

# VISIONARY MILTON

*Essays on  
Prophecy and Violence*

Edited by Peter E. Medine,  
John T. Shawcross & David V. Urban



DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

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Published in the United States of America by  
DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY PRESS  
600 Forbes Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15282

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Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Visionary Milton : essays on prophecy and violence / edited by Peter E. Medine,  
John T. Shawcross, and David V. Urban.

p. cm. — (Medieval & Renaissance literary studies)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Summary: "Scholars discuss Milton's focus on prophecy and violence and how these themes—which function as a context in Milton's life and as a mode for an extended analysis of Restoration politics in Milton's poetry—add to an understanding of Milton as a visionary, extending the literary discussion of Milton's work into a larger geopolitical area" —Provided by publisher.

ISBN 978-0-8207-0429-6 (cloth : alk. paper/

1. Milton, John, 1608-1674—Criticism and interpretation. 2. Milton, John, 1608-1674--Political and social views. 3. Milton, John, 1608-1674—Religion. 4. Prophecy in literature. 5. Violence in literature. 6. Politics and literature — England—History-17th century. 7. Religion and literature—England — History-17th century. I. Medine, Peter E. II. Shawcross, John T. III. Urban, David V.

PR3592.P64V57 2010

821'.4—dc22

2009053468

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# 10 From Last Things to First

## The Apophatic Vision of *Paradise Regain'd*

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Michael Bryson

### 1. *The Visionary Mode*

How can a poet write God? How can *anyone*—even a poet who doubles as a theologian—describe the indescribable? Milton struggles with this in his *De doctrina Christiana*, attempting to describe God in terms of such ideas as may be found in the Scriptures; however, he is emphatic in pointing out—as a kind of preface or qualification to all that follows, that "God, as he really is, is far beyond man's imagination, let alone his understanding." If God is beyond imagination, let alone understanding, how can he be represented at all, much less *represented accurately* in literary form? The key to this question lies in Milton's single most iconoclastic character—the human Jesus (more often referred to as the Son), in *Paradise Regain'd*.

In an attempt to understand Milton's use of this character, I propose that we read both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*

as examples of what Michael Lieb calls the "visionary mode." In his book of the same name, Lieb begins by carefully analyzing the vision of Ezekiel, finding in its imagery and logic that the visionary mode is a way of representing, if not bridging, the gap between God-with-qualities and God-without-qualities, what Lieb refers to as the *ma'aseh bereshit* and the *ma'aseh merk-abah*—roughly, the "lore of creation" and the "lore of the chariot" (shorthand for the knowable and unknowable God). According to Lieb, Ezekiel presents the reader with a veritable textbook of the mechanics and techniques of Western mystical thought, and the deconstructive relation of that thought to the traditions within which it stands:

[Ezekiel's] vision simply refuses to be domesticated. Emerging from a rich and complex milieu of traditional source material, the vision ultimately subverts its own lineage.... The vision is conceptualized in such a way so as at once to suggest associations with identifiable objects and at the same time to undermine those associations at every point.<sup>2</sup>

Lieb's crucial point here is that Ezekiel's vision—as a pattern of the visionary mode itself—is contextualized, that it comes from a long and complex tradition. But, grounded in that tradition though it may be, it contests the tradition, questions its categories, images, and assumptions even as it uses them in the contestation and questioning. The associations the visionary mode relies upon are at the very same time the associations it undermines. The visionary mode, as Lieb will argue, is a deconstructive reading of the symbols and narratives of the tradition within which the vision appears.

Lieb goes on to demonstrate that the visionary mode uses the motif of ascent through the known categories and objects of this world, to the unknown, and unknowable in strictly human terms, divine itself. One of the most famous examples of this ascent motif is to be found in the work of Pseudo-Dionysius. As Lieb argues, "Pseudo-Dionysius maintains that [cataphatic, or positive, theology] embodies a descent from first things to last, that is, from

the most abstruse conceptions of deity to their concretization in symbolic form," while its necessary complement, apophatic (or negative) theology, "involves a return or *epistroph*" upward from last to first things. In this return we discover an obliteration of knowing, understanding, naming, speech, and language as the seer travels into the realm of unknowing, divine ignorance, the nameless, the speechless, and the silent" (*Visionary*, 236-37).

Pseudo-Dionysius's method, most notably as embodied in the works *The Divine Names* and *The Mystical Theology*, is to move from the knowable "God"---knowable because conceived in and through human terms to the unknowable God which cannot be described, and finally cannot be grasped at all except through negation, in other words, except through the refusal of description. The movement is from a figure identifiable in terms of a name, a set of characteristics, a history of actions and interactions, to a figure without figuration, a blank, an absence of characteristics, an ahistorical, nonactive, and noninteractive hidden and unimaginable no-thing. But as Lieb explains, Pseudo-Dionysius proceeds along this path in two ways: directly from affirmation to negation (as demonstrated in *The Divine Names* and *The Mystical Theology*), but also *indirectly* toward negation through a paradoxically heightened (and exaggerated) form of affirmation. It is this latter method (as discussed in *The Celestial Hierarchy*) that provides a particularly powerful lens through which to see Milton's use of his characterizations of the divine. As Lieb writes,

[In *The Celestial Hierarchy*] Pseudo-Dionysius distinguish[es] two modes of revelation in the Bible. Corresponding to his cataphatic and apophatic views of mystical theology, these modes articulate a theoretic of scriptural interpretation. Whereas the first mode "proceeds naturally through sacred images in which like represents like," the second mode uses "formulations which are dissimilar and even entirely inadequate and ridiculous." ... According to this [second] mode, the Deity is manifested through "dissimilar shapes" that embody an essential paradox: the more *unlike* God and the celestial realms they appear to be, the more they lead us to a knowledge of the unknowable.... We are to read ... apophatically by distancing

ourselves from, indeed denying (*aphairesis*), "the sheer crassness of the signs" in order to understand what the signs truly signify. This is essentially a deconstructive reading. ( *Visionary*, 240).

In Pseudo-Dionysius's terms, such "crassness" is "a goad so that even the materially inclined cannot accept that it could be permitted or true that the celestial and divine sights could be conveyed by such shameful things." The exaggerated, crass quality of the images used to represent "the celestial and divine" are designed paradoxically to focus attention away from the images themselves, the "last things" of cataphatic (positive) theology, and toward the negations of such concrete conceptions of the divine, toward the "first things" of apophatic (negative) theology. Visual and other representations of deity serve a necessary function as "types for the typeless, for giving shape to what is actually without shape." Why are such types and shapes needed? Because, according to Pseudo-Dionysius, even the best of us "lack the ability to be directly raised up to conceptual contemplations." At most, even the best of us (in terms of intellectual capacity and philosophical/metaphysical learning) can be led only to brief glimpses and momentary insights of the realities toward which our symbols merely gesture. More to the point, however, is that most of us are *not* the best of us (most of us, after all, are neither Plato nor Plotinus, neither Proclus nor Pseudo-Dionysius), and from that majority of us "it is most fitting... that the sacred and hidden truth about the celestial intelligences be concealed." "Knowledge," Pseudo-Dionysius argues, "is not for everyone."<sup>3</sup>

But this highest knowledge, as Pseudo-Dionysius argues, is hidden behind both the images of the biblical texts and the interpretive traditions through which worshippers encounter and understand them. These images, texts, and traditions are actually what stand between worshippers and the recognition that they do not, and cannot, know God except, in the formulation of Paul, "through a glass, darkly" (1 Cor. 13:12). The Pauline insight is also the Dionysian insight: the only possible knowledge of this God is "the *knowledge of his unknowability*."<sup>4</sup>

The Pauline and Dionysian insight is also, finally, the Miltonic insight. Just as Pseudo-Dionysius's method of scriptural interpretation is, in Lieb's terms, "a deconstructive reading," so also, I contend, is Milton's poetic rendering of deity. Milton's portrayal of God is "a deconstructive reading" of the divine. This deconstructive reading, with its use of dissimilar and crass shapes and signs, is part and parcel of the visionary mode's simultaneous use and contestation of the images and concepts of the tradition within which it works. In using "dissimilar shapes" as representations of the divine, Milton is trusting his "fit audience ... though few"<sup>6</sup> to understand the significance of "the sheer crassness of the signs" he uses in his great poems, to understand his own simultaneous use and contestation of the images and concepts of the tradition within which he is writing and they are reading. His poems were not then, and are not now directed to all, but to a few. For Milton, as for Pseudo-Dionysius, knowledge is not for everyone.

## 2. Milton's Dynamic of First Things and Last Things

Milton's works, like the Son's rejections of Satan's temptations in *Paradise Regain'd*, are strongly infused with a dynamic of moving from last things to first things, a dynamic often illustrated as a movement from external to internal values and motivations. In order to understand what is at stake in *Paradise Regain'd*, it is necessary to understand the relationship between *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd*, keeping in mind what exactly has been lost and regained. What is this "Paradise" that Adam and Eve lose and that Jesus (the Son) regains? There is an equivalency at work: a one-to-one correspondence is being suggested in the logic of the titles and the structure of the works. Each work features a temptation by Satan. In *Paradise Lost*, that temptation is successful, first with Eve, then soon afterward with Adam. In *Paradise Regain'd*, the temptation is a failure, as the Son rejects and even scorns Satan's blandishments. At the core of each temptation is an appeal to identify oneself with power, with knowledge, with divinity itself, but

each of these things is considered, and offered, as a thing external to the one tempted. In Eve's case, she is promised all these things as a direct result of eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge:

he knows that in the day  
Ye Eat thereof, your Eyes that seem so clear,  
Yet are but dim, shall perfectly be then  
Open'd and clear'd, and ye shall be as Gods,  
Knowing both Good and Evil, as they know. (PL 9.705-09)

Satan portrays this knowledge—and the power that comes with it—along with divine similitude (being as Gods) as an effect of the fruit itself; he even implies that "the Gods" themselves get their knowledge and power and divinity from their food: "And what are Gods, that Man may not become / As they, participating God-like food?" (PL 9.716-17). In doing so, Satan is cleverly trying to cultivate the seeds of this same idea that were earlier planted by Raphael, when he tells Adam and Eve, while dining with them, that "from these corporal nutriments perhaps / Your bodies may at last turn all to spirit, / Improv'd by tract of time, and wing'd ascend / Ethereal as wee" (PL 5.496-99). Raphael ties this suggestion of physical transformation and attainment of "Ethereal" (divine) status to obedience ("if ye be found obedient" [PL 5.501]), an idea that Satan conveniently elides in his version. The elision highlights, however, the *external* nature of the idea Raphael introduces. Raphael conceives of both the effect of the "corporal nutriments" and the effect of being "found obedient" as physical, external transformations. Food is ingested from outside the self. Obedience is offered to a figure outside the self. Ethereal status (as near as Raphael comes to the idea of divine similitude) is something to be achieved, grasped for, taken into oneself from outside, and/or conferred on oneself from outside. It is these external mechanics that Satan highlights in his temptations of both Eve in *Paradise Lost* and Jesus in *Paradise Regain'd*.

What is lost, then, in *Paradise Lost* is a focus on divine similitude, a connection to the divine source of all things that is always already there in Eve and Adam. Satan (with a little help from



Raphael, and by extension, from the Father) is able to focus both Eve and Adam on externals—for Eve, knowledge as a means to gain a greater place in a hierarchy of two, and for Adam, the potential loss of Eve—and, in so doing, manages to pluck paradise, the "paradise within" (12.587), right out of the human pair's hearts. Paradise had always been within. Eden was merely a place, a wondrous and lovely place to be sure, but it was not, in and of itself, "paradise." *Paradise Lost* is not a narrative of the loss of Eden, but of the loss of the "paradise within," the sense of divine similitude, the realization of connection to all things and to the source of all things. *Paradise Lost* is a narrative of descent, and of a loss of focus on first things. *Paradise Regain'd* is a narrative of ascent, of a reclamation of the "paradise within," of a restoration of the focus on first things through a successful rejection of the temptations to focus on externals and last things.

It is in this dynamic of ascent and descent, in a tension between a focus on first things and a focus on last things that *Paradise Regain'd*, through its human protagonist Jesus, comes brilliantly to light. The contest between the Son and Satan is precisely a contest between first things and last things, and understood in this way, none of the things that Satan offers the Son is, in itself, problematic. It is as if each of the temptations is its own text, a text that, according to Lieb, "reveals more about the interpreter than the interpreter reveals about the text" (*Visionary*, 240). In offering food, wealth, power, knowledge, Satan offers things which are fine in themselves, but he offers them as "last things," as ends in themselves. The Son's rejections constantly focus the issue back on first things, on ascent to the origin of all.

Satan's temptations, modeled on the temptation sequence from Luke 4:1-13 and Matthew 4:1-11, form a kind of circle, as if they were an attempt to replicate a full cycle of ascent and descent all on their own. But that circle or cycle is an illusion, a trick of light and shade that Satan uses in an attempt to deceive the Son, who will have none of it. The temptations Satan places before the Son run from that of bread and divine identity (a temptation to use

divine power to transform stones into bread), to the more physically elaborate temptation of gourmet delicacies, to wealth, political and military power, knowledge, and finally the temptation to prove—through a display of divine power—his identity. The appearance is of a descent from temptations that focus on divine power and identity through the realms of physical and worldly powers and an ascent back to the realm of divine power and identity. But each temptation is actually the *same* temptation presented in a different guise. Each temptation is designed to trick the Son into identifying himself with, and through, externals and a focus on last things. All of Satan's temptations are, as Stanley Fish observes, "allied in their inferiority to an inner word and an inward kingdom." What the Son rejects are not the things (bread, gourmet food, wealth, knowledge, even power) in themselves, but the temptation of regarding them as ends. The Son's rejections of each temptation relentlessly return the focus back to internals and first things.

### 3. *The Temptations of Identity, Glory, and Power*

The first temptation, which seems the simplest in terms of the physical object involved, sets the pattern for everything that follows: "But if thou be the Son of God, Command / That out of these hard stones be made thee bread" (PR 1.342-43). What could be simpler, and more understandable, than the need to eat? And what could be more basic to that need than bread? Bread, after all, is a staple, the bottom-line necessity of a subsistence diet, hardly a luxurious indulgence. But it is not the bread that is the point of the temptation; rather, it is the *means of attaining* that bread. The temptation here is one of identity and power—each of which will run like a bright crimson thread through the tapestry of temptations that Satan weaves in a deceptively improvisational manner. *If thou be the Son of God*—what Satan is testing here is not whether or not the Son is hungry. Satan is not so banal as that. The test, and the temptation, is an attempt to get the Son to show off. *Go ahead. Show me who you really are. Give me a flash of that "heavenly"*

power... if you are who they say you are. There is something primal about Satan's approach here, something redolent of the battlefields of human life (physical and symbolic), something that is designed to raise the hackles of a lesser man and trick him into identifying his primary strength as an *external* strength: the ability to transform—through power of some *kind—external* objects.

The Son rejects—as he will throughout—Satan's external focus and instead refocuses the issue as one of internals, in this case, the true sustenance by "each Word / Proceeding from the mouth of God" (*PR* 1.349-50). He also gives evidence of his focus through his ability to see past external appearances to the exact nature of his tempter. Satan, having not identified himself, and having disguised himself as "an aged man in Rural weeds" (*PR* 1.314), is easily seen through by the Son: "I discern thee other than thou seem'st" (1.348). In addition to seeing through Satan's *physical* disguise--something Uriel was unable to do in *Paradise Lost*, since such "Hypocrisy ... walks / Invisible, except to God alone" (*PL* 3.683-84)—the Son also sees through Satan's *mental* disguise as someone who honestly does not know whether or not the man Jesus is the particular Son of God known only as "the Son" in *Paradise Lost*. Jesus cuts through this latter disguise—one that Satan may not be admitting to himself that he is donning until he is "smitten with amazement" (*PR* 4.562) much later—by confronting Satan directly: "Why does thou then suggest to me distrust, / Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?" (1.355-56). The implications of this line are radical: if only God can see through hypocrisy's guise, and Jesus knows who this "aged man in Rural weeds" really is, then in some sense the Jesus of *Paradise Regain'd* is God. But in what sense? Here is where the temptation of *Paradise Regain'd* itself—and its corresponding modeling of how to resist that temptation—comes into play. Look past the external, the surface, and focus on the internal, the substance. What this means for the Son is a focus on connection to the divine, through a constant remembrance and realization of divine similitude.

Where a focus on identity and power will be the thread that runs through all of Satan's temptations, it will be this focus on divine

similitude that runs through all of the Son's rejections of temptation. Even when Satan is tempting the Son to identify himself with the glory and power of the Father, he is missing the point. It is not the trappings of glory and power through which divinity can be found; those things, in fact, are distractions, accidents, *externals*. The key to divine similitude, and thus to the Son's rejections of temptation, is to be found in the "inward oracle" (*PR* 1.403), the "spirit of truth" (1.402) that dwells within, as does "the Spirit, which is *internal, and the individual possession of every man*" (*YP* 6:587; emphasis added).

It is this "inward oracle," this "spirit of truth" from which the Son draws his strength to fight off Satan's temptations. Even after having given considerable thought, in 2.245-53, to the fact that he is *hungry after 40 days with no food* (a time span that can be life threatening), the Son rejects Satan's offer of

A Table richly spread, in regal mode,  
With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort  
And savor, Beasts of chase, or Fowl of game,  
In pastry built, or from the spit, or boil'd. (*PR* 2.340-43)

He refuses even the smallest nibble, much less the opulence of the feast that has been spread before him "at a stately sideboard by the wine" (*PR* 2.350). Why? What could possibly be wrong with eating, especially after having fasted for 40 days? Nothing, in and of itself. The food is not the point; rather, it is the focus that Satan is trying to tempt the Son into adopting, a focus on the physical, the palpable, the external. Satan is trying, in each of his temptations, to get the Son to look outside of himself for the good, to focus on "last things" as if they were ends in themselves.

In rejecting Satan's bounty, the Son declares that he could himself "Command a Table in this Wilderness" (*PR* 2.384), but has not. Again, why? Earlier, in his private meditation on his hunger, he established a hierarchy of value that placed physical food beneath his "hung'ring more to do [his] Father's will" (*PR* 2.259). The "will" the character called "the Father" has expressed in *Paradise Regain'd* is that the Son "drive [Satan] back to Hell" (1.153), and

"conquer Sin and Death" (1.159) as part of an overall effort to show Satan that he (the Father) "can produce a man / Of female Seed, far abler to resist" (1.150-51) than Adam turned out to have been, and to show future generations of humankind "from what consummate virtue I have chose / This perfect Man, by merit call'd my Son, / To earn Salvation for the Sons of men" (1.165-67).

This all sounds rather grand and showy, admirable to be sure, as far as, at least, the concern with "Salvation for the Sons of men" is concerned, but otherwise focused on public relations, on the Father's reputation. The opening phrase, "He now shall know," sounds interestingly like what might be said by a man planning a comeback from an earlier defeat: "I'll show him," in other words. There is a great deal, in fact, of showing in this statement. The Father will show Satan. The Father will show humankind. The Father, it seems, will show *everyone*. A more dramatic focus on external displays would be hard to shoehorn into a few short lines. The rest of the statement is couched in metaphors of war and combat, not out of character for the Father as a reader has come to know him from *Paradise Lost*, to be sure, but oddly out of place considering the dynamic that will develop in *Paradise Regain'd*. The Father imagines the Son "Winning by Conquest what the first man lost," but before he achieves this conquest, the Father means to "exercise him in the Wilderness" where the Son will "lay down the rudiments / Of his great warfare" (*PR* 1.154, 156-57).

With all this, is it merely conquest that is the "Father's will" the Son is hungering for, even more than he is hungering for food .after a 40-day fast? Satan certainly seems to assume so. In fact, what Satan argues will be most likely to bend the mind of this man is glory. After Belial suggests that Satan "Set women in his eye and in his walk" (*PR* 2.153), Satan scoffs, insisting that it will take "manlier objects ... / ... such as have more show / Of worth, of honor, of glory, and popular praise" (*PR* 2.225-27). Is "the Father's will," then, glory? Satan argues as much after the temptation of wealth fails miserably. After sounding like Iago ("put money in thy purse") with his "Get Riches first, get Wealth, and Treasure heap" (*PR* 2.427), Satan is exasperated with the Son's refusal and

argues that he is depriving himself of the opportunity to have "All Earth... wonder at [his] acts" and simultaneously denying himself "fame and glory, glory the reward / That sole excites to high attempts" (3.24-26). The Son's response, that glory is merely the praise of "a herd confus'd, / A miscellaneous rabble, who extol / Things vulgar" (3.49-51), elicits this defense from Satan: *your Father seeks glory*:

Think not so slight of glory: therein least  
Resembling thy great Father; he seeks glory,  
And for his glory all things made, all things  
Orders and governs, nor content in Heaven  
By all his Angels glorifi'd, requires  
Glory from men, from all men good or bad,  
Wise or unwise, no difference, no exemption. (PR 3.109-15)

What is initially most interesting about the Son's response is not what he says, but what he does not say. Satan has nailed the Father's concern with glory, and the Son does not deny it. But as the Son's response unfolds, it becomes obvious that his definition of "glory" is radically different from that of Satan. More interesting, however, is how radically different the Son's perspective is from the concerns expressed in the Father's speech from book 1. For the Son, "glory" is merely thanks: "what could he less expect / Than glory and benediction, that is thanks" (PR 3.126-27).<sup>9</sup> Such "thanks" are hardly what the Father seems concerned with as he meditates on how he will "show" everyone that he can defeat Satan through the medium of a perfect man—despite the fact that he is 0-1 on that score to elate. Such "thanks" are hardly what Satan has in mind when pushing the Son to seek glory on earth. When Satan describes glory in terms of "show / Of worth" and "popular praise" (PR 2.226-27), he is not describing thanks so much as adulation.<sup>1</sup> The Father and Satan, as so often in *Paradise Lost*, seem to speak the same language here, while the Son speaks in a dialect that is almost unintelligible to the two ancient combatants. Humans should not seek glory, according to the Son, because they have nothing to be thanked for, and no one from whom thanks would be anything but unworthy. What value, after all, would thanks

be from a people "Of whom to be disprais'd were no small praise"  
(*PR* 3.56)?

Having dispensed with glory, and having delivered—through his redefinition of glory as thanks—a critique of both Satan and the Father, the Son is easily able to reject the temptations of political and military power that Satan offers in the forms of the Parthian and Roman realms. More subtle, however, is Satan's lead-in to this temptation, the appeal to duty:

If Kingdom move thee not, let move thee Zeal  
And Duty

Zeal of thy Father's house, .....  
Duty to free  
Thy Country from her Heathen servitude;  
So shalt thou best fulfill, best verify  
The Prophets old, who sung thy endless reign.

(*PR* 3.171-72, 175-78)

This appeal is quite literally fiendishly clever, tugging, as it does, on the strings of the Son's own earlier revealed desires. At the tender age of 12, the Son already felt that his "Spirit aspir'd to victorious deeds" and "heroic acts" to "subdue and quell o'er all the earth / Brute violence and proud Tyrannic pow'r" (*PR* 1.215-20). It is precisely these feelings at which Satan's appeals to duty and zeal are aimed. But in the Son's case, these feelings are presented, not as the noble thoughts of a hero, but as a remembrance of the fantasies of a child, fantasies that were quickly rejected in favor of higher, and more reasoned thoughts, as the Son "held it ...more heavenly," even as a child, to "make persuasion do the work of fear" (*PR* 1.221, 223), though there still remained an element of the fantasy of force in the line "the stubborn only to subdue" (1.226). The thoughts, however progressive, of a 12-year-old boy (no matter how exceptional a boy), have by no means yet reached the levels of profundity that are revealed in the thoughts of the fully mature man now being tested and tempted by Satan. This is no longer the Son who in heaven's battles in *Paradise Lost* seems to be just as concerned with raw power as either Satan or the Father, casting the dispute between the two in remarkably satanic terms:

Mighty Father, thou thy foes  
 Justly hast in derision, and, secure,  
 Laugh'st at thir vain designs and tumults vain,  
 Matter to mee of Glory, whom thir hate  
 Illustrates, when they see all Regal Power  
 Giv'n me to quell thir pride, and in event  
 Know whether I be dext'rous to subdue  
 Thy Rebels, or be found the worst in Heav'n.

(PL 5.735-42)

The Son is no longer the all-or-nothing thinker he was before the war in heaven--declaring that he would either be covered in the glory of military victory or be revealed through failure as the *worst* in heaven. Nor is the Son any longer the 12-year-old boy who fantasized conquest, though he quickly if incompletely—rejected the means of force. The now fully mature Son reveals an altogether more profound judgment than he has yet displayed in any previous situation. His answer to Satan's earthly appeal emphasizes patience, even suffering, rather than conquest (the conquest by which both Satan and the Father still seem obsessed):

All things are best fulfill'd in their due time

..... who best

Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first  
 Well hath obey'd; just trial e'er I merit  
 My exaltation without change or end.

(PR 3.182, 194-97)

In fact, by this point, the Son has made it quite clear what he thinks of the conquests to which Satan would urge him (the "Duty to free / Thy Country from her Heathen servitude") and to which the Father would urge him ("Winning by Conquest what the first man lost"). The Son rejects the idea of external conquest: "They err who count it glorious to subdue / By Conquest" (PR 3.71-72). He even more definitively rejects war and violence as means of attaining *any* end:

if there be in glory aught of good, it  
 may by means far different be attain'd,  
 Without ambition, war, or violence;  
 By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent.  
 By patience, temperance.

(PR 3.88-92; emphasis added)



The failure of Satan's temptation of military and political power, especially after the Son's rejection of the appeals to duty and zeal, and his redefinition of glory and rejection of conquest, violence, and war, comes as no surprise to any reader who has been attentive to the Son's earlier summation of the real nature of power, authority, and reign. Again, he speaks a different language from that spoken by both Satan and the Father, for whom the above-mentioned things are externals, things to be wielded over others than oneself. The position the Son expresses is quite the opposite: at the end of book 2, he rejects the external model of government that "o'er the body only reigns, / And oft by force, which to a generous mind / So reigning can be no sincere delight" (PR 2.478-80). Instead of this kind of external, public reign, the Son chooses the internal, private government of truth:

to guide nations in the way of truth  
By saving doctrine, and from error lead  
To know, and, knowing worship God aright,  
Is yet more kingly, this attracts the soul,  
Governs the inner man, the nobler part. (PR 2.473-77)

For the Son, power, authority, and reign are *internal* and to be exercised, not over others, but over oneself. The Son's greatest expressions of contempt are reserved for those who do not wield such control over themselves: the "captive Tribes / Who wrought their own captivity" (PR 3.414-15) by falling into "Idolatries" (3.418), and the Roman people,

That people victor once, now vile and base,  
Deservedly made vassal, who once just,  
Frugal, and mild, and temperate, conquer'd well,  
But govern ill the Nations under yoke. (PR 4.132-35)

In each case, the Son is describing a people who have become slaves *internally*, and have projected that slavishness *externally* onto their orientation toward the world.

In Milton's well-known argument from *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, the internal serves as the base and root cause of the external; as a result, slavish people beget tyrannical regimes: "being slaves within doors, no wonder that they strive so much to

have the public State conformably govern'd to the inward vitious rule by which they govern themselves" (YP 3:190). The Israelites and the Romans, who once were free inwardly—the Israelites through "worship[ping] God aright," and the Romans through being "Frugal, and mild, and temperate" and having "conquer'd well" *themselves*—are now slaves internally, and thus slaves externally: Israel as an occupied territory, and the Romans, once citizens of a republic, now merely vassals of a vast empire.

#### 4. *The Temptation of Knowledge*

So far, each temptation has been a call to focus on things in themselves, on last things, on a world of objects that may have its origin in the divine, but looks resolutely away from that origin. Each rejection of temptation has been grounded in a call to look past these last things back toward first things, the divine as the origin of all. The famous temptation and rejection—of knowledge makes most sense when viewed in this context. Since Satan sees the Son as being "otherwise inclin'd / Than to a worldly Crown, addicted more / To contemplation and profound dispute" (PR 4.212-14), his final temptation is at once his most powerful and profound—knowledge, study, wisdom, the very things to which the poetic creator of Satan and the Son had given his life, had praised as early as the gorgeous lines of *Il Penseroso*:

Or let my Lamp at midnight hour  
Be seen in some high lonely Tow'r,  
Where I may oft outwatch the *Bear*,  
With thrice great *Hermes*, or unsphere  
The spirit of *Plato* to unfold  
What Worlds, or what vast Regions hold  
The immortal mind that bath forsook  
Her mansion in this fleshly nook.

(85-92)

A love letter to knowledge, *Il Penseroso* should be in the background of a reading of the exchanges between Satan and the Son when Satan extols the virtues of "the Olive Grove of *Academe*, /

Plato's retirement" (*PR* 4.244-45), and "Blind *Melesigenes* thence *Homer* call'd" (4.259). The poet who had once begged his own father not to "persist in [his] contempt for the sacred Muses" (*Nec* to perge, precor, sacras contemnere Musas [*Ad Patrem*, 56]), and who had gone on to claim that that contempt was a mere pretense, "You may pretend to hate the delicate Muses, but I do not believe in your hatred" (*Tu tamen ut similes teneras odisse Camenas, / Non odisse reor* [*Ad Patrem*, 67-68]), is not writing the Son's response to Satan to portray a man with contempt for the Muses of philosophy and poetry. Far from it—the Son's abiding familiarity with both shines through in the very scenes in which he is ostensibly rejecting both.

Though the intellectual achievements of the Greek and Roman worlds are characterized by the Son as "false, or little else but dreams, / Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm" (*PR* 4.291-92), the Son goes on to deliver a concise account of the very thinkers and schools of thought he has just "rejected," and like the Milton of *Ad Patrem* I contend that the reader's reaction is supposed to be *non odisse reor*—"I do not believe in your hatred." The Son's characterizations of Socrates, "The first and wisest of them all [who] profess'd / ... that he nothing knew" (*PR* 4.293-94), and Plato, who "to fabling fell and smooth conceits" (4.295), strike at the very heart of the mental labors upon which Milton has spent the bulk of his life and energy: the search for knowledge and the ability to present that knowledge in high literary form.

But Milton is not rejecting himself, his studies, his work here. Rather, he is having the Son, through the expression of what seems a radical, even shocking point of view, make a variation of the point that the great German mystic Meister Eckhart makes in his famous prayer to be able to "for God's sake ... take leave of god." Eckhart asks for the strength to be able to recognize the highest good, and to be able to separate himself, his affections, his desires, his piety and belief from all other goods, even to the point of abandoning all of his most sacredly held beliefs about the divine itself, in order to reach that highest good. In Milton's case, through the

Son, the desire is analogous: to be able to reach the highest good, expressed in this case as an internal realization of divine similitude, one must have the strength to be able to leave behind all that one loves most in the world, about existence itself, which in Milton's case is no other than the knowledge, poetry, beauty he has spent his entire life pursuing, mastering, and powerfully expressing. Even these things, finally, are *externals*, last things, which at their best and most powerful can only be guideposts along the way to the divine, but taken as ends in themselves are distractions; if not impediments and barriers.

This is the core meaning of the poignant phrase from Sonnet 19, "God doth not need / Either man's work or his own gifts" (9-10). No work or gifts or talents can bring humankind to the divine. The one thing, ultimately the *only* thing needed (not desired, not appreciated, not loved, but *needed*) is "Light from above, from the fountain of light" (*PR* 4.289). This "Light from above" is the knowledge that reveals, the teacher that teaches the all-important lesson of divine similitude, and it can only be accessed from within, which is the crucial point of the scene in the desert where the Son realizes what he must do, and how he must do it:

(the) Son, tracing the Desert wild,  
Sole, but with holiest Meditations fed,  
Into himself descended, and at once  
All his great work to come before him set;  
How to begin, how to accomplish best  
His end of being on Earth, and mission high. (*PR* 2.109-14)

The desert is the ideal location for a narrative the point of which is the withdrawal from the world—from external values and stimuli—that facilitates the kind of internality essential to realizing one's connection to the divine. It is here where the Son realizes "how to accomplish best" his mission, here away from even the extremely private life he has been leading up to this point, away from the expectations of Mary, who believes that he will "By matchless Deeds express [his] matchless Sire" (*PR* 1.233), away from the expectations of his followers, who are "missing him thir

joy so lately found" (2.9), and above all, away from the expectations of the Father, for whom the Son's mission is first and foremost an extension of the Father's own agon with Satan, as he envisions the Son "Winning by Conquest what the first man lost / By fallacy surpris'd" (1.154-55). But the "Light from above" is not to be found in any of these clamoring voices with their urgent, even imperious demands. This light makes no demands of any kind; rather, it merely shows the Son who and what he is. It is this light that allows the Son to read "The Law and Prophets" and find "of whom they spake / I am" (*PR* 1.260, 262-63). After that, it is always and only the Son whose demands on the Son are obeyed.

The figure of whom "The Law and Prophets" were speaking, of course, is the Messiah. From *mashiach*—anointed one/deliverer—the Messiah, in the early years of what is now regarded as the Common Era (CE), was often conceived as a political and military figure who would lead the peoples of the occupied territory of Israel in a rebellion against their Roman occupiers, and reestablish the earthly kingdom of David.<sup>12</sup> Milton weaves similar expectations into several of his characters, among them Mary, who expects "matchless Deeds" from her son who will "sit on *David's Throne*" (*PR* 1.233, 240); Satan, who not only shares the belief that the Son is "ordain'd / To sit upon ...*David's Throne*" (3.152-53), but also suspects that the Son is "rais'd / To end his Reign on Earth" (1.124-25); and finally the Father himself, whose main concern seems to be his ongoing struggle with Satan:

He now shall know I can produce a man  
Of female Seed, far abler to resist  
All his solicitations, and at length  
All his vast force, and drive him back to Hell. (*PR* 1.150-53)

But just as the kingdom of the biblical Jesus was "not of this world" (John 18:36), so the "Conquest" and "Reign" and "matchless Deeds" that so many expect of the Son in *Paradise Regain'd* are "not of this world," in the special sense of being not of the world of politics, military struggles, wealth, and even physical necessities like food—not, in other words, of the world of *externals*.

The Son's conquest is of himself. The Son's reign is over himself. The Son's matchless deeds are the rejections of temptations to which everyone else—including the Father—succumbs. The Son's most truly "matchless" deed is his choice to focus, not on the world without, but on the world within; to focus, not on last things—food, wealth, power, knowledge, and even divinity conceived of as an external force—but on first things—the quiet, but firm assurance of divine similitude. In himself, and through himself—as he realizes when he "with holiest Meditations fed, / Into himself descended" (*PR* 2.110-11)—is the only place and the only way that the "inner man, the nobler part" (2.477) can be accessed, that part of each man which is connected to, even comprised by, the "Spirit of Truth" the "inward Oracle" (1.462-63). The Son's conquest is achieved in the realization that for humankind, indeed, for all creation, the divine is only to be found by searching within, by heeding the promptings of "the Spirit, which is *internal, and the individual possession of every man*" (*De doctrina Christiana*, YP 6:587; emphasis added). It is this realization that gives his final response to Satan its tremendous power.

### 5. *Tempt Not the Lord Thy God*

This final scene between Satan and the Son has been the subject of much analysis and controversy. One common line of argument suggests the Son does not fully realize who he is in the poem; he does not know, until he formulates his rejection of the final temptation, what his true identity is, and even after coming to the realization of that identity he is merely declaring his faith in God—a *God that he is not*. In contrast to this, it can be, and has been, argued that the Son is fully aware of who he is, and is openly declaring his divine status." At the very moment of refusing the final temptation of Satan, the Son utters these enigmatic words: "Also it is written, / Tempt not the Lord thy God" (*PR* 4.559-60). The crucial question to be asked is what exactly the Son means by this. Are readers to assume that the Son is merely refuting Satan by trading biblical quotations with him, countering Satan's quotation

of Psalm 91:11-12 by hurling Deuteronomy 6:16 back at him? Is the Son merely declaring his faith in God, or is the Son openly declaring his divine status, declaring that he actually *is* God?

More radical than either of these alternatives is a third, which I believe to be the underlying reason for Satan's reaction when he "smitten with amazement fell" (*PR* 4.562). What the Son, significantly referred to here as the man Jesus, reveals when he says "Tempt not the Lord thy God" (4.561) is a threefold meaning: (1) *do not tempt me*—I am God; (2) *do not tempt anyone*—all creatures, sharing in the divine as their origin, are also God; and (3) *do not tempt yourself*—you, even you, Satan, are included in points 1 and 2.<sup>14</sup> All temptation is ultimately *self-temptation* in the scenario Milton has created here. Thus, though in a different sense than either Satan or the Father seems to have understood in *Paradise Lost*, Satan was "Self-tempted, self-deprav'd" (3.130), in that he—though not by "his own suggestion" (3.129) as the Father claims—did not simply refuse to indulge the feelings being played upon by the Father in the coronation scene of 5.600-15. It was in Satan's power to ignore the external provocation, to focus, not on last things (in this case, his fixation with finding meaning in rank and power within the confines of a rigid hierarchical system), but on first things, an inner awareness of divine similitude. Satan's failure ever to realize this, ever to understand who—and what—he has been all along is what truly amazes, not the realization that he cannot successfully tempt this man (or this God). What has smitten Satan with amazement is the profoundly horrific depth of his misunderstanding and miscalculation about the nature of himself and the origin of all things.

The crushing irony of Satan's situation is that he was right in characterizing the Father as a usurper, someone claiming solely for himself rights that belonged to all, but that he was tragically wrong about the way he confronted, and has continued to confront, the situation. The Father, in this scenario, is no more or less "God" than are any of the angels, "fallen" or "unfallen," than were Adam and Eve, than is Satan or the Son. In his rebellion, Satan had hit upon an essential truth, but as proves to be usual for his

character, he understood that truth in precisely the wrong way, emphasizing the external rather than the internal, difference rather than similitude.

In making his radical claim, the Son redefines all of the expectations that have been laid upon him, most notably that of taking hold of what he refers to as "My everlasting Kingdom" (3.199). Mary, Satan, and the Father all seem to envision this kingdom as an earthly or heavenly variant on the political and military kingdom over which the conqueror David reigned. But it is *not* that kind of kingdom. The Son's kingdom is, as Donald Swanson and John Mulryan argue, "a spiritual kingdom that is neither accompanied by eschatological signs nor located in space.... The inner or spiritual nature of the kingdom might easily have been inferred from the parable of the seed growing secretly or from Luke xvii, 21b: 'for behold, the kingdom of God is within you.'"<sup>15</sup> *The kingdom of God is within* you—in some sense, everyone who attains what Milton elsewhere calls "the mind of Christ" (YP 6:583) has what the Son calls "The authority which I derived from Heaven" (PR 1.289). This authority is an internal authority, the "double scripture," especially the "internal scripture of the Holy Spirit" that Milton describes in *De doctrina Christiana* (YP 6:587). He who has "the spirit, who guides truth" (YP 6:583) has an authority that no "visible church ...let alone any magistrate, has the right" (YP 6:584) to gainsay or oppose. The Son in *Paradise Regain'd* powerfully illustrates what John Shawcross calls "Milton's essential belief," that "worth does not lie in the external, in works for a public arena, in negation and prohibition, nor in a mere following of example, no matter how blest the example might be, if the inner being has not been enlightened."<sup>16</sup>

As the Son returns "unobserved / Home to his mother's house private" (PR 4.638-39), he has accomplished the regaining of paradise, making of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regain'd* a complete cycle of descent and return. Where Adam and Eve move away from, the Son moves in return to the divine source. *But that source is not the Father*. The divine source is the "Spirit of Truth," the "inward Oracle" (PR 1.462-63), which the Son is at pains to tell Satan will



replace the latter's oracles ("henceforth Oracles are ceast" [1.456]). The external "Oracles" which are "ceast," however, do not have their origin with Satan, but with "Heaven's King" (1.421). When Satan claims to have been allowed access to heaven, to have undertaken the assignment of filling "the tongues / Of all [Ahab's) flattering Prophets ... with lies" (*PR* 1.374-75), the Son, though he berates and belittles Satan, does not contradict him; instead, he attempts subtly to shift the emphasis, arguing that Satan *chose* the task:

But thou art serviceable to Heaven's King!  
Wilt thou impute to obedience what thy fear  
Extorts, or pleasure to do ill excites?  
What but thy malice mov'd thee to misdeem  
Of righteous *Job*, then cruelly to afflict him  
With all inflictions? But his patience won.  
The other service was thy chosen task,  
To be a liar in four hundred mouths;  
For lying is thy sustenance, thy food.  
Yet thou pretend'st to truth, all Oracles  
By thee are giv'n.

(*PR* 1.421-311)

This is true, as far as it goes, but it stops short of an important acknowledgment. Oracles may, indeed, be given by Satan, but everything Satan does (or is allowed to do) has its origin in the Father.

In *Paradise Lost* this is made abundantly clear when the narrator informs us that Satan would never have been able to get up off "the burning Lake" (1.210) except for the fact that "the will / And high permission of all-ruling Heaven" allowed it (1.211-12). In *Paradise Regain'd* this idea is reinforced. Satan does nothing beyond what he is allowed to do by the Father, as the Son makes clear by telling Satan: "do as thou find'st / Permission from above; thou canst not more" (1.495-96). In the specific cases of Job and Ahab being discussed by Satan and the Son, it is important to note that in the biblical accounts Satan (known in each case as *the Satan* or *ha satan* in the Hebrew, signifying that "Satan" is a title or a function rather than a proper name) undertakes his activities

with the express permission of Yahweh. The origin of Job's sufferings is Yahweh. The origin of the "lying spirit" sent to Ahab in 1 Kings 22:20-23 is Yahweh. With these incidents serving as the background of the argument between Satan and the Son here in *Paradise Regain'd*, the scenario that Milton has created argues, not only for the irrelevance of Satan in the face of the "inward Oracle," but the irrelevance of the *source* of Satan's external oracles, the Father himself.

How does it do this? By sweeping the Father up, along with Satan, in the relentless focus on the "inner Paradise" first mentioned in *Paradise Lost*, and reinforced with each rejection of temptation in *Paradise Regain'd*. Where *Paradise Lost* was a narrative of descent, of moving away from a focus on first things, and toward a focus on appearances, surfaces, and last things, *Paradise Regain'd* is a narrative of ascent, or return, which restores a focus on first things, the true substance and nature of which are all too often obscured behind appearances. This process began with the temptations of food. In *Paradise Lost*, food was at the center of the question of what it meant to be like God. Satan's temptation of Eve focused on the fruit of the tree of knowledge as if it had, in itself, the power to transform human into divine, to make ethereal of physical. In so doing, Satan was merely following up on broad hints to the same effect delivered earlier by Raphael. In *Paradise Regain'd*, the very human (and very hungry) Jesus rejects Satan's offering of food, considering himself "fed with better thoughts" (2.258).

Satan's appeals, however, are no different, his focus no less external, than are the thoughts of the Father, who cannot seem to get enough recognition, enough in the way of accolades and affirmation from the creatures to whom he is ostensibly superior. The Father's fixation on his reputation, how he is regarded by others, shines through clearly in his desire that Gabriel, and "all Angels conversant on Earth / With man or men's affairs" (*PR* 1.131-32), bear witness to what he anticipates will be the Son's "Conquest" (1.154) of Satan. Given the Father's previous model of such conquest, the Son's piloting of "The Chariot of Paternal Deity" (*PL*

6.750), which "O'er Shields and Helms, and helmed heads he rode" (6.840), it becomes clear that the Father expects a display that can best be understood from without, visually, aurally, even kinetically.

But there is no sound and fury in the Son's "conquest" in *Paradise Regain'd*, because the Son's focus is not the value of appearances, but on how best to hear, understand, and obey the promptings of the "Spirit of Truth," the "inward Oracle" (1.462-63). In mastering this, the Son, existing in this time and place as the human male Jesus, realizes within himself the strength to easily withstand the all-too-transparent temptations of Satan, but he also realizes that the divine is to be found within, not without, that "Tempt not the Lord thy God" is an admonition, not against tempting a God conceived and understood as an external figure, but against self-temptation. In regaining paradise, Jesus neither regains Eden, nor does he shed a drop of sacrificial blood. In Milton's construction of the descent and ascent, the procession from and return to the divine, such externals are—at best—mere symbols, but at worst—and more typically—active and dangerous distractions from the one basic truth: *The kingdom of God is within you.*

27. In the second chapter of Daniel, Nebuchadnezzar dreams of an image of gold, silver, brass, and iron; Daniel interprets the image as four monarchies that would perish before God set up a kingdom that could not be destroyed. Therefore, Satan's offer of Parthia to Jesus is strategic, for by it he hopes to subvert Daniel's prophecy. By offering Jesus only Parthia as the sum of the first three kingdoms, he tempts Jesus to act too soon, to anticipate his heritage by assuming rule over the first three monarchies, rather than waiting to destroy the still more powerful fourth.

28. See the commentary on Daniel's prophecy in Revard, "Milton and Millenarianism," 62-66.

29. See T. F. Reddaway, *The Rebuilding of London after the Great Fire* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1940); Christopher Wren, "Proposals for the Rebuilding of the City of London, after the Great Fire," in *Parentalia, or, Memoirs of the Family of the Wrens* (1750) (Farnborough, Hants.: Gregg, 1965); and Jim Bennett, Michael Cooper, Michael Hunter, and Lisa Jardine, *London's Leonardo: The Life and Work of Robert Hooke* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

30. See my discussion of the Renaissance city ode and its application to Satan's praise of Rome and Athens in *Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode*, 310-15.

31. See Clayton Roberts, "The Impeachment of the Earl of Clarendon," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 13 (1957): 1-18.

32. See the commentary on Daniel's prophecy in Revard, "Milton and Millenarianism," 67-68.

33. For the spread of neoclassicism in Restoration England and the reaction against it, see Paul Spencer Wood, "The Opposition to Neoclassicism in England between 1660 and 1700," *PMLA* 33 (1928): 182-89.

34. See, for example, William Bridge, *Babylons Downfall* (London, 1641).

35. Lieb, *Poetics of the Holy*, 72-73.

36. Aphra Behn, *A Pindarick on the Death of our Late Sovereign: With an Ancient Prophecy on his Present Majesty* (London: Henry Playford, 1685), discussed in Revard, *Politics, Poetics, and the Pindaric Ode*, 159-63.

### *Notes to Bryson, "From Last Things to First"*

1. *De doctrina Christiana*, in *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, 8 vols. in 10, ed. Don M. Wolfe et al. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953-82), 6:133. All quotations of Milton's prose are from this edition, hereafter cited as YP, followed by volume and page number.

2. Michael Lieb, *The Visionary Mode: Biblical Prophecy, Hermeneutics, and Cultural Change* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), 32; hereafter cited in the text.

3. All quotations in this paragraph are from *The Celestial Hierarchy*, in *Pseudo-Dionysius: The Complete Works*, trans. Colm Luihheid (New York: Paulist Press, 1987), 150, 149.

4. Hans Jonas, *The Gnostic Religion* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963), 288.

5. Michael Lieb, *Theological Milton: Deity, Discourse, and Heresy in the Miltonic Canon* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2006), argues that Milton "reveals his determination to conceive the act of knowing God by arguing that God is beyond all power to know.... Essentially at issue is ... apophatic theology" (77). According to Lieb, "what emerges from the discussion [of God in *De doctrina Christiana*] is the unknowableness of God on any level" (79).

6. *Paradise Lost*, 7.31. All quotations of Milton's poetry are from *John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose*, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey, 1957); hereafter cited in the text.

7. Stanley Fish, "Inaction and Silence," in *Calm of Mind: Tercentenary Essays on Paradise Lost and Samson Agonistes*, ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich (Cleveland: Press of Case Western Reserve University, 1971), 41.

8. I have argued this point previously in chapter 5 of *The Tyranny of Heaven: Milton's Rejection of God as King* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2004). John T. Shawcross, *Paradise Regain'd: Worthy T'Have Not Remain'd So Long Unsung* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1988), also argues (quoting M. V. Rama Sarma) that *Paradise Regain'd* depicts "a human's ideal passage through life to salvation: any human being like the Son must first gain 'self-knowledge or awareness of divine similitude" (1).

9. For a further discussion of "thanks" or gratitude, see Peter E. Medine, "Gratitude and *Paradise Lost*: A Neglected Context," in *Milton and the Grounds of Contention*, ed. Mark R. Kelley, Michael Lieb, and John T. Shawcross (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2003), 115-49.

10. Anthony Low, "Milton, *Paradise Regained*, and Georgic," *PMLA* 98 (1983), argues, "Satan ... cannot help thinking of heroic actions in terms of honor, glory, and popular praise—rewards he craves—because they constitute his definition of 'greatest.' For him, to be 'Above Heroic' must mean to win more applause than Alexander won" (163-64).

11. *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, trans. Raymond B. Blakney (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1941), 204.

12. Joel Marcus, "Mark 14:61: 'Are You the Messiah-Son-of-God?'" *Novum Testamentum* 31 (1989), argues that the titles "Messiah-Son-of-David" and "Son of David" refer to a Messiah understood as "one whose task is primarily to reestablish the Davidic empire," then goes on to argue that all three synoptic gospels claim "that Jesus is not just the Son of David (in other words, not a mere *military* messiah) because he is the Son of God" (137).

13. Shawcross, *Paradise Regain'd*, argues that the Son "knows he is the Son of God, despite the unintelligible readings of some critics who have tried to hinge the poem on that question" (39). Hill, *Milton and the English Revolution*, disagrees, taking the view that it is not until "the miracle of the pinnacle [that] Jesus arrives a full understanding of his nature" (422). Barbara Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, and Art of Paradise Regained* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1966), 135-38, demonstrates that there has long been controversy over the nature—human or divine—of the Son in *Paradise Regain'd*. For example, Allan Gilbert, "The Temptation in *Paradise Regained*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 15 (1916): 606, maintains that the Son was taught directly by God, and therefore had no need for ordinary human education. Douglas Bush, *English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 412, characterizes the Son as a "sinless divine protagonist." Elizabeth Pope, *Paradise Regained: The Tradition and the Poem* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1947), argues that Milton himself viewed the Son as a divine being: "Milton was working under the influence of the tradition that Christ deliberately withheld from Satan all evidence of his own identity" (39). Among those who see the Son as human, however, are M. M. Mahood, who argues that the Son is a "perfect man, as yet scarcely aware of His divine progeniture"; Northrop Frye, for whom the Son "withstands the temptations as a human being until the tower temptation, at which time the omnipotent divine power 'takes over' the human will"; and A. S. P. Woodhouse, in whose account the Son "progresses from human beginnings to a full realization of his divinity in the tower scene" (all three quoted in Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, 137).

14. Milton's account of Creation as *ex Deo* (out of God) rather than *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) in both *De doctrina Christiana* (chapter 7, book 1), and *Paradise Lost* (7.168-69) supports the Son's meaning here. If all things (especially all living things) are of God, then all things share in the divine nature, and all things are—in that sense—God.

15. Donald Swanson and John Mulryan, "The Son's Presumed Contempt for Learning in *Paradise Regained*: A Biblical and Patristic Resolution," in *Milton Studies*, vol. 27, ed. James D. Simmonds (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1991), 250.

16. Shawcross, *Paradise Regain'd*, 76.

### *Notes to Loewenstein, "From Politics to Faith in the Great Poems?"*

1. Blair Worden, "Milton's Republicanism and the Tyranny of Heaven," in *Machiavelli and Republicanism*, ed. Gisela Bock, Quentin Skinner, and Maurizio Viroli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 244-45.