

Great Expectations: Paradise Lost Assignment – Dr. Flora Armetta

1. Consider the following quotation, in which Milton describes Adam and Eve's expulsion from Eden in *Paradise Lost*:

They, looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand; the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms.
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and Providence their guide.
They, hand in hand, with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

[John Milton, *Paradise Lost* (1667), Book XII]

Possible questions to use for essay prompts or student-led discussions:

- a) What parallels can you locate between Pip's story and Adam and Eve's story as narrated here?
- b) What are their attitudes toward what they leave behind and what they have to look forward to?
- c) What might Dickens be suggesting about Pip's future?
- d) If Pip is, somehow, like an Adam figure, then what is his sin?
- e) How do both *Great Expectations* and *Paradise Lost* relate to the actual Biblical passage describing the expulsion from the Garden in Genesis 3:22-24?
- f) If childhood innocence is like Eden, how do we account for Pip's lies (which horrify Joe so much in Chapter IX, p. 63], early on ... what, specifically, corrupts him?
- g) Do you see Dickens as affirming original sin here? Why or why not?