

Milton and the Romantics: The Conundrum of Romantic Language

Courtesy of R.F.W. Kroll

1. Raphael to Adam in *Paradise Lost*, 5.563ff:

O prime of men,
Sad task and hard, for how shall I relate
To human sense th' invisible exploits
Of warring Spirits: . . .

. . . I shall delineate so,
By lik'ning spiritual to corporal forms,
As may express them best, though what if Earth
Be but the shaddow of Heav'n, and things therein
Each to other like, more then on earth is thought?

2. Raphael to Adam, *Paradise Lost*, 7.112ff:

. . . to recount Almightye works
What words or tongue of Seraph can suffice,
Or heart of man suffice to comprehend?

3. The narrator in *Paradise Lost*, 7 after God has just addressed the Son (lines 174-179):

So spake th' Almightye, and to what he spake
His Word, the Filial Godhead, gave effect.
Immediate are the Acts of God, more swift
Then time or motion, but to human ears
Cannot without process of speech be told,
So told as earthly notion can receive.

4. Michael tells Adam what will happen in human history after the Fall: God's Providential design results in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles in *Acts 2* (*Paradise Lost*, 12.498ff):

. . . for the Spirit
Powr'd first on his Apostles, whom he sends
To evangelize the Nations, then on all
Baptiz'd, shall them with wondrous gifts endue
To speak all Tongues, and do all Miracles,
As did thir Lord before them. Thus they win
Great numbers of each Nation to receive
With joy the tidings brought from Heav'n: at length
Thir Ministry perform'd, and race well run,
Thir doctrine and thir story written left,
They die . . .

(Excerpts are from a public domain edition)