

Better to Reign in Hell, Than Serve in Heav'n

"Is this the Region, this the Soil , the Clime",
Said then the lost Arch Angel , "this the seat
That we must change for Heav'n, this mournful gloom
For that celestial light? Be i t so, since he
Who now is Sovran can dispose and bid
What shal I be right: farthest from him is best
Whom reason had equal led, force had made supreme
Above his equals. Farewell happy fields,
Where joy for ever dwells! hail horrors! Hail
Infernal world; and thou profoundest hell
A mind not to be changed by place or time.
The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, and a hell of heav'n.
What matter where, if I be still the same,
And what I should be al I but less than He
Whom thunder had made greater? Here at least
We shal I be free; the Almighty hath not built
Here for His envy, will not drive us hence;
Here we may reign secure, and in my choice
To reign is worth ambition, though in hell ;
Bet ter to reign in hel I than to serve in Heav'n.
But wherefore let we then our faithful friends,
The associates and co-partners of our loss,
Lie thus astonished on the oblivious pool
And cal I not to share with us their par t
In this unhappy mansion, or once more
With rallied arms, to try what may be yet
Regained in Heaven, or what more lost in Hell?"

So Satan spake and him *Beelzebub*
Thus answer'd.
(John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, Book I ll. 242-272)