

The Provenance of the *Christian Doctrine*

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The year 1991 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of Maurice Kelley's *This Great Argument* with the subtitle *A Study of Milton's "De Doctrina Christiana" as a Gloss upon "Paradise Lost"*.¹ One can make a good case that it has been the most influential work of Milton scholarship published in this century; on this anniversary it is appropriate to review its successes and failures, and especially its fruitful thesis that the theological treatise provides a major interpretative gloss for the poem, as its subtitle states. Such a fertile theory has given inspiration to others who have applied it to the rest of Milton's poetry and prose, especially the later works. It is safe to say that lacking the thesis of *This Great Argument*, *Bright Essence* would not exist and *Milton's Brief Epic*, *Toward Samson Agonistes*, and *Milton and the English Revolution* would be quite different books from the ones we know.²

Significant too is the fact that Kelley saw no cause to change his arguments radically during the rest of his productive career. He was the obvious choice to edit the *Christian Doctrine* for the sixth volume of the *Yale Prose*. Its extensive introduction is to a considerable extent a recapitulation and occasional expansion of the work printed over thirty years earlier. Indeed, as Kelley himself observes, he sometimes repeated the earlier argument word for word in the introduction to the edition.³

In view of the heterodoxy of much of the *Christian Doctrine*, Milton is now interpreted in many of his works, not just in the treatise, as a heretic—the opposite from the views that almost

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everyone held before its publication in 1825. In this paper I wish to propose the unorthodox thesis that Milton did not write the *Christian Doctrine* and that accordingly all of the criticism of his works based on the assumption that he did should be rethought.⁴ Considering the number of years I have spent supporting the opposite position, I find such a view daunting to say the least. To argue this case I must first examine the historical evidence associated with the manuscript itself and then what Milton's contemporaries knew about it.

To begin, one should remark on the improbability of the actual creation of such a work as the *Christian Doctrine* by a blind man. With others I have marveled that the blind Milton could have managed the thousands of quotations which appear not only as uninterrupted series but also distributed freely within the discussions of them. The collection itself, if made while he was still sighted, is quite likely just such a one as that by Amandus Polanus, *Enchiridii Locorum Communum Theologicorum* (Basel, 1600), arranged by subjects in alphabetical order. What is problematical is that a blind man could have effectively used such a collection in such a treatise, simultaneously dictating *Paradise Lost*, *A Treatise of Civil Power*, and *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*. (I omit the contemporary *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings out of the Church* as having been dictated some years earlier.⁵) All are products of the years close to 1660 when the Jeremie Picard evidence taken up below shows that Milton was supposedly completing the treatise. Another question is why he did not issue it then, an easy feat before the Restoration. The assumption has been that he did not because it was incomplete, but it is essentially finished except perhaps in its discussion of marriage. Charles Richard Sumner's successful publication in 1825 proves otherwise, and only Gordon Campbell has argued its incompleteness and then primarily in the ordering of some of its material.⁶

Furthermore, although *Paradise Lost* and the *Christian Doctrine* are concerned with congruent religious issues, the poem includes statements about the physicality of angels—the belief that they really eat and enjoy sexual activities—which have no mention in the treatise, though there is no obvious reason why they should not appear there. On the other hand, the treatise argues that Sunday need not be observed and that the practice of polygamy be permitted, both subjects that could naturally enter the history of mankind in Books 11 and 12 of the poem but find no place in them. More obviously, the treatise ignores Satan, a major character in the poem, which in turn ignores its “conditional decrees,” a

basic position as the treatise redefines predestination in favor of Arminian views. Such arguments from silence, of course, are inconclusive but can be suggestive.

Moreover, although the *Christian Doctrine* certainly supports an unusual view of the Son of God, the *Treatise on Civil Power*, supposedly written about the same time, seems, as Sewell argued, orthodox in one of its statements about him: "if bought and by him redeemed who is God from what was once the service of God, we shall be enthralld again and forc'd by men to what now is but the service of men."⁷ Kelley demurred from differing definitions in the treatise; but to argue an interpretation of *Civil Power* from the *Christian Doctrine* is to beg the question, though Kelley repeated his argument in the introduction.⁸

Sewell also points out an inconsistency in the definition of Christ's death: in *Paradise Lost* the Son forecasts that he will yield to death, "All that of me can die" (3:246)—only the human nature, that is, in the orthodox tradition—whereas in the treatise the divine nature dies too.⁹ There are similar but less clear examples of dogmatic disagreement in *Readie and Easie Way* and *Of True Religion*. One must also observe that the arguments in favor of divorce are based on quite different premises in *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* and the *Christian Doctrine*. In the earlier treatise the thesis is that in a divorce no true union has taken place, whereas in the later marriage is a true union, the dissolution of which God has permitted since the Fall.¹⁰ This latter view is analogous to the Arminian belief that one can fall away from union with God, for, according to the marriage service then and now, matrimony signifies "the mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his church." If the one union is dissoluble as was the Arminian belief, so is the other under this analogy. On the other hand, such differing conceptions of these unions may not be significant in view of the lapse of time between the composition of the two works.

Again, the lack of any direct allusions in the *Christian Doctrine* to the canonical writings is striking. The book does not even suggest that its author has written anything else, like attacks on tithing or arguments against state authority over the church which he actually published about the time when he was supposedly writing the treatise. Furthermore, as I have shown about its theological context, references within the work prove that it was addressed by names to the writings of what I have called "Calvinist orthodoxy"—William Ames, Francis Gomarus, Wolfgang Musculus, David Pareus, Amandus Polanus, Zachary Ursinus, and Jerome Zanchy (plus Theodore Beza and John Calvin); to the French

school of Saumur, represented by Louis Cappel, Joshua Placaeus, and John Cameron; and to the Arminian Simon Episcopius.¹¹ Checking with the prose concordance the names of these authorities cited in the *Christian Doctrine* to see where Milton himself has referred to them elsewhere is instructive: Paraeus appears seventeen times and Cameron seven, but Ames and Musculus only once, in *Tetrachordon*. Milton never mentions the other seven in any canonical work. On the other hand, Calvin is surprisingly unimportant in the *Christian Doctrine*, whereas he is cited sixteen times in the canonical prose. An even more significant discrepancy is the use of Ames and John Wolleb. Although Kelley believed that the treatise is fundamentally based on their books, Ames is named only once in all the other prose and Wolleb never. Finally, religious authorities cited in the canonical works, like Martin Bucer, William Perkins, Hugo Grotius, or Peter Heylyn, are quite unexpectedly ignored in the treatise, a fact for which Kelley was unable to account.¹²

The points of greatest interest, however, are the heresies that *Paradise Lost* supposedly shares with the *Christian Doctrine*, a major part of both of Kelley's comparative studies of the two works. It is important to remember that such heresies are not evident to the objective reader who limits himself to the poem and ignores the interpretations of it derived from ideas in the treatise. The poem can be read alone as orthodox. For a century and a half readers believed it exemplary of Protestant dogma; a major and favorable commentator was Bishop Thomas Newton. Milton received a Church of England burial, suggesting that he had not voiced to anyone during his later years the heretical ideas which he supposedly judged his "dearest and best possession" and which he wished to share "with as many people as possible," as the Epistle to the *Christian Doctrine* announces.¹³

Objections to the supposed Arianism of *Paradise Lost* were voiced by Daniel Defoe, but they arose from a literal reading of the word "beget" (5:603 ff.) rather than the metaphorical interpretation of its source in Psalm 2:7 as "exalt" in the New Testament, Acts 13:13 and Hebrews 1:5 and 5:5.¹⁴ John Shawcross chronicles another minor upheaval originating in John Dennis's criticism but publicized largely by the Socinian Jonathan Richardson.¹⁵ Kelley's findings of Arianism (or as he prefers to name it anti-Trinitarianism or as I prefer subordinationism) in the poem as taken apart from the treatise center especially in this literal reading of "beget." On the other hand, the poem indeed has, as C.A. Patrides, J.H. Adamson, and I have shown, a subordinationist underpinning: the Son is divine but subordinate to the Father as Eve is human but

subordinate to Adam.¹⁶ As Stevie Davies and I have recently argued, the invocations in Books 1, 3, and 7 address all three persons of the Trinity, something that an Arian would avoid.¹⁷

Further fundamental disagreement between treatise and poem appears in their differing conceptions of the status and significance of the Holy Spirit. It is perfectly clear that Milton invokes that Spirit in 1:17-19: "chiefly thou O Spirit . . . Instruct me" as everyone up through Sewell had understood the words.¹⁸ The traditional reasons for understanding the words in this way, besides their obvious meaning, are that the description of the Spirit as "dove-like" (1:21) suggests the dove-Spirit of Luke 3:22 at the Baptism and the fact that Milton's widow made the same identification. On the other hand, the treatise flatly states that the Spirit is never to be invoked, a passage that forced Kelley into what seem to me to be tortuous interpretations according to ideas that appear in the treatise alone of otherwise quite obvious statements about the Spirit in the poem.¹⁹ Of course, if Milton did not write the *Christian Doctrine* this is all quite beside the point.

Despite these arguments that separate Milton from the treatise, an insuperable objection appears to lie in the inscription of it as his three times in the manuscript itself (see Figure 1, p. 134). Except for these three instances it contains absolutely no indication of who authored it. But page 1 is headed "Ioannes Miltonus Anglus," the text itself is prefaced with "Ioannis Miltoni Angli" preceding the title "De Doctrina Christiana" on page 7, and the introductory Epistle concludes on page 5 with the initials "I.M." The editors of the Columbia edition judged that these words were "evidently added in [a] later hand,"²⁰ a conclusion that Kelley questions as "not evident. The handwriting is [Daniel] Skinner's, the ink not unlike that on the rest of the page, and the heading shows no crowding."²¹ I have no idea how Kelley could reach such a conclusion. Though the words on pages 1 and 7 seem to have been printed by the same person and with the same pen, they are printed, not cursive like that of the manuscript, almost forbidding identification of their orthographer. The same seems to be true of the (printed) initials on page 5. Skinner may indeed have written them all; I simply do not know. The fact that they were added on page 1 after the text on that page had been set down is evident in that they *are* crowded, written through the capital letter beginning the word "Christi" immediately below, and off center to the right to avoid the even larger capital that begins the Epistle. Again, on page 7, the words could barely be fitted in at the top of the page and are spaced about the capital letter of the word "De" which begins the title. Although I have examined the manuscript in the

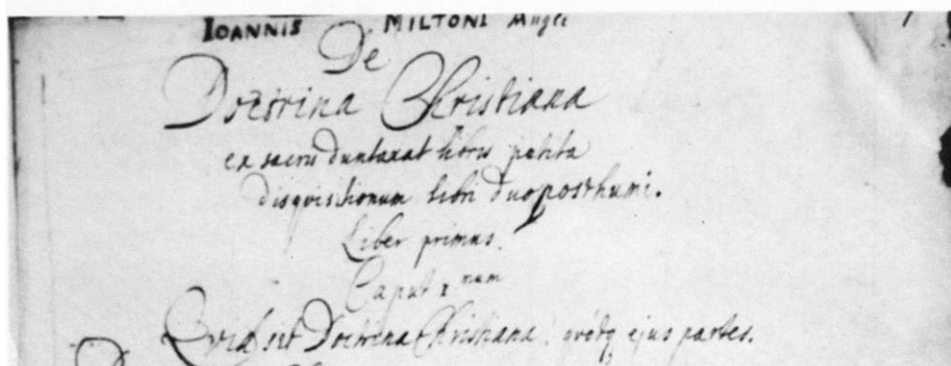
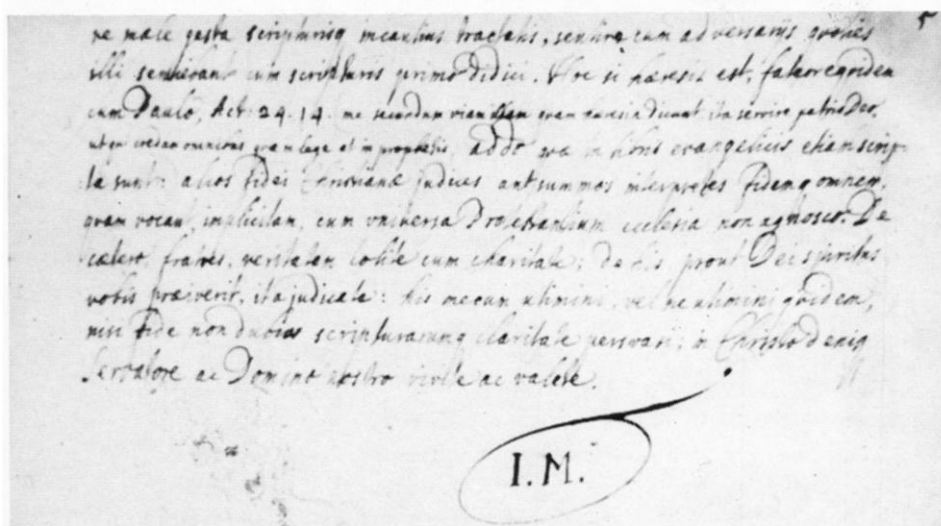


Figure 1: De Doctrina Christiana MS, pages 1, 5, and 7

London: Public Record Office SP 9/61

Public Record Office, I hesitate to judge one way or another about the quality of seventeenth century ink,²² but it is clear that the words—the only words—ascribing the work to Milton in the manuscript itself were not part of Skinner's original from which he was copying, were printed later, were written with a different pen, and because of the printing can have no absolutely identifiable author.

Some indirect evidence suggests that these additions were made after Robert Lemon discovered the manuscript in 1823. He left statements which prove that he thought it necessary to verify Milton's authorship of the work. To do so he quoted from its paper wrapping that addressed it to "Mr. Skinner, Mercht.," whom he mistakenly identified as Cyriack Skinner, well-known student and associate of Milton whom he so characterized by quoting the sonnet "Cyriack, this three years day" and by citing the early biographers, whose information about Cyriack appears below. He then judged certification of this information on the wrapper so important that he had it sworn to by two witnesses. But if the names were already present on pages 1 and 7, why did Lemon not use their conclusive and direct evidence rather than the round-about attribution by way of the wrapper? The obvious answer appears to be that they were not there on the manuscript as he originally discovered it. Someone then must have added them later, using the same title that Milton had employed for his other Latin works, the *Defenses* and the *Logic*.²³ In concluding this stage of the argument, there is, it seems, nothing in the original physical manuscript to associate it with Milton as its author. Let us now turn to the testimony of his associates to trace its provenance.

Long ago Hanford identified its original amanuensis as Jeremie Picard, who through signatures as a witness and otherwise was certainly associated with Milton from 1658 to 1660.²⁴ Beyond this fact we know nothing about him unless he was the Jeremiah Pickard admitted to Bethlehem Hospital in 1700²⁵ or the "Mr. Packer" whom John Aubrey named as one of Milton's scholars²⁶—information that does no good at all in deciding the authorship of the *Christian Doctrine*.

Picard is supposed to have copied the whole of the original treatise at about this time, 1658 to 1660, supporting the assumption that it was essentially completed by then; but as it has come down to us Daniel Skinner copied out again pages 1-196, 308, and 571-74. Skinner alone provides the original authority that it was Milton's own work. Let us consider what we know about him—a good deal more than about Picard.

Parker places his birth about 1651 and his admission to Trinity College, Cambridge, on 1 July 1670.²⁷ With other biographers like

David Masson he has assumed that Skinner was one of Milton's later amanuenses and that Milton thought so highly of him that he entrusted to him copies of the yet-unpublished *State Papers* and the *Christian Doctrine* on the basis of the fact that both manuscripts showed up after Milton's death in Skinner's hands. Unfortunately, there is no evidence to back up this assumption. Skinner does not appear in any of the records directly associated with Milton. Instead, it is he himself who after the poet's death made a vague claim of familiarity with him: in November 1676 he wrote to Samuel Pepys (the diarist, whose then mistress was Skinner's sister Mary) that he had "happen'd to be acquainted with Milton in his lifetime."²⁸ In the same letter he claims that he has "the works of Milton which he left behind him to me." On the other hand, J. Milton French discovered an unsigned letter from a contemporary who wrote, "I am informed that since the death of Mr. Milton his Books have byn lookt over by one Mr. Skinner a scholar and a bold young man who has cull'd out what he thought fitt, amongst the rest he has taken a manuscript of Mr. Milton's written on the Civil Ecclesiastical Government of the Kingdom which he is resolved to print."²⁹ The letter goes on to show that its author knew how Skinner planned to publish the works in Holland. Skinner's statement and the actual possession in hand of the two unpublished manuscripts are the sole direct pieces of evidence for any relationship between the young student and the old controversialist. From the anonymous letter it seems clear that what Skinner planned to do with his manuscripts was pretty widely known.

Other information that we have about Skinner, though not much, is not reassuring. As Kelley observes, he lied to Pepys about the location of the two manuscripts;³⁰ another letter to Pepys French judged to "contain a veiled hint of blackmail";³¹ he borrowed ten pounds from Pepys which he did not repay as promised. Kelley comments on his "manifest untrustworthiness."³² Just how Skinner came into possession of his two manuscripts seems a matter now of unprofitable speculation. One of them, the *State Papers*, was not original with Milton except in its Latin translations; the other, as I am showing, is of doubtful authenticity. It is ironic justice that Cromwell's political reputation forbade the issuance of the *State Papers* and indeed hindered Skinner's career with English political authorities.³³ As for the theological treatise, Elzevir, Skinner's publisher in Amsterdam, showed it to the Dutch theologian Philippus van Limborch, who advised against printing it on the grounds of its Arianism.³⁴

With regard to Skinner's relationship to the theological manuscript, as has been mentioned he copied pages 1-196, 308, and 571-74. It has been assumed that he did so to clean up the text for the printer to whom he would submit it, but that is a questionable assumption because, as Kelley observes, his "clean" copy is far more smitten with errors than the manuscript of Picard that Skinner never completed.³⁵ It may be significant that pages 1-196 (through chapter 14) are the most unorthodox of the whole treatise and that the other larger intrusion, pages 571-74, is in the middle of the attack on the observance of the Sabbath. But without more evidence the question of Skinner's motivations must remain unanswered. His reason for getting possession of both manuscripts and his attempts to publish them are clear. In 1676 he was on the edge of an appointment to Trinity College (which he finally got), and he evidently believed (wrongly) that his publication of the two manuscripts which he could assign to a famous but now late poet who could not correct him might help him to a political appointment in Holland. Such is the questionable evidence for the authority of the manuscript that we can extract from the wayward young Daniel.

The remaining evidence for the inclusion of the *Christian Doctrine* in the Milton canon derives from the early biographers, all of whom know about a religious work authored by Milton, though none got its title right. We may group together John Aubrey, Anthony à Wood, and John Toland, who garnered much the same information. Thus Aubrey learned of an "Idea Theologiae in MS. in y^e hands of M^r Skinner,"³⁶ information repeated by Wood, who adds that the work, "fram[ed] . . . out of the Bible," was completed after the Restoration and is "now, or at least lately, in the hands of the Author's Acquaintance called *Cyr. Skinner*, living in *Mark lane, London*," but this was the home of Daniel Skinner's father, to whom was addressed the paper wrapper on the manuscript as Lemon discovered it.³⁷ Toland reported a "*System of Divinity* that once was in the hands of his [Milton's] Friend *Cyriac Skinner*."³⁸ What these records show is that their authors all knew of some religious work but only by hearsay; their information is quite consistent, and it all seems to derive from a single source, Daniel Skinner, whose authority about Milton was for them so vague that when they gave his Christian name it was that of the well-certified Cyriack rather than the unknown Daniel. Richardson's biography is of not much more use: he had heard only of "a Body of Divinity out of the Bible" without any associated date but thought it was "probably" written after Milton became blind.³⁹

The other two early biographies do not trace as clearly to this common source in Daniel. They are by the "Anonymous Biographer," whom I tend with others to identify with Cyriack Skinner, and the poet's nephew Edward Phillips. In his biography of his uncle, Phillips knew only of a work in divinity composed when Milton was still teaching school in the 1640s. Edward was one of his students and so could report accurately about how he directed "the writing from his own dictation, some part, from time to time, of a Tractate which he thought fit to collect from the ablest of Divines, who had written of that subject; *Amesius, Wollebius, &c. viz. A perfect System of Divinity.*"⁴⁰ But this cannot be the *Christian Doctrine*, which is collected from the Bible rather than from Ames and Wolleb; and its date of composition is much too early.⁴¹

Also important, and the last biographer to be considered, is the "Anonymous" one. Its author knew that after he became blind Milton "fram[ed] a *Body of Divinity* out of the Bible . . . which . . . hee finish'd after the Restoration." He also knew that in some of its "speculative points" it differed "perhaps from that commonly receivd, (and which is thought to bee the reason that [it] never was printed)."⁴² This information is indeed congruent with what else we know about the treatise except for its date of composition after 1660, which seems a little late. Its author was aware that it was based on biblical texts (there is no mention of Ames and Wolleb) and of its unusual doctrinal points. This biography offers, I think, the main piece of evidence that may directly link Milton with the treatise as its author.

But it too must be questioned. Accurate though it generally is, it tends to vagueness about the last twenty years or so of Milton's life. The paragraph that mentions the "Body of Divinity" also refers to the beginning of a Greek dictionary, otherwise unnoticed by any associate of the poet. The same paragraph says that after the Restoration Milton finished "the *Brittish history* . . . , *Paradise regain'd, Samson Agonistes*, a Tragedy, *Logica & Accedence commenc'd Grammar.*" But surely the history of England, the Logic, and the Grammar though published then actually date from some years earlier. The description of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* as works in which "hee more especially taught all Virtue" is somewhat eccentric. Facts like these suggest that the author of the biography was not a close associate of Milton at the time when he was supposedly dictating the *Christian Doctrine*. If indeed it was Cyriack Skinner he was busy setting up his own household then. In conclusion I suggest that this work relies for these years upon the same rumors about the treatise that the other biographers had

also heard, emanating ultimately from Daniel Skinner and including the rejection of the manuscript by Elzevir on the grounds of its heresies. Flawed though it may be, nevertheless, the Anonymous Biography provides the main evidence that Milton authored the treatise. One must question whether it is sufficient to support so important an assignment.

If he did not, who did? Clearly the question is impossible to answer. We need to know more about its first copier, Picard. We need to know more about how and when the manuscript came into Daniel Skinner's hands. Skinner, incidentally, may have honestly believed that Milton was its source; evidently he advertised the fact widely and at the same time spread some idea of its contents and of his plans to publish it. Whoever originated the work would have been an Arminian, a person who shared Milton's minority ideas on divorce and on many of the basic beliefs held by the group loosely titled radical puritans. I should expect him to have had some personal association with the poet. Unlike Milton, he would have been an Arian—that is, in seventeenth-century terms, a Socinian. He would be someone who had not recently published anything about religious dogma (the *Christian Doctrine* was written to remedy that lack) but an author who already had a considerable career behind him. Why two amanuenses copied out the work and several more wrote in various individual words and sentences I do not know. If I had to choose someone who best fits this pattern I would suggest John Goodwin, who died in 1665.⁴³

NOTES

¹Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1941.

²W.B. Hunter, C.A. Patrides, and J.H. Adamson, *Bright Essence: Studies in Milton's Theology* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1971); Barbara Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, and Art of "Paradise Regained"* (Providence, RI: Brown Univ. Press; London: Methuen, 1966); Mary Ann Radzinowicz, *Toward "Samson Agonistes": The Growth of Milton's Mind* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978); Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977).

³*Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Dan Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1953-82), 6:24, n.5. Henceforth *Yale Prose*.

⁴I am not the first to raise this question. Right after its publication in 1825 Thomas Burgess, Bishop of Salisbury, strongly challenged the ascription of the *Christian Doctrine* to Milton but failed to sway public opinion (*Yale Prose*, 6:7-8, n. 24). Michael Lieb has kindly informed me that John Mitford

expressed some doubts in his *Life* (1831). See Mitford's *Poetical Works of John Milton*, 2 vols. (Boston, 1841), 2: xcix. I do not believe that the ascription has been questioned since then. The late C.A. Patrides, accepting Milton's authorship, considered it as a gross statement of theology, unworthy of him. See his "Milton and the Arian Controversy," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 120,4 (13 August 1976): 245-52.

⁵*Yale Prose*, 7 (rev. edn.): 230, n. 6.

⁶Gordon Campbell, "De Doctrina Christiana: Its Structural Principles and Its Unfinished State," *Milton* 9 (1976): 243-60. Kelley questions even this lack of completion in "On the State of Milton's *De Doctrina Christiana*," *ELN* 27, 2 (December 1989): 43-48.

⁷Arthur Sewell, *A Study in Milton's "Christian Doctrine"* (London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1939), pp. 47-48, and *Yale Prose*, 7:264.

⁸*This Great Argument*, p. 19, n.; *Yale Prose*, 6:68, n. 78.

⁹Sewell, pp. 119-21; *Yale Prose*, 6:439-40; and my essay in *Bright Essence*, p. 144.

¹⁰*Bright Essence*, pp. 141-42.

¹¹*The Descent of Urania: Studies in Milton, 1946-1988* (Lewisburg, Pa.: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 77-90.

¹²*Yale Prose*, 6:22, n. 25.

¹³*Yale Prose*, 6:121.

¹⁴For a convenient statement of Defoe's views see Irving Rothman's summary in *A Milton Encyclopedia*, 9 vols. (Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell Univ. Press, 1978-83), 2:135-40. For "beget" see *Bright Essence*, pp. 116-18.

¹⁵John Shawcross, ed., *Milton: The Critical Heritage* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1970), p. 25, and *Milton 1732-1801: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 24-26 and the associated texts of both.

¹⁶As we variously argued in *Bright Essence*.

¹⁷"Milton's Urania: The meaning, not the Name I call," *SEL* 28, 1 (Winter 1988): 95-111; reprinted in *The Descent of Urania*, pp. 31-45.

¹⁸Sewell, pp. 100-103.

¹⁹*Yale Prose*, 6:295; *This Great Argument*, pp. 111-18.

²⁰*The Works of John Milton*, 18 vols. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1931-38), 17:432.

²¹*Yale Prose*, 6:117, n. 1.

²²This is SP 9/61, in four parts. Dr. Gordon Campbell has written me privately that he too has recently examined the manuscript. He found that the ink of the printed letters "under ultra-violet light . . . becomes faintly fluorescent, so it must be based on ferrous sulfate." On the other hand, "Early nineteenth-century documents . . . were written with vegetable-based India ink." Further, as he observes, "The colour-match is perfect." But he also reports an incongruity: "the ink of the names was more acidic than that of the rest of the pages (there are telltale marks and holes)" and so it "clearly came from a different batch" from the ink of the manuscript proper. He concludes that "Ferrous ink was not in general use [in 1823], but it still existed. Forgers were certainly able to produce it, and they could match colours accurately." Dr. Campbell also considered another document in SP 9/61: "an engraving apparently from the 1820s, of selections from the *Christian Doctrine* MS, including the top of page 7. Every jot, tittle and smudge is lovingly reproduced, so it looks exactly like your photocopy, except for one rather interesting detail: Milton's name is missing. Engravers did not omit names."

²³Reflecting on the odd manuscript evidence, Dr. Campbell goes on to recount that he requested another Public Record Office manuscript, SP 12/260, No. 117, a famous forgery in which Shakespeare and his fellow actors supposedly petitioned the Privy Council about the Blackfriars Theatre in 1596. Despite the disavowal of its authenticity by "various luminaries," as Dr. Campbell observes, "there is another distinctly touchy letter stating that the document is authentic, and it has only one signatory: Robert Lemon. . . . The forgery [of the Blackfriars petition]," he concludes, "has been assigned probably to [John Payne] Collier," who "is known also to have worked on the manuscripts in SP 9." In a few years Lemon would send Collier information connecting Sir Thomas Lucy with Shakespeare's family and facts supposedly concerning his military service.

²⁴James Holly Hanford, "The Rosenbach Milton Documents," *PMLA* 38, 2 (June 1923): 290-96.

²⁵William Elton, "New Light on Milton's Amanuensis," *HLQ* 26, 4 (August 1963): 383-84.

²⁶William R. Parker, *Milton: A Biography*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 2:1063, n. 54, adding that he once put some of his graduate students to finding more about Picard, without success; see also John Shawcross, "A Survey of Milton's Prose Works," in *Achievements of the Left Hand*, ed. Michael Lieb and John Shawcross (Amherst, MA: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1974), p. 372, suggesting Picard's possible earlier connection with Milton about 1655 but not a later one.

²⁷Parker, 1:610.

²⁸R.G. Howarth, *Letters and the Second Diary of Samuel Pepys* (London: Longman's, 1933), p. 60.

²⁹J. Milton French, "'That Late Villain Milton,'" *PMLA* 55, 1 (March 1940): 102-115, 103.

³⁰*Yale Prose*, 6:37, n. 7.

³¹French, p. 105.

³²*Yale Prose*, 6:37.

³³David Masson, *The Life of John Milton*, 7 vols. (rpt. Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1965), 6:790-805, is a convenient, if incomplete, source for Skinner's attempts at self-advancement.

³⁴H. Scherpbier, *Milton in Holland* (Amsterdam: H.J. Paris, 1933), p. 63.

³⁵*Yale Prose*, 6:35, n. 8.

³⁶Helen Darbishire, ed., *The Early Lives of Milton* (London: Constable, 1932), pp. 9-10.

³⁷Darbishire, pp. 46, 47.

³⁸Darbishire, p. 192.

³⁹Darbishire, p. 265.

⁴⁰Darbishire, p. 61.

⁴¹Kelley would disagree. Arguing a heavy obligation of the treatise to the works of Ames and Wolleb named in the Phillips biography as the sources of the "perfect System of Divinity" mentioned there, he finds the conclusion "Not unreasonable . . . that the Amesius-Wollebius materials present in the *Christian Doctrine* arrived there via 'A perfect System,' and that 'A perfect System' constituted the primary version of the *Christian Doctrine*" (*Yale Prose*, 6:19). But the parallels are only in the commonplaces of Calvinism. There are simply no analogues between the Ames-Wolleb materials and the discussion in the treatise of subjects like the Trinity, the Incarnation, predestination, baptism, and so on. Nor is any to be expected with those two

bastions of Calvinism. Dr. Thomas Calhoun has privately suggested that one of Milton's student's theological outlines based on Ames and Wolleb may have survived to flower later as its owner's *Christian Doctrine*.

⁴²Darbshire, pp. 29, 31.

⁴³This paper is deeply indebted to critical suggestions made by Dr. John Shawcross, by Dr. Gordon Campbell, by Dr. Michael Lieb, and by my colleague Dr. Sherry Zivley. None, however, necessarily endorses its thesis.