

## P R E - E X I S T E N C E :

## A P O E M,

## In Imitation of MILTON.

*Has quoniam cœli nondum dignamur honore,  
Quas dedimus certè terras habitare sinamus.*

**N**OW had th' archangel trumpet, rais'd sublime  
Above the walls of heav'n, begun to sound ;  
All æther took the blast, and hell beneath  
Shook with celestial noise ; th' almighty host  
Hot with pursuit, and reeking with the blood  
Of guilty cherubs smear'd in sulphurous dust,  
Pause at the known command of sounding gold.  
At first they close the wide Tartarian gates,  
Th' impenetrable folds on brazen hinge  
Roll creaking horrible ; the din beneath  
O'ercomes the roar of flames, and deafens hell.  
Then through the solid gloom with nimble wing  
They cut their shining traces up to light ;



Return'd upon the edge of heavenly day,  
 Where thinnest beams play round the vast obscure,  
 And with eternal gleam drive back the night.  
 They find the troops less stubborn, less involv'd  
 In crime and ruin, barr'd the realms of peace,  
 Yet uncondemn'd to baleful seats of woe,  
 Doubtful and suppliant ; all the plumes of light  
 Moul't from their shuddering wings, and sickly fear  
 Shades every face with horror ; conscious guilt  
 Rolls in the livid eye-ball, and each breast  
 Shakes with the dread of future doom unknown.

'Tis here the wide circumference of heaven  
 Opens in two vast gates, that inward turn  
 Voluminous, on jasper columns hung  
 By geometry divine : they ever glow  
 With living sculptures, that arise by turns  
 T' imboss the shining leaves, by turns they set  
 To give succeeding argument their place ;  
 In holy hieroglyphicks on they move,  
 The gaze of journeying angels, as they pass  
 Oft looking back, and held in deep surprize.  
 Here stood the troops distinct ; the cherub guard  
 Unbarr'd the splendid gates, and in they roll  
 Harmonious ; for a vocal spirit fits  
 Within each hinge, and, as they onward drive,  
 In just divisions breaks the numerous jarr  
 With symphony melodious, such as spheres  
 Involv'd in tenfold wreaths are said to sound.

Out



Out flows a blaze of glory ; for on high  
 Tow'ring advanc'd the moving throne of God,  
 Vast and majestick ; on each radiant side  
 The pointed rays slope glittering ; at the foot  
 Glides a full tide of day, that onward pours,  
 In liquid torrents through the black abyfs,  
 Sparkling among reluctant shapes which thence  
 Retire confus'd ; as when Vesuvio shakes  
 With inward torments, and disgorges flames,  
 O'er the vast mountain's ridge the burning waves  
 Drive their refulgent curls, and on they roll  
 Sweeping the glowing plains down to the sea ;  
 Th' affrighted sea leaps back with hideous roar  
 To give the fire its course ; thus Chaos wild  
 Hissing recoils to let in floods of light.

Above the throne, th' ideas heavenly bright  
 Of past, of present, and of coming time  
 Fix'd their immov'd abode, and there present  
 An endless landscape of created things  
 To sight celestial, where angelick eyes  
 Are lost in prospect ; for the shiny range,  
 Boundless and various in its bosom bears  
 Millions of full-proportion'd worlds, beheld  
 With stedfast eyes, till more arise to view,  
 And farther inward scenes start up unknown.

Myriads of seraphs in long series wait  
 About the throne, and as it moves, proceed  
 In numerous order, to celestial song.

Above,



Above, the symphony of mellow flutes,  
 And harps, by flying angels gently touch'd;  
 Relieve the trumpet's rage, and fitly blend  
 The solemn sounds in harmony divine;  
 Such as might tune new worlds, and give the laws  
 To globes on high, and the just figure guide  
 Of planets forming all their airy dance.  
 Below, the blazing wheels drive bounding o'er  
 The starry pavement; stars and hills of light  
 Double their glories where the chariot rolls  
 With rattling sound; and th' empyræum vast  
 Down to its steadfast axis, groans throughout  
 Under the burning tracts, till now it rests  
 Upon the gaping brink of heaven; and there  
 With open pomp, fills the vast empty space.

Silence ensues; a deep and awful pause  
 More terrible, all expectation held  
 In horror: now wrath imminent amaz'd  
 With dreadful precipice, to all it seems  
 More formidable near; then from the throne  
 A vocal thunder roll'd the sense of God,  
 Majestically long, repugnant all  
 To princes' customs here; their judgments flash  
 On guilt, with words concise, and sudden blaze.  
 Quite otherwise, the God's enlarged speech  
 Set wide the fate of things; that all around  
 Might take full prospects of their coming doom.



Servants of God! and Virtues great in arms;  
 We approve your faithful works, and you return  
 Bless'd from the dire pursuit of rebel foes;  
 Resolv'd, obdurate, they have try'd the force  
 Of this right hand, and known Almighty pow'r;  
 Transfix'd with lightning down they sunk, they fell  
 Into the fiery gulph, and deep they plunge  
 Below the burning waves, to hide their heads  
 In shelter from my vengeance bellowing hence  
 More fierce, and scorching with more dreadful fires.  
 There let 'em find their doom, that durst defy  
 Omnipotence, and slight his proffer'd grace;  
 Rolling in flames, and ne'er to find a dawn  
 Of heavenly day; instead, the mind imbibes  
 Eternal gloom, and sing'd with constant flames,  
 Can find no ease; while fierce their boiling rage  
 Eats through th' impyreal mould, and glows within  
 With endless pain; not one repentant thought  
 Shall cool the breast, but proud in horrid crime,  
 The soul anneals and hardens in the fire.

But you commission'd by commands divine,  
 Have wisely fill'd your trust, and clos'd 'em all  
 Within the fervid lake, lest any roam  
 Into the dark abyss to shun their doom,  
 And in the womb immense of things unborn  
 Should seek annihilation; you must rise  
 Among the shining virtues more sublime;  
 On lofty thrones preferr'd for lofty deeds.

For



For you, ye guilty throng ! that lately join'd  
 In this sedition, since seduc'd from good,  
 And caught in trains of guile, by spirits malign,  
 Superior in their order ; you accept,  
 Trembling, my heavenly clemency and grace.  
 When the long æra once has fill'd its orb,  
 You shall emerge to light, and humbly here  
 Again shall bow before his favouring throne,  
 If your own virtue second my decree :  
 But all must have their manes first below,  
 So stands th' eternal fate, but smoother yours  
 Than what lost angels feel ; nor can our reign,  
 Without just dooms, the peace of heav'n secure ;  
 For forms celestial new erect in glory  
 Wou'd totter, dazzled with the heights of power,  
 Did not the nerves of justice fix their fight.

See, where below in Chaos wond'rous deep  
 A speck of light dawns forth, and thence throughout  
 The shades, in many a wreath, my forming power  
 There swiftly turns the burning eddy round,  
 Absorbing all crude matter near its brink ;  
 Which next, with subtle motions, takes the form  
 I please to stamp, the seed of infant worlds  
 All now in embryo, but ere long shall rise  
 Variously scatter'd in this vast expanse,  
 Involv'd in winding orbs, until the brims  
 Of outward circles brush the heavenly gates.  
 The middle point a globe of curling fire



Shall hold, which round it sheds its genial heat ;  
 Where'er I kindle life the motion grows  
 In all the endless orbs, from this machine ;  
 And infinite vicissitudes shall roll  
 About the restless center ; for I rear,  
 In those meanders turn'd, a dusty ball,  
 Deform'd all o'er with woods, whose shaggy tops  
 Inclose eternal mists, and deadly damps  
 Hover within their boughs, to choak the light ;  
 Impervious scenes of horror, 'till reform'd  
 To fields, and grassy dales, and flow'ry meads,  
 By your continual pains. The torrid zone  
 Here fries with constant heat, the swarthy world ;  
 Parching the plains where hideous monsters glare,  
 And dusty mountains, tumbled by the winds,  
 Stretch their uncertain heaps ; no less the frost  
 At either end shall rage, and high shall raise  
 Firm promontories ; vast the ruins seem  
 Of desert nature, and th' eternal piles  
 Load all the dreary coast, and thick in ice,  
 Arm either pole, that yearly peeps askance  
 On coming light, but feels no gentle ray  
 Unbind the frozen chain. Between these lie  
 The changeful climes, alternately they burn,  
 And chill again by turns ; for both extremes  
 Make their incursions here ; and this my will  
 Unchangeable ordains your doleful seat.

Beneath



Beneath mishapen Chaos, and the field  
 Of fighting atoms, where hot, moist, and dry,  
 Wage an eternal war with dismal roar ;  
 The dismal roar breaks smoothly on the ground,  
 Sacred to horror, and eternal night :  
 Here Silence sits, whose visionary shape  
 In folds of wreathy mantling sinks obscure,  
 And in dark fumes reclines his drowsy head ;  
 An urn he holds, from whence a lake proceeds,  
 Wide, flowing gently, smooth, and Lethe nam'd :  
 Hither compell'd, each soul must drink long draughts  
 Of those forgetful streams, 'till forms within,  
 And all the great ideas fade and die :  
 For if vast thought should play about a mind  
 Inclos'd in flesh, and dragging cumbrous life,  
 Flutt'ring and beating in the mournful cage,  
 It soon would break its grates and wing away :  
 'Tis therefore my decree, the soul return  
 Naked from off this beach, and perfect blank,  
 To visit the new world ; and strait to feel  
 Itself, in crude consistence closely shut,  
 The dreadful monument of just revenge ;  
 Immur'd by heaven's own hand, and plac'd erect  
 On fleeting matter all imprison'd round  
 With walls of clay ; th' ætherial mould shall bear  
 The chain of members, deafen'd with an ear,  
 Blinded by eyes, and manacled in hands.  
 Here anger, vast ambition, and disdain,



And all the haughty movements rise and fall,  
 As storms of neighbouring atoms tear the soul ;  
 And hope, and love, and all the calmer turns  
 Of easy hours, in their gay gilded shapes,  
 With sudden run, skim o'er deluded minds,  
 As matter leads the dance ; but one desire,  
 Unsatisfy'd, shall mar ten thousand joys.

The rank of beings, that shall first advance,  
 Drink deep of human life ; and long shall stay  
 On this great scene of cares. From all the rest,  
 That longer for the destin'd body wait,  
 Less penance I expect ; and short abode  
 In those pale dreary kingdoms will content :  
 Each has his lamentable lot, and all,  
 On different racks, abide the pains of life.

The pensive spirit takes the lonely grove :  
 Nightly he visits all the sylvan scenes,  
 Where far remote, a melancholy moon  
 Raising her head, serene and shorn of beams,  
 Throws here and there the glimmerings thro' the trees,  
 To make more awful darkness. Starry lights,  
 Hung up on high, shed round 'em as they burn  
 A pale sad influence ; and they gild the plains  
 With doubtful rays, which strike within the shades  
 A trembling lustre and uncertain light.

The SAGE shall haunt this solitary ground,  
 And view the dismal landscape, limn'd within  
 In horrid shades, mix'd with imperfect light.



Here JUDGMENT, blinded by delusive SENSE,  
 Contracted through the cranny of an eye,  
 Shoots up faint languid beams, to that dark seat,  
 Wherein the soul bereav'd of native fire,  
 Sits intricate, in misty clouds obscur'd,  
 Ev'n from itself conceal'd, and there presides  
 O'er jarring images with reason's sway,  
 Which by his ordering more confounds their form;  
 And by decisions more embroils the fray:  
 The more he strives t' appease, the more he feels  
 The struggling surges of the darksome void  
 Impetuous, and the thick revolving thoughts  
 Encount'ring thoughts, image on image turn'd,  
 A Chaos of wild science, where sometimes  
 The clashing notions strike out casual light,  
 Which soon must perish and be lost again  
 In the thick darkness round it. Now, he tries  
 With all his might to raise some weighty thought,  
 Of me, of fate, or of th' eternal round,  
 Which but recoils to crush the labouring mind.  
 High are his reasonings, but the feeble clue  
 Of fleeting images he draws in vain  
 To wond'rous length; (for still the turning maze  
 Eludes his art) its end flies far away,  
 And leaves him tracing round the toilsome path,  
 Returning oft on the same beaten thought.  
 For much of good he talks, and life serene,  
 Of happiness deny'd, the dismal waste



Of wisdom's privilege, and th' obdurate breast,  
 Stubborn in anguish ; idle wisdom all,  
 Weak forcery to charm a real pain ;  
 Distasting crowds and business, thus he seeks  
 Diversion in himself, but with deep thoughts  
 He kindles doubt ; and while he strives to blow  
 The ashes off, revives the brand of care.

Hence far remov'd, a diff'rent noisy race  
 In cities full and frequent take their seat,  
 Where honour's crush'd, and gratitude oppress'd  
 With swelling hopes of gain, that raise within  
 A tempest, and, driv'n onward by success,  
 Can find no bounds. For creatures of a day  
 Stretch their wide cares to ages ; full increase  
 Starves the penurious soul, while empty sound  
 Fills the ambitious ; *that* shall ever shrink,  
 Pining with endless cares, whilst *this* shall swell  
 To tympany enormous. Bright in arms  
 Here shines the hero, out he fiercely leads  
 A martial throng, his instruments of rage,  
 To fill the world with death, and thin mankind,  
 Ambition drives, and round the world he roams,  
 Marking his way with blood ; the dreadful noise  
 Begets a fame ; and all the breath he leaves  
 Is spent in his false praise, and vainly bloats  
 The tyrant's soul ; while high his kingdoms rise  
 In fleeting pomp, hov'ring o'er their gaudy wings  
 Around the servile globe, that tamely bends

Beneath



Beneath his haughty reign ; and all his slaves  
 Under his yoke shall groan, and scarce shall groan  
 Without a crime. Here torturing engines roar  
 With human voice disguis'd ; earth, water, fire,  
 Are made (dire elements of cruelty !)  
 Subservient to his lust, and power to kill ;  
 Yet shall the herd endure, nor dare to break  
 United their imaginary chain ;  
 While their great monarch chills with equal fears,  
 No less a slave than they. Each rumour shakes  
 The haughty purple, dark and cloudy cares  
 Involve the awful throne, that stands erect,  
 Balanc'd on the wild people's temper'd rage,  
 And fortify'd with dangerous arts of power.  
 But death shall shift those scenes of misery ;  
 Then doubtful titles kindle up new wars,  
 And urge on ling'ring fate ; the ensigns blaze  
 About the camp, and drums and trumpets' sound  
 Prepare a solemn way to griezly war ;  
 Javelins and bearded spears in ghastly ranks  
 Ereft their shining heads, and round the field  
 A harvest's scene of formidable death ;  
 Then joins the horrid flock, whose bellowing burst  
 Torments the shatter'd air, and drowns the groans  
 Of men below that roll in certain death.  
 These are the mortal sports, the tragick plays  
 By man himself embroil'd ; the dire debate  
 Make the waste desert seem serene and mild,

Where



Where savage nature in one common lies,  
 By homely cots possess'd ; all squalid, wild,  
 And despicably poor, they range the field,  
 And feel their share of hunger, care, and pain,  
 Cheated by flying prey ; and now they tear  
 Their panting flesh ; and now with nails unclean  
 They tug their shaggy beards ; and deeply quaff  
 Of human woe, even when they rudely sip  
 The flowing stream, or chew the savory pulp  
 Of nature's freshest viands ; fragrant fruits  
 Enjoy'd with trembling, and in danger fought.

But where th' appointed limits of a law  
 Fences the general safety of the world,  
 No greater quiet reigns ; for wanton man,  
 In giddy frolick easily leaps o'er  
 His own invented bounds ; hence rapine, fraud,  
 Revenge, and lust, and all the hideous train  
 Of nameless ills, distort the meagre mind  
 To endless shapes of woe. Here misers mourn  
 Departed gold, and their defrauded heirs  
 Dire perjuries complain ; the blended loads  
 Of punishment and crime deform the world,  
 And give no rest to man ; with pangs and throes  
 He enters on the stage ; prophetick tears  
 And infant cries prelude his future woes ;  
 And all is one continu'd scene of grief,  
 'Till the sad fable curtain falls in death.

But



But that last act shall in one moment close  
 Of doubt and darkness ; pain shall crack the strings  
 Of life decayed ; no less the soul convuls'd,  
 Trembles in anxious cares, and shuddering stands,  
 Afraid to leap into the opening gulph  
 Of future fate, till all the banks of clay  
 Fall from beneath his feet : in vain he grasps  
 The shatter'd reeds that cheat his easy wish.  
 Reason is now no more ; that narrow lamp  
 (Which with its sickly fires would shoot its beams  
 To distances unknown, and stretch its rays  
 Askance my paths, in deepest darkness veil'd)  
 Is sunk into his socket ; inly there  
 It burns a dismal light ; th' expiring flame  
 Is choak'd in fumes, and parts in various doubt.

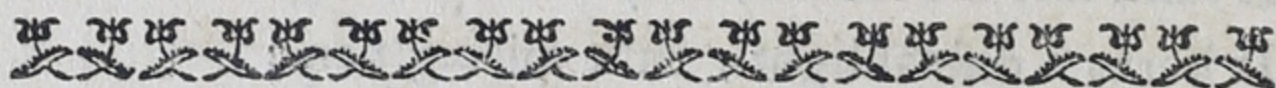
Then the gay glories of the living world  
 Shall cast their empty varnish, and retire  
 Out of his feeble view ; and rising shade  
 Sit hov'ring o'er all nature's various face.  
 Musick shall cease, and instruments of joy  
 Shall fail that fullen hour ; nor can the mind  
 Attend their sounds, when fancies swim in death,  
 Confus'd and crush'd with cares : for long shall seem  
 The dreary road, and melancholy dark,  
 That leads he knows not where. Here empty space  
 Gapes horrible, and threatens to absorb  
 All being : yonder footy demons glare,  
 And dolorous spectres grin ; the shapeless rout

Of



Of wild imagination dance and play  
 Before his eyes obscure; till all in death  
 Shall vanish, and the prisoner, now enlarg'd,  
 Regains the flaming borders of the sky.

He ended. Peals of thunder rend the heavens,  
 And Chaos, from the bottom turn'd, resounds  
 The mighty clangor: All the heavenly host  
 Approve the high decree, and loud they sing  
 Eternal justice; while the guilty troops,  
 Sad with their doom, but sad without despair,  
 Fall fluttering down to Lethe's lake, and there  
 For penance, and the destin'd body, wait.



## CHIRON to ACHILLES.

### A POEM.

By HILDEBRAND JACOB, Esq;

*Res est severa voluptas.*

OLD CHIRON to his pupil thus began,  
 When he beheld him rip'ning into man.  
 " Accomplish'd youth! well worthy of my pains,  
 " You now are free, and guide yourself the reins:  
 " Yet hear, Achilles, hear, before we part,  
 " A few short precepts from a faithful heart.

" What