

## Forum: Milton's *Christian Doctrine*

William B. Hunter's essay, "The Provenance of the *Christian Doctrine*," was delivered 8 August 1991 to a session at the Fourth International Milton Symposium at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. Dr. Gordon Campbell of the University of Leicester chaired the panel. Dr. Barbara Lewalski of Harvard University and Dr. John Shawcross of the University of Kentucky responded. Both respondents received advanced copies of the Hunter essay.

The panel participants all agreed that the responses as well as a short reply from Dr. Hunter should appear in print with the original essay, already accepted for this issue of *Studies in English Literature*. Because of severe restrictions of time as the issue goes to press, no substantive changes have been made in any of the papers or in the initiating article.

### BARBARA K. LEWALSKI

It is always salutary for scholars to rethink established verities; so my good friend William Hunter has contributed largely to our collective good by forcing us to reconsider the case for Milton's authorship of *De Doctrina Christiana*. His challenge centers on three issues: the alleged disparities and contradictions between the theological tract and Milton's other works, especially *Paradise Lost*; the state of the *De Doctrina* text and the names and initials inscribed on it; and the external evidence surrounding the document, notably the questionable probity of Daniel Skinner. Reviewing evidence collected by David Masson, William Riley Parker, Maurice Kelley, and others, I mean to argue here the case for Milton's authorship, which despite these challenges seems to me persuasive, indeed compelling. In doing so I shall reverse

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Barbara K. Lewalski, William R. Kenan Professor of English Literature at Harvard University, has written several books on seventeenth-century literature, among them "*Paradise Lost*" and *the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (1985) and *Protestant Poetics and the Seventeenth-Century Religious Lyric* (1979). Her forthcoming book is entitled *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (1992).

Hunter's method and come last to what is in fact the nub of the matter—the question of consonance between this tract and Milton's poems. Miltonists who find *Paradise Lost* to be a grand embodiment of Christian orthodoxy have always sought to distance it on some grounds from the heterodoxies of *Christian Doctrine*.<sup>1</sup> Other Milton scholars find the late poems to be imbued with those heterodoxies—antitrinitarianism, arminianism, monism—and find them central to the poems' drama and power.<sup>2</sup>

Let me first address some of Hunter's speculative questions. If this tract is Milton's why did he not publish it between 1658 and 1660, while he still could? This question only arises from hindsight. Milton could not know that the Restoration would happen in May 1660; in 1659 he was still hopeful of the Commonwealth, and in the early months of 1660 he was trying desperately to stave off the Restoration by various appeals to his fellow Puritans. It was hardly the moment to antagonize them with a heterodox theological document even if it were finished. But probably it was not then in final form. Kelley notes that even the final manuscript retains a few discrepancies: some references lacking, one section missing from a chapter in the book on the worship of God (II.ii).<sup>3</sup>

Could a blind man produce such a document, with its wealth of scripture texts marshaled in support of each proposition? Surely this blind man could, given that he so manifestly loaded every rift of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* with the ore of biblical allusion, as the very different studies of James Sims and Mary Ann Radzinowicz demonstrate.<sup>4</sup> That is a much harder feat. While working on *De Doctrina* Milton and his amanuenses probably had to hand the now lost *Index Theologicus* or *Commonplace Book* of texts and citations he reportedly gathered over many years.<sup>5</sup>

Is it significant that a somewhat different array of authorities is cited in *De Doctrina* from those in Milton's controversial prose? Not really. Milton had little reverence for authorities as such, of any kind, and tended to look out the ones he needed for the argument at hand. He translated part of Bucer as support for his divorce tracts,<sup>6</sup> but elsewhere makes little use of him; Ames and Wolleb's manuals are useful for the organization of topics in *De Doctrina*, but not for concepts, here or elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> Hunter himself points toward the resolution of this issue in a 1976 article identifying a group of contemporary continental Calvinists and Arminians as the specific audience for *De Doctrina*:<sup>8</sup> this was not an audience Milton needed or wanted to address in his other tracts.

Now to the state of the text and Hunter's photographic evidence of the crowded inscriptions. How much does it matter that Milton's

name (twice) and initials (once) seem all to be later additions, not part of Skinner's original transcription? One was certainly added later, as is evident from a contemporary engraving of page 7 lacking the inscription.<sup>9</sup> This scenario is hardly surprising: the author's name probably would not be part of the working text of Milton's copyist—or for that matter the working text of a modern Miltonist. The last thing I do before sending off a paper or a book manuscript is to put my name on it: before that it is quite anonymous. If discovered posthumously, it would have to be shown to be mine by being found with my papers, by its consonance with my other works, by the fact that my husband and colleagues knew I was working on such a text, etc. And whoever prepared it finally for publication would have to add my name, in the form I customarily use. Hunter shows that we cannot base a claim for Milton's authorship on these inscriptions. But neither Kelley, who thought them probably in Skinner's hand, nor the Columbia editors who thought them all later additions, relied on them to authenticate the document. And neither I think need we.

Several other features of the manuscript do point to Milton's authorship. Most of the text is in the hand of Jeremie Picard, whose connection to Milton is evident from the fact that he signed his name as witness to two Milton documents in the relevant years: a mortgage deed in 1658 and a conveyance of a bond, 5 May 1660. Also, paleographic analysis by Kelley and the Columbia editors shows that several other amanuenses (seven or more) worked on the manuscript at various times, adding corrections and revisions—usually in cursive hand, sometimes printed.<sup>10</sup> This is exactly the kind of text one would expect from a blind scholar who had to rely on many scribes to produce and revise a long work over many years; it is much harder to explain as the manuscript of a sighted author. Since the early chapters are the most heterodox, they were probably the most heavily revised, causing Skinner to copy over the first fourteen chapters for the printer—albeit sloppily, as Kelley notes.

What about the external evidence associating this manuscript with Milton? That Daniel Skinner was an ambitious and less than admirable careerist is documented by Masson, Parker, Kelley, William Hunter, and others, but his story affords, I think, little basis for Hunter's suggestion that he deliberately or mistakenly palmed off *De Doctrina* as Milton's. He may or may not have been Milton's scholar or amanuensis; and he may have assumed the role of Milton's literary executor without authorization, as is implied in the anonymous letter terming him "a bold young man who has

cull'd out what he thought fitt" of Milton's papers.<sup>11</sup> But he had to have some relationship with Milton to gain access to those papers: we know that he transcribed Milton's letters of state and sent them with the *De Doctrina* to Elzevir, to be printed in Holland. In the numerous letters exchanged from 1675 to 1677 among Skinner, Pepys, the English Secretary of State Sir Joseph Williamson, Elzevir, Skinner's father, and others, those two documents (the State Papers and the theological tract) are always mentioned together and always ascribed to Milton.<sup>12</sup>

The letters show that Skinner expected at first to further his career by publishing the two Milton works. But his mistake was soon made painfully clear to him: Williamson pressed him to recall the manuscripts, and he missed out on a much-desired secretary's post in the Netherlands when Williamson wrote that he [Skinner] needed to be "a little aired from the ill name Mr. Milton's friendship ought to leave upon one."<sup>13</sup> Skinner expressed to Pepys his chagrin "that Sir Joseph was such an enemy to the name of Milton, he told me he could countenance nothing of that man's writings."<sup>14</sup> Skinner stopped publication, proclaimed his readiness to burn all Milton's papers if Williamson wished, and tried to dissociate himself as far as possible from Milton, claiming that he was not "in the least tainted with any of his principles" and that his only concern "with Milton or his works" arose from "a foolish, yet a plausible, ambition to learning."<sup>15</sup> What he does not do—though it could only have helped him were it true—is to suggest that the theological treatise might not be by the notorious Milton after all, that he might have made a mistake about that.<sup>16</sup> At length Skinner's father wrote to Elzevir (apparently at Williamson's behest) to hasten the return of the papers; Elzevir promised on 19 February 1677 to send posthaste "the two manuscripts of Milton—to wit, his work on Theology and his Letters to Princes."<sup>17</sup> This parcel, containing the Milton State Papers and the *De Doctrina*, addressed "To Mr. Skinner, merch." was found by Robert Lemon in 1823, still in its Elzevirian wrappings.<sup>18</sup> Seen in terms of this story, the wrappings testify eloquently to the provenance of the texts they enclosed.

Moreover, several of Milton's contemporaries knew he had written a theological tract. While John Aubrey and Anthony à Wood may have had their information from Skinner, there is also independent testimony. Milton's nephew Edward Phillips claimed that in the 1640s Milton was writing "A perfect System of Divinity" collected "from the ablest of Divines . . . Amesius, Wollebius, &c."<sup>19</sup> As William Hunter says, this cannot be the *De Doctrina* we know, based on the Bible, heterodox, and written much later. But it sounds like an early version: Kelley shows that the organization

and topics of *De Doctrina* closely follow Wolleb and Ames, and the Epistle to *De Doctrina* reports the writer's early practice of compiling biblical proof texts after the example of some "shorter systems of theologians."<sup>20</sup> Also, Milton's anonymous biographer, probably his student and close friend Cyriak Skinner, knew of the tract's heterodoxy (which Daniel Skinner does not mention), and there is no reason to discount his evidence:

It was now [after he became totally blind] that hee began . . . the composing *Paradise Lost* And the framing a *Body of Divinity* out of the Bible. . . . his Judgment in his *Body of Divinity* concerning some speculative points, differing perhaps from that commonly receivd . . . is thought to bee the reason that never was printed.<sup>21</sup>

If these contemporaries are unclear about some facts, they all agree on the central one: that Milton wrote some such work as *De Doctrina Christiana*.

I turn now to the tract's consonance with Milton's prose and poetry. Hunter states that *De Doctrina* does not allude to any other Miltonic work. But the passage on Divorce (I.x, *Yale Prose* 6:377-78) does just that: it defines fornication very broadly ("*some shameful thing*") to justify divorce for virtually any cause disrupting marital harmony, and concludes, "I have proved this elsewhere, basing my argument on several scriptural texts." The cross-reference is to a passage in *Tetrachordon* (*Yale Prose* 2:671-73) which expounds the term in the same way, citing the same central text from Judges 19:2.<sup>22</sup>

Some of the closest verbal parallels are echoes of Milton's *Arte of Logic* in *De Doctrina* I.iii, "Of Divine Decree." Since Kelley's footnotes make that case (*Yale Prose* 6:159-60), I will focus here on some characteristic passages in the treatise that echo fundamental concepts and language in Milton's prose. First, the issue of heresy. *De Doctrina*'s "Epistle: To All the Churches of Christ" denounces those who use the term to condemn unconventional beliefs, limiting its meaning to doctrine not based on a personal understanding of scripture:

Since the compilation of the New Testament, nothing can correctly be called heresy unless it contradicts that. . . . In common with the whole Protestant Church I refuse to recognize any other arbiters of or any other supreme authorities for Christian belief [than scripture], or any faith not independently arrived at but "implicit" as it is termed.

(*Yale Prose* 6:123-24)

Milton makes the same point in *Of Civil Power* (1659), probably written concurrently: "then ought we to beleeeve what in our conscience we apprehend the scripture to say, though the visible church with all her doctors gainsay . . . they who do so are not heretics, but the best protestants" (*Yale Prose* 7:248-49).

Second, the uses of open discussion to the advancement of truth. *De Doctrina's* "Epistle" declares:

I implore all friends of truth not to start shouting that the church is being thrown into confusion by free discussion and inquiry. These are allowed in academic circles, and should certainly be denied to no believer. For we are ordered to find out the truth about all things, and the daily increase of the light of truth fills the church much rather with brightness and strength than with confusion.

(*Yale Prose* 6:121)

That point is urged (more eloquently) in *Areopagitica*:

There be who perpetually complain of schisms and sects, and make it such a calamity that any man dissents from their maxims. . . . The light which we have gain'd, was giv'n us, not to be ever staring on, but by it to discover onward things more remote from our knowledge.

(*Yale Prose* 2:550)

Next, the method of turning first to scripture in doctrinal matters, and only then to authorities. The "Epistle" to *De Doctrina* states:

I had not even studied any of the so-called heretical writers, when the blunders of those who are styled orthodox, and their unthinking distortions of the sense of scripture, first taught me to agree with their opponents whenever these agreed with the Bible.

(*Yale Prose* 6:123-24)

Milton lays claim to the same method in the Bucer divorce tract:

I ow no light, or leading receav'd from any man in the discovery of this truth, what time I first undertook it in the doctrine and discipline of divorce, and had only the infallible grounds of Scripture to be my guide. . . . When I had almost finisht the first edition, I chanc't to read . . . Hugo Grotius.

(*Yale Prose* 2:433)

Finally, the habit of appealing to scripture and reason together, as harmonious supports for all sorts of arguments. *De Doctrina* appeals to both to urge the absurdity of the Trinitarian position, "Reason rejects the idea, and scripture nowhere supports it" (*Yale Prose* 6:239). And to defend the author's antitrinitarian position:

If God is one God, and the Father, and yet the Son is also called God, then he must have received the divine name and nature from God the Father, in accordance with the Father's decree and will, as I said before. This is in no way opposed to reason, and is supported by innumerable texts from scripture.  
(*Yale Prose* 6:222)

Compare (among many such places) Milton's defence of divorce in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (*Yale Prose* 2:242): "This position shall be laid down . . . either from Scripture or light of reason." Or again, "neither Scripture nor reason hath laid this unjust austerity upon divorce" (*Yale Prose* 2:342). Or, the Miltonic justification of tyrannicide in *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*: "This, though it cannot but stand with plain reason, shall be made good also by Scripture" (*Yale Prose* 3:206).

Now for *De Doctrina* and *Paradise Lost*. The treatise does not ignore Satan (as Hunter states): chapter nine discusses the devils and their leader, Satan, terming him the "author of all wickedness." In *Paradise Lost* he is termed "Author of evil" (6:262) and "Author of all ill" (2:381).<sup>23</sup> The monism of the treatise (I.vii) and its argument for Creation ex Deo is consonant with *Paradise Lost* 5:470-500. These lines refer to "one first matter" proceeding from God and "Indu'd with various forms, various degrees / Of substance, and in things that live, of life" (5:473-74). This principle underlies the epic's blurred distinctions between matter and spirit, angels and humans, intuitive and discursive intellect—"Differing but in degree, of kind the same" (5:490). It also allows angels who eat and have sex into the epic, but the absence of biblical proof texts would dictate omission of these activities from the treatise.

Hunter asserts that the poem ignores the "conditional" divine decrees so central to the Arminian argument of the treatise. But the poem makes God's decrees of reward and punishment explicitly conditional for both men and angels. At 5:501, the divine warning to humankind, declared by Raphael, is conditional—"If ye be found obedient"—and he explains that the same condition governs angelic life:

Myself and all th'Angelic Host that stand  
 In sight of God enthron'd, our happy state  
 Hold, as you yours, while our obedience holds.

(5:535-37)

Moreover, in terms which recall *De Doctrina* I.iii-iv, Milton has God himself deny predestination and insist that his conditional decrees guarantee human liberty:

nor can justly accuse  
 Thir maker, or thir making, or thir Fate;  
 As if Predestination over-rul'd  
 Thir will, dispos'd by absolute Decree  
 Or high foreknowledge; they themselves decreed  
 Thir own revolt, not I: if I foreknew,  
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,  
 Which had no less prov'd certain unforeknown.  
 So without least impulse or shadow of Fate,  
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,  
 They trespass, Authors to themselves in all.

(3:112-22)

Finally, there is the issue of Antitrinitarianism. Hunter refers to his earlier papers and articles as "proving" the trinitarian thrust of the invocations in *Paradise Lost*, and its treatment of the Son and the Spirit. We are all of us prone to believe that when we develop an argument about a literary text we have proved it to all comers; but in fact these remain controverted places in the poem. Many Miltonists continue to believe that the Hymn to Light in Book 3 addresses Light as prime attribute of God, not the trinitarian Son; and that the invocation to the Spirit in Book 1 as the dove brooding over the creation addresses essentially the creating Power of the Father, in consonance with *De Doctrina's* explication of that allusion to Genesis 1:2 (I:vi, *Yale Prose* 6:282). *De Doctrina* refers all Old Testament texts naming the Spirit either to God the Father himself or to some embodiment of his divine power: light, creative breath, voice, word sent from above, divine impulse, the Son, or the angels as God's agents (*Yale Prose* 6:293). And it explains the "person" of the Holy Spirit in the New Testament as the designated emissary of both Father and Son, much inferior to both. The passages describing the descent of the dove-spirit at Christ's baptism in *Paradise Regained* accord with *De Doctrina's* assertion that the Spirit then descended "not so much in its own right as sent by the Father to be a symbol and minister of divine power" (*Yale Prose* 6:284).



Whatever name we give to the Antitrinitarianism of *De Doctrina*, that treatise holds that the Father alone is the supreme, self-existent, eternal God. The Son is also divine (and so appropriately called God in *Of Civil Power* and elsewhere) but he is not self-existent, not co-eternal, not of the same essence with the Father, not eternally generated of God's nature but "voluntarily created or generated or produced . . . before all things" by God's will and decree "within the bounds of time" (*Yale Prose* 6:211, 209). *De Doctrina* insists that the Son's divine nature and powers are not his own but derived from the Father, who imparted to him "as much as he wished of the divine nature" and attributes, which belong by right "to the Father alone" (*Yale Prose* 6:211, 227). The Son by contrast is mutable and not always omniscient, deriving from his Father "not only the name of God and Jehovah," but also "his individuality, his life itself, his attributes, his works, and lastly his divine honor" (*Yale Prose* 6:259). This is close to Arius and Socinus, but *De Doctrina* differs from both in affirming that the Son shares in the Father's substance. However, this is not consubstantiality as the Athanasian Creed understood it, for the Son is emphatically not of the same essence as the Father. And, according to the tract's monistic principles, the prime matter of every creature is produced from God's substance.

In *Paradise Lost* 3 the Son is not omniscient. He does not fully comprehend the Father's plan for humankind until he engages in debate with him and offers himself as sacrifice; he is then commended by the Father as "By Merit more than Birthright Son of God" (3:309). Mutability in the Son explains Satan's curious shock at his "sudden" exaltation in Book 5. It also explains two scenes in which God infuses his own divine power into the Son: sending the Son to conquer the rebel angels, God says, "Into thee such Virtue and Grace / Immense I have transfus'd, . . . / Go then thou Mightiest in thy Father's might, / Ascend my Chariot" (6:703-711). Yet more explicitly, God designates the Son his agent in the creation: "And thou my Word, begotten Son, by thee / This I perform, speak thou, and be it done: / My overshadowing Spirit and might with thee / I send along" (7:163-66). Moreover, God's words to Adam seem intended to deny Trinitarianism: "[I] am alone / From all Eternity, for none I know / Second to mee or like, equal much less" (8:406-408). And in *Paradise Regained* Christ is portrayed at first as vulnerable and uncertain, led "by some strong motion" into the Wilderness "to what intent / I learn not yet"—but expecting God's revelation (1:290-92).

There is, I think, only one real discrepancy between the treatise and the late poems. As Hunter notes, the Son's phrase (*PL* 3:246)

"All that of me can die" contradicts the argument in *De Doctrina* that both the human and the divine natures of Christ die in the crucifixion. The treatise confidently affirms the mortalist position in regard to Christ's human nature—"If Christ really died, then both his soul and his body died"—but in fact it registers some hesitancy about the other issue: "As for his divine nature, it is more questionable whether that also succumbed to death" (*Yale Prose* 6:439). Most likely, Milton simply changed his mind on what he saw as a debatable point.

Now, a word about reception. The several early readers who detected "Arianism" in *Paradise Lost* sometimes misread the psalmic echo ("This day have I begotten thee") in Book 5 as Hunter notes, but they also responded more generally to the overall portrayal of the Son. Defoe claimed that Milton made "a meer *je ne scay Quoi* of *Jesus Christ*" and laid a foundation "for the corrupt Doctrine of *Arius*."<sup>24</sup> John Toland in his biography of Milton (1698) and other writings sparked a heated controversy when he located his own Socinian views in Milton.<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Richardson in 1734 emphasized Milton's religious radicalism but refused to meddle with the dispute arising from "the Conjecture . . . that *Milton* was an *Arian*."<sup>26</sup> Several attacks on and denials of Milton's "Arian principle" appeared in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of 1738 and 1739.<sup>27</sup> The remarkable thing is that Milton was so widely suspected of heterodoxy on this point even before the discovery of *De Doctrina*.

Why, though, did a far larger body of readers think Milton's poems orthodox until *De Doctrina* was discovered? The reason is not far to seek. The biblical images, metaphors, and allusions suffusing both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*—Image of God, Holy Spirit, Dove, Eternal Wisdom, Edenic innocence—allowed readers early and late to invest such terms with traditional meanings or their own understandings, eliding what might contradict them. It is not that Milton was trying to make his *poem* seem more orthodox than *he* was, or that his right hand was happily able to ignore what the heretical left was about. Anything but. As *De Doctrina* makes clear, Milton argues his most heretical positions by amassing scripture texts—but his understanding of those texts and their terms often differed markedly from that of his Puritan contemporaries and his later orthodox Christian readers. That is why *De Doctrina* has proved so useful to so many Milton scholars.

Consider, finally, the persona projected in the "Epistle" to *De Doctrina*. He is a layman who sets forth a comprehensive theological system—drawing back just a little from claiming that "all previous writers have failed in this attempt." In any event he finds it

necessary "to puzzle out a religious creed for myself by my own exertions" (*Yale Prose* 6:118). He believes that "In religion as in other things . . . God offers all his rewards not to those who are thoughtless and credulous, but to those who labor constantly and seek tirelessly after truth" (*Yale Prose* 6:120). And he offers his tract to his readers not as authoritative doctrine but as questioning method:

Assuredly I do not urge or enforce anything upon my own authority. On the contrary, I advise every reader, and set him an example by doing the same myself, to withhold his consent from those opinions about which he does not feel fully convinced, until the evidence of the Bible convinces him and induces his reason to assent and to believe.

(*Yale Prose* 6:121-22)

As I encounter this persona, with or without name and initials and date attached, I can only call him—John Milton.

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>E.g., C.S. Lewis, *A Preface to "Paradise Lost"* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1942); W.B. Hunter, C.A. Patrides, and J.H. Adamson, *Bright Essence: Studies in Milton's Theology* (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1971).

<sup>2</sup>E.g., Christopher Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution* (London: Faber and Faber, 1977); Mary Ann Radzinowicz, *Toward "Samson Agonistes": The Growth of Milton's Mind* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1978); Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, and Art of "Paradise Regained"* (Providence: Brown Univ. Press; London: Methuen, 1966); and *"Paradise Lost" and the Rhetoric of Literary Forms* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1985).

<sup>3</sup>Maurice Kelley, "Introduction" to *Christian Doctrine*, in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al., 8 vols. (New Haven and London: Yale Univ. Press, 1953-82), 6:103, 330, 334-35, 392, 414. Citations to Milton's prose in text and notes are to this edition (*Yale Prose*).

<sup>4</sup>James H. Sims, *The Bible in Milton's Epics* (Gainesville: Univ. of Florida Press, 1962); Mary Ann Radzinowicz, *Milton's Epics and the Book of Psalms* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1989).

<sup>5</sup>There are twelve references in the Milton *Commonplace Book* we have (*Yale Prose*, 1:344-508) to what Milton terms in one of them an *Index Theologicus*. The "Epistle" to *De Doctrina* (6:119) describes his early practice of listing "under general headings all passages from the scriptures which suggested themselves for quotation, so that I might have them ready at hand when necessary."

<sup>6</sup>*The Judgement of Martin Bucer Concerning Divorce*, 1644 (*Yale Prose*, 2:422-79).

<sup>7</sup>Kelley, "Introduction," *Yale Prose*, 6:18-21.

<sup>8</sup>William B. Hunter, Jr., "The Theological Context of Milton's *Christian Doctrine*," *Achievements of the Left Hand*, ed. Michael Lieb and John T. Shawcross (Amherst: Univ. of Massachusetts Press, 1974), pp. 269-87.

<sup>9</sup>Gordon Campbell has reported but not yet published his discovery of this engraving.

<sup>10</sup>Kelley, "Introduction," *Yale Prose*, 6:23-35. F.A. Patterson, et al., *Works of John Milton*, 18 vols. (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1931-38), 17:425-32.

<sup>11</sup>J. Milton French, " 'That Late Villain Milton,' " *PMLA* 55, 1 (March 1940): 102-115, 103.

<sup>12</sup>William Riley Parker lists nine major letters and depositions (*Milton: A Biography*, 2 vols. [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968], 2:1131), and David Masson quotes from or reprints several more (*The Life of John Milton*, 7 vols. [Cambridge and London: Macmillan, 1859-94], 6:790-806). French, " 'That Late Villain Milton,' " reprints or provides large extracts of these and other related letters, supplying further details of Skinner's life and activities. We know rather more about him than Hunter suggests.

<sup>13</sup>Masson, 6:801.

<sup>14</sup>Masson, 6:795.

<sup>15</sup>Masson, 6:799, 801-802.

<sup>16</sup>While Elzevir evidently hesitated to publish the theological tract after being warned of its Arianism, Williamson's chief concern was to stop publication of Milton's State Papers.

<sup>17</sup>Masson, 6:803.

<sup>18</sup>Masson, 6:805; Kelley, "Introduction," *Yale Prose*, 6:3.

<sup>19</sup>Edward Phillips, *The Life of Mr. John Milton*, in Helen Darbishire, ed., *The Early Lives of Milton* (London: Constable, 1932), p. 61.

<sup>20</sup>*Yale Prose*, 6:119.

<sup>21</sup>*The Life of Mr. John Milton*, in Darbishire, pp. 29-31.

<sup>22</sup>In a personal letter Jason Rosenblatt has pointed out to me that the exegesis in *De Doctrina* of "some shameful thing" (Deut. 24:1) and the identification of that term with fornication (Matt. 19:9) parallels the inclusive meaning given those terms in both *Doctrine and Discipline* (*Yale Prose*, 2:244, 334-35) and *Tetrachordon* (*Yale Prose*, 2:620). The argument is rabbinical, familiar to Milton from John Seldon's *Uxor Ebraica*. The parallels between the general argument in *De Doctrina*'s divorce passage and that in Milton's two major Divorce tracts is in fact very close.

<sup>23</sup>All citations of Milton's poems in text and notes are to Merritt Y. Hughes, *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose* (New York: Odyssey, 1957).

<sup>24</sup>Daniel Defoe, *The Political History of the Devil* (London, 1726), p. 69.

<sup>25</sup>See John Toland, *Life of John Milton*, in Darbishire, pp. 83-197. And see the discussion of the controversy in John Shawcross, ed., *Milton 1732-1801: The Critical Heritage* (London and Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972), pp. 24-25.

<sup>26</sup>Jonathan Richardson, *Explanatory Notes and Remarks on Milton's "Paradise Lost"* (1734), in Darbishire, pp. 201-330, esp. p. 84.

<sup>27</sup>Extracts in Shawcross, *Milton 1732-1801*, pp. 93-98. Cf. p. 25.

## JOHN T. SHAWCROSS

The suggestion that Milton may not have been the author of *De Doctrina Christiana* obviously has major implications for the study of his works, particularly of *Paradise Lost*, and of his beliefs. Denial of his authorship nullifies much of the scholarship of the last century and three quarters, or makes it redundant. Before the manuscript was discovered by Robert Lemon in 1823 among the papers of the Public Record Office, the epic was viewed as religiously orthodox, except for early eighteenth-century concern over the presentation of God as what we would call anthropomorphic—God the Father, that is, rather than God the Son, it would seem. People like Charles Leslie and John Clarke found the characterization of a speaking God to be blasphemous, though Jonathan Richardson defended Milton against such charges. Subsequently a controversy arose in the pages of the *Gentleman's Magazine* on this same issue, causing the label Arianism to be bruited about.<sup>1</sup> What these early attacks on the poem suggest are two important problems that persist today. First, people believe that God is real and any attempt to define him is blasphemous, although at the same time the Son is not viewed as being God in some different aspect but somehow Other. The Son is placed on some kind of opposite par with Satan, who also, of course, is real, but both the Son and Satan seem to be capable of characterization. Second, the poem is inadequately read, with stress on certain matters but not on others, with no awareness of its complexities and multifarious interpretations, with partial reading even to the point of reading this book but not that book of the poem. An obvious example of the kind of thing I mean is the attitude toward the allegory of Sin and Death. Constantly and consistently eighteenth-century and later charges against its inclusion in an epic and in a “religious” poem ignore Book 10 and the building of the bridge, and disrelate Satan from that allegory in Book 2 and in the symbolic dissolution of the fallen angels into serpents, for, we know, Satan is “real.” We can understand why Satan has been alleged the hero of the poem, but we should also recognize that people who make this allegation have totally ignored Books 7, 8, 11, and 12 in which he does not figure, although satanic types like

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Nimrod emerge after the Fall. My point in all this, of course, is that *Paradise Lost* is a work that can be variously interpreted, so big that it has seldom been fully encompassed, and that much of the criticism and scholarship expended on it has been wasted on incomplete and inadequate readings.

In 1825 the publication of *De Doctrina Christiana* in both Latin and English translation by Charles Sumner caused a furor because of the inadequate reading of the English translation only. Unfortunately that problem also persists with present-day critics, including Maurice Kelley in his Yale Prose edition, where he is using John Carey's sometimes more literal but far from reliable translation. On subtle points one should use only the Latin, which in itself will cause interpretive difficulties since the Latin can often be interpreted in different ways or can supply subtle ambiguities, hidden by any translation. (I have previously given a couple of examples of Kelley's writing to Carey's translation rather than to the Latin of the text, and need not pursue this point further here.<sup>2</sup> My caution is that we should read the Latin before we start making statements about what the author of *De Doctrina Christiana* said or did not say.) The 1825 translation advanced an unorthodox view of God for many people; there were some revisions to the translation in 1853 for the St. John Bohn edition of the prose and in the Columbia Milton in 1933. Publication of the treatise became the impetus for the popular "life" of Milton by Thomas Babington Macaulay in the *Edinburgh Review*; for a statement in the *North American Review* that commended its survey of scriptural matters but criticized Milton for pursuing such heretical views; and for William Ellery Channing's often reprinted "Remarks on the Character and Writings of John Milton" in *The Christian Examiner*, in which Milton is basically defended.<sup>3</sup> It also becomes a critical sally against Samuel Johnson's bifurcation of Milton the poet and Milton the polemicist; and for Henry John Todd's altered "Some Account of the Life and Writings of John Milton" in the first volume of his third variorum edition of *Poetical Works* in 1826.<sup>4</sup> An unorthodox view of God was seen in the separation of God the Father and God the Son, a reading posing concepts of anti-Trinitarianism, which inexactly was called Arianism, a term that continues to persist in such books as Michael Bauman's *Milton's Arianism* (1987), although the point of juncture is only the anti-Trinitarian reading.<sup>5</sup>

All of these critics seem to forget that the Son *is* God, and *is* God in *Paradise Lost*, and they seem to forget that God is the Father only in relation to the second aspect of godhead, the Son. God, meaning the triune God, becomes Father of all creation, the

Sons of God whether Satan and his cohorts, the faithful angels, or human beings. What Milton gives us in *Paradise Lost* and what is found in *De Doctrina Christiana* is an explanation of what is meant by a triune god, who becomes Father and Son and Holy Spirit. This, of course, leads to another problem besetting criticism of the epic: the Holy Spirit's presence in the poem. Apparently some readers, in order to recognize the Holy Spirit in the poem, would demand someone like Topper or Noel Coward's "Blithe Spirit." Read with an eye toward understanding the presence of the Holy Spirit in the poem, one can discern him (or her) or his absence everywhere: that is much of the point of Books 11 and 12. There are those imbued with the Holy Spirit like Enoch and those not, like Nimrod, but it is "Thou O Spirit" who makes the "vast and dark Abyss pregnant with dove-like" white creatures, that is, those like the "Spirit of God descending like a dove" (Matthew 3:16), who inspirits the dark within the poet to "illumine" him so that he "may assert Eternal Providence, / And justifie the wayes of God to men."<sup>6</sup> But he is the God who "is also in sleep" and the "Providence" that is humankind's guide. Ultimately the Holy Spirit is the most important aspect of God in *Paradise Lost*, for it is God's Spirit engendered in humankind that will allow for Milton's success in asserting providence and justifying God's ways to and toward human beings.

Among the significant passages in *De Doctrina Christiana* for these ideas is Book I, Chapter V, "Of the Son of God": "This one thing I beg of my reader: that he will weigh each statement and evaluate it with a mind innocent of prejudice and eager only for the truth. . . . So far the efficiency of God has been treated as INTERNAL, residing in his decrees" (6:203-204). (I would remark that treatment concerns the unified God, the God to whom the author or Milton, along with Tertullian, assigned *substantia*.) He continues: "His EXTERNAL efficiency takes the form of the execution of these decrees. By this he effects outside himself something he has decreed within himself" (6:205). One of the subdivisions of external efficiency is generation, of which the first is the Son, second, the Holy Spirit, third, the angelic orders. The author's continuance in this chapter and the next on the Holy Spirit demonstrates an analysis of the concept of one god in three persons by differentiation of terms and concepts. The *substantia* of God, which is singular and out of which all creation comes, will be reduced under God, at the end of time, so that God will be All in All (a major text of the poem and, of course, it is cited from I Corinthians 15:28, where the Son is specifically said to put himself under God—that is, return his part of substance to the substance

which is God). In the treatise the text occurs in chapter V on the Son twice, in chapter XV on Christ's mediatorial office, and in chapter XXXIII on the final conflagration.

At the beginning of humankind's time the text and concept are of major import: as soon as "the great Ensign of *Messiah* blaz'd / Aloft," Michael, "Under [the] conduct [of the Son's 'Sign in Heav'n'] . . . soon reduc'd / His Armie, circumfus'd on either Wing, / Under thir Head imbodyed all in one" (*PL* 6:775-79). That is, Michael leads back his army under the guidance of the Son, so that once again God will be all in one, that army becoming body to the head which is God. We have a pun on "reduced" meaning to lead back and on "conduct" meaning to lead with, thus stating the Corinthians text: "And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." But further punning occurs with "reduced" meaning to make smaller than their heroic stature as warriors against the rebellious angels, so that all the multitude will again constitute the body of the singular head God, now reconstituted by the previous generations. This second pun on "reduced" has not been recognized as an ironic play on those

who [but now] seemd  
 In bigness to surpass Earths Giant Sons  
 Now less than smallest Dwarfs, in narrow room  
 Throng numberless, like that Pigmean Race  
 Beyond the *Indian* Mount, or Faerie Elves.  
 . . . . .  
 Thus incorporeal Spirits to smallest forms  
 Reduc'd thir shapes immense, and were at large,  
 Though without number still amidst the Hall  
 Of that infernal Court [Pandaemonium].

(*PL* 1:777-92)

And note that this reduction takes place only when "the Signal [is] giv'n." We understand the contrast in "Sign" and "Signal."

But what Milton (or the author) is developing in these chapters on the Son and the Holy Spirit in talking of their generation is to explain what is meant by three persons of God; the *substantia* of God makes God indivisible; the separate personages of God create separate essences (or personalities) which each has as an external efficiency unto itself. Generation out of the *substantia* of the indivisible God has created these essentiae: "By GENERATION God begot his only Son, in accordance with his decree. That is the



chief reason why he is called Father," the text we are considering says (6:205). The Father's function is generation, among other things, just as in any parental idiom; the Son's function is basically surrogate for the Father (rather the Son acts as God, who he is); and the Holy Spirit's function is basically to minister for the Father. The author of *De Doctrina Christiana* writes: "The Holy Spirit, since he is a minister of God, and therefore a creature, was created, that is, produced, from the substance of God, not by natural necessity, but by the free will of the agent, maybe before the foundations of the world were laid, but after the Son," and adds that these generated concepts "signify the mission not the nature of each." They are significant in "discussing matters relative to the Deity" (6:298). Remarks in these theological chapters, the subordination of the Son to the Father, and the supposed absence of the Holy Spirit from the epic have led to discussions of hierarchy in both the theological statements and the poem, where rather division of labor or signification of mission or function is the point. What is attempted in *De Doctrina Christiana* is a clarification of the issue of what the three persons of God indivisible means; the author of the work reviews the unanalytic and sometimes illogical statements of others and the nebulousness of the issue in the words of the Bible itself. After all, "three persons indivisible" in itself is meaningless, a result we know of the influence of mystic numbers through Pythagoras and Philo Judaeus.

What I find most dismaying in Professor Hunter's paper is that he has been the major analyst and spokesperson for this understanding of Milton's position in *Paradise Lost* and of the text of the treatise under question. He seems to have ignored the import of his own arguments and to have slipped back into a reading of the epic which sounds more like the general reading of the poem prior to 1825—a surface reading only. He talks of "the lack of any direct references between the *Christian Doctrine* and the canonical writings" and the nonheretical reading of the poem, yet "heretical" content of the treatise. Partially this depends upon what is meant by "heretical"; nonetheless *Paradise Lost* as "nonheretical" means to me an incompetent reading of the poem. The poem engages fable, allegory, fabricated actions for the Son standing in for the Father, and to quote Professor Hunter, "In having Satan ignore the very existence of the Son, Milton almost inevitably had in mind one of the earliest heresies to arise in the church, monarchianism."<sup>7</sup> While the poem does not propound Satan's heresies, it offers what others, seeing Satan as hero, have construed as having validity. Milton is not writing anything in *Paradise Lost* that leads me to accept something theologically

heretical, but neither does *De Doctrina Christiana* when we read the Latin and when we accept the subordinationist position as not heresy but function.

Professor Hunter mentions his own work on audience for the treatise but then dismisses what that would imply in terms of “direct references” and content, as with the discussion of polygamy, which the author of the treatise is NOT advocating but only not categorically dismissing as others do as an immoral and heretical position. “Except for . . . three passages, which are actually irrelevant,” the author remarks that “no trace of the censure of polygamy can be seen throughout the whole law” (6:360); that is all. The audience and the intentionality of the treatise point to the author’s attempt to cover all bases and subbases and to winnow false thought from valid, to focus upon the real issues, not the inflammatory digressions. Professor Hunter’s remarks in this section of the paper sound as if he has not read either work very well in terms of authorial aims and audience and subtleties, and he has avoided C.A. Patrides’ admonition that one is a poem and the other a piece of philosophic prose; I would say, following Hunter’s previous work, a piece of *polemical* prose.

I recite all of the above because there are two major considerations when one investigates authorial canonicity: the external and the internal. Professor Hunter has primarily brought into question the external, but while he has paid some attention to content in looking at “arguments from silence” and what he now sees as “fundamental disagreement between treatise and poem,” it seems to me that he has insufficiently studied content and style with an eye toward deep reading of either. He seems not truly to have considered the author of each work’s writing each work; that is, intentionality and authorial presence and audience.

One case in point, I think, is the avoidance of discussion of Chapter X of the first book: “Of the Special Government of Man before the Fall: Dealing also with the Sabbath and Marriage.” Professor Hunter does mention polygamy and divorce which are discussed in that chapter. Professor Kelley’s footnotes citing the divorce tracts indicate their pertinency as offering an agreement of ideas. But Hunter’s only comment on the brunt of the chapter is “the assumption has been that he did not [publish it] because it was incomplete, but it is essentially finished except perhaps in its discussion of marriage.” What is unfinished here, it seems to me, is the impassioned pleading on a subject that is not unified with the chapter’s main topic because it engages excessiveness. Chapter IX had dealt with the special government of angels and Chapter XI deals with the fall of our first parents, and of sin. Chapter X

was supposed to discuss the special government of man before the Fall, and to this was added, according to the title, the sabbath and marriage. The treatise does discuss these things in a style and brevity that fits with Chapters IX and XI, though the latter includes a very complicated subject, one would have thought. But then comes the prolix discussion of marriage that would have got x'd out as disunified and even incoherent (as unplanned and unprepared for), were it a freshman composition paper. While this may constitute an unfinished state, perhaps we should wonder about authorial intentionality and audience. If the author was not Milton, he certainly fell into the same kind of prolixity and special pleading that Milton exhibited in *Tetrachordon*. And if the manuscript was finished (except for this section), one can turn the question back and ask why the author, whoever he was, did not publish it?

Maybe what some of this is suggesting is that we cannot be certain when the treatise was written even if it was Milton's; we cannot be certain why it was not published although *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings from the Church*, which Professor Hunter alludes to, was probably written in 1652 as Hunter has suggested but not published until coerced from Milton in 1659; *Accedence Commenc't Grammar* did not appear until 1669; *The History of Britain*, until 1670; *The Art of Logic*, until 1672; *Character of the Long Parliament*, until 1681; and *A Brief History of Moscovia*, until 1682, and this may be just another delayed publication that got lost with his death, except that Daniel Skinner did get hold of it along with the Letters of State. It was the Letters of State that were denied publication by Sir Joseph Williamson, not the treatise which just did not figure into the discussions. At least one or two other manuscripts have been lost: the Greek thesaurus that the Anonymous Biographer mentions and the Latin dictionary which was employed in producing *Linguae Romanae Dictionarium Luculentum Novum* in 1693.

As to external evidence, what Professor Hunter's paper suggests—I think, shows—is that some of it may be unreliable, the additions of Milton's name to the manuscript may be much later in date than even Skinner's transcription, and Skinner was not the most admirable or trustworthy person one might want. We should probably note that it has been suggested that the Trinity MS is owned by Trinity College Library because Skinner may have used it as a kind of bribe to become a member of the College. We should also note that Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach had reported that a bookseller (Moses Pitt? John or Peter Blaeu?) had "ein Systema Theologie von Milton" which evidenced

"Arianismus," adding that the whereabouts of the manuscript was unknown.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps too I should remind us that Picard worked for Cromwell's envoy Samuel Morland in connection with the Piedmont massacre in May 1655, and perhaps Morland found out Picard through Milton or vice versa. This may have significance in dating Picard's penning of the treatise.

What Professor Hunter does not really handle is how Skinner and Picard were able to appear together in this manuscript if the author was not Milton. Picard probably did scribal work for many people other than Milton; Picard and Skinner may have fortuitously worked for the same person other than Milton; or the manuscript may somehow have come into Skinner's hand without any clear line of relationship of author/Picard/Skinner. But are not those all very dubious suggestions when the easy one exists of Milton's employing Picard, which we know, and of his having some kind of relationship with Skinner at the end of his life, which by all accounts is true?

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup>See excerpts in my *Milton: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970): Leslie (1698), pp. 117-18; Clarke (1731), pp. 261-64; and in my *Milton 1732-1801: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972): Richardson (1734), pp. 83-84; *Gentleman's Magazine*, various items (1738-39), pp. 93-96, 96-97, 98, 100-104.

<sup>2</sup>See "Milton and Covenant: The Christian View of Old Testament Theology," pp. 168-69, 171-72, in *Milton and Scriptural Tradition: the Bible into Poetry*, ed. James H. Sims and Leland Ryken (Columbia: Univ. of Missouri Press, 1984).

<sup>3</sup>See *Edinburgh Review* 84 (1825): 304-46; *North American Review* 22 (1926): 364-73; and *The Christian Examiner* 3 (1826): 29-77, respectively.

<sup>4</sup>See 1:291-364 in *Poetical Works* (1826).

<sup>5</sup>Professor Kelley in an article in *HLQ* 33 (1970): 315-20 admitted his loose employment of the term, though in his rebuttal of "subordinationism" he dismissed the importance of such labeling and argued that Arianism can mean any rejection of orthodox Trinitarianism. Professor Hunter now seems to agree with that position.

<sup>6</sup>I quote *Paradise Lost* from my edition of *The Complete Poetry of John Milton* (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1971) and *De Doctrina Christiana* from *Complete Prose Works of John Milton* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press), Vol. 6 (1973), ed. Maurice Kelley and trans. John Carey.

<sup>7</sup>See William B. Hunter, "The Heresies of Satan," p. 28, in *Th'Upright Heart and Pure*, ed. Amadeus P. Fiore (Pittsburgh: Duquesne Univ. Press, 1967).

<sup>8</sup>See *Herrn Zacharias Conrad von Uffenbach Merkwürdige reisen durch Niedersachsen Holland und Engelland. Dritter theil* (Ulm, 1754), under Amsterdam, p. 585.

## WILLIAM B. HUNTER

Let me begin with some of Dr. Lewalski's objections. She first argues that lying back of Milton's putative *Christian Doctrine* was the now lost *Index Theologicus*, into which he had certainly entered over the course of years various religious statements. But the surviving entries for it in the canonical *Commonplace Book* which evidences its existence cannot have been of any use for a work like the *Christian Doctrine* because its known subjects such as "Of Idolatry," or "Of Not Forcing Religion" are not suitable for such a treatise. See my entry "Index Theologicus" in *A Milton Encyclopedia*. If some collection of texts lay usefully back of the *Christian Doctrine* it must have been, as I observe above, one like that of Polanus. I still wonder how a blind man could use it effectively.

Skipping to Dr. Lewalski's added evidence about Daniel Skinner, I, of course, was well aware of all of it but did not use it, not seeing then or now how it would clarify the argument. Perhaps I should have.

The evidence from *all* the early biographers as I imply but do not expressly state traces I believe to Daniel Skinner, who seems to have talked freely about his two manuscripts. I think that the biographers are too much in agreement for this not to be true, including their inaccuracy about the title which suggests some distancing in all of them. Dr. Ruth Kivette has suggested to me that the Anonymous Biographer and Wood found their supposed title, *The Body of Divinity*, in Milton's wish for "som wholsom bodie of divinitie, as they call it, without schoole terms and metaphysical notions," in *Hirelings* (*Yale Prose* 7:304). I still do not know the circumstances of how Skinner came into possession of his texts.

A telling argument favoring Milton as author is Dr. Lewalski's disagreement with my statement that the *Christian Doctrine* does not refer to any other of Milton's works, whereas she points out that it seems to in the passage on divorce (I:x; *Yale Prose* 6:377-78): "It defines fornication very broadly ('some shameful thing') to justify divorce for virtually any cause disrupting marital harmony, and concludes, 'I have proved this elsewhere, basing my argument on several scriptural texts'" ("nos alias ex aliquot scripturae locis" in the manuscript). She goes on to observe that this is a "cross reference to a passage in *Tetrachordon* (*Yale Prose* 2:671-73) which expounds the term in the same way, citing the same central text from Judges 19:2." Finally, in a note she adds that Dr. Jason Rosenblatt has observed to her that the same argument appears in *Doctrine and Discipline* (*Yale Prose* 2:334-35) and "The argument is

rabbinical, familiar to Milton from John Selden's *Uxor Ebraica*." But neither she nor Dr. Rosenblatt mentions that in the passage in *Doctrine and Discipline* Milton expressly traces this interpretation of fornication and of Judges 19:2 to Hugo Grotius (*Annotationes in Libros Evangeliorum*). If Milton in the *Christian Doctrine* is citing his own earlier statement, why does he omit Grotius and add Selden? I suggest that the interpretation was a commonplace redefinition among "divorcers," among whom Milton's is the prominent name; but there certainly were others besides him who wrote but did not publish. The passage in the *Christian Doctrine* does not suggest either title or publication of this earlier argument. As for the other parallels with the prose that Dr. Lewalski points out, they seem to me to be statements which any of Christopher Hill's "radical puritans" could have uttered, nor should one forget that both translators, Sumner and Carey, deliberately imitated the English phrasing of the canonical works whenever they could, giving a possibly distorted assessment of similarity.

*Pace* Dr. Lewalski, the "Scale of Nature" passage in *Paradise Lost* 5:470-500, with its reference to "one first matter," really has no pertinence to the concept of creation ex Deo of the treatise but is an expansion of Aristotle's physics which describes the development of matter into form. See my "Milton's Power of Matter" in *The Descent of Urania*. Nor, I think, though she does not mention them, do the puzzling lines about the Divine retirement in Book 7 (lines 168-73) give any further support to this idea.

Moving to the question of "conditional decrees" and Arminianism in treatise and poem, I am certainly at fault in expressing my meaning obscurely. My point was not that the poem is not Arminian, for it most certainly is, proved even more forcibly than Dr. Lewalski's examples by the words "Prevenient Grace" in 11:3—a fundamental doctrine among these people. I was trying to make the point that the phrase "conditional decrees" itself, so prominent in the argument of the treatise, does not appear in the poem. On reflection, I question whether I should have belabored the point.

These are the main replies that I want to make to the arguments in Dr. Lewalski's paper. Her several others are, I believe, subject to individual interpretation, unfortunately not being definitive one way or another. Let me now turn to Dr. John Shawcross's statement.

I admire and applaud his opening remarks about the difficulty (impossibility?) of a literary depiction of the Christian God, whether it be the Godhead or one of the Persons. We agree that Milton was only partly successful whether in treatise or poem.

But I assuredly do *not* agree that for me “Arianism can mean any rejection of orthodox Trinitarianism.” What I silently did in my paper was to uncouple the differing evidence relating to the Trinity in the poem and the treatise and then ignore the latter. If Milton did not write it, I am no longer interested in it as I formerly was when I considered it a “gloss” to the poem and am simply indifferent to whether it is Arian or whatever. The poem, as I have said and repeat here from my paper, is based in part on a subordinationist view of the Godhead.

I do think that there are two aspects of the Holy Spirit in the poem. According to orthodox Christianity it (he? she?) was historically “given” at Pentecost, after the Resurrection. The post-Pentecostal Milton accordingly can and does invoke its guidance for himself. Prior to Pentecost the Being is not yet manifest and so makes at best a vague appearance in the course of the historical narration of the poem.

As Dr. Shawcross goes on to discuss the generation of Son and Spirit, I have only agreement and especially admire his interpretation of the “reduction” of Michael’s forces like the earlier one of the devils in Hell.

But I must give a rejoinder to what he understands to be my reading of heresy in the poem (the treatise, as I observe above, I want to ignore here). Subordination, as I have defined it elsewhere, undergirds much of the theology of the poem. For some it is heretical, for others it is not. The latter is the position, I think, of the narrative voice of the work. But characters within it can utter ideas heretical in any Christian system, and I must again confess to not having expressed my argument clearly. Satan, of course, asserts one heresy after another—monarchianism, fatalism, polytheism, and so on. I should add too that I doubt that the author of the treatise supports the idea of polygamy; he just does not dismiss it. Two members of the symposium mentioned to me privately that Milton may refer to the practice in the epic’s depiction of ideal marriage: “Perpetual Fountain of Domestic sweets, / Whose bed is undefil’d and chaste pronounc’t, / Present, or past, as Saints and Patriarchs us’d” (4:760-62).

Finally, I certainly agree with Dr. Shawcross’s analysis of Chapter X of the treatise, analysis that I wish I had known so as to include it in my paper. Whether the prolixity of this section of the treatise on divorce matches that of *Tetrachordon* I shall happily leave to others to decide. I agree to ignorance about why the treatise was not published. As to the question of Skinner’s and Picard’s appearance together, this seems simple. As Dr. Shawcross observes, “Picard probably did scribal work for many other people than

Milton." All the evidence, though, shows that Skinner came into the picture much later than Picard and, I should say, quite independently of him. Again, we are left with differing interpretations of the same facts.

I think it is true, and I observed this at the symposium, that scholars with a vested interest in believing that Milton authored the *Christian Doctrine* tend to argue in its favor and those with a vested interest in believing that he did not argue against it. My own vested interests, as I have previously published them, are all with the former group. On the other hand, from this new perspective I find a less self-contradictory, more interesting, and richer understanding of the man and his works. In its light he stands closer to the great traditions of Christianity, no longer associated with a merely eccentric fringe. (I do not know of a single history of Christian dogma that mentions the *Christian Doctrine*; its reputation rests solely upon its association with Milton.) Finally, rejection of the treatise as his absolves him from responsibility for having put on paper one of the dullest religious tracts to be found anywhere. To the contrary is the poem. The great Hymn to Light, for example, indeed invokes light as a prime attribute of God as Dr. Lewalski wants to limit it (and physical light as well, and light as supporter of life and form). But to recognize that in the ancient Christian tradition that I have discussed in *Bright Essence*, pp. 149-56, Milton is also invoking the Son of God, who is "the Light of the World," John 8:12, either the subordinate ("ofspring of Heav'n first-born") or the equal divinity ("Of th'Eternall Coeternal beam") greatly enriches the poem for me. Such enrichment surely helps validate the interpretation.

Perhaps the arguments that have been presented in these papers have not finally convinced anyone. Despite its acceptance as Milton's for almost two hundred years, the burden of proof remains on those who think that he wrote the treatise. What is needed now is a definitive stylistic analysis of the Latin prose of the *Christian Doctrine* put beside the Latin prose of the canonical works to see whether under such analysis they are similar or different. Whoever does such a study must possess a good computer programmed with Milton's texts, a sophisticated understanding of how to work with these materials, and a solid grasp of Renaissance Latin. I am not competent to do this.