

The cross of Christ is still the focal point of all ages and movements. However important churches and creeds and institutions may be, the student of Church History has to do with much more than these—these sometimes obscure the real issue. He has to do with that ever-enlarging Divine-Human life which appears in history as the "Incarnate Son of God in the son of Mary"; he has to deal with the impact which this Divine Human Person made upon the first century, and upon all the centuries that have followed. The power of Jesus the Christ does not cease with his death; rather it obtains its source in that death, glorified and signalized by his resurrection. Historically, this power is carried on by his disciples, who through faith become partakers of his grace and nature.

In the power of this new life which he gave to his followers, the Greece and the Rome of yesterday were subdued and transformed. So will be the India, the China, the Russia, and the Isles of the Sea of tomorrow. The God, who in Christ Jesus, began his work anew over nineteen centuries ago, has never ceased to work nor ceased to love any part of the human race. Into a full and interesting world, but a world of spiritual bankruptcy and despair, came the Jesus of history and the Christ of God. He came to seek and to save the lost, and to do so, he sought to utilize, to vitalize and to universalize the religious culture of the Jews, the intellectual culture of the Greeks and the disciplinary culture of the Romans, in order that men, all men, of every race and clime, might be won back to the God and Father of us all. This then, is something of the high, the holy, the endless quest of the student of Church History and of all history.

Paradise Regained and Recent Criticism.

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From its first publication until now *Paradise Regained* has suffered by comparison with *Paradise Lost*. It was generally censured by contemporaries as being much inferior, though Milton himself could not hear with patience any such thing when related to him. Still it was thought then by the most judicious that, though the subject might not afford such variety of invention, yet the poem was little or nothing inferior for style and decorum.¹

Bailey² observes that it has been more appreciated by critics than by the public because of the difficulty of handling such a theme. In the poem there is no love, no sin, no quarrel, no reconciliation, no representation of womanhood except for a brief touch, no central moment of tragic suspense, indeed, no human action at all. It is a poem of two thousand lines whose single subject is the defeat of a Devil who knows himself doomed to defeat in an attempt upon a Divine Person who knows himself assured of victory. The temptation of Christ has for many critics as much unreality as that in *Paradise Lost* has of reality.

Pattison³ judges it to be the most unadorned poem in any language, and reminds us that in the first three books there is not a single simile. He notes that in it there figure only two personages, and both of these supernatural, indeed, scarcely personages at all, but mere voices of the abstract principles of Good and Evil engaged in disputation. Saurat⁴ finds this poem to be lacking in orthodoxy and in artistic merit and to be marred by a false psychology for Christ. He asks, Where is the Milton of 1644 (that is, of the *Areopagitica*) with all his youthful enthusiasm? Admitting in parenthesis that the poem contains many lovely passages, and selecting as the one lovely passage the one on women, the French critic says that it should find no place in such a poem.

¹ Edward Phillip's *Life of Milton*, A. D. 1694.

² *Milton*, pp. 197-208. ³ *Milton*, pp. 191-195.

⁴ *Milton, Man and Thinker*, pp. 233-236.

Of strangely opposite view are the poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, and De Quincey, who believed it to be the most nearly perfect of Milton's works,¹ and Johnson,² who thinks that if it had been written not by Milton, but by some of his imitators, it should have received universal praise.

Is the poem unappreciated because of intrinsic lack of merit, or because the longer poem by the same author overshadows it? Would it be more prized if Milton had not written *Paradise Lost*, just as *The Holy War* would stand as the greatest allegory in English if its author had not written a greater, *Pilgrims' Progress*?

The deprecatory critics attribute the alleged inferiority of *Paradise Regained* to the intractable nature of the subject, or to its supposed lack of congeniality for Milton, or to the supposedly waning power of the author's senescence, or to the exhaustion that must have followed upon the Herculean labors expended upon its predecessor, or to the languor of doing over again what he had already done.

Hanford stands with the poet critics over against the deprecatory critics in believing that Milton rated the second epic as of more worth because it was more congenial to his humanistic nature. "In *Paradise Lost*," he says, "he had been committed to a more or less inflexible story and to a traditional system of ideas which his best endeavor could not wholly rationalize or adapt to his own more individual thought, with the result that . . . the work is but an imperfect and distorted image of his philosophical point of view." *Paradise Regained*, in his view, is a pictorial map of Milton's moral universe, a representation of the happier inner Paradise of life according to reason, a theme commanding the full resources of his meditative life, of his knowledge of history and political philosophy, and of the biography of great men—such a theme as gave Milton the opportunity to be altogether his humanistic self.³

¹ Journal of English and German Philology, XV, p. 600.

² Pattison, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

³ J. H. Hanford, "Samson Agonistes and Milton in Old Age" (in *Studies in Shakespeare, Milton, and Donne*, University of Michigan Publications, Language and Literature, vol. I, 1925), p. 171.

Tillyard⁴ rejects Saurat's supposition of fatigue in the aging Milton, finding present the old mastery of his art yoked with a yet more masterly artistic restraint, and judges the poem to be perhaps the most fairly proportioned of all his creations.

Pattison⁵ suggests that Milton refrained from adornment in this poem out of reverence for the Scriptures, in order to atone for being over free with them in *Paradise Lost*, or else as a protest against the prevailing error of over ornateness. He suggests that Milton in this poem did not wish to detract attention from religious truth to the splendor of the frame in which he might set it. He would set forth Christ himself and revert to the pure Word of God, feeling, as he had once written, that "pomp and ostentation of reading is admired among the vulgar; but it matters of religion, he is learnedest who is plainest." He saw that here absolute plainness was best.

II.

Until recently¹ Quaker Ellwood's interpretation of his two interviews with Milton—in which he thought that it was he who had moved Milton to write his second epic by saying of the first, "Thou hast said much of Paradise lost, but nothing of Paradise found"—has been accepted at its face value.² But if Ellwood was right, then *Paradise Regained* was an afterthought.

Raleigh judges that Ellwood misinterpreted both Milton's silence on the first interview, and his words on the second; and that he twisted both by his own self-flattery. Hanford³ and Tillyard⁴ agree with Raleigh in seeing humor or irony in Milton's treatment of Ellwood. The poem is not the result of a chance suggestion, not an afterthought, but a necessary sequel to the first epic. There is a kind of inevitability about it. It is the fulfilment of Milton's early literary ambition to write a shorter epic on the model of *Job*. The regaining of Paradise is

⁴ Milton, pp. 301, 309.

⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 191-195.

¹ Raleigh in 1900 is the first to challenge Ellwood.

² So Masson, VI, 654; Brooke, p. 150, et al.

³ *Samson*, etc. pp. 167-170. ⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 297-301.

predicted in the opening lines of *Paradise Lost*,⁵ and outlined in Books III⁶ and XII.⁷ But the exhibition of the process is not included in *Paradise Lost*. It could not be exhibited in Adam whose story is of a fall. It remained for Milton to embody in another work its counterpart, to set forth in detail the successful encounter of humanity with evil in the Person of Christ, who becomes for Milton the second Adam, the new protagonist of humanity.

Ramsey,⁸ finding that *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* together completely fill up in structure the measure of the typical Morality Play, thinks it not impossible that *Paradise Regained* was at one time conceived as merely the first act, or the closing cantos, of the larger work. The later Morality Play required two struggles—with Evil triumphant in the first, but in the second, Good. *Paradise Lost* with a tragic close serves for the first struggle; *Paradise Regained* with Virtue victorious, for the second. If Milton's earlier plan was to embody both parts in a single epic, this would explain the ten books of the first edition instead of the consecrated epic number of twelve, to which he altered it in the second edition by dividing original books VII and X, the two longest books, into two books each. The average length of a book in the first edition was 1,055 lines. *Paradise Regained* would divide into two books of 1,034.

Tillyard¹ is of the view that *Paradise Regained* is not properly a sequel or continuation of *Paradise Lost*, which is complete and final, admitting no extension; but that it is rather a colony of the mother city, linked with it by tradition, but autonomous and with a character entirely its own. He feels that it is not an epic continuation, but a theological correction of the former work, on the view that Milton's theological views underwent a change before the completion of the longer poem.

⁵ I, 1-5. ⁶ Ll. 129-415. ⁷ Ll. 574 ff.

⁸ R. L. Ramsey, "Morality Themes in Milton's Poetry" (in *Studies in Philology*, XV), pp. 154-155.

¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 300-301. ² P. 38.

III.

Why for the *Paradise Regained* did Milton select from the many possible episodes in the life of Christ that of the Temptation? In the *Cambridge Manuscript*² in which Milton in 1840 and 1841 set down all the Biblical subjects that he considered suitable for literary themes are included seven episodes from the life of Christ: Christ born, Herod massacring or Rachel weeping, Lazarus, Christ bound, Christ crucified, Christ risen, and *Christus patiens*. On the last named theme he has this note: "The scene in the garden beginning from the coming thither till Judas betrays and the officers lead him away. The rest by message and chorus. His agony may receive noble expressions."

Saurat³ and others suppose that the Crucifixion would have been more appropriate, and explain Milton's failure to use it as due to his alleged distaste for the story of Jesus' Crucifixion and Resurrection, and for the sacrifice in which he gave his blood as an offering to Eternal Justice. Vicarious atonement, so he says, is no Miltonic conception; *Paradise Regained* is the poem for it, but in it he speaks of it not at all.

Bailey⁴ offers reasons that must have been decisive for Milton in the difficulty of handling the Passion story in a way that Christian readers could bear to read it; in the detail with which the Passion is related, leaving no freedom of invention to the poet; in the close parallelism between the temptation in the Garden and the temptation in the Wilderness; and most important of all, since the counterpart of the first epic could not do without Satan, in the fact that the Temptation is the only event in the life of Christ in which Satan plays a visible and important part.

Dowden⁵ exonerates Milton from the charge of an unorthodox view of Redemption by pointing us to the words of the Father in Book I, 150-168. From these words Dowden deduces that if Milton had written a poem of Redemption on a larger scale, the Tragedy of the Powers of Hell would have consisted

³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 233-236, 178. ⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 199.

⁵ "Paradise Regained" (in *Milton Memorial Lectures*), pp. 191-193.

of three acts—the successive defeat of the three great adversaries, Satan, Sin, and Death. Satan's defeat comes in the Wilderness; the victory over Sin would come in the Crucifixion; and the victory over Death, in the Resurrection. The defeat of Satan, chief and leader of the rebel host, must come first. His defeat in the Wilderness was absolute; with it the final issue was potentially attained, and the ruin of Sin and Death was already assured.

IV.

The main source of material for the poem is Luke's account of the Temptation. In one sense Luke is the only source, for while Milton has amplified Luke's twenty lines into two thousand, he has merely expanded them, scarcely introducing a circumstance not in the original. His poem is little more than a paraphrase of the Gospel account without the addition of any invented incident and without the introduction of any irrelevant digression.¹ He even had his outline ready made by Luke, and in his expansion of the outline there is no alteration and no addition of anything not directly evolved from it.² Much as he expands the second temptation, he adheres to the letter of the Biblical account. Every part of it is a detail of "the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them."

V.

Of the long line of interpreters who have charged Milton with failure to understand Luke's account of the Temptation we may take Brooke³ as the able spokesman. Brooke attributes the brevity of the treatment of the first temptation to his view that Milton had no idea of its meaning. He therefore finds this part of the poem to be heavy and grotesque. The banquet scene is for Brooke a religious and artistic blunder. Milton, not having formed a clear conception of the temptation, he says,

¹ Pattison, *op. cit.*, p. 191.

² Gilbert, "The Temptation in *Paradise Regained*" (in *Journal of English and German Philology*, XV, 1916), p. 601.

³ Milton, pp. 150-158.

tried to get one by repeating himself, with the result that the unintelligent repetition is confusion worse confounded—a commonplace grotesque piece of theatrical vulgarity. The second temptation, as Brooks would have it, Milton does understand, and to his clear conception of the subject is due his grand success in this part of the poem. The Scriptural words, however, of Satan's proposal and Jesus' answer are not well brought in, since Milton makes them an incident in the temptation; whereas in Luke they are the idea of the whole. In treating the third temptation, Milton, not understanding the subject, is driven as with the first temptation to theatrical sensationalism. The additions to the story violate it, and even with the additions Milton could only muster thirty lines, so little did he understand. This critic finds fault with the unequal length in the treatment of the three temptations, arguing that the brevity in the treatment of the first and third was due to lack of understanding of them, and that Milton's reason for expanding the second was that he did understand it.

Miller⁴ agrees with Brooke in the view that Milton did not understand the first and third temptations, and explains that Milton could not have understood them because he considered them as objective. He says that all English theologians until long after Milton's time took the temptations to be objective, not psychological and inward, and the Satan of the temptations to be objectively real. According to Miller the first thoroughgoing attack in England upon the literal interpretation was made in 1761 by Hugh Farmer. Subjective interpreters make the struggle a real one in Jesus' own mind; while objective interpreters make the temptation to be to accept *anything* from Satan. The subjective interpretation, as Miller sees it, is the only one that could give unity to the temptations. Not so understood, the attacks of Satan seem to have no relation, the transitions are lame, and the unity of the poem is lost. The second temptation, however, the poet could use, because it was understandable objectively. Milton, therefore, succeeded with the second temptation, while failing with the first and third.

⁴ "Milton's Conception of the Temptation as Portrayed in *Paradise Regained*" (in *Modern Language Notes*, XV, 1900) pp. 403-409.

Hanford¹ answers that Miller is utterly mistaken in thinking that Milton is blind to the spiritual significance of the incident. True, he says, the temptation for Milton was not inward. For Milton and his contemporaries all temptation was regarded as external and as coming from the Devil. Milton would so interpret a conflict of conscience of his own; but that would not make it any the less a real temptation.

Gilbert gives a complete answer to this school of critics in his study, "The Temptation in *Paradise Regained*."² The poem to him was worthy to receive from all readers such appreciation as it won from Wordsworth, Coleridge, and De Quincey. He pronounces it the most nearly perfect of Milton's works, a masterpiece of art, that furnishes never-ending profit and delight to any whose affections are set upon the highest poetry.

Milton's interpretation, says Gilbert, was that of the best commentators of his time. Milton was familiar with the best commentaries. As a youth "besides his ordinary lectures out of the Bible and out of the best commentaries on the week day, that was his sole study on Sundays."³ Many of his prose writings mention theologians and commentaries he was especially familiar with, such as Calvin, Bucer, and Paraeus.

With Calvin, Milton makes the first temptation not to be a mere attempt to persuade a hungry man to take food, but to influence Christ to doubt his divine Sonship. The whole dialogue emphasizes distrust; Satan asserts that a solitary wayfarer has never yet escaped alive from the desert, and that only by miracle can Jesus reach safety. The whole first temptation is not one of hunger but one of lack of faith.

We have seen the offense that Brooke took at the banquet scene. All critics for more than two centuries explained the banquet as part of the first temptation. As late as 1911 we hear even Professor Dowden⁴ saying of it that Milton, after making

¹ "The Temptation Motive in *Milton*" (in *Studies in Philology*, XV, pp. 202ff, 190.

² *Journal of English and German Philology*, XV, pp. 599-611. Gilbert has done more than any critic in revealing the high merit of *Paradise Regained*.

³ *Milton's Tract on Education*.

⁴ "Paradise Regained" (in *Milton Memorial Lectures*), pp. 200-201.

his bow in the first incident to literal Scripture, then adds his own, a presentation of the romance of gastronomy. Gilbert⁵ apparently is the first to place the banquet as a part of the second temptation. He observes that the three temptations fall on three successive days, each clearly marked off from the others. Placed thus as Milton placed it, the banquet scene finds an artistic place in the structure of the poem. Gilbert's point has been accepted by all later critics, such as Hanford⁶ and Tillyard.⁷ The banquet thus becomes a temptation not of hunger (already tried in vain) but one of earthly pomp. Its appeal is to the aesthetic sense, and to the pride of glamor. Of course, its splendor is out of keeping with the simplicity of the first temptation, but thoroughly suitable to the glories of the kingdoms of the world in the second. So long as it was placed in the first temptation, it was rightly criticised; but placed in the second it but enhances the art of Milton.

The second temptation has its parts so arranged that they continuously gain in attractiveness. Well does the splendid banquet, then, come first, presenting bodily luxury as the first and simplest of worldly glories.

The parts of the temptations are arranged not only by steps, but with a transition between each step. When the linked structure of the poem is understood, we admire Milton yet more for using the banquet as a transition from hunger to wealth. It thus has both a backward look to the hunger temptation, and a forward look to the offer of treasures.

Gilbert points out that much as Milton expands the second temptation he adheres to the letter of the Biblical account with a respect here as throughout the poem for the exact details, and even for the wording of the Bible. The splendid banquet at the beginning, and the learning of Greece at the end, may be included among the glories of the kingdoms of the world. Gilbert observes that the place given the Scriptural words of the second temptation is as in the Scripture just following what are in no

⁵ In 1916. ⁶ "The Temptation Motive in *Milton*" (in *Studies in Philology*, XV), p. 182.

⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 326.

figurative sense worldly kingdoms—the vision of the Parthian and Roman realms.

In the third temptation, according to Gilbert, Milton is true to the Gospel account. Satan does not propose two alternatives to Christ, that of standing or casting himself down. Satan's imperative is scornful, meaning that Christ cannot possibly stand, and that there is nothing for him to do but cast himself down.

In this temptation Satan has long enough been perplexed to know whether Jesus, Son of David and Messiah that he admits him to be, is the Son of God who in *Paradise Lost* had cast him out of heaven. He thinks by this test quickly to settle the question. The miracle Satan expected was if he were the Son of God he would be borne up as he fell. The answer is no act of Christ's but a miracle: to the amazement of his adversary he remains divinely supported. This miracle unimagined by Satan forces him to see that the one he has declared to be no more son of God than himself or other men is the one who ages before had driven him into the abyss of Chaos.

The whole point, then, in the third temptation, is that Satan is making a physical test to see whether Christ is what he claims to be. It proves to be not a temptation at all but the rout of Satan. The answer of Christ fits suitably into this interpretation, if with Dowden¹ we allow that Satan understood by "the Lord thy God" Christ himself. Satan, amazed to recognize at last by the un-thought-of miracle that Jesus was "the Lord thy God," tumbled down himself.

The fall of Satan from the pinnacle is not, as it has been long held to be, an invention of Milton's. He is adopting the interpretation given by many commentators to words of Jesus on a later occasion. Accounting for the power of his disciples to cast out demons, Jesus said: "I beheld Satan fallen as lightning from heaven." Commentators explain that Jesus is speaking of his victory over Satan—a victory that made possible the victory of his disciples, and that was, therefore, the heart of his work of Redemption—a victory variously placed either in the Incarnation or the Resurrection. This interpretation, then, is

¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

not peculiarly Milton's. Milton's however, is the theological view that places Christ's defeat of Satan in the Wilderness temptation; and his is the dramatic art that utilizes as he does Jesus' vivid picture of Satan's defeat.

VI.

Milton's art is seen in the order he gave the three temptations, and in the length of treatment he accords each. He treats the first temptation briefly as a prelude;² the second at length as the body of the poem; and the third briefly again, as a swift climax—not indeed, as a temptation, but as the brief and sudden rout of Satan.

The brevity of the first and third parts, then, is not due to Milton's inability to make anything out of them, as Brooke would have it, but to his masterful art of construction. Milton could have drawn out the third temptation, but swift action at this point is called for. It is for Satan his last gambler's throw. He is in his rage eager for the issue, and the decisive thrust must be at once. Both the mental condition of Satan and the reader's desire for the dramatic catastrophe make it good art in the author to give but a few bold strokes to this hitherto much criticised ending of the main action of the poem.

Why, if Milton from an artistic sense of proportion chose to make the middle temptation the body of the work—why did he select the second for such elaboration? Hanford³ indicates that the first and third are special, having to do with Christ's mission, and as such are not temptations of humanity; but that the second is universal, implying all human moral issues. Milton accordingly selects it as the one most suitable for expansion, and elaborates it into a survey of vice with all its baits and seeming pleasures.

The temptation of hunger and distrust is fittingly chosen for the introductory temptation, since it is the simplest and quietest. The episode of the pinnacle is put last because it is the most violent, represents Satan in his greatest excitement, and

² Tillyard, *op. cit.*, p. 323.

³ In "Samson, etc.," (*op. cit.*), p. 170.

serves best as the climax of action or the catastrophe of the poem.

It might be said that he chose this order because it is the Scripture order. But Matthew has the second and third temptations reversed. The student feels that Milton made deliberate selection of Luke's order for the artistic reasons we have outlined above.

VII.

Many critics consider the temptations of Christ to be artificial because they seem to be for Christ no temptation at all. Some, as Dowden,⁴ escape this difficulty by explaining that Milton was Arian in his Christology, and that his Arian Christ had freedom of choice and *could have* been worsted. If not, he says the impossibility arises from his virtue, not from his Deity. But even Trinitarians hold that their Christ was, while divine, still completely human and susceptible to temptation in all points as other men.

The alleged artificiality of the temptations does not lie in the view taken of Christ's person, but in the psychology Milton gives him in the poem. Dowden,⁵ denying that the conflict was artificial, interprets it as an intense contest between two opposites. Life for him is not a gymnasium (as with the Greeks), but a battlefield (as with the Hebrews). In the dialogue each speaker has a fixed position, flings his spear of speech, which is caught by his opponent's target, and the other hurls his spear of retort. There are no glancings aside, no by-issues, no yieldings, no compromise. It is a duel, not a debate. Milton learned this in his ecclesiastical and political duels, in which he had no hope of converting an adversary. He flung a book not to persuade, but to destroy. The duel in the desert is a desperately serious affair. Hence the certainty of issue announced in heaven at the very beginning.

Hanford,¹ while making the first and third trials peculiar to Christ, allows that in the second Christ is delineated not as meeting his own personal temptations, but as a representative

⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 193. ⁵ P. 195, 198.

¹ "Samson, etc.," (*op. cit.*), pp. 170-171.

man meeting the characteristic temptations of humanity. That the nature of Christ may have made them not tempting, he says, is beside the point. Christ's indifference to them instructs all men how they may despise them, and his calm answers reveal how they may, as he, to the baits and seeming pleasures of vice oppose the antidote of reason. Milton is not attempting Biblical commentary nor portraiture of the historic Christ, but rather painting a pictorial map of the moral universe.

Gilbert² reminds us that in all the temptations Christ's weakness is stressed, and that the fact of his weakness intensified their force. Christ was hungry; Satan would give him food. He was poor; Satan would supply the wealth he seemed to need for his mission. He was unknown; Satan would give him the name he must have to make headway. He was without power; the Parthian aid would supply the need. With less than the greatest power his movement would be insecure; Satan offered the Roman power. Christ was unskilled in the learning of the world; the Greek learning would stand him in good stead. In every detail of these trials Christ's weakness is to be made strong by the gifts of Satan. The gifts are in themselves not to be despised; the sin lies in taking them from Satan.

VIII.

Upon what other sources than the Gospel of Luke did Milton draw in writing *Paradise Regained*? The parts played by the wild beasts and by the ministering angels are elaboration of Mark's account of the Temptation. We have already noted that Milton was a constant student of the best commentaries. We have called attention to Ramsay's study of the influence of the Morality Play upon Milton. Tillyard³ reviews Ramsay's thesis with approbation, and thinks he finds this influence even stronger in *Paradise Regained* than Ramsey has asserted. The contest between Christ and Satan is strongly reminiscent of the contest between the Vice and the Virtue of the Morality. Most critics observe that the recollection of Giles Fletcher's treatment of the

² *Op. cit.*, p. 606.

³ *Op. cit.*, p. 317.

same theme in *Christ's Victorie and Triumph* was clearly with Milton as he wrote. Satan's disguise of an old man in rural weeds seems to be an echo of Fletcher's Devil disguised as an aged hermit, which in turn was borrowed from Spenser's Archimago. Milton seems to have intended a conscious revolt against the Bourne of Bliss device of Fletcher, the pleasure-loving son of the Renaissance, in having Satan reject with scorn Belial's suggestion of tempting Jesus by setting women in his eye.⁴ Here the poet speaks in person, but next day we find him, though discarding allegory, presenting the same Epicurean type of temptation. In one line Milton reminiscently uses the phrase of Fletcher's title, "Christ's victory and triumph."

This poem more than any other is filled with the fruit of Milton's vast learning. It is the product of his intensive study throughout a life-time. Only a scholar with accurate and extensive knowledge—geographical, historical, political, literary, Biblical, philosophical—could give the exact and splendid account found in the poem of the Graeco-Roman world in the time of Tiberius, or the brilliant historical review of Greek literature. Only a master poet could make the picture so compact and reverent as Milton has made it. Milton studied with intensity and insight all the realms of knowledge, and digested and assimilated until it had become Milton himself. His own vast knowledge then is the chief fund from which he drew in expanding the brief Gospel narrative into the epic of *Paradise Regained*.¹

IX.

It is strange that some critics find the temptations in *Paradise Regained* so unreal that the poem is artificial; while others see them to be so real that the Christ of the poem is not Christ at all but a representative man. Hanford's² view is that Satan

⁴ H. E. Cory, Spenser, *The School of the Fletchers and Milton*, pp. 370-371.

¹ Hanford, *A Milton Handbook*, p. 214; Masson, VI, pp. 655f. See also Blakeney's *Paradise Regained by John Milton*, 1932, which is the latest and fullest commentary. It is a tribute to Milton's vast learning and infinite patience which built up the possibility of his great poetry.

² "The Temptation, etc." (op. cit.), p. 180.

is directing his appeal through Christ at humanity at large. Tillyard³ says that the protagonist of the poem is partly an allegorical figure, partly Milton himself imagined perfect. All modern critics find with Bailey⁴ obviously autobiographical passages throughout the poem. He says that the grave introspective note, present from the first in everything Milton wrote, is far more conspicuous in *Paradise Regained* than in *Paradise Lost*. Besides purely autobiographical passages are to be found also passages echoing the conflicts of the parties of the time, and reflecting Milton's opinion of the Puritan Revolution, of the Restoration, and the society of the times under both regimes. Martin¹ says that *Paradise Regained* is made the vehicle of Milton's keenest feelings and thoughts about contemporary and recent events, and about his own more intimate experiences and ideals. Both in himself and in the larger theatre of national life he had often seen enacted the temptation and the fall, a trial and an insufficiency.

There comes out Milton's sensitiveness to feminine charm, and his delight in festal joy, but with them his discipline of temperance (I, 408). One asks whether the poet in his expressions of contempt for wealth had forgotten his debt to his father and the leisure for study he had given him (II, 447-449). From a child he had his heart set on high designs (II, 410), engaged in no childish play, but had all his mind set serious to learn and know (I, 200-4). He felt the desire for fame above all other desires (III, 25-27), but chastened it into a thirst for the true fame of God's approval (III, 47-64). As a young man he debated with himself his slowness to begin his life's task, and waited for his time to come (III, 396-399). He completed his education by going to see the cities of the world (III, 232-246). He took solemn stock of himself before launching into his life's task. Zeal and Duty moved him to seek his country's freedom from ecclesiastical and political servitude (III, 171-180), and his heart flamed to free truth o'er all the earth from brute violence and Tyrannick power (I, 215-220). But he became dis-

³ Op. cit., p. 305f.

⁴ Op. cit., pp. 217-218.

¹ Milton: *Paradise Regained*, pp. v-xi.

illusioned as to the value of the Revolution (III, 387-393), when he found that by the sword he could not of inward slaves make outward free (IV, 143-145; II, 427-440), and that the people were but a herd confused, a miscellaneous rabble, who extol things vulgar (III, 47-64). His hopes for his country's freedom were defeated by their preference of bondage with ease, their readiness to give up true freedom for an unspiritual tyranny, by the failure of England to keep its hard-won Republican liberty. In the Restoration a great opportunity had been tragically missed.

While Milton is pessimistic for the immediate future, he expects the people in the time to come to be led by God to a real readiness for freedom, and that the tree of Christ's kingdom shall then spread over all the earth (IV, 143-151).

Milton came to be irked by the undeserved praise given proud military leaders (III, 78-83), rating as a much worthier fame that won by deeds of peace and wisdom eminent (III, 88-192). As Latin Secretary (Secretary of State, or Foreign Secretary) he saw the coming and going of embassies (III, 61-67), but fretted under the tedious waste of time to sit and hear so many hollow compliments and lies, outlandish flatteries (IV, 121-125). He had been subjected to suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting without distrust or doubt, and had learned that who best can suffer best can do (III, 188-196). Dowden sees in Belial Milton's picture of the typical Restoration courtier,² and Tillyard³ thinks that some of the arts of Satan are reflections of what Milton had seen in politicians—his readiness to salve the conscience with plausible reasons for wrong political actions, his agility in shifting from one argument to another, and his complaining at the lack of appreciation of his efforts. In the struggle between King and Parliament he had his example of men eager to rule others who had not yet learned to rule themselves.⁴ In the King and court of the Restoration he had another example of the same; and the Charleses had convinced him that to give a kingdom hath been thought more noble, and to lay down far more magnanimous than to assume,

² *Op. cit.*, p. 200. ³ *Op. cit.*, p. 311. ⁴ Bailey, *Op. cit.*, pp. 203-4.

and that a king should guide his nation in the way of saving doctrine, and from error lead to know, and knowing, worship God aright (III, 466-482).

The passages on the worth of Greek literature have created endless discussion. Many¹ explain them by saying that in Christ's words Milton was insincere, and did not mean what he said; others,² by supposing that his opinion on the subject had undergone a change, and that while Satan's words represented Milton's earlier view, Christ's words give us his opinion at the age of sixty-two. Some³ feel that Milton throughout his life held both views side by side, and that both Satan and Christ are speaking for the author. Dowden⁴ reconciles the two passages by explaining that Milton always did put—as the source of illumination—first, the inward promptings of the Spirit, and second, the written Word of God, citing for evidence the preface to his *Tract on Christian Doctrine*. Hanford⁵ carries the reconciliation further. In tracing Milton's mental history he shows that Milton at first saw no danger in the love of knowledge, but by the time he wrote the *Areopagitica* and the *Tract on Education* he came to feel that it should have as its goal the knowledge and service of God. In *Paradise Lost* he points danger in intellectual curiosity, making it a co-operating motive in the Fall. In *Paradise Regained* knowledge is presented, while ostensibly as an aid to Christ's Messiahship, yet really for its own attractiveness. This is how men of high ideals, as the author had seen, are often seduced from their true course. Satan goes farther than Milton could go in his praise of pagan literature. Milton had heard such praise from his contemporaries and considered it little less than blasphemous. Milton could always heartily assent to his Christ's words on the errors in the classic writers. Moreover, he knew men deep versed in books, shallow in themselves (IV, 327).

¹ Bailey, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-4. ² Masson, VI, p. 658; so also Saurat.

³ Brooke, *op. cit.*, p. 290. ⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 208.

⁵ "The Temptation, etc." (*op. cit.*), p. 178-181.

X.

Milton's literary preface in the first seven lines of *Paradise Regained*, and his invocation of a divine being for inspiration in the second paragraph, are on the conventional model first set by Vergil in the rejected first lines of the *Aeneid*, and followed by Spenser in the *Faerie Queene*, and by Abraham Cowley in his *Davideis* —published in 1656, only fifteen years before *Paradise Regained*. A glance at the opening of the four works reveals the common model followed by all.

The *Aeneid* begins: "I am the same that once played on the delicate pipe of the shepherds . . . ; But now arms and the man I sing who first from the Illyrian shore . . . banished by Fate . . . into Italy came.

"Tell me the reasons, O Muse."

Spenser's work begins: "Lo I the man, whose Muse whilome did maske . . . in lowly Shepherds weeds; Am now enforst a far unfitter taske, For trumpets sterne to chaunge mine Oaten reeds, and sing of Knights and Ladies gentle deeds.

"Helpe then, O holy Virgin chiefe of nine."

And Cowley opens with these words: "I sing the Man who Judah's Scepter bore. . . .

"Thou, who didst David's royal stem adorn. . . . Even Thou my breast with such blest rage inspire, As moved the tuneful strings of David's Lyre."

Cowley makes the following annotation: "The custom of beginning all poems with a proposition of the whole work, and an invocation to some God for his assistance to go through with it, is so solemnly and religiously observed by all the ancient poets, that though I could have found out a better way, I should not (I think) have ventured upon it."

Milton follows in this tradition by opening his *Paradise Regained* thus: "I who erewhile the happy Garden sung . . . now sing Recover'd Paradise to all mankind.

"Thou Spirit who ledst this glorious Eremite . . . inspire, As thou are wont, my prompted Song else mute."

Aside, however, from the literary introduction, statement of proposition, and invocation, the classical epic has little influence

upon the structure of *Paradise Regained*. Its model is not the *Aeneid* but the *Book of Job*.

XI.

For nearly a third of a century before the publication of *Paradise Regained* Milton had in mind to write a brief epic on the model of Job. In considering the types of literature that "the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself" he wrote of "that epic form whereof the two poems of Homer and those other two of Virgil and Tasso are a diffuse, and the *book of Job* a brief model."¹ In *Paradise Lost* he fulfilled the first plan; in *Paradise Regained*, the second.

That the *Book of Job* was vividly in the author's mind at the time he was composing *Paradise Regained* is evidenced by the number of allusions to Job made in the poem. These allusions are more than figures of adornment. A parallel of many details is drawn between the trial of Job and that of Christ. Milton clearly takes the Temptation of Jesus to be in many respects a repetition in form of that of Job. From these preliminary considerations there can be no doubt that Milton thought of the *Book of Job* as his model. Let us see how well he succeeded in following his model.

1. In *length* the poems are almost exactly equal.
2. The *theme* is the same for both poems: the attempt of Satan upon the virtue of a servant of God whom the Father has praised.
3. There is a parallelism of *characters*. There are two chief characters in each poem. Of these one is the same person in both dramas; and in the two he plays the same role. The second character in each poem, while not the same in identity, plays the same role; and so far as is relevant to the action he has the same character—a personage of well-known piety subjected to all the trials of virtue of which the Adversary is master.
4. The *settings* are strongly parallel. The ash heap to which Job is banished from the city has as counterpart the wilderness

¹ Reason of Church Government.

far removed from men. These are the battlefields of the two contests.

For each poem there are superterrestrial scenes from celestial beings in council. In each the battle on earth has been projected in heavenly councils. And the celestials take all interest in the issue of the battle waged below.

In each a great storm comes near the end of the action serving to introduce the catastrophe.

5. The two *plots* have much in parallel. The Father pronounces strong approval upon the virtue of his servant. Satan, hearing the approval, determines to give it the lie. He believes every man has his price. He is given freedom to deal with God's servant as he will, except that in his persecution he may go no farther than the limit of his permission. The Father, knowing the virtue of his servant, is secure as to the issue.

In each a first brief attempt of Satan fails; and a new celestial council meets in which the failure is discussed and a severer trial projected.

The chief trial of both narratives covers the longer central part of the poem and is conducted by means of a dialogue. True, while in the second Satan debates in person, but Job's three friends in the first, the friends are tools, though they know it not, of the unseen enemy.

The trials in both poems move by stages and increase in intensity.

6. As a minor detail both servants are assailed with terrible dreams. As another, the opposition in the debate seems to be more interested in the servant's religious faithfulness or mission than he himself, and is rebuked by the protagonist as falsely partisan.

In each the Adversary exhausts his battery of weapons, and in defeat turns to the weapons of blind rage. In *Job* the defeated friends conclude by making bold charges of terrible crime, while in Milton's epic Satan turns to physical violence.

When the servant, resisting every solicitation, overcomes whatever the Adversary's cruel malice can invent, the trials come to a sudden end.

The victor after the successful issue of his trial is comforted with the comfort of God. In the Old Testament epic Jehovah appears to Job in the whirlwind, and restores him to double his former prosperity, with new children, including Jemimah, the fairest of the daughters of the East. In *Paradise Regained* angels come and minister to Christ.

Both narratives have a quiet ending, concluding with the setting with which they opened.

7. The *style* of the two bears comparison. *Paradise Regained* is written in blank verse, the stateliest of English verse forms. *Job*, except for the narrative links, is written in the stateliest of Hebrew meters—that in which the lines are characterized by synonymous parallelism, ordinarily with two lines in parallel, but often with an elaborate verse paragraph of many synonymous lines.

In one quality the style is strikingly different. The English poem has few figures to adorn it, while *Job* is the poem of all the world most ornate with many and vigorous figures.

8. In the two the *central action* is alike—in that it consists of no outward action at all. It is a mere debate—a debate, however, that is the register of an intense inner action. This gives Genung his title for *Job* of "The Epic of the Inner Life."

9. In both a *great issue*, the supreme issue of heaven and earth, is at stake—the fate of man. The outcome will determine whether man is capable of righteousness or not. If *Job*, the world's most righteous man, goes down before the Powers of Evil, then no man can stand. In *Job* not an individual, but all mankind, was on trial. Likewise with Milton's poem: if Christ should yield, Evil is stronger than Good, and God's hope of redeeming man is lost. If Christ overcomes, he wins for all mankind.

10. In one point the two epics differ radically. We have seen that the temptation of Jesus was objective and, hence, seemingly unreal. *Job's* struggle, on the other hand, is subjective, inward, psychological. He is not an abstraction, but a man—a very real man. He wrestles with all his powers, and sounds the depths of despair about himself in his sense of the

alienation of God. He suffers intensely at the thought that God has gone wrong, and has become his unjust and cruel enemy, and that the order of the moral universe has turned into chaos. Job goes to the bottom of mental wretchedness, and, spiritual Prometheus that he is, works his way back to faith—to a faith far richer than he possessed before, a faith so great that he can say, "I had heard of thee with the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee."

The Historic Witness of the Baptists.

BY THE REV. J. H. RUSHBROOKE, M.A., D.D., GENERAL SECRETARY BAPTIST WORLD ALLIANCE.

An Address to the General Assembly of the Baptist Union of Australia.

The Gospel in Personal Experience. In the year 1926 there was held in Budapest the capital of Hungary, one of a series of Regional Conferences. During our stay in the city, a few of us were guests of Mrs. Udvarnoki, wife of the president of the Preachers School. As we took leave, we naturally thanked our hostess for her gracious hospitality. She burst into tears, and protested that she needed no thanks from fellow-Baptists: it was a privilege and joy to serve them, for she owed everything to Baptists. Then she told us a story that stirred us to the depths. As a girl in that great city, she had been taught something of the New Testament; it was explained to the pupils as a part of the school curriculum. But she also read it for herself, and she found it very hard to reconcile what she read with the explanations that were given in the school. In the New Testament she discovered that the first Christians had a vivid sense of their personal relation to the Lord Jesus Christ; they shared a joyous transforming experience and were conscious of the very power of God in their lives. They felt themselves brothers and sisters to one another, and they constantly bore testimony to the Gospel to which they owed all. She said: "I did not know any Christians like that, but determined that I would try to be one even if there were no others in the world." A few years passed, and this young girl heard that a Christian of that kind had appeared in the city. He was Heinrich Meyer, the pioneer Baptist of Hungary. She sought him out, and was among the first whom he baptized.

In that description by one still living, there stands revealed the open secret, the source and fount, of our distinctive Baptist witness. It would be easy to parallel it in other countries—to