But Milton also wrote *Paradise Lost* to advance his theodicy, particularly regarding predestination. In his poem, he artfully—and clearly—asserts the Arminian doctrine of predestination, several times stating that all are created for salvation but that those who fall from grace do so of their own volition. In the character of Satan, Milton blends the literary and theological to craft an allegory for fallen faith, which, ultimately, makes *Paradise Lost* very much a cautionary tale to remain true to God and continue in the faith, as Satan asserts:

But what will not Ambition and Revenge

Descend to? who aspires must down as low
As high he soar'd, obnoxious first or last
To basest things. (IX.168-71)

Works Cited

- "Arminianism." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford UP, 2005. *Oxford Reference Online*. Web. 07 Nov. 2011.
- Campbell, Gordon, and Thomas N. Corns. *John Milton: Life, Work, and Thought*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008. Print.
- Carey, John. "Milton's Satan." *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*. 2nd ed. Ed. Dennis Danielson. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1999. 160-174. Print.
- Como, David R. "Predestination and Political Conflict in Laud's London." *The Historical Journal* 46.2 (June 2003): 263-294. *JSTOR*. Web. 07 Nov. 2011.
- Escobedo, Andrew. "Allegorical Agency and the Sins of Angels." *ELH* 75.4 (Winter 2008): 787-818. *Project Muse*. Web. 13 Nov. 2011.
- Fish, Stanley. *How Milton Works*. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard UP, 2001. Print.
- Kelley, Maurice. "The Theological Dogma of *Paradise Lost*, III, 173-202." *PMLA* 52.1 (Mar. 1937): 75-79. *JSTOR*. Web. 07 Nov. 2011.
- Leib, Michael. *The Dialectics of Creation: Patterns of Birth & Regeneration in Paradise Lost*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1970. Print.
- Milton, John. *The Christian Doctrine. John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Ed. Merritt Y. Hughes. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1957. 903-1020. Print.
- . *Paradise Lost. John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*. Ed. Merritt Y. Hughes. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co., 1957. 173-469. Print.
- "Predestination." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford UP, 2005. *Oxford Reference Online*. Web. 07 Nov. 2011.
- "Reformation." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford UP. *Oxford Reference Online*. Web. 07 Nov. 2011.
- Slotkin, Joel. "Poetic Justice: Divine Punishment and Augustinian Chiaroscuro in *Paradise Lost*." *Milton Quarterly* 38.2 (May 2004): 100-127. *Wiley Online Library*. Web. 07 Nov. 2011.
- "Sublapsarian." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford UP. *Oxford Reference Online*. Web. 22 Nov. 2011.
- "Supralapsarian." *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*. Eds. F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone. Oxford UP. *Oxford Reference Online*. Web. 22 Nov. 2011.
- Wallace, Dewey D., Jr. *Puritans and Predestination: Grace in English Protestant Theology 1525-1695*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982. Print.
- White, Peter. *Predestination, Policy and Polemic: Conflict and Consensus in the English Church from the Reformation to the Civil War*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.