THE WEAPONS OF THE "TRUE WARFARING CHRISTIAN":

RIGHT REASON AND FREE WILL

IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE

A Dissertation

by

NANCY ROCHELLE BRADLEY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2009

Major Subject: English

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ABSTRACT

The Weapons of the "True Warfaring Christian": Right Reason and Free Will in Seventeenth-Century Literature. (August 2009)

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Milton writes in *Areopagitica* of the "true warfaring Christian" who can "apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better." Though many reformers saw both human nature and the faculty of reason as depraved after the fall, Milton and other radical writers in the period emphasized the role that reason can and should play in the experience of spiritual warfare. The dissertation therefore begins by considering the theological contexts within which writers of the English Reformation understood evil and human encounters with evil, especially in the form of temptations, but also in the form of disturbing dreams and satanic presences. It then considers some epistemological problems as related to the experience of such conflicts: reason, especially right reason; knowledge, conscience and memory; and free will.

Focusing on the texts of John Milton, Aemilia Lanyer, Richard Norwood, and John Bunyan, this study shows that these radical religious writers refuse to conform to the general tendency in Reformation theology to discount the use of reason. Eve's

dream in Milton's *Paradise Lost* reveals the proper use of right reason in spiritual warfare, while the actual temptation scenes in *Paradise Lost* and Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* point to a fundamental failure of reason in the fall. Norwood's *Confessions*, Milton's *Comus*, and Milton's *Samson Agonistes* portray the triumphs of human reason over evil and temptation, though there remains an awareness of the constraints placed upon reason by their fallen nature such that reason needs the aid of divine grace to function as right reason. Milton's *Paradise Regained* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* point to the extraordinary victories gained by Christ and Christian through the use of right reason and memory to direct the will toward the highest goods. These texts offer a counter-voice to those who would dismiss the possibilities of the powers of right reason. Despite the awareness of the inherent limits of fallen reason, these radical reformists generally find reason an indispensable tool in spiritual battles that helps direct their wills to the highest good.

To my father, Rev. Michael Proctor,

who encouraged my love of theology

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the Judeo-Christian tradition, spiritual warfare is evident from the earliest records of that tradition—the Hebrew Bible accounts of the fall of Adam and Eve, the trials of Job, the weakening of Samson; the New Testament accounts of the temptation and crucifixion of Jesus, the doubts of the disciples, and the persecution of early Christian communities. But accounts of spiritual warfare have not been limited to sacred texts. Priests, theologians, preachers, hagiographers, and laypersons since the advent of Christianity have been aware of the reality of spiritual warfare in the day-to-day lives of Christians.[1]

With the Reformation, however, new dynamics of spiritual warfare were introduced. Many of the reformers' revolts against the Catholic Church were perceived as having spiritual implications for both the individual believer and the entire body of Christian believers. But aside from the obvious struggle between Catholic and reformer, the discourse even within the ranks of the reformers recommended a realization that no

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This dissertation follows the style of *Modern Language Association*.

[1] As I argue here, it is remarkable that some of the greatest and most complex literature of all time, poetry in particular, and especially Milton's, has gone unappreciated as literature foundational to the topic of spiritual warfare, even though there is no shortage of rather prosaic and popular literature that touches upon the issue even in our own time. Such an interest and concern for spiritual warfare is not irrelevant to modern Christians. A quick search for books on "spiritual warfare" on amazon.com revealed 10,922 items on 21 June 2009, including such titles as T. D. Jakes' *Overcoming the Enemy: The Spiritual Warfare of the Believer* (2003), Beth Moore's *Praying God's Word: Breaking Free from Spiritual Strongholds* (2000), Pat Hulsey and Ray Beeson's *Strategic Spiritual Warfare* (2006), Cindy Trimm's *The Rules of Engagement: The Art of Strategic Power and Spiritual Warfare* (2005), and Richard Ing's *Spiritual Warfare* (2006), where he "shows you all of the techniques available to you in your full arsenal of weapons" (synopsis).

matter what became of Rome, the individual Christian would be in a fight for his or her soul on many fronts.

Milton therefore writes in *Areopagitica* of the "true warfaring Christian," whom he describes as that Christian who "can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better" (1006). In *Areopagitica*, Milton is fighting in particular against the position of his fellow Puritan believers who sought to suppress the promulgation of dissenting religious views as he advocates against press censorship.[2] But he also counters the reformers' (and especially the Puritans') general denigration of the use of reason as being faulty and unreliable, instead putting a surprising emphasis on the exercise of the mind—reason and judgment—and the will in choosing good over evil.[3] For Milton, access to dissenting writing allows the Christian to exercise and strengthen the mind's ability to reason and distinguish between good and evil, an important virtue and a significant aid in the spiritual battles the Christian must inevitably encounter. The overriding concern in this study is therefore the peculiar role that reason, or the failure of reason, plays in the remarkably complex phenomenon that is spiritual warfare, particularly as imagined or conceived by some of the radical writers of the Reformation.[4]

For writers, both Anglican and Puritan, of seventeenth-century England, with their particular apocalyptic world-views of both the problems of their own government

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[2] Milton does not, of course, want to see Catholic writings allowed to be in print.

[3] Milton's word choices in truth point to the importance of choosing not only that which is good, but that which is *truly* better—that is, eternal goods at the expense of temporal goods, ,which may not be evil per se, but are still inferior to the eternal good of God.

[4] Milton's argument about the warfaring Christian also points to his understanding of the fundamental importance of using reason, and more particularly right reason, in undertaking such spiritual battles.

and their fears of infiltration by the Catholic Church, spiritual warfare was a profound and meaningful part of their Christian experiences.[5] Their literature reveals much about the way they conceived the problems of the existence of evil, their spiritual battles, the use of reason, and the abilities of their wills to overcome the evils which they perceived around them, but it is in the texts of religiously radical writers where the emphasis on the use of reason is most surprising, if only because of the pervasiveness of the Puritan mistrust of reason. Indeed, some of the most prolific writers of the seventeenth century were radical religious writers who rejected entirely the use of reason—writers such as Lawrence Clarkson, who insists on "the vast difference of Faith from Reason, … and how from Faiths royal Prerogative all its seed in Adam was saved, and all Reason in the fallen angel was damned" (190). For the most extreme of these writers, there is no positive use of reason in the spiritual life of the Christian.

The writers examined in this project stand in stark contrast to the views promulgated by radical Protestants such as Clarkson. While these writers, as well as less obviously religious writers, understood that human reason is limited in significant ways, they yet found it an indispensable tool for any serious issue confronting humanity, even in matters of faith and spiritual experiences, particularly in their conceptions of spiritual warfare.

While I would also place John Milton among these writers who emphasize the use of reason, there is a trend in recent Milton scholarship to emphasize the radical

[5] "Warfaring Christians" must face all sorts of spiritual trials, but those trials are intended as opportunities to strengthen the virtue of godly people, for an untested virtue—a "fugitive and cloister'd virtue," as Milton describes it—is essentially and spiritually worthless (*Areopagitica*, 1006).

aspects of Milton's writing, thus aligning him with the more radical writers of the period.[6] Yet I would argue that throughout his major texts, Milton emphasizes again and again the fundamental role that reason should play in the spiritual life of humans, and in their spiritual battles against evil, thus holding a position against the dominant radical voices of the period.

A conversation between Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* provides an excellent example of the relationship between the human will and right reason as Milton saw it. Milton has Adam instruct Eve on the nature of the human will and reason:

> But God left free the Will, for what obeyes
> Reason, is free, and Reason he made right,
> But bid her well beware, and still erect,
> Least by some faire appeering good surpris'd
> She dictate false, and misinforme the Will
> To do what God expresly hath forbid.
>
> (9.3.351-56)

Adam here admonishes the not-yet fallen Eve even as she pleads with him to let her work separately from him on this particular morning in Eden. Only moments later, she will leave him to be tempted, successfully, by Satan. The most striking element of this speech, in terms of its theological significance, is Adam's awareness and acknowledgement of the relationship and tension that exists between will and reason,

[6] The scholarship of David Loewenstein, Kristin Poole, Jeffrey S. Shoulson, Walter Lim, Barbara K. Lewalski, Joan S. Bennett, and Thomas N. Corns offers a sampling of the interest in Milton's radical qualities.

even in his prelapsarian state. He informs Eve—or more properly, reminds her—of what she should already know: that reason should immediately and spontaneously inform the will to reject *rightly* that which is false, and that she, Reason, must be vigilant lest she be deceived by something that only *appears* to be good. Even before the fall, Adam is well aware that reason has the potential to fail in what it is supposed to do. Reason can be deceived by "false appearances," make false judgments about those appearances, and hence draw the will away from the highest goods.[7] Furthermore, there is implicit in Adam's speech the injunction for Eve to *remember* that using reason in this way to direct her will to good is what she is required to, so that memory is also linked to the use of right reason when facing trials and temptations.

Milton clearly emphasizes the importance of reason, and more specifically right reason, in such encounters with evil. Milton here points to the need for a certain diligence and watchfulness on the part of reason, a discernment between what is truly good and what only appears to be good, and he further outlines the way in which reason should direct the will rather than allowing baser, lesser faculties to do so. In this way, this episode in *Paradise Lost* serves as a paradigm for this study of the problem that the intersection of evil and reason presents to notions and representations of spiritual warfare in seventeenth-century literature and Reformation theology—for both the ways in which Milton understood the relationship between reason and will in spiritual conflict, and the ways in which other writers address this relationship as well.

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[7] "Deceived" is also the word that Milton uses to describe the way in which Adam and Eve fall into sin. See Book III where God distinguishes between the sins of the fallen angels and the sins of fallen man: "The first sort by thir own suggestion fell, / Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls deceiv'd / By the other first: Man therefore shall find grace, / The other none" (129-32).

This study therefore explores the philosophical and theological contexts within which writers of the English Reformation in the seventeenth century understood evil and human encounters with evil, especially in the form of temptations, but also in the form of disturbing dreams and in alleged satanic presences. This is not intended to be a source study, as such: my intention is not to show or suggest direct influence (for example, that Milton was directly influenced by Augustine in the writing of *Paradise Lost*). Rather, I propose this dissertation as a study in what might be called theological historicism—the historical development and context of particular aspects of Reformation theology of the period, as represented and accounted for in both imaginative literature and accounts of personal spiritual experiences.[8]

Religion and theology in the seventeenth century are a messy business, as it is exceedingly difficult to divide up the issues neatly between Catholic and Reformers (and still further among the Reform sects). I would suggest, however, that the theological and philosophical texts which I present in this study form a significant part of a tradition, and exemplify that tradition, such that the literary writers of the seventeenth century treated in this study are seen to be responding to, drawing from, and engaging with, that tradition as well, even as they draw out their own implications from that tradition. This study also suggests that the radical Protestant texts which I analyze reveal important aspects of the Reformation theology of seventeenth-century England, including ways that complicate the traditional notions of English Reformation theology, especially

[8] I do not use the phrase "theological historicism" in the theological sense—as a particular branch of study of religion or theology—but as a modified form of historicist literary study. It might also be considered a theological history of ideas, but again, with a dual emphasis on both artistic representations and accounts of lived experiences of those theological ideas and principles.

among radical sects, but even among Anglicans which itself is predominantly Calvinist and therefore suspicious of reason.

Though the concept of reason pervades this dissertation, the most important concept of reason is that of right reason as informed by a long tradition of Christian thought. I will not concern myself here with the changing perceptions of reason as the culture of the seventeenth century became more secularized and "enlightened."[9] I also do not intend to engage the particulars of the debate about how religious beliefs might be reconciled with the "new religion" of reason. Instead, this study is interested in the ways in which religious writers, especially those operating within a theological system that called into serious question the use of reason, continue to rely on reason—and insist that others do so as well—even in spiritual matters, particularly matters of spiritual warfare. Reason, for these writers, comes to be seen as a significant tool in the encounters with tempters and temptations, as the exercise of reason guides the will to the good of God.

The second chapter, "Theological Contexts: Evil, Spiritual Warfare, and Reason," therefore, sets out some of the key issues regarding spiritual warfare, starting with the problem of the existence of evil and the necessity of engaging evil in spiritual warfare. I then consider a cluster of epistemological problems as they relate to the experience of spiritual warfare: reason, especially right reason; knowledge, and its relatives, conscience and memory; and free will. Questions about the limits of human reason and knowledge are of utmost significance to debates about spiritual warfare in

[9] See Raymond D. Tumbleson's article on the "science" of Anglican theology near the end of the seventeenth century. Many of the secular philosophers (such as Locke or Hume) saw religion as separate from the work of reason, as they cast doubt upon the revealed truths of religious beliefs.

this theological history as they reflect one of the operating premises common to both Catholic and Reformer: the nature of the effect of the fall on human reason and whether, and to what extent, the defect in human reason complicates the use of reason in spiritual battles or whether the use of reason should be limited as well. Accordingly, I conclude this chapter with a brief and very general consideration of the differences between the Catholic and reform views of reason.[10]

The three subsequent chapters examine various representations of spiritual warfare by Puritan (or presumed radical) writers and the ways in which these writers conceive of the use of reason in such warfare. Here, the concern is with the ways in which these issues are represented and resolved in the literary texts and what these representations suggest about conceptions of reason in Reformation theology. Throughout these chapters, there is also a running thread concerning the problem of satanic or demonic dreams in various texts. Dreams pose their own particular problems in spiritual warfare because neither reason nor will can function as they should when a person is dreaming.

This study follows Milton especially because the joined themes of spiritual warfare and the use of reason are so prominent throughout his major works, such that he functions much as an outspoken advocate of the importance of reason in spiritual warfare, which is particularly relevant considering the multitude of voices in the period

[10] I generalize the Catholic and reform positions, with the understanding that any generalizations are precisely that, where examples can be found to counter such generalizations. But there is a purpose to these generalizations, as they are useful in identifying the over-arching tendencies of the various groups, their perceptions of the issues at stake, and the ways in which they address those issues *in general*.

dismissing the value of reason.[11] Milton is therefore discussed extensively in each chapter, but he is read alongside other writers who share, at least to some extent, his ideas on reason and will: Aemilia Lanyer, Richard Norwood, and John Bunyan, with more than occasional glances at Augustine and Aquinas. While Milton's work, especially his late poetry, provides the most compelling insights for the "true warfaring Christian," and portrays so well how so much is at stake when a Christian, or any person, struggles with matters of utmost spiritual significance, Milton was not alone among radical writers during this time in emphasizing that the Christian should consider the importance of reason in spiritual warfare and the problems associated with what could be called the principle of defective reason.

Chapter III, "The First Temptation: The Failure of Reason," focuses on Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, both of which portray the first temptation, that of Adam and Eve. Both Milton and Lanyer depict the fall of Adam and Eve as a consequence of the failure of human reason, and they both suggest implicitly that the fall might have been prevented had Adam and Eve exercised reason rightly, especially while human reason was in its purest form. Moreover, it is because of Adam and Eve's failure that spiritual warfare becomes a necessary part of human existence and that human reason itself becomes limited.

The fourth chapter, "After the Fall: Reason Informed by Grace," analyzes Richard Norwood's *Confessions*, Milton's *Comus*, and Milton's *Samson Agonistes*. Here, the focus shifts toward the function of reason in light of the fall and in a fallen

[11] Milton figures largely throughout the dissertation, with parts of each chapter devoted to his major poems, but my argument does not rely entirely on Milton's texts.

world. Each text represents characters relying on reason in various ways and to different degrees in the encounters with evil and temptations. But these texts all emphasize the theological position that after the fall, reason must be informed by grace in order to help the person properly in moments of spiritual warfare. Though the characters/persons in these texts triumph over the temptations and spiritual battles in which they become engaged, there remains an emphasis on the constraints placed upon reason by their fallen nature such that reason is insufficient to the task alone, and needs the aid of divine grace if it is still to be useful in spiritual warfare.

Chapter V, "The Heights of Human Reason," offers readings of Milton's *Paradise Regained* and John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*. This chapter considers the final objectives in undergoing spiritual warfare with reason aided by grace. In these texts, we can see the ultimate point of spiritual warfare, as the victors not only win particular battles in the spiritual war against evil, but they win in the proper way so as to be allowed to enter into heaven, into God's presence. Pervading these two texts in particular, however, is the notion that the victories of the protagonists in both are gained by the right use of reason and will in conjunction with acute memory—they remember and do what they ought to do—in order to overcome what would otherwise be significant weaknesses on their parts. Thus in these texts we see more fully how the proper function of right reason also depends significantly on the proper use of memory.

It is my purpose, then, to show that these radical writers and their texts refuse to conform to the general tendency in Reformation theology to discount the use of reason. Instead, they place a strong value on the use of reason in the spiritual battles which they

represent, resulting in a marked paradox in radical Protestant theology of the seventeenth century. While there are yet many Puritan writers, even if not as extreme as Lawrence Clarkson, who mistrust and denigrate the use of human reason, these writers reveal that even among more radical Christians, reason could also be redeemed and found useful in the spiritual life of the believer. Despite the suspicion of reason because of the inherent limits of fallen reason, these radical reformists generally find reason an indispensable tool in spiritual battles that can help them direct their wills to the highest goods—and to God. Their voices offer a counter-voice to those who dismiss the possibilities of the power of right reason.

CHAPTER II

THEOLOGICAL CONTEXTS: THE PROBLEMS OF EVIL, SPIRITUAL WARFARE, AND THE USE OF REASON

Before looking at literary representations of spiritual warfare in the seventeenth century, it will be useful to outline in brief the problems that are evident in what I conceive as the intersection of evil and epistemology and that are fundamental to this study.[1] This chapter, then, will first examine the theological problems of evil and sin, followed by a consideration of some of the epistemological concerns as they pertain in particular to the questions of evil. It will conclude by looking at the ways in which evil and epistemology intersect on the supposition that humanity is living in a fallen world and as they become manifest in the religious debates of the seventeenth century. I am limiting this discussion mainly to two thinkers whom I consider foundational to the development of Christian doctrine, St. Augustine and St. Thomas Aquinas, and the ancient philosophers who influenced them and the western philosophical traditions at large, Plato and Aristotle, and I relate their work on evil and epistemology to the elements of spiritual warfare as implicit or explicit in the work of Milton.[2]

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[1] John S. Feinberg is mindful that "there is in fact no such thing as *the* problem of evil, for at best, the expression 'the problem of evil' stands for a host of distinct problems that confront theologies" which believe that God is omnipotent and good and that evil also exists (19); moreover there are as many "problems of evil" as there are such theologies, since different theological systems define these terms in different ways (24). This study obviously cannot address all such problems, so it will focus on those problems which are most directly relevant to its subject of spiritual warfare.

[2] In a general sense, it can be argued that Plato and Aristotle established the two foundational traditions of western philosophical thought. In Christian thought, these two lines can be seen as developed respectively by Augustine and Aquinas (though not without some common positions), which can then be seen as being particularly influential, respectively, with reformers and counter-reformers (Catholics). The reform theologians (such as Calvin and Luther) significantly appropriated Augustine for their theology,

The Problems of Evil and Spiritual Warfare

Recognizing the seeming inevitability of spiritual warfare which human beings must undergo raises first and foremost the question of why: Why must humans encounter and contend with evil in the world? Or, why does God allow human beings to be tested in such a way? Or, even more fundamentally yet, why does God allow the existence of evil in the world? Answering these questions has been the task of many thinkers and writers, including Milton, when addressing the problem of evil.[3] Feinberg distinguishes between the religious problem of evil and the theological/philosophical problem of evil, suggesting that the two are almost entirely disconnected because he sees the theological defense of the existence of evil as offering little comfort to the person confronting a "crisis of faith" in a religious question of evil (21). Yet I would suggest that coming to the idea of spiritual warfare via an understanding of the theological problem of evil allows a better appreciation as to why spiritual warfare is necessary and even beneficial, so I shall begin here.

Traditionally, the problem of evil has been identified logically through the attempt to reconcile the following three statements:

1) There is an all-powerful and all-knowing God.

2) This God is wholly good, indeed, perfect.

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while the Catholic theologians of the counter-Reformation revived an interest in Aquinas's though to counter the work of such reformers.

In this chapter, I will focus primarily on the interpretations of these problems that Milton seems to offer, though as drawn from these other thinkers. I will leave it to later chapters to develop these ideas as they relate to other writers of the seventeenth century, in addition to giving greater attention to Milton.

[3] Milton undertakes to develop and explain his understanding of Christian doctrine in his treatise on the subject, *On Christian Doctrine*. Here he asks such questions as whether something sinful can originate in God, and he answers: "When matter or form has gone out from God and become the property of another, what is there to prevent its being infected and polluted, since it is now in a mutable state, by the calculations of the devil or of man, calculations which proceed from these creatures themselves?" (1177).

3) Evil yet exists in the world.

While it is impossible to establish with absolute certainty that all three premises are true, most thinkers have set out to show that there is some interpretation of the three premises that does not put them into absolute contradiction with one another. In what follows, some of the possible interpretations are developed more fully, although it is inevitable that not all of the possible resolutions of these problems can be addressed here, nor is it necessary that they be.[4]

One attempt to deal with the problem of evil is simply to call into question God's existence entirely, or at the very least his existence as an omnipotent and benevolent God (thus rejecting both the first and second premises). An omnipotent and benevolent God, it is argued, would not allow the existence of evil in the world, so there must not be such a God.[5]

Yet even (or especially) if one acknowledges God's existence, the three claims cannot be easily, or entirely rationally, reconciled.[6] Most religious thinkers have sought to call into question, or to qualify in some way, only one of the three premises rather than denying the existence of God outright. To maintain that God is omnipotent and yet allows evil to exist would be to imply that He must not be wholly good (rejecting premise two). On the other hand, to maintain that God is wholly good and yet allows

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[4] John S. Feinberg emphasizes that what is most important in considering the logical problem of evil is to remain internally consistent with the theological position taken. This is especially important for those who want to attack the defense offered by a particular theological position; they must attack a position or view that the theist actually holds, say a particular conception of God or evil, rather than imposing their own definitions of terms onto the theist's argument (27).

[5] This is essentially Epicurus' argument against the existence of God. It is not really a solution, however, for a Christian thinker whose purpose in reconciling these claims is theodical: the ways of God would not need to be justified if there were no such God.

[6] See Dennis Danielson, *Milton's Good God*, 7-9; and Susan Neiman, 35-36.

evil to exist would be to suggest that He is not all-powerful (rejecting premise one), a position which leads to the dualistic worldview of Manichaeism.

None of these solutions is particularly tenable for orthodox Christian thinkers, such as Augustine and Aquinas, so their traditional response to this problem has been to posit that evil does not actually exist (thereby rejecting premise three), or rather to define evil in such a way that its existence does not contradict the first two premises regarding the nature of God. Thus it is argued that evil does not, properly speaking, exist as a substance, in a positive state, but only as a privation. Moreover, even though it *appears* that evil exists in great and unbearable abundance, God can bring good out of such evil through his benevolence and omnipotence. This has been the position of orthodox theism in order to insist on both God's omnipotence and His benevolence, which constitute the very nature of God. Both Augustine and Aquinas are of this position, as is, I think, Milton.[7] Yet underlying this position is one of the most fundamental theological problems: how to define evil very particularly in such a way that the omnipotence and benevolence of the Supreme Being do not have to be called into question.

In the attempt to define evil, thinkers have categorized evil into three species: metaphysical evil, natural evil, and moral evil.[8] Properly speaking, the first type of evil, metaphysical evil, is not actual evil at all. The term metaphysical evil is generally taken

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[7] This is not to say, however, that such evil is necessary for God's goodness, but that he, through his omnipotence, can bring good out of the evil resulting from the free choices of created beings, which in itself is also a good created by God.

[8] Dennis Danielson, *Milton's Good God*, provides a concise summary of the various types of evil, pp. 3-7. In considering the problem of evil in terms of Milton's theodical purposes, Danielson devotes most of his attention to questions of moral evil.

to "denot[e] the essential dependency, finitude, imperfection, and limitation of all created things"; that is, it is assumed that insofar as all created things are not God, Who is necessarily the absolute Good, and is indeed perfect, then individuated things are not wholly good insofar as they are potentially corruptible, which is to be in some sense evil (Danielson, *Milton's Good God* 5).[9] Hence, Augustine comes to define evil as a privation of the good. For Augustine, evil is very real but is often hard to fathom or even recognize because it does not exist as a thing—or as a product of an efficient cause, to put it in Aristotle's language. To claim that evil is a privation of the good serves as a reminder that, as God pronounced in Genesis, while all of creation is good, evil may yet become the case as a negative state, a privation, of goods that God would ordain should be the case, either through acts of commission or omission.[10]

The category of metaphysical evil serves two important functions in discussing the problem of evil. First, this category of evil helps provide an etiology of evil in that the imperfections and mutability of a yet good creation are also the conditions upon which moral and natural evil can enter that created world, without holding God accountable for that evil.[11] Perhaps more significantly for the purposes of theodicy, however, the category of metaphysical evil also provides an ontology of evil, a way to

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[9] Such a definition of evil thus provides a means to reconcile a good and omnipotent God with the existence of evil in the world.

[10] For example, the murder of one man by another "generates" privations of the good even while everything in the deed was good: the gun was good, the bullet was good, his aim was good, etc. Yet, in that sin of commission, the world is deprived of that which the murdered man might generate by his art; he and his friends and family are deprived of all of their communal relations; the state is deprived of a citizen, etc. So, too, with sins of omission: laziness is evil as it "generates" all kinds of privations of the good that God would otherwise ordain to be the case. Watching television for hours, not just for some recuperative entertainment, is evil, a case of laziness, a sin of omission, as in that laziness one is not exercising one's higher faculities for ends that extend beyond the person's merely private inclinations.

[11] Etiology is the study of the causes of things. Ontology is the study of being or existence. See Dennis Danielson, *Milton's Good God*, for further discussion of these aspects of metaphysical evil.

give an account of the nature of evil—of what evil is. Though evil has no substance, because it does not exist except as a privation of the good, metaphysical evil constitutes not merely the lack of a good, but also the lack of a good that it ought to have—"not the absence of a goodness that a thing has never and could never possess, but rather the *lack* of a goodness in some sense original to it" (Danielson, *Milton's Good God* 6). Yet if the definition of metaphysical evil depends upon the notion of the limitation of created beings and things, the question remains as to what goodness can be original to created beings, and indeed the created world, if they are created already limited, and hence evil, in some sense?

In response to that particular problem, Augustine talks about the original goodness of created beings in his *Confessions*.[12] He emphasizes there that even beings that suffer corruption—those that can be potentially corrupted—are originally good because God made all things and beings good. There are no substances that God has not made, and there are therefore no substances that are not good (which also explains further why evil is not seen as created and is therefore defined as a privation rather than a substance itself and why God cannot be seen as the creator of evil). Still, all these created beings would be incorruptible only if they were either *supremely* good, as only God is, or entirely evil as nothing is, so it is the nature of created things and beings to be susceptible to corruption but not entirely or inherently corrupt. This is not to suggest that created beings, and the created world, are necessarily going to be corrupted, but rather that the possibility is always already *potentially* there in their nature as created

[12] See Augustine, *Confessions*, 7.12. All citations of Augustine will be by book and chapter numbers unless otherwise noted.

beings. Yet if there were not also some original goodness in them, a goodness that is in them since their origin and creation, there would likewise be nothing in them to be corrupted. So whatever suffers corruption (as both the fallen angels and humans do, and indeed as all earthly creation does) must be deprived of some, but not all, good, for things deprived of all their good become wholly evil and therefore cease to exist, to have *being*.[13]

It is the potential corruptibility of the created world that constitutes its metaphysical evil, and that same potential corruptibility also gives rise to the natural, or physical, evil in the world. At the simplest level, natural evil can be defined as that evil which exists in the world in the form of disease, general suffering, natural disasters, and the like. Augustine defines natural evil as evil that is suffered, rather than done, but there are still some fine distinctions to be made in the consideration of natural evil.[14]

John S. Feinberg divides natural evils into four categories.[15] The first category of natural evil is actually related to moral evil in that it is attributable to human agency—it is "evil done" rather than "evil suffered." This category includes such physical evils that result from one person's actions done to another. Examples include birth defects resulting from an expectant mother's abuse of alcohol, a person deliberately infecting another person with a sexually transmitted disease, or a person abusing a child so

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[13] G. R. Evans describes evil thusly: "Only when evil works upon created things do they change, and such change must be for the worse, because evil is stealing its very existence from the good; only by making good things like itself can it exist at all. It has a borrowed existence, by inhering in something which exists; its effect upon its host is to diminish its existence, and to push it further and further in the direction of non-existence. It is impossible for absolute evil to exist at all, for if it has entirely deprived its host of goodness it will have no existence left; host and parasite will disappear together" (154).

[14] See Augustine, *On Free Choice of the Will*.

[15] See pp. 192-93.

severely that the child grows up severely mentally ill. The next three categories of natural evil are not direct results of human actions, so are not directly related to questions of moral evil.[16] The second category of natural evil includes disorders or physical deformities which have their causes within human beings, as through genetic malfunctions.[17] The third category of natural evil includes natural disasters that occur in the natural world but are outside the purview of human beings (in contrast to genetic mutations). The final category of natural evil includes diseases that are caused by viruses and bacteria (rather than genetics).

While Feinberg's division of natural evil into four distinct categories seems, at least in part, unnecessary, it is useful to distinguish between those in the first category and those in the latter three. The existence of the first group of natural evils can be addressed as part of the question of moral evil below, but the other types of natural evil, as evils that cannot be directly attributable in origin to the wrongful choices or actions of rational beings, need to be handled separately, as they pose their own particular problem within the larger theological problem of the existence of evil.

Within Christian tradition, natural evil is largely seen as having its origin in the fall and its effects, namely the fall of nature that occurred simultaneously with the fall of

[16] This is to say that people who drown in a flood or die from cancer are not at fault for the evil that befalls them; these natural evils (in the form of disaster and disease) are not connected to the moral choices that the individuals or those around them have made.

[17] These distinctions and examples are primarily Feinberg's. I do not mean to raise any kind of issues surrounding disabilities or offend those with disabilities. The issue is not whether a person with a birth defect or physical limitation is "normal" but with something much more fundamental. Would it not be a better world if *no one* had to struggle with physical or mental limitations? Without considering particular persons, does the very existence of such limitations in the world not constitute a kind of natural evil?

Adam and Eve.[18] While nature has not sinned in the same sense that Adam and Eve have, the world in which they live is now, like them, a fallen and corrupt world rather than a wholly good one; there have been "negative consequences for the natural order" of the world, as recounted in Genesis (Feinberg 195).[19]

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes not just the fall of man but also the fall of nature. Milton paints pictures of the first natural evils as inevitable consequences of, and corresponding to, the fall of humankind. After Eve eats the forbidden fruit, "Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat / Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe, / That all was lost" (9.782-84). And again after Adam eats,

> Earth trembl'd from her entrails, as again
> In pangs, and Nature gave a second groan,
> Skie lowr'd and muttering Thunder, som sad drops
> Wept at compleating of the mortal Sin
> Original.
>
> (9.1000-4)

While nature "sighs" at Eve's initiation of the original sin, nature's response to Adam's completion of that sin is much stronger—earthquakes and thunderstorms, and by extension other natural disasters, or natural evils, now plague the earth. The earth feels the wound of Adam and Eve's sins as deeply as their own souls do, and responds accordingly.

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[18] Here I shall not enter the debate about the historical figures and events of the Fall. The writers and thinkers with whom I am engaging talk of, and believe in, a fall of humankind, and of Adam and Eve, whether literally or symbolically, and I refer to them within that general Christian context.

[19] Genesis records the curse on Adam: "cursed is the ground because of you; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth to you …" (Gen. 8.17-18).

Though natural evil is not generally attributable to the wrongful actions and choices of human beings, other Christian thinkers, like Milton, do not see natural evil as entirely disconnected from the wrongful actions of created, rational beings. Aquinas also notes the connection between the first human sins and natural evil. Distinguishing between *malum poena* ("evil of penalty") and *malum culpa* ("evil of fault"), Aquinas deems natural evil a *malum poena,* which means he does not see natural evil as the direct result of sinful actions of humans today.[20] Yet Aquinas still argues that the evils naturally occurring in the world—pain, sickness, disasters, etc.—are ultimately part of the consequences of the sins of Adam and Eve in that they (and their offspring) are thereafter deprived of paradise. Though the first natural evils enter the world with the fall of After the fall of Adam and Eve, after the fall, these disasters are an inevitable part of the fallen world, a fallen world that has become other than the entirely good (though potentially evil) world that God had created.

While natural evil may be "evil suffered," it must be suffered as punishment for the generally sinful condition of humankind; it is seen as part of the penalty (hence "evil of penalty") that humans must pay for their sinfulness. Though natural evil is part of the punishment of human beings for what constitutes their now sinful nature, such evils are not generally seen as a punishment for the particular sins of any human beings. Indeed, a virtuous person may yet suffer great natural evil, without having merited such a penalty himself; likewise, a sinful person may live a long life without suffering any such evil. Feinberg emphasizes that "because we all have disobeyed God in Adam as well as

[20] See Brian Davies' introduction to Aquinas, *On Evil*, 21.

during our time on earth, things like disease and death can and do occur. Even people whose basic pattern of life is to follow God may suffer from these evils (think of Job). None of us is sinlessly perfect" (195). Natural evil is thus a penalty regarding all of humankind, rather than a penalty toward particular persons.[21]

Yet natural evils such as diseases and human illness should also be considered from the perspective of God's divine justice in the punishment of human sin. When Michael begins sharing the visions of the future with Adam after the fall in *Paradise Lost*, he urges Adam to

> ope thine eyes, and first behold
> Th' effects which thy original crime hath wrought
> In some to spring from thee, who never touch'd
> Th' excepted Tree.
>
> (11.423-26)

Michael informs Adam that his descendants will inherit the same punishment, namely death, as he, but without having committed the first sin—disobeying God's commandment not to eat the forbidden fruit. The punishment of death comes to Adam's descendents by default, rather than as direct punishment. Yet Adam's descendants are not entirely free of blame. They will not be undeserving of the punishments that they

[21] I would stress that there is no particular causal relation between one's actions and what one suffers on earth per natural evils. However, there has always been some blurring of the lines on this point, particularly in the popular imagination. Consider, for example, beliefs in the late sixteenth century regarding the plague where it was thought that the plague was the hand of God striking down the sinful and degenerate. The line is further blurred when considering diseases that are contributable to particular choices (such as venereal diseases). It is important to remember that the existence of the diseases are not contributable to the particular sins of a particular person, even if certain actions and choices make one more susceptible to the experience of that disease. There are too many people who also make those same choices and yet do not experience such disease to argue for such a causal relation.

will receive, for from Adam's sin "derive[s] / Corruption to bring forth more violent deeds" (11.427-28), and Adam's descendents will willingly participate in those deeds. This is already evident to Adam in the first vision to which he is treated, that of his son's murder of his brother, and this is also the first sign of Adam's comprehension of what it means to die, which he has already been told is his punishment for his sin but of which he has no understanding as of yet. Michael then makes known to Adam the myriad ways that death can come to humans so "that thou mayst know / What miserie th' inabstinence of Eve / Shall bring on men" (11.475-77):

> all maladies
> Of ghastly Spasm, or racking torture, qualmes
> Of heart-sick Agonie; all feavorous kinds,
> Convulsions, Epilepsies, fierce Catarrhs,
> Intestin Stone and Ulcer, Colic pangs,
> Dæmoniac Phrenzie, moaping Melancholie
> And Moon-struck madness, pining Atrophie,
> Marasmus, and wide-wasting Pestilence,
> Dropsies, and Asthma's, and Joint-racking Rheums.
>
> (11.480-88)

Adam is properly horrified at what awaits him and his descendants, even going so far as to ask why humans should not lay down their lives immediately rather than live to wait for and endure such horrors. He also questions why humans, made in God's divine likeness, should suffer such gross disfigurement. But Michael's reply quiets Adam's

short-lived rebellion against what awaits. Michael reminds Adam that Adam himself has already perverted his own likeness to God, perverting "pure Natures healthful rules / To loathsom sickness" (523-24), such that in a sense, Adam can hardly even appeal any longer to his being made in God's likeness. Given this newfound understanding of disease and death, Adam answers, "I yield it just … and submit" (11.526).

In these words lies the key to the more complete answer to the question of why a good and all-powerful God would allow the existence of natural evil in the world.[22] Natural evil exists in the world as an instance of God's justice, and God must be a just God, for an unjust God could not also be a good one, and God's goodness is one of the three basic premises with which we began this discussion and that classical theodicy seeks not to call into question.[23] When Adam and Eve disobeyed God's commandments, it was necessary for God to punish them, and by extension all humankind, in order to uphold His justice.[24] From this view of natural evil as a means for punishment of sins

[22] This question is one place where Feinberg's distinction between the theological and the religious problems of evil may be deemed to meet. The person who suffers natural evils is likely to ask this very question, whether the answer provides comfort or not. Granted, he is likely asking this question with regards to specific instances of natural evil, rather than with regards to natural evil at large, but the implications remain the same.

[23] Whatever defense is offered, there is a common strategy in offering a defense: "in creating a world, God had to choose between actualizing one of two good things. The two are mutually contradictory, so God couldn't do both, because the theist's notion of omnipotence doesn't allow God to actualize a contradiction. Regardless of the theology, one of the two options will be removing evil. Depending on the theology, the other option will specify some other valuable thing God could do in creating a world…. Once the theist sets up these two options, he argues that God cannot do both conjointly. If he removes evil, he cannot create the best of all possible worlds, metaphysically speaking" (Feinberg 489-90). It is then argued that the good of the "other valuable thing" outweighs the good that would be a world without evil. Moreover, God cannot then be held accountable for failing to do what He could not do, namely create both of the mutually exclusive worlds. See John S. Feinberg's "Strategy of Theodicy and Defense-Making," *The Many Faces of Evil*, 489-90.

[24] Indeed, justice is an eternal good, as part of God's being. But of that, more later. The inverse of this point is that God's justice would also have demanded great rewards for Adam and Eve if they had remained obedient.

committed by the first parents, God cannot be blamed for the effects of natural evils because they exist at root from human choices.[25]

Furthermore, God is the author of these evils only insofar as evil suffered is "a necessary concomitant of certain goods and that God can be said to have brought it about only in the sense that he brought about those goods," a view which also draws upon an understanding of God as just (Davies 22). God must allow natural evil if He is to achieve the greater good of justice with regard to human sins and the fall. Aquinas states in *On Evil* that "there are two kinds of evil, one that is truly and absolutely evil, and one that is apparently and in some respect evil but, in reality, absolutely good" (11.1). Natural evil clearly belongs to this second category; though it appears to humans to be evil, in truth it is an absolute good because it works in and towards God's justice in dealing with human sin. Accordingly, natural evil loses the quality of evil that would call into question either God's benevolence or omnipotence. Though God does indeed have the power to remove natural evil from the world, He refuses to do so not because He is a malevolent God but because it serves the greater good of justice toward his creation.[26] Likewise, He could not choose to create a world without evil at the expense of the greater good of a created world which is endowed with free creatures who can choose to obey and can therefore be rewarded.

Like the natural world, rational beings were also created with the capacity for corruption, of being corrupted (because they are not supremely good). For Aquinas,

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[25] This point raises the issue of free will as a good created by God: was God therefore right in creating humans with free will who could introduce such evils? But this question will be addressed below in considering the Free Will Defense.

[26] Feinberg's defense is a variation of this argument: evil exists because the alternative world is not really the best one.

humankind's original perfection is qualified in that it is also potentially corruptible. And as with the created world, this inherent limitation constitutes the metaphysical evil of such beings. But for created beings, the source of such potential corruption is internal, in their wills and desires, rather than external. As such, their metaphysical evil, their capacity to be corrupted, is the condition for the possibility of moral evil. Moral evil is here defined as that evil which proceeds from the direct choices, actions, and even habits of rational agents. One key element of this definition is the emphasis on reason. Only rational creatures, humans and angels, are capable of moral evil, because they have been granted by God the free will to choose, and the reason to help them choose rightly.[27]

This study is primarily concerned with the category of moral evil because it is most clearly related to the phenomenon of spiritual warfare and the function of reason in human encounters with evil in its various forms, particularly sin and the temptation to sin, sin being the most significant manifestation of the human susceptibility to corruption. Sin is also the most obvious type of moral evil in that it proceeds directly from the choices and actions of rational agents, and in the process further corrupts such rational agents by moving them progressively further away from their original goodness.

Augustine and Aquinas provide similar definitions of sin—primarily as the voluntary movement of the will to abandon or neglect higher things in the choice and pursuit of inferior things.[28] Sin can also be defined in terms of the choice of lesser,

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[27] While I may often refer only to human beings in what follows, it must be remembered that these same principles apply also to the higher order of beings, namely the angels, both fallen and unfallen. The unfallen angels are also capable of corruption, but they have chosen of their own free will, with the aid of right reason, not to be corrupted.

[28] See Augustine, *On Free Choice*, 3.1. Aquinas phrases it as a deformed act which "is at variance with the requisite rule of reason or of God's law" (*On Evil*, 2.2).

temporal goods at the expense of eternal goods, namely, God and the Truth, the seven virtues (wisdom, courage, moderation, justice, faith, hope, and charity), and the eternal, that is, unchanging first principles by which all sciences proceed. The element of choice is crucial to both definitions, and Augustine points to the will as the primary source of this movement and choice: "Now we admit that this movement belongs to the will alone, and that it is voluntary and therefore blameworthy; and the only useful teaching on this topic is that which condemns and checks this movement and thus serves to rescue our wills from their fall into temporal goods and turn them toward the enjoyment of the eternal good" (*On Free Choice* 3.1).[29] That sin is therefore a form of moral evil is rather obvious: the will alone directs the choices and actions of rational beings to commit sins and other moral evils. Yet sin is also a form of metaphysical evil in that the will reveals its own limitations and finitude in its movement away from God, the greatest good, and the will reveals the limitations and finitude of reason in not being able better to guide the will toward the highest good.

Even allowing, then, that moral evil originates not with God but rather with his rational creatures, we can still ask why He created beings in such a way that the existence of moral evil would originate in them.[30] One answer to that question comes down to the issue of freedom that allows rational agents to make moral choices. Still, it is asked, why did God make the will free to fall away from the good, to do evil? What

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[29] See also 3.3.

[30] This question raises the issues of both human freedom and God's omniscience or foreknowledge, which will not be addressed here in much depth, as having less to do directly with the problem of evil. In sum, the question is if God foreknew what humans would do with free will, was He still right in giving them that freedom? For those thinkers such as Milton who value human freedom, God's foreknowledge of human sin does not alter the value they place on human freedom, as after all, a free will is God's greatest gift to his creatures.

justification is there for creating beings in such a way that He would thereby also have to allow the existence of evil in the world? The answers to these questions, at least for Milton and some others, including Augustine, lie in what is often called the "Free Will Defense." For these thinkers, human freedom is of fundamental importance to an understanding of both God and humankind, and the relationship between them.

The basic argument of the free will defense proceeds as follows. Evil, particularly moral evil, originates in the abuse of free will by rational agents, namely angels and humans. Given their contribution to the existence and problem of evil, God's justification in creating them with such freedom to commit evil deeds is initially questioned, since, in His omnipotence, He could have created angels and humans without free will to do evil. Despite the evil actions and choices of these beings, however, advocates of the free will defense maintain that the very existence of such beings as created by God—that is, as free creatures capable of evil rather than automatons capable of only good—is a great good, and more importantly, a greater good than a world in which evil does not exist at all, so that God is indeed justified in creating these beings as He did.

In *On Christian Doctrine*, Milton relates the free will defense to a justification of God's punishment of sin:

> As a vindication of God's justice, especially when he calls man, it is obviously fitting that some measure of free will should be allowed to man, whether this is something left over from his primitive state, or something restored to him as a result of the call of grace. … But if [God]

> turns man's will to moral good or evil just as he likes, and then rewards the good and punishes the wicked, it will cause an outcry against divine justice from all sides. (1193-94)

Milton recognizes that without free will, humans would be able to call God unjust in His actions toward His creatures; indeed He would even be unreasonable in demanding something they could not give and in punishing them for something over which they had no control. Yet Milton also ties free will to the notion of grace, at least after the fall (when humans are no longer in their primitive state). Milton does not conceive of human beings as being capable any longer of acting independently in choosing the good over evil. Rather, as Milton views humanity and Christianity, humans are in need of divine help from God if they are going to be able to choose good over evil because of their fallen nature.

So while it is clear that God cannot control these creatures' choices because He created them with free will, with the consequence that God is responsible for neither the evil generated by their abuse of that free will, nor the evil generated by His just punishment of that abuse, it is less clear why the creation of such free agents is a greater good than a world without evil. Yet, that problem is resolved with consideration of the relationship that God seeks to have with His creation, especially with His rational creatures, which demands obedience, freely enacted.

Milton's God essentially expounds upon this aspect of the free will defense in *Paradise Lost*. In Book III, God reveals the importance of free will, not only for

humans, but also for the higher orders of created beings, as they relate to their Creator.[31] As if offering a miniature treatise on the relation between metaphysical evil and moral evil, Milton's God insists that angels, and later humans, were created "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (3.99), emphasizing that there was absolutely no necessity in their fall to evil. Though these rational creatures were created inherently capable of corruption, such corruption was not inevitable, and indeed they were equally capable of avoiding such corruption.

Even more importantly, Milton has his God explain *why* He gave His creatures this free will:

> Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
> Not free, what proof could they have givn sincere
> Of true allegiance, constant Faith or Love,
> Where onely what they needs must do, appeard,
> Not what they would? what praise could they receive?
> What pleasure I from such obedience paid,
> When Will and Reason (Reason also is choice)
> Useless and vain, of freedom both despoild,
> Made passive both, had servd necessitie,
> Not mee.
>
> (3.102-11)

[31] Milton's God is initially talking about the fallen angels, but His words apply equally to fallen mankind.

Milton conveys this world-view for himself in *On Christian Doctrine*, where he writes that "if religious matters were not under our control, or to some extent within our power and choice, God could not enter into a covenant with us, and we could not keep it, let alone swear to keep it" (1194). God can experience no pleasure from, nor give any reward for, a forced and necessary obedience to His laws, and He makes it clear He wants to do both—be pleased with and reward His creatures. A world in which evil exists alongside creatures who are freely and willingly faithful to God and keep His covenant is an immensely greater good than a world without evil that is such only because of a forced obedience.[32] God has given His creatures a free will so that they can give sincere proof of their love and faith in God and His goodness, and so that they would be capable of having a personal and conscious relationship with their Creator.

Yet in order for there to be such a relationship, it is also necessary that the creatures be tested in some way, that they be given opportunity to make choices. And so God allows His rational creatures to be tempted. Milton shows God allowing Satan to work as a tempter even before the fall, both in Heaven and on earth. The confrontation between Lucifer/Satan and Abdiel near the end of Book 5 reveals Satan to be the tempter of angels. Abdiel recognizes the sinfulness of Satan's arguments against God's reign, and he makes his choice to return to the throne of God. Abdiel's arguments against Satan also function as a moment of choice for the other angels; Abdiel has shown them

[32] It could also be argued that the converse is also true: that creatures who are faithful to God in such a world filled with evil are also a greater good than creatures who are faithful in a world without evil, but this comes close to the doctrine of the "Fortunate Fall." However, this particular formulation avoids the "fortunate fall" aspect because the premise of the forced obedience in the latter case is still implied.

the truth concerning Satan, and they must choose for themselves at that moment whether to follow Satan or return to God:

> Cease then this impious rage,
> And tempt not these, but hast'n to appease
> Th' incensed Father, and th' incensed Son,
> While Pardon may be found in time besought.
>
> (5.845-48)

Though Abdiel has pointed out the blasphemous and false nature of Satan's arguments, none of the other angels chooses to follow Abdiel back to God, choosing instead to remain with Satan. With this scene, Milton emphasizes yet again the importance of free will in the choice to sin against God. None of the fallen angels can claim they fell by deception, for Abdiel revealed the full truth to them, and after his revelation of the truth, the fallen angels are truly apostate, unredeemable when they still choose to follow Satan.[33]

God even more obviously allows Satan to work as the tempter of humans to sin, and His reasons for doing so are twofold. First, temptation allows humans the opportunity to be obedient, to show their allegiance toward God and His commandment, for which they could be duly rewarded. Second, God thus allows Satan's free will to run its course, while also making Satan's sins work for His greater good. This is evident in *Paradise Lost* in the moments after Satan is captured by Gabriel at the ear of Eve, where

[33] The fallen angels are unredeemable because they fell undeceived, unlike humans who fall by Satan's deception, though still with their free will. Though the angels are initially deceived by Satan, Abdiel ends that deception by stating the truth to them; their choice to remain with Satan rather than leave with Abdiel marks the real moment of their fall.

Satan delivered her dream of sin. Gabriel removes Satan from the Garden so as to engage in battle with Satan directly, but the signs in the Heavens reveal that Michael must release Satan, thus leaving him free to make his way back into the Garden to complete his temptation of Adam and Eve, to engage them in spiritual warfare. The entire fall of humankind could presumably have been prevented in this moment, but God's plan for humankind includes or incorporates Satan's temptation as the means by which Adam and Eve, and indeed all humans, can prove their "true allegiance" to God. God approves of spiritual warfare.

Like the angels, Adam and Eve are deemed "sufficient to [stand], though free to fall" (3.99). God has given them all that is necessary for them to withstand Satan's temptation in the Garden. In addition to reason and free will with which God has endowed them in creation, Milton's God also sends Raphael to Adam and Eve to impart particular knowledge of their enemy and what he insidiously desires. Armed with this knowledge, Adam and Eve are in principle fully capable of withstanding Satan's temptation. They are actually more than fully capable at this point. Raphael's lessons were truly unnecessary for them to remain unfallen, but Milton's God offers it to them so they clearly have no excuse but their own perverted wills when they succumb to Satan's deceptions. Milton's Adam and Eve can therefore claim no ignorance about God's expectations of them, and yet they still choose disobedience, and with that choice, they damage the relationship they originally shared with their Creator. Concomitantly, the extent of and need for spiritual warfare dramatically increase in order for them to reestablish that relationship with God.

Both before and after the fall, God allows His creatures to be tempted in order to test and strengthen those who overcome such temptations. And even after the fall, when humans have already proven themselves to be disobedient, God yet desires free, willing obedience from his human creatures.[34] So the extent of and even need for spiritual warfare increases such that even those who are seemingly made weaker by temptation can be brought closer to God once they acknowledge their sinfulness.[35] Spiritual warfare therefore plays a significant role in working through the problem of evil, for such evils are ultimately necessary to achieve what God wants and intends for human beings as His creatures—God is able to bring about what He wants for His creatures through the evils they must face because of the nature of human sinfulness. Evil exists in the world because of the abuse of the will God gave to His human creatures, but through those same evils He is able to effect His plan for the created world.

While this line of argument can be used to address various forms of evil which humans encounter in their spiritual and physical lives—e.g., diseases and disasters which cause a person to suffer—this study is primarily concerned with forms of spiritual warfare that involve sin or the temptation to sin. Insofar as Milton and others are fundamentally concerned with the temptations of human beings to sin against their God, why they are so tempted, and what they can do to try to prevent or overcome such temptation, more might be said about the nature of temptation.

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[34] That God does not desire the same obedience from the fallen angels is due largely to His foreknowledge that the fallen angels, and Satan in particular, will never willingly give Him such obedience, a fact which Milton's Satan also acknowledges as he makes his way to earth out of the depths of Hell. This is not the place for a long discussion which could ensue concerning the nature of God's foreknowledge of the sins of both humans and angels. But God's desire for human obedience also has to do with the way that humans were deceived in their fall, while the angels were not.

[35] Consider Adam and Eve's heartfelt repentance in Book XI.

Created as moral beings, humans (and all rational creatures) are susceptible to temptation and sin, and therefore to an exacerbation of the corruption of their original goodness. But humans have also been given the opportunity, even after the fall, to become perfect as the "children of God," or better, to return to the state of perfection, albeit qualified perfection, that Adam possessed by the original grace of God at creation. Such perfection becomes possible, however, only when a person has met, mastered, and overcome temptations to make right and godly choices.[36] The soul then engages in the arduous work of "soul-making," striving to achieve that perfection which God intends and wants for his creation, the very reason for which He endowed them with a free will, and the reason He allows them to encounter evil and to be tempted.[37]

Spiritual warfare is thus a significant part of the godly person's spiritual life and relationship with God, so that it becomes of utmost importance to know how to engage in spiritual warfare in such a way as to emerge successful from it. Human beings are bound, then, to encounter and master temptation in order to enter into a more profound

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[36] John Hick writes that the second stage of the divine creative process, that of creating spiritual beings who can enter into fellowship with God, "cannot be performed by omnipotent power as such. For personal life is essentially free and self-directing. It cannot be perfected by divine fiat, but only through the uncompelled responses and willing co-operation of human individuals in their actions and reactions in the world in which God has placed them. Men may eventually become the perfected persons whom the New Testament calls 'children of God,' but they cannot be created ready-made as this. The value-judgment that is implicitly being invoked here is that one who has attained to goodness by meeting and eventually mastering temptations, and thus by rightly making responsible choices in concrete situations, is good in a richer and more valuable sense than would be one created *ab initio* in a state either of innocence or of virtue" (168-69). The particular force of Hick's argument could, however, lead one to the notion of the "fortunate fall," which I would prefer to avoid. Even if the "child of God" is in a better state having overcome temptation than that of Adam and Eve's original innocence or virtue, that is not to say that Adam and Eve would not have been in a yet greater state having willingly continued in that innocence and virtue, if they themselves had overcome the original temptation. Moreover, I do not read Milton as advocating the idea of the fortunate fall, nor am I alone. See, for one, Dennis Danielson's chapter, "*Paradise Lost* and the Unfortunate Fall" in *Milton's Good God*.

[37] A point of great debate in the idea of "soul-making" is the means by which humans strive to attain perfection—can they achieve such alone, or must they have divine help, in the form of grace? Furthermore, to whom has God made such grace available—to everyone or only to the elect?

and perfect communion with God. Augustine identifies seven progressive steps towards perfection, though he never claims that such can achieved in this lifetime: "We begin to run the perfect course, then, by loving God; through holiness we come to knowledge; by knowledge we come to fortitude; by fortitude we learn counsel; counsel leads us to understanding, and understanding to wisdom" (Evans 158). The key to spiritual warfare for rational beings therefore lies largely with the human ability to reason and with the ability to attain, and to retain, the right kind of knowledge: thus we move to questions of epistemology.

Reason, Knowledge, and Will

At its broadest, epistemology is defined as the study of knowledge. Within the scope of epistemology is a wide array of questions and problems, such as questions of certainty, the nature of belief, whether an ultimate reality is knowable, and notions of truth. The epistemological questions with which this study is primarily concerned are three that are intertwined: How is human knowledge obtained? How reliable are some forms of knowledge, hence, what is the nature and role of ignorance? And how does knowledge relate to questions of ethics, or, that is, what is the relationship between knowledge and right action? Reason will be shown to play a significant role within each of these areas, in particular as they relate to the theological concerns outlined above.[38]

[38] Before continuing, I should clarify the way in which I use the term "reason." By reason, I mean that mental faculty with which human beings are endowed and as it is linked to language, consciousness, and logic. Among religious thinkers, it is the ability to reason that makes humans made in the image of God.

Philosophers have long sought to answer the question as to how knowledge is obtained, with widely varying answers. Given the heavy influence of the ancients regarding many basic things human, even as late as the seventeenth century, there were still essentially two main avenues by which to address the question as to how knowledge is obtained: empiricism, which derives largely from Aristotelian philosophy, and rationalism, which derives from Platonic philosophy.[39]

According to Aristotle, all knowledge is derived from sense perception and experience; essentially all we can know with any certainty is what we rationally and logically derive from what our senses tell us about the world around us. According to Plato, however, the senses are not to be trusted, for real knowledge comes more properly via the intellect. Moreover, Plato teaches that while humans can gain limited knowledge of many things, the highest knowledge is that of divine, eternal things, and such knowledge is not available through the senses, but only through reason.

Following Plato, Augustine distinguishes between *scientia*, or knowledge of things in the visible, sensible realm of being, and *sapientia*, or wisdom, knowledge of eternals such as God and Truth.[40] While Plato's theory of knowledge appears to be grounded in the notion of the recollection of eternal ideas, *anamnesis*, and therefore a belief in the preexistence of the soul, and indeed, the inherent immortality of the soul, Augustine, *qua* Christian, who must hold that the soul is not inherently immortal, but a

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[39] This is said quite broadly, with the recognition that particular ideas concerning the acquisition of knowledge cover a broad spectrum between the ideas of Plato and Aristotle. It is also said without regard to the more modern notion of constructivism which holds that all knowledge is constructed out of perceptions and experiences. Of more relevance to the topic in the seventeenth century is the emergence of skepticism, which seeks to call all human knowledge into doubt (such as Descartes' famous claim of *cogito ergo sum*; all he can know with any certainty is that he is a thinking being).

[40] See Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 12.14.

creature, cannot maintain with Plato the thesis of the inherent immortality of the soul and therefore the automatic knowledge of eternal essences. Accordingly, Augustine emphasizes the need for divine revelation or illumination in the attainment of such knowledge.[41] And Aquinas develops the idea of the need for divine revelation even more systematically in *Summa Theologica*. As a follower of sorts of Aristotelian philosophy, Aquinas greatly privileges the use of deductive reason in the pursuit of knowledge, yet he also emphasizes the limits of reason in the pursuit of divine knowledge, considered a much higher order of knowledge, which is ultimately obtained with the help of divine revelation rather than through reasoning alone: "it was necessary for the salvation of man that certain truths which exceed human reason should be made known to him by divine revelation" (1.1.1)[42] And yet it cannot be overemphasized that Aquinas does not entirely discount the use of reason in the pursuit of even the highest knowledge. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas states: "There is a twofold mode of truth in what we profess about God. Some truths about God exceed all the ability of the human reason. … But there are some truths which the natural reason also is able to reach" (1.3.2).[43]

Both Augustine and Aquinas thus privilege the human ability to reason as a means of gaining knowledge while they also warn about reason's limitations: thus their

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[41] In *On Genesis*, Augustine distinguishes between the objects of the intellect and "the light by which the soul is illumined, in order that it may see and truly understand everything, either in itself or in the light. For the light is God himself, whereas the soul is a creature; yet, since it is rational and intellectual, it is made in his image. And when it tries to behold the Light, it trembles in its weakness and finds itself unable to do so. Yet from this source comes all understanding it is able to attain" (in *The Essential Augustine*, 97).

[42] Cited by book, question, and article.

[43] Truths that must be revealed by revelation are such truths as the Trinity, but reason reveals that God exists and that He is one.

claims of the need for divine illumination for access to those truths beyond our usual employment of reason, truths that must be revealed by God and accepted on faith, which truths of faith are yet compatible with reason if not derived from reason alone.

Once divine knowledge has been attained, reason must play a further role in helping to guide humans to act in accordance with that knowledge. Aquinas suggests that while God has given creatures the freedom to obey Him or to turn away from His commandments and from His perfection, the will alone does not allow God's creatures to make such choices regarding their actions, for the ability to act originates not merely in the will itself but in the ability to understand and to reason. Aquinas identifies four acts of reason insofar as reason directs human actions: 1) "an *understanding* whereby a person correctly esteems the ultimate end"; 2) "*deliberation* about what is to be done"; 3) *judgment* about what is to be done; and 4) a *command* to act (*On Evil* 15.4).[44] Humans are capable of knowing, at least to some degree, the highest goods, the highest of which is God, and their ability to reason should help them to act with those highest goods in mind.[45]

With proper understanding, then, creatures can pursue goods and good ends or goals consciously and intelligently. But the converse is also true: the failure to understand properly can lead to the pursuit of the wrong ends or goals, leading to improper actions. The failure of reason to lead to proper actions, actions which are directed toward the realization of highest goods, is therefore a chief cause of sin.

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[44] Also see Brian Davies's introduction, 24.

[45] God's commandments are part of these highest goods, for acting in accordance with the commandments He has given is to live a life of virtue and good.

Aquinas, following Aristotle's formulation of the four causes, formal, efficient, material, and final, thus considers the failure of reason, or improper reasoning, to be the "instrumental efficient cause" of evil—the instrument or means by which a person commits a sin (*On Evil* 2.6).

Despite some basic differences between the thought of Plato/Augustine and Aristotle/Aquinas regarding how divine knowledge is attained, Aquinas yet agrees in principle with Plato's assessment of the use of right reason. In fact, it could be argued that with Plato, and the principle of *nemo sua sponte peccat*, one can see the beginning of the tradition of the idea of right reason.[46] Plato's emphasis on the pursuit of the highest knowledge was never merely for the sake of knowledge itself. Rather, the pursuit of the highest knowledge had ultimately an ethical dimension, in effect, the avoidance of ignorance. For according to Plato, and the principle of *nemo sua sponte peccat*, no one would willingly choose the bad or the evil because such a choice does harm to one's self. But for Plato, evil begins in a kind of ignorance of what goods there are and what goods are to be chosen. On the other hand, for Plato, knowledge of the good (and of its deficiency, evil), would much more likely produce moral virtue, for it would be unnatural to know the good (especially the truly good), and yet not also seek to

[46] Posed traditionally in Latin rather than in Greek, *nemo sua sponte peccat* is roughly translated as "no one willingly does himself harm." Cicero is actually the first philosopher to use the term "right reason" (or *recta ratio*) in his *Tusculan Disputations*. He uses the term to emphasize the proper use of reason: to improve onself with the goal of attaining moral and intellectual perfection. But this sense of reason originates in the work of Plato (see the *Timeaus*) and is further developed by Aristotle (see the *Nicomachean Ethics*). In his prose, Milton uses the term in *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, where it is paralleled with the Law of nature (1059); and in *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, where God, in human form, is "commensurate to right reason" (954). Man is said to be made in God's image, but more specifically, it is in his reason, and more specifically yet his right reason, that he mirrors God.

do the good. To be thus virtuous requires the knowledge of what virtue is, or to be good requires knowledge of what the good is.

Aquinas takes this conception of knowledge of virtue and knowledge of the good further by suggesting that there is a certain obligation to pursue and attain such knowledge of the good to keep one from a sinful state: "being ignorant of things that one is not bound to know involves no moral wrong, but the ignorance whereby one does not know things that one is bound to know involves sin. And everyone is obliged to know the things that guide human persons in their actions" (*On Evil* 3.7). Ignorance is itself seen as a sin when the person has not sought to know what one ought. For this reason, Aquinas distinguishes carefully among not knowing, ignorance, and error. Error most clearly has the nature of sin since it consists of an act of "assenting to false things as true" or "mak[ing] judgments about things of which the person is ignorant" (*On Evil* 3.7). Ignorance has the nature of sin only when a person does not know what ought to be known to guide one to right action.

Considering it an obligation to know certain things in order better to overcome temptation, human ignorance can be viewed as perhaps the most significant detriment to the person who must engage in spiritual warfare, for one is not likely to emerge victoriously from such battles when undertaken without the proper weapons. The constant exercise of reason, then, is one of the primary means of overcoming ignorance and gaining and retaining the right kind of knowledge which will lead to right actions. This is what it means to say that God has given human beings the faculty of reason to

help them do good, rather than evil, with the free will with which He has also endowed them.

However, the function of mere reason, or reason alone, will not necessarily help humans obtain the kind of knowledge needed to live a life of virtue rather than sin. Pure reason is concerned primarily (or only) with obtaining knowledge of things and their nature.[47] While knowledge is the aim or final cause of (pure) reason, right action and moral virtue is the end of right reason. To achieve this end, right reason is comprised of the simultaneous functioning of reason and a certain moral sense, both of which have been given to humans by God to guide them properly.[48]

This moral sense has been described in various ways. First, it includes a certain prudence in judgment. Augustine writes of prudence that "all its vigilance [is] spent in the discernment of good from evil things, so that no mistake may be admitted about what we should desire and what avoid" (*City of God* 678). And, of course, what should be desired are the highest, eternal goods, and what should be avoided are the lesser, temporal goods.[49] Aquinas likewise emphasizes the need for understanding and prudence to accompany the exercise of reason, deeming prudence "the right reason about things to be done" (*Summa Theologica* 2.58.4).[50] Milton, too, makes similar connections

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[47] See Richard Arnold's similar distinction between "right reason" and "pure reason." In truth, "reason" can assume a variety of meanings. William Kerrigan writes that "'Reason' is …a whorish term in the Renaissance lexicon," which can mean simply the mind, the power of logic, or faculty which one uses to to determine right from wrong (223).

[48] The term "moral sense" is perhaps anachronistic, as it was coined as a theoretical term by the Earl of Shaftesbury at the end of the seventeenth century. I use the term in its very general sense here.

[49] Here the problem of evil clearly begins to merge with the epistemological questions

[50] Aquinas continues his analysis of the relationship between intellectual and moral virtue: "Moral virtue can be without some of the intellectual virtues, viz. wisdom, science, and art, but not without understanding and prudence. … Consequently just as right reason in speculative matters, in so far as it proceeds from naturally known principles, presupposes the understanding of those principles, so also

in his conception of right reason, "whose function it was to discern the chief good, and which was, as it were, the life of the understanding" (*On Christian Doctrine* 1193). But the notion that best encapsulates the idea of a moral sense is that of "conscience." Etymologically, the word "conscience," from *cum scientia*, means "with knowledge," so to act according to one's conscience is to act with and according to what one *knows* of good and evil, or to act in accordance with the highest goods which one should know and always desire.[51]

Aquinas stresses the *cum-scientia* sense of conscience perhaps more than any other Christian thinker, and therefore emphasizes the role of reason with faith perhaps more than any other, and Milton appears to take a similar stance.[52] Indeed, these two principles would seem to be the driving force of his *On Christian Doctrine*, where he seeks to lay out the Christian doctrine that is revealed to him through reading of the Holy Scriptures with the guidance of the Holy Spirit.[53] His aim in thus "puzzl[ing] out a religious creed" is to provide a foundation of knowledge that can "effectually wipe away those two repulsive afflictions, tyranny and superstition, from human life and the human mind" and show that he was "concerned not for religion but for life's well-being" (1158).[54] Battling the threat of tyranny and superstition is indeed a form of spiritual

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does prudence" (2.58.4). While the exercise of reason alone can lead to intellectual virtue, moral virtue also needs the work of understanding and prudence.

[51] Looking at *Samson Agonistes* as a casuist text, Camille W. Slights writes this about conscience: "The conscience, casuists agree, is that part of practical understanding that applies moral law to individual actions, judging past actions and legislating future ones…. The primary task of the conscience, then, is to remove doubt through a clear understanding of the moral nature of human actions" (396).

[52] James Obertino notes that "Milton agrees with Aquinas about the primacy of reason in maintaining one's position within the City of God" (26).

[53] See *On Christian Doctrine*, chapter 1 (1160).

[54] This section of the treatise is titled "John Milton: Englishman."

warfare for Milton, and he seeks the knowledge that will also help his conscience direct him away from such.

And in *Reason of Church-Government*, Milton rather personally reflects upon the remarkable power of conscience in his own life as he reminds himself first of the dire personal consequences if he does not heed his own conscience in working toward the reformation of the church: "But were it the meanest under-service, if God by his Secretary conscience injoyn it, it were sad for me if I should draw back, for me especially, now when all men offer their aid to help ease and lighten the difficult labours of the Church" (925). He must do what his conscience tells him to do, no matter how menial or insignificant the task might seem to be. Likewise, he appeals to the consciences of all Christians to do their part in the spiritual battle being waged for the life of God's church. He then concludes the tract with an acknowledgement of his own spiritual battles concerning his early refusal to serve the Church of England as a priest, which employment his parents initially intended for him, for when he had

> com[e] to some maturity of years and perceav[ed] what tyranny had invaded the Church, that he who would take Orders must subscribe slave, and take an oath withal, which unlesse he took with a conscience that would retch he must either strait perjure, or split his faith, I thought it better to preferre a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking bought, and begun with servitude and forswearing. (925)

Viewing the English Church at the time as full of tyranny, Milton's conscience would not let him take such an oath to become a minister within that tyrannous church. And

indeed, his conscience instead led him to fight against that tyranny and its other manifestations of tyranny in England.

Similarly, in Book III of *Paradise Lost*, Milton's God tells the Son that He

> will place within them [Adam and Eve] as a guide
> My Umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
> Light after light well us'd they shall attain,
> And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
>
> (3.194-97)

Presumably, Adam and Eve's conscience need only be heeded in order to keep them in their state of innocence and let them live eternally in paradise. And yet neither of them heeds their conscience when confronted with the actual temptations. Adam in particular allows Eve to guide his reason down the improper path to choose the temporal goods of her companionship over the eternal good of his relationship with God.

Effects of Original Sin: The Limits of Reason and the Work of Memory

When Milton's God tells the Son that He has placed His "Umpire Conscience" within Adam and Eve, He is referring primarily to their prelapsarian state. We are left, then, with two questions: how right reason functions differently in the prelapsarian and fallen states, and how this shift in the function of reason is related to the mark of original sin upon humans as it is conceived by Christian thinkers.

In the prelapsarian state of human existence, there would seem to be little need for the distinction between pure reason and right reason. The problem with Adam and

Eve's use of reason in the Fall is not a failure of reason *per se* but rather the failure to "[keep] strictest watch, as she was warnd" (9.363) and which allows them to be deceived by a "faire appeering good" (9.354). Reason is meant to direct the will to right action, since knowing and recognizing the good should make one will to do that good, as even Plato had argued. However, if reason chooses something that it only thinks is good but actually is not good, then the will still becomes involved in sin rather than virtue. Adam and Eve both knew already who Satan was and what he intended for them, yet both allowed themselves to be deceived by Satan's arguments. Adam and Eve did not heed what reason had told them; they did not let reason guide their wills toward the good they already knew. Instead, they accepted the false arguments offered first by Satan to Eve, and then by Eve to Adam.

Though Adam and Eve were deceived by Satan's false argments, their acceptance of those arguments was yet willful. Therefore, one of the effects of the fall was that fallen humans found their ability to reason severely hampered.[55] Milton ties the failings of human reason (especially in fallen humans) to God's punishment of the first humans' failure to heed reason: thus a consequence of the fall, the first failure in spiritual warfare, is spiritual death.

In every war there is death. While death is the punishment for the first sins, death is not to be understood only in physical terms. In *On Christian Doctrine*, Milton identifies four kinds of death which constitute God's punishment for sins, one of which is spiritual death. A significant part of spiritual death is "the extensive darkening of that

[55] In a similar way, Milton's Eve essentially wills her own trial with her insistence on working alone despite Adam's entirely reasonable arguments against it.

right reason, whose function it was to discern the chief good, and which was, as it were, the life of the understanding" (1193). Sin, particularly as derived from Adam and Eve's repudiation of reason, caused reason to lose the ability to discern the divine light. Accordingly, reason still functions, but only with great labor. Reason is unable to know the good directly or to direct the will toward the good without further aid. Thus, the faculty of reason in fallen humans is no longer unquestionably "pure," and it is only "right" on occasion. The postlapsarian mind is too easily misinformed by the "faire appeering good" (9.354): mere appearance that directs the will away from the highest goods, and certainly away from the "life of the understanding," and toward lesser goods which are chosen at the expense of the higher goods.[56]

In *On Free Choice of the Will,* Augustine contrasts the wisdom and rest which belonged to created human nature with the painful and defective reason which belongs to humanity in its current state. This state of ignorance, however, is yet a case of God's justice as just punishment of sin:

> It is indeed the most just penalty for sin that we should lose what we were unwilling to use well, since we could have used it well without the slightest difficulty if only we had willed to do so; thus we who knew what was right but did not do it lost the knowledge of what is right, and we

[56] At this point, theologically, Milton's warning about the "faire appeering good" seems to echo certain elements of the Bible that warn about the attractive appearance of some forms of evil. And philosophically, or epistemologically in particular, Milton sounds like his famous contemporary Descartes who, early in the *Meditations on First Philosphy*, dismisses the imagination (or in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the fancy) as a source of genuine truth. Milton, the poet, would not dismiss the fancy categorically like Descartes dismisses the imagination. Yet, in the spirit of the debate about right reason and free choice, there are certainly intersections between and among the Bible, Milton, and champions of reason like Descartes.

> who had the power but not the will to act rightly lost the power even when we have the will. (3.18)

By thus distinguishing between humanity's original nature and its punishment in the fallen state, Augustine avoids placing blame for humanity's sinfulness and seemingly willing ignorance on its Creator—God created humans with a good nature and to be intelligent, so that man's natural actions would only be good ones. But with the willful choice not to use the knowledge given by the Creator, humans can no longer see immediately, intuitively as it were, how they ought to be (that is, good); nor do they have the power to be what they ought to be with facility, even if they see the good.[57]

Aquinas similarly links ignorance and failure of reason to original sin:

> There is in original sin something formal, namely, the lacking of original justice, which belongs to the will. And original justice, which united the will to God, produced an overflowing of perfection into other powers, namely, that knowledge of truth enlightened the intellect, and that the irascible and concupiscible appetites received direction from reason. Just so, when original justice was taken away from the will, the intellect's knowledge of truth and the irascible and concupiscible appetites' direction by reason are deficient. (*On Evil* 164)

[57] Here we come again to the problem of evil—is God to be held responsible for the moral evil in the world?—and as with the problem of natural evil, an understanding of God's justice exculpates the Creator for the existence of moral evil. While humans apparently cannot help but choose to do moral evils in their fallen state, this ignorant state in which they commit these sins is part of the just penalty placed upon human beings by God.

And Milton makes the point of re-evaluating the terminology regarding the doctrine of original sin in his own treatise, *On Christian Doctrine*, where he writes in Chapter 11:

> Apparently Augustine, in his writings against Pelagius was the first to call this ORIGINAL SIN. He used the word *original*, I suppose, because in the *origin* or generation of man this sin was transmitted to posterity by our first parents. But if that is what he meant, the term is too narrow, because this evil desire, this law of sin, was not only inbred in us, but also took possession of Adam after his fall, and from his point of view it could not be called *original*. (1191)

Yet, all of Adam and Eve's posterity, by virtue of Adam and Eve's sin, has this mark of evil "inbred in us." Evil becomes such an inherent and inescapable part of fallen human nature that any evil that comes into the mind of fallen humans invariably leaves yet another "spot or blame" of sin. This is because the mark of original sin is such that it makes postlapsarian persons, on some level, signatories to the presence and willful accumulation of evil.[58]

These estimations by Augustine, Aquinas, and Milton seem to depict a rather hopeless circumstance. It would seem that humanity is a lost cause, utterly incapable of right reason or action in a fallen state. But there is a remedy. According to Augustine, even if this state of ignorance is the mortal inheritance of humans and thus part of their

[58] C. A. Patrides observes that "Augustine's interpretation of original sin, and particularly his graver views on predestination and the deprivation of free will, were accepted neither widely nor at once" (101). Though his ideas were eventually accepted in the Western Church, it was in the Reformation that "Augustinianism returned to reassert itself in even harsher terms in the theology of the Reformers, notably Luther and Calivin" (101).

fallen (though, importantly, not created) nature, and even if it is punishment for a sin they themselves did not immediately commit, it is still the individual's sin to refuse, by one's own will, to apply oneself to act in accordance with right reason that, by the grace of God, is still essentially operative in the world and, by grace, always available. It is the individual's sin to remain willingly in ignorance of such. What humans have even in this fallen state is "the power to search diligently and piously if [they] will to do so" (*On Free Choice* 3.22). Moreover, even if this state of ignorance and difficulty were the natural state of the human soul, it would still be a sin willingly to refuse even the attempt to rise from that state to the happiness that would come with wisdom and rest.

With this active search for the proper kinds of knowledge, there is also an injunction to the faculty of memory, for it is the task of memory to recollect at the proper times what has been learned that will help direct the will toward the good. Augustine writes extensively about the tremendous power of memory in Book X of his *Confessions*:

> I remember that I distinguished between those true doctrines and the false things said against them. … I both remember that I have often understood these things, and I store away in memory what I now discern and understand, so that hereafter I may remember that I have understand at the present time. I have remembered that I have remembered, just as hereafter, if I shall recall that I have now been able to remember these things, I shall in truth recall it by the power of memory. (10.13.20)

Augustine links that which is known to that which is remembered. Knowledge and experiences should be stored in the memory so that they may be recollected at moments when that understanding is again needed. For Augustine, memory, as a power of the mind, is fundamental in the relationship he can and will have with God, for he can only know God if he remembers God, and he can only remember God by his memory:

> Behold, how far within my memory have I traveled in search of you, Lord, and beyond it I have not found you! Nor have I found anything concerning you except what I have kept in memory since I first learned of you. For since I learned of you, I have not forgotten you. Wheresoever I found truth, there I found my God, truth itself, and since I first learned the truth I have not forgotten it. Therefore, ever since I learned about you, you abide in my memory, and I find you there when I recall you to mind and take delight in you. (10.24)

Fallen humans, pitifully, must remember, in a sense, in order to know God, so that memory works in conjunction with right reason. Remembering God—keeping God in one's mind, recollecting that good which God wants one to do—is to act with that moral sense which defines right reason.

Yet Augustine is also aware that memory, like reason, is not infallible, for it remembers not only the good, but also that which is less desirable and even that which is evil. And remembering evil, while failing to remember the good, may lead one to more sin. Augustine refers especially to his memories of sins he has known and committed which emerge primarily when he sleeps. Sleep offers special dangers via the powerful

faculty of memory, because memory is working independently from reason at those times. The potential dangers of sleep and dreams suggest that memory can be a powerful detriment in spiritual warfare when one fails to remember the good and instead recalls only evil. Yet, too, memory for fallen humans is a necessary condition for the awareness of fallen humans desirous of a return to an immediate appreciation of the good. When it works as it should, memory is a crucial element in the work of right reason, even, or especially, after the fall.

Reason in the Reformation

Milton and many others were eager to argue that the fall transformed human nature itself because it transformed the nature of reason itself, so it is useful to retrace some of the early modern theology that addresses these epistemological concerns and the particular ways in which humans can yet overcome the deficit of reason. Because Adam and Eve failed to heed the right reason with which God endowed them in their creation, their progeny find their use of reason significantly hindered. Adam and Eve's progeny are not "sufficient to stand"; they are not capable of standing on their own, for they have lost the natural inclination to choose good over evil through their own wills as directed by reason because their natures are now tainted by the sins that have been committed.

The valuation of reason, as just one issue, has long been considered widely varied among Catholics and Protestants. It can be stated in the most general of terms that there is a tension in post-Reformation thought between the respective merits of reason and faith, with Protestants leaning toward an emphasis on blind faith and

Catholics toward an emphasis on rational faith. Additionally, the belief in the utter depravity of human beings, which some trace back to Augustine or Paul but gained special prominence during the Reformation, particularly in the theologies of Martin Luther and John Calvin, further complicated the debates. Indeed, in England, much of the Reformation was driven by Calvinist theology, especially among the Puritan reformers, but even in the Church of England, which among other beliefs stresses the innate depravity of human beings and their inability therefore to withstand with their own wills the temptations presented to them. Indeed, humans were essentially seen as lacking the freedom to do anything but evil.

The recognition of a certain obscuring of reason as an effect of the fall became almost a commonplace of theology among many Christian thinkers. We can observe how almost pervasive the notion of fallen reason became when we consider much of the literature of the reformers. The reformers in general betray a marked distrust of the faculty of reason; they view reason in the fallen state of humanity as unreliable and untrustworthy. Because reason is thus at least darkened, or simply perverted, many reformers find it doubtful that reason can even recognize evil as such, much less be trusted to guide the will toward good.[59] The reformers came to question what kinds of knowledge humans can attain through the work of reason and what relation such knowledge can have to the human will. Most significantly, Luther and Calvin viewed the perversion of reason in such a way that they were led to doctrines that clearly

[59] Obertino notes this key difference between the Catholic and reform views: "Aquinas emphasizes the power of good to continue in the natural order despite the workings of evil. … His emphasis on the continuing power of goodness despite evil contradicts Luther's belief that Satan is the master of the world and Calvin's idea that human nature is totally depraved. And Milton follows Aquinas in both these matters" (29).

privilege faith over reason, even on occasion denigrating the use of human reason in spiritual life.

In *Bondage of the Will*, Luther argues that "If you regard and follow the judgment of human reason, you are forced to say, either there is no God, or that God is unjust" (Sec. 166). God is ultimately unknowable via reason. Therefore, instead of focusing on what can be discovered by reason, as, for example, in various attempts to prove or demonstrate God's existence, Luther suggests that all attention should be directed toward the suffering of Christ, by which humans are given God's grace. Luther recommends abandoning the work of reason and awakening a faith in God's truth, for it is only through pure childlike faith that the Christian can find the greatest assurances of salvation. The work of reason is therefore limited only to revealing human limitations and impotence relative to God's power and His mercy. From this position on reason, Luther promotes wholeheartedly the notion that salvation happens by faith alone—no ability to reason will earn a human being salvation. God grants salvation to those who accept by faith alone that He alone can grant salvation.[60] It is only through God's redeeming grace that humans become able once again to choose good over evil with their own wills.[61]

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[60] John Schwindt highlights what he considers to be the absurdities associated with Luther's theology which "replac[ed] the traditional optimistic Catholic theology of similitude … with a dialectical theology based upon the paradoxical opposition of nature and grace, reason and faith, man and God." Such a theology renders the Christian "an absurd hero who constantly confronts absolutely impossible things" (9).

[61] There are traditionally two categories of grace in Christian theology: prevenient grace and subsequent grace, each with further subdivisions. Prevenient grace is believed to be given by God to enable humans to be redeemed; subsequent grace is that which accompanies humans to preserve and uphold their actions to be pleasing to God. Jackson Campbell Boswell suggests that "Milton made little distinction between them" (83). A further element of debate is also introduced by Calvin's doctrine of irresistible grace, which does not allow that humans can resist the grace offered by God, so their choice to

Compared with Luther, Calvin's response to the role of reason relative to faith might seem more measured. Calvin sees reason as vastly inferior to the exercise of faith, yet he allows that reason has a certain power to illuminate faith because the human mind has an innate awareness of divinity. Still, Calvin insists that the particulars of faith are beyond the scope of human reason. Calvin therefore remains staunch in his position that acts of human reason—through argumentation, disputation, and the like—are not viable means to build one's faith in God. Instead, the believer should rely solely on the testimony of the Holy Spirit in interpreting and living out the Holy Scriptures.[62]

It would seem, then, that there would be little room for the experience of spiritual warfare for those who follow Luther and Calvin, for in a strong sense there is essentially

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accept that grace is not truly a free choice. But Milton also seems to reject that notion of grace. Boswell offers Satan's refusal of God's grace in Books I and II, as well as God's treatment of grace in Book III of *Paradise Lost* as evidence of Milton's beliefs that "Man's will is entirely free … but God can and does plant ideas and ideals in man's subconsciousness in the hope that he will choose the eternal good rather than the infernal vile" (94). Benjamin Myers talks extensively about prevenient grace in *Paradise Lost*, particularly as concerns the repentance and conversion of Adam and Eve: "The conversion scene can be fully understood only against the backdrop of the Fall, and , correspondingly, the Fall is seen in its proper light only when it is viewed in relation to the ensuing intervention of the grace of God. 'Man's First Disobedience' … [has] subjected human nature to a radical corruption. … [But] the gracious providence of God does not leave human nature in its fallen state, but brings forth good from evil by triumphing over the power of original sin and liberating the human will from its dark enthrallment" (21). Myers also points out that Protestants tended to view prevenient grace as preparing and transforming humans for the work of salvation, whereas Catholics viewed prevenient grace as "aid[ing] and enabl[ing] them to prepare themselves" (23).

[62] In contrast to these Reformist tendencies, the Catholic Church could be seen as reviving, partly through the works of Aquinas, the interest in reason as a means to develop and further one's faith in and relationship with God. Faith (supernatural knowledge) and reason (rational knowledge) are seen as complementary rather than contradictory, for they have the same aim: Truth. In *Summa Contra Gentiles*, Aquinas maintains that "there is a twofold mode of truth in what we profess about God," some of which truths are beyond the ability of human reason (such as the nature of Trinity) and some which natural human reason is able to attain (1.3.2). Moreover, though he allows that humans can come to know truths about God through reason, he also insists that reason is not the only means available for discovering these truths, for several reasons. One of these reasons is his own recognition that "the investigation of the human reason for the most part has falsity present within it, and this is due partly to the weakness of our intellect in judgment" (1.4.5).

See Raymond Tumbleson for a discussion of the Anglican Church's move toward this position on reason and knowledge of God as well in the last decades of the seventeenth century. Interestingly, Anglican writers use this particular rhetoric of reason most vociferously in their anti-Catholic polemic, particularly as concerns the use of reason to know God and to believe in transubstantiation.

no freedom of the will for fallen humans because, as fallen, they can choose only sin. However, by way of God's grace, the fallen human will is again capable of choosing good over evil, though that does not mean it will always choose so.[63] And in that possibility also lies the arena for spiritual warfare. For Reformers, even a so-called knowledge of God is not really achieved by reason, as that knowledge requires a leap of faith independent of reason and understanding. But once the believer has come to know God by faith, God's grace enables the mind to function properly and be a source of comfort in the spiritual life, particularly insofar as grace enables the mind to recollect apposite Scriptures, and interpret them properly, at just the time that one is encountering spiritual trials.[64]

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[63] William Walker makes a similar argument about the relationship between reason and free will after the fall, but he emphasizes a certain loss of freedom if reason is not obeyed, which corresponds to civil freedoms: "though, as a result of God and the Son, reason is restored in fallen man, he does not necessarily enjoy the freedom that depends upon it. For … fallen man is, as Adam and Eve were, free to disobey his reason, free to permit passion and desire to overrule it. And if, out of this freedom, he does disobey reason and allow it to be governed by appetite, he forfeits the freedom to believe and act, and he suffers the special punishment God reserves for that forfeit: the loss of *civil* liberties" (158).

For a different view, consider Albert Fields's argument that to overcome evil, humans must know that part of themselves that corresponds to the nature of God—that is, the faculty of reason. Fields writes that "the immediate problem of Adam and Eve is that they are caught in the backwash of their discovery of the darker side of self, and, in their submersion, are temporarily blinded to the aspect of self-like-God. Eve, the first to succumb, is … subverted by the unreason of Satan" (397).

[64] Christopher Hill distinguishes between the "old" reason (defined by proper logic and associated, in Hill's argument, with forms of authority and tradition) and the "new" reason (reason aided by the light of grace, essentially "right reason"), which became the basis for the interpretation of the Scriptures by radical reformers. Kathleen M. Swaim argues that "Reason itself is fallen, but its new role is to aid in the return to the original state and truth, and it mediates between the reality and the absolute, between experience and the divine plan" (134). Kristin Pruitt McColgan notes that Milton "provide[s], in Book 10 [of *Paradise Lost*], a pattern 'to repair the ruins of our first parents' by showing how they reestablish a relationship between themselves and God based on reason, faith, and 'the soul / Of all the rest,' love"; after their judgment for their sins, "their minds [are] better able to use reason in the service of faith, their faith in a prophetic future stronger for the 'suffering for Truth's sake'involved in reaching it ("Reason, Faith," 201-2).

Citing Douglas Bush's *The Renaissance and English Humanism*, William Kerrigan describes the ideals of "Christian humanism" in similar ways: "proclaiming the historical compatibility of faith and humanistic learning, [Christian humanism] had as its major content *ratio recta* or 'right reason,' the belief that knowledge of the good acquired through the patient study of the Bible and classical culture could be, and must be, exemplified in the conduct of life, making the completed person a living embodiment of his

Yet I have noted how Milton is, in a sense, the Reformer's reformer, insofar as he disowned not only what he regarded as the pretenses of the papacy, but also other Reformers' almost wholesale rejection of the role of reason in spiritual life, and he emphasizes that role of reason to a much greater extent than other reform thinkers[65] Milton clearly saw temptation as a necessary part of the believer's spiritual life—it is a consequence of the fall insofar as it becomes necessary to reestablish humans' relationship with God.[66] He writes in *Areopagitica* of the need for a tested virtue: "I cannot praise a fugitive and cloister'd vertue" (1007).[67] Yet, in comparison with Luther and Calvin, Milton does not believe the Christian survives such tests passively, by grace alone. He also fundamentally believes that active reason, still aided by grace but also directing the will toward right action, is an important tool for virtue to be upheld when it is tested out in the world rather than safe at home, untried.

With an emphasis among reformers on the depravity of human nature, there was also a concomitant devaluing of the notion of right reason, though not entirely without qualification. Arnold explains:

> This sense of total depravity can be said to have had a dual effect on the concept of right reason. On the one hand, if reason is "totally blind and

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knowledge" (218-19). Kerrigan goes on to suggest that Bush's conception of Christian humanism has survived in the notion of "Protestant poetics" that has since gained critical attention (221).

[65] Consider Milton's urging for the Puritan Parliament of the Interregnum to renounce the licensing act essentially because it would limit the free exercise of reason that he saw as necessary for an ongoing reformation.

[66] Benjamin Myers writes about Milton, "the conversion of human beings is, moreover, not simply a once-for-all event that confirms them in a regenerate state. On the contrary, the initial experience of conversion is only the first step in a dynamic and lifelong process" which involves countless spiritual battles and the constant need of God's grace (29-30).

[67] *Areopagitica* is yet another place where Milton clearly emphasizes the role of reason in the Christian's life. There, he expresses his desire that reason be given the opportunity to exercise its judgment in determining which books offer the best substance for one's mind.

> stupid," as Calvin says, then right reason as a guide to living is discarded, because right reason needs a clear rational faculty as well as a developed moral sense. On the other hand, if humankind needs to rely totally upon God in Christian life, then perhaps the intimation in Luther and Calvin is that God *will* guide humankind in daily living, if they are sensible enough to follow God's teachings. This would imply at least a remedial intellect as well as moral conscience and thus right reason. (9)

In general it can thus be observed that Protestant thinkers rejected or severely doubted the function of right reason. Reason was seen as having little role in a person's salvation as compared with the importance of blind and irrational faith. Indeed, reason was seen as a cause of deception which would lead a person away from a pure faith in God. Calvin and Luther both speak out against the blindness to divine truths that result from an over-reliance on the rational intellect. Belief in the total depravity of humankind taught that any knowledge obtained through human endeavors alone must inherently be flawed.

We can see the extreme implications of such beliefs perhaps most obviously in the case of Lawrence Clarkson. Here is a man whose entire spiritual life consisted of a movement from one theological position to another because each one failed to explain a theological problem in his mind. His rejection thus always stemmed from a use of reason—a new position or church explained rationally something that had bothered him in his previous beliefs—but he thereby entered an endless cycle of searching for faith by reason. In his mind, Clarkson believes that reason keeps leading him to further error, so

to escape such repeated errors, he comes to believe that the truth for which he has been searching is found only by rejecting outright and consciously all things rational. This, however, leads him to the startling revelation that he is the one true disciple of Christ!

Most reformers did not move to the same extreme as Clarkson of rejecting all uses of reason, but they generally did see reason as inherently flawed and deceptive. And yet, even within these Calvinist traditions, we can find thinkers and writers who privilege the human intellect and the ability to reason as a means to engage successfully in spiritual warfare, as already evidenced by Milton's concern in *Paradise Lost* with the human capacity to reason. Such an emphasis is also evident in his *Areopagitica* where the business of the reformation depends initially upon the free exercise of reason and judgment. Thus while Calvinist thinkers generally tend to dictate that faith alone is the means by which human beings are justified to God, some reform thinkers attempt to qualify that notion in crucial respects. Richard Hooker, for example, is commonly viewed as the first to advance "within the post-Reformation English Church the use of reason as an essential ingredient in order to act as a counterpoise to Calvinism's appeal to Scripture and Rome's appeal to tradition" (Atkinson 1).[68]

With the advent of the Reformation and its privilege of faith over reason and even attack on reason, however, Catholic thinkers, after several centuries of skepticism, once again sought out and emphasized Aquinas' ideas on reason as a means to counter the influence of the presumed irrationality of Reformation theology. This is perhaps

[68] Atkinson argues that Hooker advances an appeal to reason in matters of faith, or the idea that reason can inform one's faith, following the thought of Aquinas. While Hooker is perhaps the most obvious example of an English Protestant theologian who exalted the place of reason in one's relationship with God, only the most extreme of the Reformers rejected all uses of reason, such as Lawrence Clarkson reveals in his spiritual autobiography.

most readily evident in the work of Ignatius of Loyola and the founding of the Jesuits. Jesuit priests were highly educated in classical studies and in theology, and they advocated the use of spiritual exercises and examinations of conscience to help Christians live virtuously and imitate the life of Christ.

An emphasis on reason in Catholic writings is not particularly surprising, yet it is quite striking that many Reformist writers, even among Puritans, emphasize to varying degrees the place of reason in both daily and spiritual life, and especially in spiritual warfare as it is imagined and represented in the literature of the seventeenth century. Though perhaps unexpected, Reformist writers remained interested in the use of reason and invested in the idea of reason as a significant tool in the spiritual battles which they expected to endure. Such an emphasis therefore gives us new insight into a paradoxical element of Reformation theology of the seventeenth century. Moreover, the literary texts studied here open the way for larger reflections on the way in which these issues of doctrine meet the Christian in the trenches of everyday life.

CHAPTER III

THE FIRST TEMPTATION: THE ABUSE AND FAILURE OF REASON

In the Christian tradition, the human engagement in spiritual warfare begins with the first temptation of the first humans, Adam and Eve. Although Adam and Eve are engaging an enemy they can see and hear, Satan in the form of the serpent, the battle is fundamentally a spiritual one. The outcome of this particular battle has far-reaching implications for both Adam and Eve, and for all of their progeny: from their ejection from Eden, to the effects of the first sin on the very nature of humans, most especially the defect in the way in which they are able to relate thereafter to their Creator.

The issue of the effects of the fall of Adam and Eve is not the only point of controversy regarding the first sin of humankind. Many different Christians also have conflicting notions regarding the very underlying causes for Adam and Eve's failure. However, most Christians view Adam and Eve as possessing the requisite tools to withstand the temptation of Satan. Most Christians must maintain that premise, for to argue otherwise would be to argue that, in some sense, Adam and Eve would have been essentially already fallen even before the fall occurred.[1]

The prime instrument Adam and Eve had at their avail in their prelapsarian state was the faculty of reason, or better, the faculty of right reason, which God intended they

[1] Such a debate surrounds Milton's representation of the fall, epecially concerning Miton's Eve and her narcissism when she prefers her own image rather than Adam's person. Then there is also the question of whether God intended that they should fall—that they were predestined to do so.

use so as to guide their wills into alignment with His will.[2] Any serious investigation into the first temptation of humankind therefore must consider very particularly the failure of human reason when reason was at its human best—that is, as reason functioned when it and all of the other faculties functioned to the best of their capability, before those faculties became defective and limited by the very sins committed when the first humans failed to heed the direction of those faculties.

Two of the most compelling studies of the role of reason in the fall of Adam and Eve are in John Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Aemilia Lanyer's *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*. Milton's epic telling of the fall is arguably the most ambitious account of the fall in all of seventeenth century literature, and perhaps of all time. Lanyer's project is provocative in its originality in many ways, not the least of which is its portrayal of female virtue in particular. While *Paradise Lost* and *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* differ in both aim and scope, these two works share some significant radical theological inclinations. But most obviously, and perhaps most profoundly, they both possess the common argument that the failure of reason was fundamental to the events of the fall, and that had the first humans heeded reason in its purest form, the fall might very well have been avoided.[3]

Paradise Lost and *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* also share another basic but important element. Albeit in different ways, both texts also point to a specific kind of

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[2] Even among those Christian sects that view human reason as unreliable and untrustworthy, the general suggestion is that it is so because of the effects of the fall, not that it was always so. There must necessarily be some exceptions to this generalization, however. I would also suggest that reason itself was also right reason in the prelapsarian human condition.

[3] It might also be interesting to compare their representations of gender, but that is outside the scope of this current project.

temptation and spiritual warfare that is posed in the form of dreams: either those dreams in which Satan or demons, as agents external to the self, tempt a person in sleep; or those dreams of temptation which originate internally in the human soul, that is, from one's sinful condition or evil desires. The issue of temptation by or in dreams will provide a particular avenue of investigation into the nature of the fall in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* and *Paradise Lost* relative to other literature on spiritual warfare, including Augustine's *Confessions* and the *Confessions* of Richard Norwood, especially as all of the above address questions of free will and right reason in the phenomenon of evil.

"Nor can I like / This uncouth dream": Eve's Satanic Dream

That which dominates the imagination—at least when one considers the nature of the fall—is the apparent inevitability of the fall. Yet, Milton's *Paradise Lost* offers a striking, hypothetical example of the triumph of reason over temptation in the prelapsarian world. Milton's remarkable poetry offers a kind of critique of pure reason relative to the fall to suggest that the case of the fall could have been otherwise. The temptation, with the right use of reason, could have been resisted.[4]

The centerpiece of the action in that hypothetical resistance to temptation in *Paradise Lost* comes in the presentation of Eve's satanic dream. Satan, at Eve's ear, puts a dream in Eve's mind. We learn the content of this "uncouth dream" when Eve arises to tell Adam about it (5.98).

[4] Again, Richard Arnold points out Milton's careful distinction between pure reason, that "pure syllogistical or enthymemic reasoning," and right reason, that reasoning which "simultaneously unites the intellectual or ratiocinative faculty *and* the moral or spiritual sense" (ix).

Eve says that she dreamt "of offence and trouble which my mind / Knew never till this irksom night" (5.34-35). She proceeds to present various episodes: Adam's voice seemed to call her forth from their bower; she beheld the sight of an angel before the forbidden tree; the angel addresses the forbidden tree; then the angel eats, or rather "taste[s]," the forbidden fruit (5.65). At that point Eve relates that she was by "damp horror chil'd / At such bold words voucht with a deed so bold" (5.65-66). Eve proceeds by reporting, however, that her own horror at the angel's eating of the forbidden fruit does not stop her, in her dream, from also tasting the fruit then offered to her by the angel himself: "the pleasant savourie smell / So quick'nd appetite, that I, methought, / Could not but taste" (5.84-86).

But Eve's reaction to her dream is a substantial part of Milton's argument about right reason. Milton's poem argues, in essence, that Eve maintains her innocence and integrity despite this dream, and Eve's waking revulsion toward her actions in her dream is testimony to that maintained innocence: "O how glad I wak'd / To find this but a dream!" (5.92-93). Moreover, Milton uses the dream of Eve (a poetic device of Milton's making, as it is not found in the Bible) as the premise for his argument that reason, if rightly employed, could have prevented the eventual fall.[5] Milton's poetic invention in this case has a relation to classical theological debates about reason, free will, and personal identity. I argue that Milton uses the invention of Eve's dream and her reaction to it to reassess the element of skepticism in spiritual warfare as manifest especially in St. Augustine's account of his own disturbing dreams.

[5] C. A. Patrides writes that while Milton utilizes all the traditional elements of Eve's temptation in *Paradise Lost*, her demonic dream is his addition to this tradition (105).

Milton was no doubt a student of Augustine, and in his *Confessions* Augustine composes perhaps the most famous treatment of the problem of the will in relation to personal identity and the problem of evil. Augustine writes at some length of his own tempting, and sometimes sinful, dreams.[6] In light of his being tempted in dreams seemingly instigated by Satan or demons, and apparently succumbing to such temptations in some manner at least some of the time, Augustine poses a series of virtually summary questions:

> At such times am I not myself, O Lord my God? Yet so great a difference is there between myself and that same self of mine within the moment when I pass from waking to sleep or return hither from sleep! At such times where is reason, by which a man awake resists those suggestions, and remains unshaken even if the very deeds themselves are urged upon him? Is it closed, together with my eyes? Is it asleep, together with the body's senses? How is it that even in sleep we often resist, and mindful of our resolution, persist in it most chastely, and yield no assent to such allurements? Yet so great a difference obtains that, when it happens otherwise, we return on awaking to peace of conscience.

[6] Augustine also addresses the issue of dreams in Book 12 of his *Literal Commentary on Genesis*, which Gareth B. Matthews suggests is Augustine's "most determined effort to escape responsibility for 'unchaste' dreams, an issue that seems to have concerned him throughout much of his priestly life" (*On the Trinity*, 68n). Elsewhere, in *Thought's Ego in Augustine and Descartes*, Matthews suggests that Augustine's effort there is ultimately unconvincing (102). The note in *On the Trinity* is in response to Augustine's assertion that there are times, as in beguiling dreams while asleep, when "not even reason itself can distinguish whether the body itself is seen without, or something of the kind is thought within" (11.4).

> By that very contrast we discover that it was not ourselves who did what we yet grieve over as in some manner done within us. (10.30)

Milton's early modern poetic presentation of Eve's dream sounds remarkably similar to Augustine's early medieval account of spiritual warfare relative to the dream phenomenon, or what Gareth Matthews has called "the moral dream problem."[7]

Of course, the primary difference between Milton's account of Eve's dream and Augustine's account of his own dreams lies in the two cases' temporal position relative to the fall. Milton argues, partially through Adam's support of Eve after she relates her dream, that Eve remains in a state of innocence despite her satanic dream. For Milton, moreover, it seems that any potentially negative effects of Eve's first battle with Satan in her dream are suspended because she is still sinless and still a legitimate citizen in a prelapsarian world.

Here we have Milton's argument in praise of reason. Had Eve employed her right reason, she could have prevented the fall when she was later tempted more materially by Satan in the form of a serpent. If she had recalled her temptation in the dream, and her revulsion toward it, she could have avoided succumbing to the more real temptation the second time.[8]

Moreover, and just as important, Milton's real point is that he is supplying us with a commentary on the human condition after the fall. In a sense, a key to salvation,

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[7] See Matthews, *Thought's Ego*, ch. 8. We post-Cartesians, of course, have a certain advantage in reviewing the parameters of "the moral dream problem." Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* is the most famous, or infamous, appeal to reason as the means by which to distinguish truth from error, especially as relative to dreams or that which might amount to the same, the merely (re)presentational. But even before Descartes, Milton was appealing to reason as the means by which Eve could have avoided evil by noting that the serpent was no mere serpent.

[8] Even here we can see the role that memory plays in the work of right reason.

or at least a key to the maintenance of moral virtue, again lies with the use of reason. For Milton the effect of the fall was deleterious, but it did not cause a complete defect in the able use of reason as some Calvinists or Puritans maintain. For Milton, reason is still a gift of God, and its right use is a necessary component in the maintenance of true piety.

Moreover, while Milton seemingly cannot abide the Calvinist or Puritan claim that reason was rendered wholly defective after the fall, his implicit criticism of Augustine's dream deliberations suggests that the Catholic line also offers no definitive answer to the issue of the relation of personal identity to the will in the context of evil. And in "the moral dream problem," Milton seems to have exposed a rare moment of Augustinian weakness, not merely moral but also intellectual weakness.

According to Gareth Matthews, the central issue in the "moral dream problem" lies with the question: "Am I morally responsible for what I* do or think in my dreams?" (*Thought's Ego* 90). The answer to that question, according to Matthews, seems to depend on how one considers the relation between the self more properly understood and the self of the dream, the latter of whom Matthews designates as "I*." Although Augustine questions whether these two selves are the same, it appears to me at least, in a rare obfuscation in Augustine's work, that he really provides no definitive answer, as he both aligns himself with and attempts to distance himself from the self of the dream. In contrast, Eve seems more clearly able to distance her real self from the dream Eve.

Matthews insists, based on the opening two lines of the passage I quoted from Augustine, that Augustine views himself and the self of his dreams as the same—"myself and that same self of mine." Yet, one could also argue, from the last line in the

above quotation from Augustine, that "we discover that it was not ourselves," that Augustine moves toward seeing himself as separate or removed from that "self" of his dreams. The case could be made that Augustine sees his proper self as separate from the dream-self insofar as he did not actively *will* to have this dream or to commit these sins; and yet, therewith, Augustine sees his proper self and the dream-self as the same at some level insofar as he yet considers himself somehow, even if not entirely, responsible for the sins therein committed.

As Matthews notes, "even someone who denies that I am my dream self … may yet suppose that I am responsible for the *content* of my dreams" (*Thought's Ego* 105).[9] Indeed, Matthews argues that Augustine admits responsibility for the sins of his dreams by expressing his grief, apparently taken here by Matthews to be a sign of guilt, over what was "in some manner done within us."[10] Matthews seems to dismiss entirely the counter-argument that a person is not necessarily or wholly responsible for his/her dreams and can remain innocent of the sins committed in such dreams. After all, despite Augustine's expression of grief, there is also his own expressed claim of "return[ing] on awaking to peace of conscience," which would imply that he feels, to some degree, that he is innocent of those sins committed in his dreams. While a clear Augustinian verdict on "the moral dream problem" may still be out, Milton's Eve-dream episode in *Paradise*

[9] Emphasis is his.

[10] I have some trouble with Matthews' easy conflation of grief and guilt—compare Milton's description in *Paradise Lost* of the angels' grief over man's fall: "Th' Angelic Guards ascended, mute and sad / For Man" (10.18-19), so that "dim sadness did not spare / That time Celestial visages, yet mixt / With pitie, violated not thir bliss" (10.23-25). Milton makes it clear here that the angels can grieve over man's sin without feeling guilt for that sin.

Lost at least suggests the possibility that the dreamer does not have to be identified with the dream-self, nor to be responsible for what is dreamt and done.[11]

Milton's employment of Eve's dream is so rich that other issues have arisen aside from the difficult question of personal identity and evil relative to it. Some critics have questioned whether Eve's dream is a sign of some inherent weakness or strength, while others have suggested that Eve's dream is an indication that Eve was then and there already in a fallen state.[12] Yet other critics argue for Eve's continued innocence at this point in Milton's narrative, despite her dream of sin, with varied readings of the dream as either foreshadowing her fall or showing what strength she does have.[13]

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[11] Moreover, Milton, in effect prior to the eventual influence of Descartes concerning the role of rational judgment as an exercise utterly independent of the (re)presentational, while not providing a manifest resolution to "the moral dream problem," at least yet praises reason, and even argues, if implicitly, that reason is an indispensable partner in spiritual warfare, not a hopelessly defective faculty as a consequence of the fall.

[12] David Aers, Reid Barbour, and William G. Riggs all point to weaknesses on the part of Eve in her experience of this dream. David Aers has recently argued in a Freudian reading of Eve's dream that Eve is both excited and frightened by her dream because it reveals "resentments and aspirations she had not known before the dream, but ones she recognizes, however ambivalently, as her own" (90). Aers thus argues that with her angel-temptation dream, Eve is already fallen.

By contrast, Reid Barbour does not argue that Eve is fallen because of her dream; but he suggests that Milton was trying to present Eve as nonetheless weak even in the prelapsarian state given that she is prone to unusual visions. Barbour in effect suggests that Milton offers a kind of indirect appeal to reason, as Eve's weakness is a mark of her gender superimposed on the otherwise basically rational form of human beings.

William G. Riggs also sees Eve's dream as a sign of her weaknesses. He argues that, via the angel-temptation dream, Satan is able to manipulate Eve by mirroring Eve's very first experience as a human where, in Milton's poem, she arises from Creation as a rather vain-glorious person who preferred her own company to Adam's. Riggs' conclusion suggests another defense of reason, but that Eve's reason was overwhelmed by Satan's cleverness; that Eve's ability to distinguish between Eve's self and dream self was ultimately lost because of Satan's abuse of language.

[13] Josephine A. Roberts, Diane McColley, and Kristin Pruitt McColgan are among those who have taken this position. Josephine A. Roberts and Diane McColley argue similarly that Eve's satanic dream reveals her continued innocence. McColley even suggests that Eve's dream was a "new opportunity for obedience" which could have strengthened her resolve in the real temptation (26). Neither McColley nor Roberts sees Eve's dream as a way for Milton to comment on Eve's, or woman's, inherent weakness, and I am in agreement with them that Milton does not use Eve's dream as a means to suggest some inherent frailty in Eve or women in general.

McColgan also believes that Eve is still sinless at the point of her dream, and her argument seems to be the ultimate position Augustine would maintain, even if he was not entirely committed to a clear

But as I have already indicated, Milton had greater issues in sight than mere foreshadowing of the fall or even questions of Eve's potential strength. He was interested in core theological issues that had ultimate, even doctrinal significance for the Christian of the seventeenth century. Again, I see Milton arguing against the Calvinist suspicion of human reason as an entirely defective faculty as a result of the fall. Therewith, Milton is arguing against the consequent extreme predestination position of the Calvinist, for whom there could be no significant spiritual warfare, none at least that would involve the individual soul trying to employ right reason so as consciously to choose the good and eschew the bad, and to view rewards and punishments, in this life and the next, as a result of such choosing and eschewing, for each person has already been determined to be saved or damned.[14]

More analysis of the particulars of Eve's dream will serve to reveal even more implications for spiritual warfare guided by reason as Milton understands it. Eve's reasoning here is particularly interesting as she attempts to distance herself from the Eve of her dream even as she analyzes the actions of that Eve. There are certain ambiguities

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conclusion. McColgan argues that Eve was still in a state of innocence in her dream because the dream, as such, renders her free will unable to act or choose, and, absent the phenomenon of the use or abuse of free will, the event does not meet the test of being a genuine temptation. Yet even given this reading of the dream, McColgan concludes that Milton meant for the dream episode to be a foreshadowing of Eve's eventual, actual fall ("'God Is Also in Sleep': Dreams Satanic and Divine in *Paradise Lost*").

Despite what we might consider a misplaced emphasis on Milton's textual strategy, McColgan's conclusion appears to be most definitive conclusion we can draw even from Augustine's text with its different but quite similar context. Augustine claims that he walked away from the dream problem with a clear conscience. But recalling Aquinas' discussion of conscience as "cum-scientia," we can yet conclude from Augustine's claim that the dream phenomenon itself does not seem to give the mind obvious occasion to employ "scientia," to employ reasoning with respect to the will because the reason is not awake to do so. This seems to be the best we can say for Augustine, were we to force a conclusion for him.

[14] And yet, as can be seen in the many spiritual autobiographies of Calvinists in the period, spiritual warfare was considered a real and important part of one's spiritual experience, and the weapons of such warfare—such as reason—would also be of great relevance.

in Eve's telling of her dream, but the ambiguities serve to emphasize the point Milton makes about reason in different ways. Initially, it is not entirely clear whether it is Eve herself or the Eve of her dream who is chilled by "damp Horror" at the sin committed by the angel (5.65), but such horror would be proper for both. Similarly, in one sense, Milton's employment of the word "methought" suggests a failure of reason on the part of the dream Eve; if she truly thought she had no choice but to eat the fruit, then she certainly failed to use her reason as she ought. But this word could also be read as referring to Eve's own actions of her mind in retelling her dream to Adam—"I, methought, / Could not but taste" (5.85-86)—signaling her own thoughtful reflection on and reasoning analysis of the actions of the Eve in the dream. In thinking about the events of the dream, Eve's reason seems to tell her that the dream-Eve had no choice in her dream but to taste of the fruit offered by the angel but forbidden by God, which only serves to emphasize the real Eve's powers of choice and ability to reason. And despite the provocative ambiguities of these lines, this reading that privileges Eve's thoughtful response to the dream-Eve's failure of reason also serves to highlight what will be her own eventual failure of reason in the real temptation—not a foreshadowing of her fall, but an emphasis on what she was truly capable of doing but failed to do.

Although Eve does not understand *why* she had no choice in the dream, why she "could not but taste" the fruit offered to her by the angel, she concludes correctly that she really did not have any choice. That is, given the perspective provided by Milton, we know, even if Eve does not, that the Eve of the dream, like the sleeping and dreaming Eve, is controlled by Satan. In the dream phenomenon, Eve is not directed toward virtue

or sin by an active freedom of the will. In large part, it seems that what truly horrifies Eve when she awakes from the dream is not merely that the sin the dream Eve committed might be her own. What seems to horrify Eve just as much is that in the act she had lost her freedom to act as she knew she should. Thus, the realization that her freedom was not truly lost because the entire episode was but a dream simultaneously offers a great measure of relief and joy to Eve.

Here we can see key similarities between Eve's account of her satanic dream and the questions that Augustine raises about his dreams. Like Augustine, Eve also understands that there is "so great a difference" between the Eve of her dream, who willingly tastes the forbidden fruit, and her real self, who is horrified. Even if her two selves are the same, the "real" Eve would not willingly consent to such disobedience, at least not in her prelapsarian viewpoint. Eve is able to identify herself with the Eve of the dream only up to the moment when she eats the forbidden fruit, at which point the "real" Eve is properly horrified because in her dream she does not, to cite Augustine, "resist, and mindful of [her] resolution, persist in it most chastely, and yield no assent to such allurements," as resistance to evil, resolve, and persistence in chastity are positions she should have maintained even in a dream.[15] The real Eve, as it were, is not able to identify with the Eve who willingly and eagerly tastes the fruit. Yet like Augustine, she is also quite happy to "return on awaking to peace of conscience" when she realizes that

[15] Consider Kristin Pruitt McColgan's point that "both the pattern and the content of the vision demonstrate how skillfully Satan produces the *drama of the self* on the stage of Eve's imagination, writing the script, directing the action, playing the lead, even using 'more pleasing light' of evening (V, 42) to contribute to effect" (138, emphasis is mine). Though McColgan allows that Satan is able to reflect Eve back to herself in the content of her dream, she still stresses that the dream is entirely instigated by Satan and not Eve, whereas William G. Riggs suggests that Satan plays upon Eve's desire for affinity by mirroring her first experience, which he takes for a sign of her weakness.

she herself did not actually commit this grievous sin. Though she is disturbed by the dream itself, Eve's conscience is clear in reassuring her that she has no need to feel guilty for the lapse she experiences in her dream.

More important, however, is the recognition that Eve's sinful dream in no way originates from Eve's own person, which is not as clearly the case for Augustine. Augustine admits that the source of his dreams is his memory, in which "there still live images of such things as my former habits implanted there."[16] There is no doubt about the source of Eve's dream for the reader, even if Adam and Eve do not know its source. Before hearing what the dream is, the reader has already witnessed Satan, in the previous book,

> Squat like a Toad, close at the eare of *Eve*;
> Assaying by his Devilish art to reach
> The organs of her Fancie, and with them forge
> Illusions as he list, Phantasms and Dreams.
>
> (4.800-03)[17]

[16] Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.30.

[17] Jane M. Petty has argued that Eve's dream here is the result of natural stimuli, of which her sense and fancy are still aware even as she sleeps, so that Adam's actual voice is the source of the first dream. In insisting that Eve's dream has such a simple, *natural* cause, however, Petty seems to deny the possibility of any external, "unnatural" cause—that is, Satan. In such a reading, then, Petty discounts entirely the discovery of Satan "Squat like a toad" at the ear of Eve in the previous book, where the narrator plainly tells the reader that Satan is responsible for inspiring this evil dream in Eve. In contrast, John S. Diekhoff stresses the role of Satan in Eve's dream and in *Paradise Lost* at large. For Diekhoff, Satan is not simply "a metaphor for man's evil impulses. He is the source of them and a real agent in Milton's fable" (6). With this emphasis, Diekhoff argues against both Petty and Aers; that is, he stresses that her dream is consciously Satan's rather than unconsciously hers.

William Myers has suggested that here Satan attempts to "convert the 'act' of thinking into something that merely 'happens' in Eve.[18] Such a reading privileges the idea that Eve's freedom is essentially overridden by Satan's will in this dream because she is not free to act, much less to think, thus absolving her of any responsibility for this dream. The dream originates in Satan's will rather than Eve's insofar as it originates in his actions (speaking the dream into her ear and forging false illusions in her imagination), even if it "happens" in Eve's mind.

Adam reaches a similar conclusion after listening to Eve, though he, too, does not know the actual source of the dream. Adam rightly believes that the evil of the dream could not have originated in Eve, for she "can harbour none, / Created pure" (5.99-100). In terms of its theological implications, Adam's response to and interpretation of Eve's satanic dream is even more significant than Eve's narrative of her dream. Adam's response seeks to answer theological questions the dream introduces. The core theological issue in this instance comes in the remarkable line: "nor can I like / This uncouth dream, of evil sprung I fear; / Yet evil whence?" (5.97-99).[19] Adam, by reason, correctly knows this newly discovered evil could not have originated in the sinless Eve. Yet, Adam also correctly realizes it must have originated somewhere.

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[18] Myers, 36. Consider, too, Matthews' observation in *Thought's Ego* that for Plato, "a bad dream is, in a way, something that happens to me, rather than something I do; but I can bring it about that bad dreams do not happen to me—that I do not have them. Their occurrence is, therefore, indirectly, even if not directly, my fault" (92). While this may be true for fallen humans, it cannot be true for Eve, in this instance, for two reasons—because she has not yet sinned and because Satan puts the dream in her mind.

[19] Some critics, such as C. A. Patrides and David Aers, have argued that Adam's answer reveals a lack of understanding of the real significance of Eve's dream. Patrides suggests that "Adam errs in his curious conviction that Eve abhorred her dream" (106), while Aers argues that Adam does not engage in a genuine dialogue with Eve about her dream but rather proceeds in a proto-Freudian analysis informed primarily by his own fears, to the neglect of Eve's own account of her dream. It appears to me, however, that Adam's response reveals the theological and moral significance of Eve's dream, particularly when read in light of Augustine's *Confessions*.

Before finally turning to give solace to the distraught Eve, Adam ponders the question of the origin of evil from various angles. He offers explanations of, or apologies for, Eve's dream, apologies in which the central issue is the use of reason.

First, Adam tries to account for Eve's dream through his understanding of the faculties of the soul. He relates this psychology, which highlights the importance and eminence of reason, to Eve:

> But know that in the Soule
> Are many lesser Faculties that serve
> Reason as chief; among these Fansie next
> Her office holds; of all external things,
> Which the five watchful Senses represent,
> She forms Imaginations, Aerie shapes,
> Which Reason joyning or disjoyning, frames
> All what we affirm or what we deny, and call
> Our knowledge or opinion; then retires
> Into her private Cell when Nature rests.
>
> (5.100-09)

In the hierarchy of faculties, as Adam accounts for them, reason rules the soul, with fancy or imagination next in rank. Fancy works from the perceptions of the senses, but

reason still supervises the work of the fancy. It is the function of reason to tell the soul whether the work of fancy is true or false.[20]

Thus far, Adam's psychology is virtually identical to Augustine's. In Adam's words, presented to Eve, reason is the faculty by which a person "frames / All what we affirm or what deny." In Augustine's words, reason is the faculty "by which a man awake resists those suggestions" of sin. More significant is Adam's belief that reason "retires / Into her private Cell" when a person is asleep, leaving fancy free reign to form whatever imaginations she wants. In that dream state, reason is unavailable to judge that those fancies are false.

Adam's point here is quite similar to Augustine's claims about dreams in *On the Trinity*, Augustine's clearest statement on "the moral dream problem." There Augustine writes that sleep is one of several kinds of moments when "not even reason itself is permitted to discern whether the body itself is seen without, or only something of the kind thought of within," that is, whether what is perceived is real to the physical senses or only to the mind's eye. Augustine continues a few lines later, "it makes a very great difference, whether the senses of the body are lulled to torpor, as in the case of sleepers, … [so] the intention of the mind is forced by a kind of necessity upon those images, which occur to it, either from memory, or by some other hidden force through certain spiritual commixtures of a similarly spiritual substance" (11.4). From this understanding

[20] Consider the correlation here to Aristotle's understanding of the faculties of the soul and the objects of those faculties. "Thinking" is the faculty which belongs only to the rational souls, the souls of humans. The task of reason/thinking is to make judgments about essences and combine judgments and propositions into arguments. The next highest faculty is Imagination, but it belongs not only to rational souls, but also to passionate souls. It is the faculty by which people draw inferences from the world around them, and it is also the faculty by which people dream.

of the soul, Milton's invention of the voice of Satan at Eve's ear may surely be considered "some other secret force." It is such "secret force" that presented to Eve's mind images that she was unable to distinguish from reality because of the retirement of her faculty of reason during sleep.

That which returns as an overriding issue, then, is the issue of free will. And that is the case whether the issue is that of Eve's dreams in a prelapsarian state of innocence, or Augustine's dreams in a fallen state of guilt. Eve is especially perplexed when she perceives and watches those images of sin in her dream that did not allow for any use of free will. While her reason is "retire[d] / Into her private cell," her will is unable to direct her mind away from the perceived images. Therefore, she could awake relieved as she remained sinless even after dreaming of such sins, believing that, awake, her reason would again be available to guide her soul and would indeed keep her from committing such sins.

The next part of Adam's response to Eve's dream, his apology for her, considers the further implications of "sleeping Reason":

> Oft in her absence mimic Fansie wakes
> To imitate her; but misjoyning shapes,
> Wilde work produces oft, and most in dreams,
> Ill matching words and deeds long past or late.
> Some such resemblances methinks I find
> Of our last Eevnings talk, in this thy dream.
>
> (5.110-15)

Milton provides here a quick treatment on the role of mimesis among the faculties. When reason is asleep with the body, the fancy or imagination attempts to imitate the functions of reason. But as imagination is an inferior faculty, it cannot imitate reason fully or accurately, or with proper precision. The result of this exercise in inferior imitation is the "Wilde work" of the dreams of the sleeping person.[21] With regard to the wild work of his own dreams, Augustine is greatly distressed that the images of his dream have "So great a power … over my soul and my flesh that these false visions persuade me when asleep to do what true sights cannot persuade me to when awake" (*Confessions* 10.30).[22] Augustine attributes these wild and powerfully compelling images to the memories of his previously sinful life. As noted above, Augustine admits that in his memory "there still live images of such things as my former habits implanted there" (10.30).

Similarly Adam attributes at least part of Eve's dream to her memories. Of course, in a prelapsarian state, Adam and Eve could not have memories on the order of a fallen person, such as Augustine. But Adam and Eve could have the memory of the possibility of sin from the conversation they shared in the middle of Book IV concerning the tree of knowledge, the "only sign of our obedience" (4.428). In that conversation Adam advises Eve to

> not think hard
>
> One easie prohibition, who enjoy

[21] William B. Hunter notes that according to popular dream and demon lore of the seventeenth century, demons could not tempt humans through the faculty of reason but rather only through the lower faculties of fancy or imagination.

[22] Augustine, *Confessions*, 10.30.

> Free leave so large to all things else, and choice
> Unlimited of manifold delights.
>
> (4.432-35)[23]

But, as Adam does not know that Satan was the source of Eve's dream, Adam must still admit he cannot fully account for so much detail in Eve's dreams. As Eve could not have remembered anything of any real detail from the mere possibilities of sin as broached in her conversation with Adam, Adam exclaims with wonder about the "addition strange" in her dream (5.116). Yet Adam remains perplexed because he is incapable of explaining in full the details of Eve's dream. But as he cannot trace an efficient cause of those details, Adam can arrive at no other conclusion than his belief that Eve is still innocent because she herself was not actually tempted to choose wrong.

So, Adam turns to comfort Eve with the certainty of her continued innocence as he resolves his remaining concerns about Eve's free will and choice in her dream:

> yet be not sad.
> Evil into the mind of God or Man
> May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
> No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope
> That what in sleep thou didst abhorr to dream,
> Waking thou never wilt consent to do.

[23] It is also in this conversation that Eve relates to Adam her memories of her creation—her sense of "much wondring where / And what I was" (4.451-52), her initial preference for her own image in the water rather than Adam, and her willing choice to "yield" to Adam's "manly grace / And wisdom" (4.489, 490-91). Satan, of course, eavesdrops on this entire conversation between Adam and Eve, which allows Riggs to argue that Satan plays on Eve's desire for affinity, which she displays in her creation narrative, both in her dream which he inspires and in her actual temptation.

(5.116-21)

In response, then, to the question of Eve's free will, Milton's Adam makes the striking claim that evil can enter the mind of man with no consequent guilt accruing to the person, and evil can even enter into the mind of God. However, when it does so, it does not *de facto* leave a stain of sin if such evil is "unapprov'd" by the will, that is, if evil's presence there remains unsanctioned by the will.[24] Thus Adam suggests that Eve's reason was not engaged when the evil in her dream entered her mind; and, in a sense, her will was retired also. Yet, her free will, when engaged relative to the content of the dream in arising from the dream, acted properly in her rejection of the dream, which rejection, though *ex post facto*, was made evident as sincere in her manifest abhorrence of the experience of the dream. Again, her will, guided by reason, did not consent to that sin. So she remained sinless despite her dream of sin.

Like Eve, then, Adam also experiences a certain "peace of conscience" in the recognition that Eve did not, at least not with her active reason, willingly choose to eat the forbidden fruit (Augustine, *Confessions* 10.30).[25] Eve's active reason, which functions when she is awake, guides her conscience and ultimately her will to reject what she has done in her dream. It is at the moment of her waking, when she can choose with genuine freedom whether to accept or reject the actions in her dream, that her

[24] The *OED Online* records Milton's as the first use of the word "unapproved" as meaning "not approved or sanctioned." <www.oed.com>.

[25] McColley suggests that Eve's dream is significant not as a temptation but as one of several "preparatory tests of virtue that exercise the faculties of will, understanding, and imagination" (26). She goes on to suggest that "for Milton, the keenness, the creativity, the liberty, and therefore the vulnerability of the subordinate faculties and the calling to keep them free by the exercise of right reason and upright will are among the risky opportunities for independent virtue that fill life in Paradise with challenge and delight" (27).

reason and will come fully into play once again. Although her reason was asleep while she dreamt, once she is awake, her power of reason, and specifically *right reason*, immediately informs her free will to reject that which she dreamed as false, which she does.[26]

Adam's peace of mind about Eve's dream—and her right response to it—seems almost complete, as Adam is satisfied that Eve could not and did not sin by way of her dream because her reason and will, retired during her sleep, did not have the opportunity to consider the images involved in the dream or to respond accordingly. Because the content of dreams is not chosen and is therefore not a product of the will, Adam can claim that evil can enter the mind of man or even God without causing any residue sin because of a lack of consent, and that seems to be the case with Eve. Therefore she remains sinless despite her dream of sin.[27]

Such a claim as Adam makes must be qualified, however, at least insofar as Eve is concerned, if not for God. Here, that is, we must be conscious of distinguishing between subjects in a prelapsarian or postlapsarian state. Although prelapsarian Eve could remain sinless in her dream due to the retirement of her reason and will, the problem is

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[26] Such a reading, of course, anticipates Adam's admonition to Eve in the moments before the fall (addressed to some extent in the previous chapter) when he reminds Eve that reason should be "well beware, and still erect, / Least by some faire appeering good surpris'd / She dictate false, and misinforme the Will / To do what God expressly hath forbid" (9.353-56).

[27] Myers has interpreted the entirety of Adam's response to Eve's dream in such a way as to make Adam imply that reason's retirement during sleep suggests a concomitant retirement of the will, where no genuine, consequential choice is possible. Reason's retirement, and the concomitant retirement of the will, "leaves the lesser faculty of Fancy, which is *incapable of choice*, to imitate reason by framing affirmations and denials" (36, emphasis is mine). Myers' argument that Fancy is "incapable of choice" implies that when Fancy is in complete control when a person is asleep, free will is thus rendered ineffectual and incapable of action. Myers further adds that "it is only because the rational will can thus be detached from evils perceived by the other faculties that it can remain uncontaminated by what it knows as a consequence" (36).

more complicated for postlapsarian persons. Unlike Eve, and especially unlike God, fallen humans have already been marked by the "spot or blame" of evil—that is, by original sin. Here again Milton's poetry was attempting to perfect Christian doctrine. But the point to emphasize here is that in the prelapsarian state, evil had not yet taken possession of Adam and Eve. It only becomes the case for them and their posterity, after their obedience and fall. "Original sin" is not original to them in their creation. They are not created with an inherently evil desire. Neither do they live according to a law of sin until after the fall, only after which point does evil desire become inherent. Eve alone can remain sinless and innocent after a satanic dream of sins committed, whereas fallen humans, such as Augustine, because of that taint of original sin, must bear some weight of responsibility for their dreams.

"What Weaknesse offerd, Strength might have refusde": An Apology for Eve's Fall

Between Eve's dream and the dreams of Augustine—and the different implications of responsibility in their respective dreams—lie the important events of the temptation and fall that change fundamentally the dynamics of the moral dream problem and, more generally, set the very parameters of spiritual warfare. These are the events that actually bring about the defect of reason in postlapsarian humanity. Among many treatments of the fall in theological and literary texts, Aemilia Lanyer's account in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* and Milton's accounts in *Paradise Lost* share a remarkable emphasis on the role that reason plays in the first consequential encounter in the spiritual war with Satan, the dynamics of the dream of Milton's Eve notwithstanding. Though

contextualizing their accounts of the fall in different ways, both Milton and Lanyer point to a failure of reason to prevent the events of the fall, as well as the effects of the fall on the faculty of human reason and the development of human relationships.

Though it is difficult to identify Lanyer's religious beliefs with any certainty—scholars place her anywhere from Puritan to Lutheran—I would suggest at the very least that there is a certain radical quality in her theology as she undertakes in this poem her own Biblical exegesis, and she reads and interprets the Biblical story of the fall in such a way as to urge equality between men and women, especially in the realm of religious experience.[28] Lanyer's exegesis of the fall is, significantly, given within the context of her exegesis on the Crucifixion. As such, Lanyer's poem is not intended to be a poetic representation of the events in the Garden, but through both of these accounts and interpretations, Lanyer emphasizes and privileges the spiritual experiences and virtues of women, especially those who witness the Crucifixion, but also of women more generally.

Key among the women in Lanyer's poem is the wife of Pontius Pilate. It is Pilate's wife who recounts and comments upon the fall of Adam and Eve as she speaks to her husband about his role in the events leading up to the Crucifixion. Lanyer herself

[28] Wendy Miller Roberts identifies Lanyer as a Gnostic, while Gary Kuchar aligns her with Lutheranism and even certain aspects of Catholicism (particularly her representation of Mary in the poem). Kari Boyd McBride and John C. Ulreich write of the shared religious positions of Milton and Lanyer: "Like most of their English Protestant contemporaries, Aemilia Lanyer and John Milton share a commitment to the Bible as the ultimate ground of aesthetic—as well as spiritual and political—authority. What distinguishes them from many other Protestants is the way they lay claim to that heritage. Both writers are crucially engaged in establishing their own authority: that is, they submit themselves, not to the letter of Scripture, but to the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, often with interpretive results that do not obviously conform to the standard features of Protestant poetic" (332). I would add their shared emphasis on reason in spiritual warfare also distinguishes them from the general tendency of Protestant poetics.

identifies this brief section of her poem as "Eve's Apology."[29] Pilate's wife narrates and interprets the events of the fall as she seeks to persuade Pilate to release Jesus so as to prevent the crucifixion, in effect aligning Eve's actions in the fall with the virtuous women witnessing the Crucifixion, and Adam's actions in the fall with the sinful and malicious men who seek to crucify the Son of God.

"Eve's Apology" seeks in particular to excuse Eve's actions in the fall while placing more blame on Adam's weakness. While Lanyer clearly identifies a role that reason plays in the temptation and fall, she seems to emphasize that role to a much greater extent in the temptation of Adam in order to suggest that Eve's sin is less serious than Adam's because Eve did not possess the same faculty of reason, or at least the same quality of reason, from the moment of her creation as Adam did. Lanyer aims in this way to counter traditional theological interpretations of the fall that mainly condemned Eve for both her fall and the fall of Adam, seeking instead to exonerate Eve on two fronts. First, Lanyer compares Adam's and Eve's respective actions that led to their respective falls. And second, relative to the Crucifixion, Lanyer offers a poetic rendering of the virtuous actions of Eve's female progeny as witnesses of the crucifixion in comparison with the ignoble actions of the men involved in the Crucifixion.

Lanyer's judgment is that the sins of the men involved in the Crucifixion are an indication of how far worse Adam's actions in the fall were than Eve's. Lanyer does not proceed to claim complete superiority of women over men in light of Adam's primary culpability in the fall, even though it is implied that she could. But Pilate's wife claims a

[29] "Eve's Apology" occupies only about sixty-five lines of the 1,840-line poem.

certain moral superiority for Eve over Adam, an exact inverse of the kind of moral superiority men have traditionally claimed over women following most traditional accounts of the fall.

Yet Pilate's wife begins her apology for Eve's sin by assuming a traditional posture of submissiveness to her husband and to men in general: "Let not us women glory in Mens fall, / Who had power given to over-rule us all" (759-60). She then proceeds, however, to qualify this submission. She argues that the greatness of the sin that men are about to commit in the Crucifixion will render void the subjection that has been forced upon women because of Eve's role in the fall: "till now your indiscretion sets us free, / And makes our former fault much lesse appeare" (761-62). Again Lanyer refrains from claiming that women should have total power over men. But she offers a peculiar argument for women's equality with men at least, with a more than generous compromise. Even assuming that Eve was the primary culprit in the fall, an assumption Lanyer does not maintain, the apparent fact that men were the primary culprits in the Crucifixion of Christ cancels out the alleged primary culpability of Eve. Men and women should now be equals, Lanyer argues, with the lingering implication that women are yet morally superior.[30] Moreover, while Lanyer's operating premise might seem to demand a harsh castigation of both Adam and the men primarily culpable in the Crucifixion, her repudiation of both is relatively gentle. While Lanyer could have been sharper in her criticisms, she does not aspire to a full-scale feminist attack. For the most part, Lanyer seems content to make at least two points: one, a counter to the operating

[30] This is in direct opposition to the long held tradition of seeing women as inherently fallen and the source of human sin.

premises of most accounts of the fall that make Eve the primary culprit; and two, the suggestion that woman are at least *morally*, if not intellectually, superior to men.

Lanyer's proto-feminist moral theology seems to be, of course, historically conditioned. Like Pilate's wife's initial position of submissiveness, Lanyer's treatment of the female intellect in the defense of Eve's actions seems to be derived almost entirely from her culture's traditional treatment of women. It seems too much grounded upon commonplace ideas about women within the misogynistic culture of the seventeenth century. That is, while Lanyer views women as morally superior to men, she also diverts attention from any prolonged consideration of the female intellect. She seems to concede that women do not possess the same degree of intellect as men, so her emphasis on the role of reason in the fall seems pertinent primarily in regard only to Adam. Laying the greater blame for the fall upon Adam, Lanyer does so at the expense of an account of Eve's, and by extension all women's, intelligence and capacity to reason in order to emphasize instead women's moral virtue.

Regarding the fall, then, Lanyer stresses the privileged place of Adam in the created world—that "he was Lord and King of all the earth, / Before poore Eve had either life or breath" (783-84). Adam received the dictate not to eat the fruit straight from the mouth of God. Eve therefore was at a disadvantage, for she only heard the law secondarily, from Adam. Most importantly, then, Lanyer stresses the strength of mind Adam possessed which should have prevented his fall.

In contrast to Adam's presumed strength, "Eve's Apology" is grounded in the notion that Eve fell because she was "simply good, and had no powre to see" what the

effects of eating the fruit would be (765). Eve's sin is committed out of an "undiscerning Ignorance [which] perceav'd / No guile, or craft that was by [Satan] intended" (769-70). The implication is that Eve sins because she does not possess the capacity for reason that would enable her to recognize Satan's deceptions as such. Lanyer suggests that if Eve had been gifted with more of the original intellect, as it were, that Adam possessed, she might have been better able to reject the serpent's arguments.[31]

Indeed, according to Lanyer, what Eve seeks in her sin is knowledge that is greater than that with which she was created. For Lanyer, Eve justifiably believes what the serpent tells her—that they will "even as Gods, be wise" (776). Thus, Lanyer tells the reader that "if Eve did erre, it was for knowledge sake" (797). That "if" is quite suggestive in its implication that Eve's sin was really no sin at all, or that if her actions were yet sinful, her motive for that sin—to gain knowledge—was pure.[32]

Eve loses her spiritual battle, but Lanyer does not blame Eve for her loss. Lanyer places the blame entirely upon Adam, for she deems it was Adam's responsibility and duty to keep both himself and his wife from sin. Whereas Eve possessed a rather limited

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[31] In this way, Lanyer's Eve seems particularly marked as inherently fallen, as she does not seem to have been created "sufficient to stand." Despite the arguments that Milton's Eve must sin out of necessity because of her inherent weaknesses, I think this is much more the case for Lanyer's Eve. Milton makes it clear that Eve's intellect is not one of her weaknesses; she possesses a full measure of reason with which to guide her will away from sin, whereas Lanyer's Eve does not. This is one way in which Milton might be viewed as other than simply a misogynist.

[32] Though I disagree with Wendy Miller Roberts's argument that "Eve's Apology" reveals Lanyer's Christian Gnosticism, I do agree with her statement that "in one stroke, Lanyer reverses the expected critique of women's superficiality and instead credits women with a preoccupation exclusively associated with men: knowledge" (16), which brings us again to questions of what she knows and how she is supposed to use that knowledge. My problem with Roberts's argument lies in her insistence that Lanyer represents the knowledge that Eve seeks both for herself and for Adam as "inherently good and valuable" (17), but such a reading seems to superimpose what Eve expected of the knowledge onto Lanyer's own conceptions of that knowledge. Eve's expectation that the fruit would make Adam's knowledge clearer is not necessarily what the fruit would actually do, but Roberts implies that the two are the same.

intellect, Adam possessed the wisdom necessary to withstand the temptation, as his strong wisdom was provided by God Himself quite immediately: "What Weaknesse offerd, Strength might have refusde" (779). Adam's sin is greater because he has virtually no need to sin, while Eve's sin is at least minimally justified in her legitimate desire for a seemingly licit knowledge. But if Lanyer's Eve is marked as particularly weak and ignorant, the point is that even if Eve sinned out of an inherent weakness, then Adam's inherent strength should have enabled him to withstand her temptation. And, again, it was also Adam's responsibility, with that superior intellect, to keep Eve from her sin; if Eve did not already possess the means to withstand temptation, then Adam was that much more responsible for both his and Eve's sin.

Lanyer goes even one step further to suggest a certain degenerate determination on Adam's part to eat the fruit. She asks, "If he would eate it, who had powre to stay him?" so that Eve's temptation of Adam seems secondary to his own desire to eat the fruit (800). She stresses that in his desire to eat the fruit, Adam "never sought her weaknesse to reprove, / With those sharpe words, which he of God did heare" (805-6). Instead, Lanyer suggests that Adam, and men more generally, boast of the knowledge that they gained "From Eves fair hand, as from a learned Booke" (808), such that the focus is drawn not to what Eve has done but to the benefit that men have drawn from Eve's actions: a claim of justifiable dominion over women because of the intellectual weakness of Eve. The perverse irony, according to Lanyer, is that men condemn women for not being as intelligent as men, yet the justification for the maintenance of that claim of intellectual superiority was made manifest by an action that revealed male inferiority

in the exercise of morals. Though Lanyer presents a less than flattering conception of Eve's intelligence in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum*, she exonerates Eve by placing greater blame on Adam's fall than on Eve's, even if Eve's fall seems as grave, or more so, as her fall renders her subject to Adam's rule.

Most compelling in Lanyer's account, however, is her suggestion of the extended consequences (in a postlapsarian state) for broader human relations. That is, such consequences are implied in her treatment of the first spiritual battle between Adam and Eve and Satan within the context of other, later spiritual conflicts, especially that of the Crucifixion. This larger context of "Eve's Apology" is suggestive of the ways in which this first spiritual conflict gives rise to all later occasions of such battles and temptations. On a smaller scale, there is the battle which Pilate's wife is waging over the state of her husband's soul. Pilate's wife is trying to prevent Pilate from committing a horrible sin by allowing the son of God to be crucified. Yet therewith there is also an even greater battle being waged, one that has far-reaching implications for the people of God. The entire story of the Crucifixion is a continuation and fulfillment of the first battle between God and Satan. The redemption and possible salvation of the entire world is at stake, as the Crucifixion of Christ is revealed as necessary to remove the effects of the loss endured in the first spiritual war in the Garden.

Ingeniously, Lanyer clarifies many complications involved in this universal spiritual warfare operating in the particular circumstance of Pilate's involvement in the Crucifixion by once again changing tradition. As Lanyer challenges the traditional

reading of the fall that made Eve the primary culprit, Lanyer also refigures the role of Pilate's wife in the events leading up to the Crucifixion.

Traditional treatments of the role of Pilate's wife have suggested that the dream of Pilate's wife is demonically-inspired. Satan would be the source of the woman's dream that would recommend the halting of the Crucifixion. Satan would want the Crucifixion halted because he realizes that Jesus is his promised foe and vanquisher, albeit a peculiar, dialectical vanquisher. Jesus's death is the only event that would destroy Satan's power in the world. According to this tradition, Satan therefore delivers a dream to Pilate's wife. The satanic function of the dream would be to move Pilate's wife to dissuade Pilate from playing his part in the Crucifixion. The satanic aim would therefore have all kinds of deleterious consequences: Christ would not be destroyed, and therefore Satan would not be vanquished; and the circumstance would harden Pilate's heart against both his wife and Jesus. Pilate would resent his wife for interfering in his business; and Pilate would resent Jesus for causing a stir Pilate might be ineffective in solving.[33]

In stark contrast to that traditional understanding of the role of the dream of Pilate's wife, Lanyer portrays the dream of Pilate's wife as divinely-inspired. It is a dream delivered to her not out of hell but out of heaven. Lanyer does not suggest that Pilate's wife's dream would be efficacious in preventing the Crucifixion. Rather, Lanyer suggests that in a sense Pilate's wife is in a position of ignorance somewhat as

[33] The *N------Town Plays*, *Ordinalia*, and the York mystery plays from the previous century all represent Pilate's wife's dream in this way. See Josephine Roberts. Satanic dreams as a particular form of spiritual warfare have already been addressed in terms of Eve's dream in *Paradise Lost* and will be further analyzed in terms of Richard Norwood's *Confessions* and Jesus's dreams in *Paradise Regained*.

Eve was in a position of ignorance. Pilate's wife was not privy to that which only Jesus's disciples could know: that the Crucifixion was necessary for the redemption and salvation of humankind. As in the case of Eve, Pilate's wife was in a state of intellectual inferiority and was yet morally superior in her earnest attempt to prevent the Crucifixion.

Moreover, the dream of Pilate's wife suggests that she was inherently virtuous. Not only was she worthy to receive a divine message, but her report of the dream reveals the proper care she has for her husband. She rightly fears that Pilate's cooperation in the Crucifixion would surely damn his soul. The virtue of Pilate's wife then extends to privilege the position of the women who witness the Crucifixion. Pilate's wife lays the blame for Jesus's death firmly on the men involved and portrays the women who witness the Crucifixion as more fully aware, if only by superior moral intuition, of who is really being put to death.

When Pilate refuses to heed his wife's dream and advice, Lanyer points out that he has failed to reason properly and understand what is at stake. It is clear that Pilate is "content against all truth and right, / To seale this act, that may procure [his] ease / With blood, and wrong, with tryannie, and might" (842-44). Pilate exhibits no care for what is true and right, as long as he does not have to face difficulties from the people over whom he rules. Similarly, Lanyer argues that his refusal to listen to his wife reveals his "base dejection of this heavenly Light," such that his will is directed by selfish desires rather than what is true and right as revealed by God (846).

With regards to Pilate's part in the Crucifixion, Lanyer laments at what cost his choice has been made:

Oh that thou couldst unto such grace aspire,
That thy polluted lips might never kill
That Honour, which right Judgement ever graceth,
To purchase shame, which all true worth defaceth.

(853-56)

Pilate's sins have driven him into even greater sin in his refusal to use his right judgment to speak out against what the multitude wishes to do to Jesus. Though listening to his wife might have allowed him to aspire to the same grace which she has been given in her understanding of the events taking place, Pilate instead has defaced his own worth with the shameful choice he has made.

Lanyer is harsh in her final judgment of Pilate, insisting that he is but a "painted wall" that appears good and virtuous but hides the sin and filth behind it. Moreover, Lanyer insists that no matter what lies Pilate tells to himself to relieve him from his sense of guilt in sending Christ to be crucified, he will be held accountable for what he has done:

Canst thou be innocent, that gainst all right,
Wilt yield to what thy conscience doth withstand?
Being a man of knowledge, powre, and might,
To let the wicked carrie such a hand,
Before thy face to blindfold Heav'ns bright light,
And thou to yield to what they did demand?

> Washing thy hands, thy conscience cannot cleare,
>
> But to all worlds this staine must needs appeare.
>
> (929-36)

Like Adam, then, Pilate possesses all the knowledge and power needed to choose rightly, and like Adam before him, Pilate willingly ignores the light of truth, ignores what his conscience tells him he should do at the crucial moment.

In drawing such parallels between Adam's sin and Pilate's, and emphasizing the virtue and wisdom of Pilate's wife which stands in contrast to Eve's supposed lack of reason, Lanyer is suggestive of the extent of the consequences for failing to use reason when one is capable of doing so. And by placing the account of Adam and Eve within this larger context of the Crucifixion, Lanyer implies that the women have learned from Eve's mistake and have internalized the need to use reason properly, while the men have failed to learn anything from Adam's mistake in his misuse of reason, as they continue to disregard what reason tells them.

"Perswasive words, impregn'd / With Reason": The Temptation and the Fall in Paradise Lost

While Lanyer places her treatment of the fall within the context of the Crucifixion, In *Paradise Lost*, Milton contextualizes his account of the temptation and fall with an extensive dialogue which he imagines leads to the separation of Adam and Eve. That separation is the condition that enables Satan to tempt Eve when Eve is entirely alone, so it is worthwhile to consider Eve's state of mind as Milton represents it

when she leaves Adam and her reasons for doing so. Eve is the one who wishes to work alone, separate from Adam, but her desire is itself not unreasonable. She desires to work alone in the garden so that she might work more productively, apart from the distractions of conversation and other forms of company supplied by Adam.

In his first response to her suggestion, Adam gives her a "mild answer," though he does not like Eve's suggestion, because he enjoys working with Eve by his side (9.226). Yet, he admits that Eve's request is not unreasonable, and indeed he praises Eve for her suggestion and desire to be alone in some measure—how better to fulfill the tasks assigned to them by their Creator? Adam even mentions reason in his mild compromise. He realizes that Eve is concerned about the shared smiles and sweet discourses that often interrupt their work, but he argues that such "smiles from Reason flow" and that God created them "not to irksom toile, but to delight / … and delight to Reason joyn'd" (9.239, 242-43).

Milton makes two points about reason here. First, reason is the faculty that separates human from beast: reason is "To brute deni'd" (9.240). Second, rather remarkably, the function of reason in the prelapsarian state is linked intimately with the experiences of pleasure and delight. It is through their use of reason that Adam and Eve most fully relate to one another. They take greatest delight in one another's company in a way that is not merely bestial: they enjoy each other's company, sharing smiles and conversation, which Adam calls the "Food of the mind" (9.238).

If Adam and Eve's innocent smiles and conversations are a sort of food that sustains their minds, then to some degree Eve's decision to work alone is a decision that

will remove her from the source of her mental sustenance. To be absent from the company of the other will therefore effect to some degree a weakening of both their minds. If Eve had remained with Adam to smile and converse as they worked together as usual, the implication is that Eve's reason and will would remain strong. Yet, separated, Eve would be more easily deceived by Satan's lies about the tree of knowledge of good and evil.[34]

Adam, notwithstanding his pure and simple desire to be in Eve's company, is also concerned about Eve's request to be alone. Adam recalls the warning about an enemy who might lead them to pursue lesser goods, and he realizes their separation might provide an opportunity for the tempter to tempt one or the other alone. Adam, knowing that their reason is heightened when he and Eve are together, also knows therefore that the enemy would have a more difficult time tempting the two together.

Adam, despite acknowledging the reasonable nature of Eve's request to be alone, therefore tries to justify their need to stay together. Adam reminds Eve of how subtle the enemy must be since he was able to seduce angels to his side. Having the help of one another seems necessary in light of the power of the enemy. And Adam proceeds to tell

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[34] This is a rather hypothetical scenario, if also an interesting one for consideration. Yet one should also consider whether shared smiles and conversations would likewise be "food for the mind" after the fall, or whether, like so much else, these are also tainted by the effects of the fall. It is my inclination to read these lines as pertaining especially to the conversations between Adam and Eve in their innocent state; after the fall, their smiles and conversations are too much tainted by the sins which they have committed to be an entirely wholesome food for their minds and reason.

In a variation on this idea, A. Kent Hieatt argues for an allegorical interpretation of the fall in which Adam and Eve are related as different levels of reason: "Woman is intellectually the equal of man in comprehending the truths of Christianity—but for symbolic reasons the role of the lower reason, or *scientia*, may be assigned to Eve, and that of the higher reason, or *sapientia*, to Adam" (221). When they are separated, the consequences are dire: "At the Fall, the Serpent seduced Eve into such a faith in *visibilia*; and she then, by unspecified arguments (*per discursum argumentationum in sensibilibus*), in turn seduced faith—the fountain of reason, who should have managed her—into putting his trust in concrete things and into withdrawing his trust from *invisibilia*, or transcendent, properly governing truth" (223).

Eve precisely how she could be of help to him should they be faced with the enemy's temptation together:

> I from the influence of thy looks receave
> Access in every Vertue, in thy sight
> More wise, more watchful, stronger, if need were
> Of outward strength; while shame, thou looking on,
> Shame to be overcome or over-reacht
> Would utmost vigor raise, and rais'd unite.
>
> (9.309-14)

Adam's explanation echoes and reinforces what he said to Eve in the first part of their conversation. Eve's presence and the virtue she both possesses and represents are a type of food for Adam's mind and reason. He argues that he becomes more virtuous and even wiser by looking at her and being reminded of her virtue. Adam also suggests that his mind and reason become firmer and more watchful on the assumption of Eve's presence for another reason. If Adam were engaged in spiritual battle with her watching, he would fear failing because of the great shame he would feel through Eve's observation of his failure. Conversely, however, the implication is that their minds would grow necessarily weaker if they were away from each other's company. Likewise, without the watchful gaze of the other, Adam implies the shame would not be immediately felt for what might be done.

Adam has the highest regard for Eve and ties his very existence to her virtue and presence. It is understandable that he wishes to hear that she has the same regard for

him. He asks if his presence should not have the same effect on her the way hers has on him: "Why shouldst not thou like sense within thee feel / When I am present, and thy trial choose / With me, best witness of thy Vertue tri'd" (9.315-17). Yet, despite such exclamations of love, and despite such reassurances and arguments, Eve believes there is some doubt on Adam's part about her capacity to stand alone. So, again, though still with "accent sweet" (9.321), Eve attempts to persuade Adam to let her work alone.

Though Eve essentially reiterates what Milton writes elsewhere about the importance of a tested virtue—"what is Faith, Love, Vertue unassaid / Alone, without exterior help sustaind?" (9.335-36)—she follows that rhetorical question with the problematic claim that she and Adam are in no real jeopardy because God would not have made them in such a way that they would be unable to withstand spiritual tests either together or alone. Eve seems convinced that neither she nor Adam is in any real danger despite evidence to the contrary, especially in the chilling effect of the temptation dream. Eve also seems forgetful of the freedom God gave them, a freedom that allows for eventual failure should they fail to maintain a discipline of reason.

Since Eve seems to have forgotten that God did not create her and Adam invulnerable to temptation, Adam reminds her of the danger of their state of being allowed to choose either good or evil:

> O Woman, best are all things as the will
> Of God ordain'd them, his creating hand
> Nothing imperfet or deficient left
> Of all that he Created, much less Man,

> Or aught that might his happie State secure,
> Secure from outward force; within himself
> The danger lies, yet lies within his power:
> Against his will he can receave no harme.
>
> (9.343-50)

Adam reiterates the same summary claim God made to the Son in Book 3, that Adam and Eve were created "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (3.99).

Adam's response is a reminder of his and Eve's capacity to fall despite his knowledge that God had otherwise created them in a state of perfection. Adam echoes Aquinas: Adam and Eve were created in a state of perfection; but not a state of perfection on a par with God's perfection, as Adam and Eve were potentially corruptible.[35] But in their created state, Adam and Eve possessed a perfection God had ordained for them. God has not left Adam and Eve lacking in anything that they could possibly need to remain in this state of perfection—namely the free will to choose and right reason to guide the will's choice.

Adam then has to educate Eve as to the subtle danger to which they are subject. Despite their state of essential perfection, the source of the danger to which they are subject does not come solely from external sources or forces. Rather, the basic and possibly lasting danger lies within the will itself, even as the power to resist that danger also lies within one's free will. No matter what the enemy is able to do, he could never

[35] Aquinas writes of the "rectitude of the primitive state, wherewith man was endowed by God," which consisted in "his reason being subject to God, the lower powers to reason, and the body to the soul: and the first subjection was the cause of both the second and the third; since while reason was subject to God, the lower powers remained subject to reason" (*ST* 1.95.1).

force Adam and Eve to sin if their wills did not consent to sin. And even though God has already announced to the Son that Adam and Eve will fall because they are deceived by Satan, such deception does not preempt their accountability and responsibility for the sins they commit via that deception.

Once again, reason is central to the issue of the fall. Satan's deception works because of the failure of reason to be vigilant:

> But God left free the Will, for what obeyes
> Reason, is free, and Reason he made right,
> But bid her well beware, and still erect,
> Least by some faire appeering good surpris'd
> She dictate false, and misinforme the Will
> To do what God expresly hath forbid.
>
> (9.351-56)

It is ultimately a failure of reason on Adam's and Eve's parts that allows their wills to direct them away from God, the highest good.[36] Satan's arguments appear or sound good, as if they are reasonable, so when Eve fails to discern the falsity of those arguments, when her reason accepts Satan's arguments as valid, then the will is directed to disobey God's commandment.

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[36] William Walker suggests that there is "something new and perhaps paradoxical in this account of the freedom to act, for now the unfallen will is not free *tout court* but is free only on the condition that it continually submits itself to the dictates—a word not usually associated with freedom—of reason and not to those other things within it that are identified earlier by Raphael: passion and appetite" (149). Walker offers two possibilities regarding the relationship between freedom and obedience, arguing that the freedom of the will depends upon the faculty of reason, but he ignores the possibility that the will is still free even if it does not obey reason, even if it uses that freedom to sin in choosing, freely, lesser goods rather than higher ones. Regardless, however, Walker likewise sees the fall as "not essentially a failure of the will but a failure of that faculty upon which the freedom of the will depends" (155).

Despite his misgivings, Adam gives Eve reluctant permission to do as she desires, and he does so in a way imitative of God giving humans the freedom to choose. That is, Adam relents with the same allowance of her free will that God grants to humankind, "for thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (9.372). Adam realizes that forcing Eve to work with him, rather than alone, would be an instance of impeding her free will.[37]

Despite these sound warnings and advice from Adam, and given the choice to leave or stay, Eve remains determined to work alone. Though Eve still seems motivated to work alone so as to be more productive, her final statement to Adam also expresses a foolish hope to be tempted by their enemy in order to prove to Adam she can engage in spiritual warfare successfully on her own:

> With thy permission then, and thus forewarnd
> Chiefly by what thy own last reasoning words
> Touchd onely, that our trial, when least sought,
> May finde us both perhaps farr less prepar'd,
> The willinger I goe, nor much expect
> A Foe so proud will first the weaker seek,
> So bent, the more shall shame him his repulse.
>
> (9.378-84)

[37] Adam's relationship with Eve here mirrors God's relationship to humans insofar as Eve is given the freedom to choose whether to stay obedient to God's commandment(s). If Adam were to force her to stay, her obedience would not really be freely given. However, what he hopes will happen when he gives Eve this freedom—that she will decide to stay with him—is not what she chooses to do.

Though she does not expect to encounter their enemy, Eve seems almost willing and eager to meet him now, for she feels she is prepared for such a battle. It might seem that the foolishness of Eve's rebuke of Adam's wish to have her remain in his presence is a suggestion that Eve has already fallen, as might the foolishness of her hopes. But Milton goes to considerable lengths to argue that Eve is not fallen for that reason.[38] She is not fallen until she makes the choice to taste and eat the forbidden fruit. That choice is her first sin. Only the choice to disobey God's sole commandment can introduce sin into the created world.[39]

Yet, the primary issue remains the issue of reason. The key to understanding Eve's moves that place her in a vulnerable position is her rejection of reason. Her first major misstep of reason that leads to the condition for her temptation is her rejection of Adam's "reasoning words" to stay with him (9.379). While she accepts that Adam has given her "reasoning words" to persuade her to stay with him—as with Eve, Adam is not

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[38] Building upon the scholarship which argues for a positive representation of Eve, Jeanie Grant Moore offers additional proof that Eve is inherently good by comparing her to the Lady in *Comus*: "supporting Milton's unfallen Eve as innately good is her likeness to one proven good, the Lady of *Comus*. Verbal parallels, similar deceptions and arguments can be seen in the temptation scenes of the two women, and, although the nature of the temptations and the outcomes are very different, they can clearly be shown to begin from a similar point of innocence" (6).

[39] Though this raises interesting questions about what being foolish or mistaken in her reason, or even naively wrong, means in a prelapsarian situation, the crucial difference lies in what constitutes sin before and after the fall. Adam and Eve's perfection depends upon their obedience to God; as long as they remain obedient, they remain in that perfect state in terms of their relationship with God. It is only when they are disobedient that such foolishness can become sinful, and only when their reason fails to direct their wills towards obedience, that they are actually fallen. Al Cacicedo suggests that readers often make the mistake of "put[ting] Eve's prelapsarian behavior in a syllogistic relationship to postlapsarian truths. … The narrative voice in the poem invites such deductions. Every time we are told that Eve is still innocent or not yet fallen, we are invited to contemplate the opposite of what were are [sic] told, particularly because the narrative voice is so slippery in its perspective that we cannot rely on it" (20-21). Kristin Pruitt McColgan emphasizes that "there is nothing inherently wrong in the action of separating, but that the means by which Eve defends this choice and by which Adam agrees to it will be, in the face of temptation, inadequate. Reason should lead *to* faith rather than *away* from it" ("Reason, Faith, and 'The Soul of All the Rest,'" 198).

being unreasonable in his desires—Eve is yet more affected by her sense that he doubts the strength of her virtue if she decides to work alone where she might be tempted. It is an initial failure of reason to direct her will rightly that will ultimately make her more vulnerable to Satan's deceptions when he tempts her in the form of the serpent, though she yet remains capable of overcoming his deception and temptation and remain in her unfallen state even when she leaves Adam's side.[40]

Given Milton's emphasis on the role of reason in spiritual warfare, it is not surprising that a major element in Satan's subtlety—what makes him so powerfully deceptive and seductive—is his ability to use, or abuse, reason to tempt those unaware. Milton's Satan is not at all unreasonable, as Satan's arguments give at least the appearance of sound reason. The difficulty for Adam and Eve therefore is that they must recognize and reject the faulty premises with which Satan begins his arguments.

Eve is mostly impervious to the antics of Satan in serpent form when he is only moving around her, trying to get her attention. It is when he begins to speak to her that Eve is truly amazed. That is, Eve is not all that surprised by the serpent's movements even when they are suggestive of a certain amount of reason, for Eve had often thought the looks and actions of animals indicated "Much reason" (9.558). But Eve is clearly impressed, and considers it miraculous, that the serpent should have the "Language of

[40] I read this scene, and this particular decision of Eve's, in the same way in which I view Adam's susceptibility to Eve's beauty. Adam has already been shown to be somewhat too taken by Eve's beauty and person. Adam was taken by Eve to such an extent that Raphael felt it necessary to warn Adam in previous books not to be overly swayed by Eve's charms. That warning anticipates the reasons Adam will give for taking the fruit which Eve offers him after her own fall. Such a weakness on his part neither says that he has to succumb to that weakness, nor suggests that such a weakness makes him inherently unable to withstand temptation. Rather, Adam and Eve are both confronted with a failure of reason that makes them susceptible to temptation but not unable to remain in their state of innocence.

Man pronounc't / … and human sense exprest" (9.553-54). She had never yet heard such language from the animals. The serpent's ability to speak is so unexpected and beguiling that Eve demands that he tell her how he came to have this ability, an ability denied to all other animals. Eve realizes something is not quite right in the serpent's ability to speak the language of humans. Other animals indicate "Much reason" rather accidentally, but the serpent expresses reason directly and immediately.

But Eve's own reason fails in this immediate, if bizarre, encounter with reason. Eve fails to question the true identity of the serpent, even though she has been warned that their enemy will use fraud and deception to bring about their fall.[41] Eve only questions how the serpent came to be able to speak, while she otherwise superficially accepts his appearance as his real identity. This is another misstep of Eve's reason on the way to the fall.

Moreover, the serpent deceives Eve to her face. He offers a fraudulent account of his ascension from brute to reasoning creature, and during that fraudulent account, Satan flatters Eve from time to time to distract her attention from the details of that fraudulent account. The temptation of Eve includes a combination of flattery and reason, as the serpent convinces Eve that should she heed his words, her own mental abilities, already very impressive, will be increased that much more, very much as the serpent's own mental abilities had been so increased that he was transformed from a mere brute into a reasoning, speaking being. Indeed, the serpent suggests that the transformation of Eve, upon her heeding his words, would be even greater yet. He

[41] Eve is certain, for example, that her "firm Faith and Love / Can[not] by his fraud be shak'n or seduc't" (9.286-87).

suggests she would be translated into a virtual goddess. The serpent impresses Eve further by addressing her as "Empress" and telling her that it is "right thou shouldst be obeyed" as the ruler over all the animals (5.568, 570). He insists that Eve would have such a transformation if she were to eat of the fruit of which the serpent has allegedly already eaten.

It is important to note that in this discussion of Eve's transformation into a goddess, the serpent does not tell Eve which fruit he has supposedly eaten, and it is important to remember also that the serpent has not actually eaten any of it. It is all a lie, of course, but the serpent nonetheless offers an extraordinarily descriptive account of the fruit's effects on him:

> Sated at length, ere long I might perceave
> Strange alteration in me, to degree
> Of Reason in my inward Powers, and Speech
> Wanted not long, though to this shape retain'd.
> Thenceforth to Speculations high or deep
> I turnd my thoughts, and with capacious mind
> Considerd all things visible in Heav'n,
> Or Earth, or Middle, all things fair and good.
>
> (9.598-605)

The most alluring part of this argument is not merely that the serpent, upon eating the fruit, became able to speak and reason, but rather that with that transformation of his being, his mind was such that he was able to take in and hold all the secrets of the

universe. The serpent suggests to Eve that he can now comprehend the entire universe and all its previously withheld secrets and mysteries—mysteries such as the movement of the stars and planets—the sort of knowledge that Adam sought from his conversations with Raphael but was denied to him.

Satan then flatters Eve further. He claims that after considering "all things fair and good" in the Heavens and on Earth, he finds her to be the fairest and best. Again he intimates that she is in effect already a goddess worthy of "worship," as he was compelled "to come / And gaze, and worship thee of right declar'd / Sovran of Creatures, universal Dame" (9.610-12), and leaving her the suggestion that eating of the fruit would only assure that state that much more. With these statements, Satan uses sin to generate sin. In saying that he would worship Eve, he has essentially committed idolatry—he would worship Eve rather than God. But Eve, not realizing that the enemy might generate sin by sin, remains "unwarie" (9.614), and she fails to recognize the serpent as her foe rather than a mere serpent. Still, Eve is slightly suspicious of h is near idolatry. The serpent's "overpraising" of both the tree and her person "leaves in doubt / The virtue of that Fruit" (9.615-16). Rightly mistrusting his extravagant praise, Eve demands to be shown this remarkable tree.

When taken to the tree, the only tree whose fruit was forbidden to Adam and Eve by God, Eve is still essentially sinless and innocent. And at first Eve responds properly to the serpent, stating that bringing her to this tree will be of no benefit to her:

> But of this Tree we may not taste nor touch;
> God so commanded, and left that Command

> Sole daughter of his voice; the rest, we live
>
> Law to our selves, our Reason is our Law.
>
> (9.61-54)

Eve's observation of the tree reveals a remarkable understanding, in principle, of the situation. For Milton, the fruit itself is inconsequential; the tree is what matters, is most significant. And the tree is most significant because it is the focal point of God's only commandment at the time: not to eat the tree's fruit. That sole commandment is the key. Eve views that commandment as the "sole daughter" of the voice of God.

Eve's use of the words "daughter" and "voice" resonate in striking ways. The Son of God is also understood as something related to the voice, that is, the Word, and the Word was to be revered especially as that vehicle through which the entire universe itself was created. Now Eve describes the sole commandment of God as the daughter of his voice, that which is also intimately tied to the Word. The sole commandment might be understood to be the daughter of the Son, a suggestion of a chain of obedience from God to the Son to humans. Moreover, that which also links humans to the Son and to the Father is the use of reason. Adam and Eve have been directed to live according to their reason. In their prelapsarian state, humanity needed no other commandments from God but the sole commandment that implied that they use reason as the primary means by which to avoid temptation. That sole commandment stands in contrast to the Ten Commandments Moses had to impose on God's chosen people among fallen humanity.[42]

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[42] See William Walker's discussion of the relationship between reason and law. He argues that "Milton's account of mankind's freedom as something that is not regulated but constituted by that reason that is its law is consistent with [the] rationalist explanation … against voluntarists such as Martin Luther, John Calvin, and Thomas Hobbes" (152).

Eve's initial response to the serpent upon seeing the forbidden tree should have been a reminder to herself that reason was the means by which she might maintain obedience to that sole commandment, or, more properly, the means by which she would prevent herself from being subject to temptations that would eventually overwhelm her capacity for discernment. Her response also reveals exactly how much she understands the role her role is to play in doing what God has commanded.

At this point in the temptation, therefore, Satan takes on the role of a great sophist and debater in order to manipulate Eve into accepting his false arguments.[43] He displays a great "shew of Zeale and Love / To Man, and indignation as his wrong" (9.665-66), and then rapidly shifts to posture himself as a great Greek or Roman orator "to som great cause addresst" and who persuades not by what he actually says but by the great emotional display before he ever speaks (9.672).

When Satan begins to speak again as orator and sophist, he seems to employ such a remarkable use of reason that Eve fails to discern his sophistry from the truth. Satan urges Eve, as "Queen of this Universe," to "not believe / Those rigid threats of Death" (9.684-85). He argues, again by lying, that he has eaten of the fruit, when he has not, and not been touched by death.[44] Satan also minimizes the transgression she would commit in eating the forbidden fruit. He refers to it as a "petty Trespass" that will not

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[43] The term "sophist" is used pejoratively to denote those sophists against whom Plato speaks in some of his dialogues; sophists are not interested in the truth of their premises or conclusions, but only in winning the argument. The term, in my mind, fits Satan perfectly, as he knows his arguments are faulty and weak; he is not interested in truth, but only in winning this particular battle with Eve and more generally in winning the war he is waging against God.

[44] Eve does not consider here that the tree was not forbidden to animals, but only to her and Adam, which again centers on the specific nature of the tree as the test of their obedience to God—a test not required of mere beasts. So quickly, Eve has already forgotten the significance of this one commandment, which she remembered but moments before.

arouse God's anger. Satan suggests that God in fact would rather praise Eve for her "dauntless vertue" and for her courage in daring to defy Him to make their human state happier with greater knowledge and wisdom (9.693-94).

Eve fails to recognize the dangerous and heretical arguments Satan presents to her. Satan attempts to persuade Eve that the knowledge of good and evil has been denied her by a merely jealous God:

> Of good, how just? of evil, if what is evil
> Be real, why not known, since easier shunnd?
> God therefore cannot hurt ye, and be just;
> Not just, not God; not feard then, nor obeyd.
>
> (9.698-701)

Satan proceeds to suggest cleverly that God is the problem: that God has left Adam and Eve deficient by not giving them the knowledge of evil, which knowledge would make their fight against evil easier, could Adam and Eve only possess it. Satan also attempts to disqualify the punishment God proclaimed he would impose should Adam and Eve disobey. Satan thereby calls God's justice into question. Satan argues that if God is unjust for punishing his children, then He must not really be God. Therefore, the need to obey God is minimized and even negated.

Satan continues to drive home his argument against God, but throughout his oration, Eve never stops him to dispute the premises of the serpent's position. Her reason continues to fail to discern the serpent's deceit as he asks why Adam and Eve would be given this commandment not to eat the fruit in the first place. Not giving Eve

an opportunity to respond with the answer she knows to be true—and the knowledge of which she has already revealed to Satan—the serpent responds with an answer that again reflects on the role of reason while revealing Satan's perversion of that reason. The serpent suggests that God wants his subjects to be ignorant:

> Why then was this forbid? Why but to awe,
> Why but to keep ye low and ignorant,
> His worshippers; he knows that in the day
> Ye Eate thereof, your Eyes that seem so cleere,
> Yet are but dim, shall perfetly be then
> Op'nd and cleerd, and ye shall be as Gods,
> Knowing both Good and Evil as they know.
>
> (9.703-709)

The serpent leads Eve to believe that the sole commandment issued in the garden was imposed by God for God's entirely self-indulgent reasons: that God wished to keep Adam and Eve ignorant subjects, blind worshippers. Yet, in truth, God wished Adam and Eve to use reason in the highest measure as the very means by which they would prevent being subject to the deceit of the enemy. While Satan the sophist argues that Adam and Eve will find their eyes miraculously opened and cleared when they eat the fruit, Adam and Eve will discover, after their fall, that a consequence of their disobedience is that their eyes and minds are dimmer. And while their recognition of the significance of the tree was a recognition that in it lay the intimate connection between

them and the Son, and therefore them and God, after the deception of Eve the pair find themselves further from God than they ever imagined possible.

Satan ends his argument with one final interrogation by which to leave Eve hanging:

> wherein lies
> Th' offence, that Man should thus attain to know?
> What can your knowledge hurt him, or this Tree
> Impart against his will if all be his?
> Or is it envie, and can envie dwell
> In heav'nly brest? these, these and many more
> Causes import your need of this fair Fruit.
>
> (9.725-31)

Again Satan would diminish the importance of God's sole commandment: surely, he argues, any knowledge gained from eating the forbidden fruit could not hurt God. The serpent insinuates once again that God is a petty and jealous God who seeks to keep all of His creatures subjugated to His tyrannical will. Satan, in the form of an animal, suggests that Adam and Eve would be barely better than animals were they to maintain their obedience to God. Satan suggests it is necessary for Adam and Eve to escape their demeaning subjection by God if they really wish to think of themselves as free agents.

Once again Milton stresses the failure of reason as the primary contributing factor in Eve's fall. Eventually in her encounter with the serpent, Eve is unable or unwilling to withstand any longer the "[ring] of his perswasive words, impregn'd / With

Reason, to her seeming, and with Truth" (9.737-38). Eve mistakes the sophistry of the serpent for truth, and bases her choice upon his lies. It is really at this moment that Eve has fallen, for she has already made the choice to eat the fruit. She is intent upon eating the fruit, and she is no longer reasoning against eating what was forbidden but instead is rationalizing the choice she has already made as a result of mistaking falsity for truth. Although she has not yet taken a bite of the fruit, she is now looking at it longingly, with an overwhelming desire to taste it.

Now, although reason should still be her guide and should direct her will to submit to the will of God, Eve has begun to employ reason in ways similar to the ways of the enemy. She offers rationalizing arguments to support what she is about to do. Such a use, an abuse really, of reason renders her fully culpable, for she is quite deliberate in her decision to eat what God has forbidden, even if she was led to that decision by Satan's deception.[45]

In Eve's reasoning or rationalizing, we see the way in which Satan's deceptions lead to her fall. Eve reiterates the punishment God said he would deliver were she and Adam to eat the fruit: "In the day we eate / Of this fair Fruit, our doom is, we shall die" (9.762-63). But the false example of the Serpent makes her question God's warning: "How dies the Serpent? hee hath eat'n and lives, / And knows, and speaks, and reasons, and discerns, / Irrational till then" (9.764-66).[46] Satan's deception leads Eve to a problematic analogy: she now views the fruit as "intellectual food" that will translate her

[45] Roy Flannagan notes that Eve's pause before eating the fruit "signifies the difference between a completely careless act and one endorsed by thought" (9.744n.223).

[46] Again, she does not stop to consider that the commandment was directly only to Adam and her, not to other creatures.

human intellect to that of a goddess much as the serpent's intellect was supposedly translated from that of a mere beast to that of a rational animal (9.768). Moreover, in Eve's mind the fruit as "intellectual food" now supplants her prior source of rational invigoration, Adam's company. The serpent's deceit has made Eve see herself, and Adam, as lacking in a fundamental and necessary knowledge: thus Eve's "expectation high / Of knowledg" and her thoughts of God-head as she eats the fruit (9.789-90). Eve expects divine knowledge to be hers instantaneously, with the first taste of what she perceives to be the most delectable fruit she could ever taste.

But what occurs instantaneously is not the assumption of divine knowledge but the compounding of sin. The dire consequences of Eve's fall follow fast from her first sin. Other sins ensue at once: she eats "Greedily" as she "ingorg'd without restraint," displaying both greed and gluttony at once (9.791). She is also "hight'nd as with Wine" (9.793)—intoxicated by the knowledge which she now imagines is hers. And she commits idolatry as she begins to worship the tree which has given her supposed divine knowledge and promises to praise the tree every morning upon waking, a time and habit she had previously reserved for Adam in their joint praise to God when they left their bower.

Worst of all, Eve comes to denigrate the faculty of reason. Prior to the fall, she and Adam, upon the advice of God Himself, took reason to be their primary guide. After the fall, Eve glorifies experience, which is always problematic and no guarantor of the truth, as her primary guide: she deems experience the "Best guide; [for] not following thee, I had remained / In ignorance, thou op'nst Wisdoms way, / And giv'st access,

though secret she retire" (9.808-10). Eve now considers experience a better guide than reason, and experience rather than reason earns the highest of her praises, second only to the praises she offers to the tree. Such displacement of reason by experience is itself evidence of the now defective nature of Eve's reason and the perversion of her created nature.

The extent to which Eve's first sin has now permeated her very being and diminished her ability to reason is clearly revealed further in more faulty rationality. Eve deliberates problematically whether to share the fruit with Adam. Her deliberation discloses more evidence of her newfound greed. Eve considers hoarding this new divine knowledge entirely for herself, to "keep the odds of Knowledge in my power / Without copartner" (9.820-21). Suddenly Eve would very much like to be superior to Adam, or at least equal, as she now, suddenly, views herself as having been inferior beforehand.[47] Eve does not consider in detail in what manner she might have been subject in some way to Adam; but worse, she is entirely incorrect in her conflation of inferiority and a lack of freedom: "for inferior who is free?" (9.825). The correct theological response is that all of God's creatures are inferior to Him. Yet that does not render them any less free to obey or disobey God's commandments.

Despite the allure of superiority over Adam, Eve determines that she will share the fruit with Adam so that he may also partake of its supposed benefits. Her

[47] Of course, she acknowledges that the realization of her entire argument here would depend upon a premise which must be rejected by the reader—that God, their "great Forbidder" (9.815), somehow missed seeing her eating the fruit so she would only reap the benefit of the fruit and miss the punishment for eating it.

justification for this generosity, however, is really rooted in envy, yet another sin now present in the postlapsarian world:

> For what if God have seen,
> And Death ensue? then I shall be no more,
> And Adam wedded to another Eve,
> Shall live with her enjoying, I extinct.
>
> (9.826-29)

Eve then begins to weigh the possibility that God was serious about his punishment for her sin, considering that it would be worse to be punished while Adam continues to live happily with another wife. Furthermore, while Eve claims to love Adam dearly—to such an extent that "with him all deaths / [she] could endure, without him live no life" (9.832-33)—her motives remain questionable, as she does not appear to be really concerned with Adam's well-being, but only with her own selfish desires.

Resolved to share the fruit with Adam, and thereby have him share her fate, Eve turns from the tree to seek out her mate. She does not walk far when Adam meets her near the tree. Adam had become worried about Eve's long absence, and indeed seems to have intuited that something was gravely amiss with her. As forthrightly as she is able at this point, Eve begins to tell him what has transpired. She believes her story is "wonderful to heare," full of things at which to wonder (9.862). She claims that Adam will be amazed and that the story will be of great benefit to him.

First and foremost she tells him they were mistaken about the dangerous nature of the tree—that it confers divinity rather than evil upon them. To show him the truth of

what she has said (but also to delay the real point, that she herself has tasted the forbidden fruit), she first relates to Adam the extraordinary example of the serpent who has eaten the fruit and who is yet "Not dead, as we are threatn'd, but thenceforth / Endu'd with human voice and human sense, / Reasoning to admiration" (9.870-72).

Eve highlights the serpent's transformation from mere beast to reasoning creature. Yet Eve remains oblivious to some of the crucial implications of her explanation of this transformation. She implicitly acknowledges, in an almost parenthetical addition, that she has been deceived by the serpent but does not wish to admit it. That is, when she states "as we are threatn'd," she acknowledges the very limited range of God's promised punishment: that only she and Adam were actually threatened with the punishment of death for eating from the tree, not any others in the created order.

This point, while seemingly minor, stresses Milton's understanding that the power of the tree is not inherent in the fruit itself but in God's commandment not to eat from it. Yet Eve attempts to sidestep this issue entirely by suggesting to Adam that she does not know whether the serpent was "not restraind as wee, or not obeying" (9.868). We know, of course, that neither the serpent, nor even Satan in the form of the serpent, ever actually ate from the tree. But even if he had, Eve's manipulations here would further suggest that while she is very much aware that God did not forbid the serpent to eat the fruit, only her and Adam, it is to her advantage to persuade Adam to eat the fruit as well. That is, her words can suggest that the serpent had also disobeyed and yet escaped punishment, and indeed benefited marvelously from his disobedience. Like

Satan's, Eve's reasoning has become convoluted sophistry with which she would manipulate others, and her sin in abusing reason would spawn even more sin.

After presenting the serpent's taste and ascension in glorious terms, particularly his newfound ability to reason so persuasively that he was able to prevail upon her to eat too, Eve finally admits to Adam circuitously that she has tasted the fruit. And in this admission, she reveals that it was her willing choice to eat the fruit: she is persuaded, not forced, to act. Even if that persuasion is generated by fraud and deception, she still made a conscious choice to eat what was forbidden.

Once she "confesses," as it were, she is, however, very quick to relate what she perceives to be the immediate benefits of her disobedience. Thus she tells Adam that like the serpent, she has

> also found
> Th' effects to correspond, opener mine Eyes,
> Dimm erst, dilated Spirits, ampler Heart,
> And growing up to Godhead.
>
> (9.874-77)

Through Eve's report on the effects the fruit has on her vision, Milton uses the eyes to represent the mental faculties at large. Eve believes that her mind, in her postlapsarian state, is more open than before, keener and more receptive to reason and wisdom. Believing that her mind, like her eyes, was "dimm" before, she now perceives it to be enlightened with a new wisdom and power to such an extent that she thinks she is in the

process of ascending even to godhead. In Eve's mind, the report of these benefits would be the basis by which she should be able to persuade Adam to eat also.

Eve now, with dubious motivation, intends to persuade Adam to share her fate with her. Eve suggests to Adam that she really sought this newfound power and wisdom primarily for his benefit. The reader already knows just how false this part of Eve's argument is, for we know how she seriously considered hoarding the fruit so she could be Adam's equal, if not his superior. It was really only jealousy of a non-existent future Eve that moved Eve to share the fruit with Adam. Now obviously lying, Eve tells Adam that having obtained godhead for his sake, she would yet despise that newfound power were she not to share it with him, "For bliss, as thou hast part, to me is bliss, / Tedious, unshar'd with thee, and odious soon" (9.879-80). She concludes her lie with an appeal to equality:

> Thou therefore also taste, that equal Lot
> May joyne us, equal Joy, as equal Love;
> Least thou not tasting, different degree
> Disjoyne us, and I then too late renounce
> Deitie for thee, when Fate will not permit.
>
> (9.881-85)

This appeal to equal lot, joy, and love is perverse given her desire not for equality but superiority. And the perversion is compounded in her claim that she would be willing to

renounce her godhead for Adam if she were permitted to do so, but she cannot.[48] Again, Eve is much less interested in returning to her former state, since she erroneously views that state as deficient, than in saying whatever it takes to avoid enduring her fate alone. Eve's love for Adam is fundamentally defaced by her fall into sin as she is no longer primarily concerned with his well-being, but with her own, and she deludes both Adam and herself in her posturing that suggests that Adam's welfare remains her primary concern.

Adam's fall is sad indeed, but not because he is persuaded by Eve's false arguments. While Eve fails to recognize Satan's lies and deceptions, thereby losing her first spiritual battle because she is persuaded by an enemy whose sophistry she does not anticipate, Adam's subsequent loss is significant because he is not at all deceived by Eve's lies and glossing half-truths. He recognizes instantly what she has done and the implications of her actions. What is most striking about Adam's fall, therefore, is its very deliberate nature. He does not fall deceived and unaware as Eve did. Rather, Adam falls with complete awareness of who the tempter is, what is being offered, and the consequences of accepting that offer.[49] While Eve does not recognize Satan in the form of the serpent, and while she remembers what she has been told will be the consequences if she eats the fruit, she is yet deceived into thinking that such consequences will not actually come to pass. Adam, on the other hand, knows that Eve

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[48] The irony is deepened in the reader's realization that it would be impossible for Eve to renounce her deity since she has no deity to renounce. She is still operating here under the false pretenses with which Satan persuaded her to eat in the first place.

[49] This is not to minimize the consciousness with which Eve falls. She also makes a conscious and deliberate choice, but she is deceived insofar as she believes the lies which Satan tells her and insofar as she does not recognize the tempter, Satan, in the form of the serpent.

is now functioning as a temptress. He knows what she is offering; he knows what her punishment will be, and he knows what his punishment will be if he follows her.

Very aware of the situation, Adam yet makes the conscious and deliberate choice to share God's capital punishment with Eve. In a way, Adam's fall is the worse, since he knows what he should do, or more exactly what he should not do. Yet Adam makes the choice to eat despite what reason dictates to him. He makes the choice based not on his reason but primarily on his physical desires for Eve. Eve's reason failed to recognize falsity. But while Adam quickly and correctly discerns the truth, he willfully goes against what his reason says he should do. Instead, Adam allows his passions rather than reason to direct his will, and his passions lead him away from God.

Adam's reaction to the realization that Eve has fallen is one of the most poignant moments in the epic. The garland that Adam has woven for Eve falls from his hand, the roses faded and wilted. He stands, initially, speechless and pale, until his silence is broken inwardly, at least at first. Adam talks to himself, and still carrying a prelapsarian impulse, he continues to exalt Eve even at this moment: "O fairest of Creation, last and best / Of all Gods works, Creature in whom excell'd / Whatever can to sight or thought be formd" (9.896-98). Adam mourns Eve's loss of innocence, but he focuses only momentarily on the fact that "some cursed fraud / Of Enemie hath beguil'd thee, yet unknown" (9.904-5). Instead, most of his attention is on his conviction that this enemy "mee with thee hath ruind, for with thee / Certain my resolution is to Die" (9.906-7). Adam talks, if only to himself, as though his capacity for deliberate choice has been taken away in this moment—that he has no choice but to fall with Eve—but his

willingness to accept that conviction without question constitutes a pivotal moment in his fall.

Adam's spiritual battle thus offers an example of a different kind of spiritual warfare, one in which the battle is almost entirely internal. Adam's temptation does not derive mainly from a disguised enemy who lays traps for his credulity. Adam's temptation comes almost entirely from within his own mind. While Eve functions as a temptress of sorts, she does not persuade him of the goodness of the forbidden fruit in the way Satan persuaded her. Rather, Adam recognizes the fruit for what it is, recognizes Eve's arguments for what they are, yet he still chooses to sin because he allows the wrong faculties to direct his actions.

Adam is not battling Eve the way Eve was, unknowingly, battling Satan. Rather, Adam is battling his over-dependence on Eve's charms. While recognizing that he is about to choose death over life, he does not question whether what he is doing is right or wrong. Instead, he is concerned only with what life would be like without Eve: "How can I live without thee, how forgoe / Thy sweet Converse and Love so dearly joyn'd, / To live again in these wilde Woods forlorn?" (9.908-10).

Adam's apparent unwillingness to live without Eve's conversation and love, and his resolve to join her in her punishment because he cannot imagine life without her (even if God were to create another Eve—her worse fear), recalls his impassioned account to Raphael in the previous book. There Adam tells the angel about the creation of Eve and his first reaction to her:

transported I behold,

Transported touch; here passion first I felt,

Commotion strange, in all enjoyments else

Superiour and unmov'd, here onely weake

Against the charm of Beauties powerful glance.

(8.529-33)

Within the context of this conversation, Adam's repeated use of the word "transported" suggests that he was moved from his thinking and reasoning faculties to his emotional and passionate faculties when he first beheld Eve. Adam himself recognizes that in gazing upon Eve for the first time, passion was awakened within him and seemed to work against the superior faculty of reason. Though his mind and reason remain strong elsewhere, there, looking at Eve, beholding her charm and beauty, Adam sensed about himself that he was potentially weak, as he admits to Raphael that when he looks at Eve, she appears to be so perfect that "what she wills to do or say, / Seems wisest, vertuousest, discreetest, best" (8.549-50), to such an extent that

All higher knowledge in her presence falls

Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her

Looses discount'nanc't, and like folly shewes;

Authority and Reason on her waite.

(8.551-54)

Adam was still innocent there, even if his admiration of Eve bordered on idolatry. Yet, while that admiration was not actually a sin then, we can see how Milton establishes

Adam's passion for Eve as a weakness that constitutes the center of Adam's spiritual warfare. And Adam eventually falls when his borderline idolatry relative to Eve effectively crosses a line.

And yet, Milton is just as insistent that this weakness in Adam is not impossible for him to overcome. Milton's soteriological argument is that Adam's passion for Eve does not lead Adam ineluctably to his fall. Milton maintains throughout his epic and elsewhere that Adam and Eve were created sufficient to withstand this and any temptation, and thereby had the capacity to remain in a prelapsarian state such that they would not need salvation by way of another agency.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton makes this point rather explicitly by having Raphael frown at Adam at that point in the conversation when Adam was exalting the beauty of Eve. Raphael issued a stern warning to Adam that Adam was to recall perpetually. Raphael tries to make Adam aware that his passion for Eve will be a central problem in his peculiar spiritual war, and that Adam should heed this fact well when the time comes for Adam's most acute temptation:

> Accuse not Nature, she hath don her part;
> Do thou but thine, and be not diffident
> Of Wisdom, she deserts thee not, if thou
> Dismiss not her, when most thou needst her nigh,
> By attributing overmuch to things
> Less excellent, as thou thy self perceav'st.
>
> (8.561-66)

With much foreshadowing, Raphael informs Adam that Eve's beauty will offer no excuse if and when Adam falls. Adam will not be able to blame Nature or God for making Eve so beautiful and charming. Regardless of Eve's charms, Adam has a responsibility to rely on reason to act properly. He must look to wisdom for guidance rather than only to Eve's physical graces, even if the poem allows that Eve's presence is part of that which constitutes Adam's use of reason. While Eve may be an excellent example of beauty, charm, and virtue, she and her attributes are still lesser goods, in St. Augustine's terms, that can be lost against one's will relative to eternal goods which cannot be lost against one's will. And that which is most important for Adam to conclude is that even if Eve's presence is what constitutes in part the activation of Adam's faculty of reason, the other element in that activation of reason is Adam's proper reciprocal action that would serve to spark reason in Eve in turn. Both of them are still required to heed the voice of reason within themselves rather than resort only to their passions.

Furthermore, Raphael reminds Adam that what he admires, that by which he is "transported," is only mere appearance—she is "fair no doubt, and worthy well / Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love, / Not thy subjection" (8.568-70). While it is right that Adam should love and honor his wife, Raphael is properly worried that Adam will eventually subjugate himself to the allure of Eve's appearance. Adam could easily become infatuated with Eve's appearance and thereby distract himself from the use and appreciation of the higher goods of his own mind. Were that to occur, Adam would fall

into a state of error such that he would come to worship Eve, the creature, more than God the Creator.

In attempting to prevent Adam from falling into such a state, Raphael concludes his warning with a clear delineation of the significant differences between love and passion. Raphael gently chides Adam for being consumed by passion rather than guided by love:

> In loving thou dost well, in passion not,
> Wherein true Love consists not; love refines
> The thoughts, and heart enlarges, hath his seat
> In Reason, and is judicious, is the scale
> By which to heav'nly Love thou maist ascend,
> Not sunk in carnal pleasure, for which cause
> Among the Beasts no Mate for thee was found.
>
> (8.588-94)

Raphael's warning to Adam brings the reader once again to the issue of reason. Raphael's warning to Adam is not merely negative. Rather, it identifies remarkable ways in which love is directly related to the use of reason. Love is inseparable from the use of reason, and there is a reciprocity between love and reason. Love serves to refine thoughts even as love grows out of the proper use of reason. Raphael suggests that love, as it was intended by God for human employment, therefore aids in the act of judgment.

Also, in a claim that echoes Plato's *Symposium* and the Neo-Platonic theories of love by Marsilio Ficino, Raphael claims the reason-oriented love Adam has for Eve can

function like a ladder by which Adam will reach higher and higher realizations of the love of God.[50] This elevating love is the kind of love God intended for humans alone and is the reason God did not seek a mate for Adam among the already created beasts but created a new mate for him. This elevating love is not possible for mere brutes, for which there can be only physical pleasure. Rather, this rational, elevating love is a function of the divine communion of souls through which reciprocity Adam and Eve might ever better worship their Maker.

In the realization of those foreshadowing moments with Raphael, Adam expresses the deficiency in his total regard for the spiritual relationship he should have and maintain with Eve. In his fall, Adam instead focuses on their physical relationship as his reason for following Eve's suggestion to eat the fruit with her:

> no no, I feel
> The Link of Nature draw me: Flesh of Flesh,
> Bone of my Bone thou art, and from thy State
> Mine never shall be parted, bliss or woe.
>
> (9.913-16)

Adam is drawn to his sin by the connection he feels between his flesh and Eve's, not the connection between his reason and hers. Adam assumes, erroneously, that the creation of Eve out of his own body ties him to her such that he is unable to live his life apart from her. Adam is therefore all too willing to share in Eve's sin.

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[50] See Ch. 18 of Ficino's *Commentary on Plato's* Symposium *on Love*: "How the soul is raised from the beauty of the body to the beauty of God" (141).

Adam's final words to Eve before eating the fruit express this sentiment, as he reveals his inner thoughts:

> However I with thee have fixt my Lot,
> Certain to undergoe like doom, if Death
> Consort with thee, Death is to mee as Life;
> So forcible within my heart I feel
> The Bond of Nature draw me to my owne,
> My own in thee, for what thou art is mine;
> Our State cannot be severd, we are one,
> One Flesh; to loose thee were to loose my self.
>
> (9.952-59)

And when Adam does finally take the offered fruit from Eve to taste it for himself, Milton's narrator makes Adam's motives exceptionally clear: "he scrupl'd not to eat / Against his better knowledge, not deceav'd, / But fondly overcome with Femal charm" (9.997-99). Raphael's precise warning was to no avail.

Having resolved in his own mind to join Eve in sin, Adam is calm when he finally speaks to Eve. But as Adam's conversations with Eve ensue, Adam's convoluted thoughts reveal again one of the key theses of Milton's *Paradise Lost*: that human reason has become deeply defective as a consequence of the fall and the failure of reason there.

The first indication that Adam is fallen is that his postlapsarian argumentation reveals itself to be as flawed as Eve's. Adam offers some delusional hope that he and Eve might escape the punishment God promised. Like Eve, Adam also begins to aspire

to something like godhead, expecting an ascent that will be proportional to the serpent's ascent to language and reason. But more crucially, Adam's impiety is manifested by him essentially calling God an incompetent liar. Adam begins to gainsay God and even begins to suggest what God should, or what God is able, to do:

> Nor can I think that God, Creator wise,
> Though threatning, will in earnest so destroy
> Us his prime Creatures, dignifi'd so high,
> Set over all his Works, …
> so God shall uncreate,
> Be frustrate, do, undo, and labour loose,
> Not well conceav'd of God, who though his Power
> Creation could replete, yet would be loath
> Us to abolish, least the Adversary
> Triumph and say; Fickle their State whom God
> Most Favors, who can please him long?
>
> (9.938-49)

Eve, of course, is thrilled at the choice Adam has made. But her assessment of the choice betrays yet another abuse of reason. It allows for equivocation on the terms "exceeding love." Eve sees Adam's decision to follow her as a "glorious trial of exceeding Love" (9.961). And in some sense of the terms, that is true. But the real truth operative in the terms, given Adam's position, is that Adam's "exceeding love" for Eve is such because it includes a motivation driven by sexual passion more than reason. If

Adam were acting from truly "exceeding love" he would choose to love God, the Creator, more than Eve, the creature. Neither Adam nor Eve seems to understand, nor wishes to understand, the nature of the spiritual warfare in which they are engaged, or the consequences they will face because they have lost the spiritual battles. They both speak as if they welcome death, but they actually have no notion of what it means to die. They are intoxicated by that which they know to be an inferior faculty, the Fancy; they are intoxicated by their imaginations. They imagine effects the fruit is supposed to bring, and their delusion distracts them from weighing rationally what their fall has cost them.

Milton leaves no doubt as to what he considers the consequences of Adam and Eve's fall. Reason is especially defective in the fallen Adam and Eve as the weaknesses which made them vulnerable to sin blossom into full-blown sins. Their "Carnal desire enflaming, hee on Eve / began to cast lascivious Eyes, she him / As wantonly repaid; in Lust they burne" (9.1013-15). In fallen souls, the passions almost entirely dominate the will, and to that extent the capacity for right reason is mightily diminished. The use of right reason might have prevented the fall. But it will be ever more difficult for the postlapsarian human to heed right reason, even as it will be ever more necessary to do so. For Milton, virtually all spiritual warfare returns to the issue of reason.

Both Lanyer and Milton suggest in their treatments of the fall that Adam and Eve's failure of reason contributed significantly to that fall, as it rendered them both more vulnerable to Satan's wiles and deceptions. Both poets also point to the effects that this failure on the part of the first parents will have for all humans—in their ability

to overcome temptations, in their relationships with each other, and in their relationships with God. While Calvinist theologians would emphasize the total depravity of reason and human nature that would result from this initial failure, the coming chapters will examine texts that turn on their head the arguments about human reason after the fall put forth by radical reformers who stress the utter depravity of fallen humans.[51] For if Adam and Eve fell despite the agility of their mental faculties, other texts will show that already fallen humans, with all the limitations placed upon their mental faculties, can yet exhibit a triumph of reason over evil, when aided by the work of grace.

[51] Lorraine Boettner explains this Calvinist position in *Reformed Doctrine of Predestination*: "Is not man now, as his progenitor Adam, fleeing from the presence of God, not wanting communion with Him, and with enmity in his heart for his Creator? … We live in a lost world, a world which if left to itself would fester in its corruption from eternity to eternity—a world reeking with iniquity and blasphemy" (74). Boettner also provides an excellent summary of the Calvinist position regarding the extent and effects of original sin on humankind (61-68).

CHAPTER IV

AFTER THE FALL: REASON INFORMED BY GRACE

Calvinists generally believe that only grace can bring the sinner back into communion with the Creator, for it is only through the restraining influences of God's irresistible grace that humans are again incited to love, truth, and goodness, and grace is the only means by which humans can do any good whatsoever. But for Milton and others, grace is also the means by which reason once again can function as right reason, so that the human will itself can direct the soul to right action in tests of virtue, as is necessary to restore the relationship between God and humans.

As a necessary part of the testing of virtue, temptations can take many and varied forms in the fallen world, and only a few will be examined here. First, we will continue the discussion of demonic dreams begun in the previous chapter. There the focus was on the dynamics involved in Eve's prelapsarian dream, though the debates surrounding Pilate's wife's dream regarding the suffering of Christ also point to particular ways the dynamics of spiritual warfare change because of the events of the fall of Adam and Eve. While Adam and Eve could draw comfort in the thought that Eve committed no sin in her dream because her reason was not awake to guide her will and she did not will to commit the sin, such a resolution does not seem as completely relevant or even possible after the fall because of the lasting effects of original sin.[1] Furthermore, while Lanyer portrays Pilate's wife's dream as a divinely-inspired dream, the traditional belief that her

[1] Evidence of this distinction was already discussed in the previous chapter in the comparison of Adam's treatment of Eve's dream with Augustine's remarks on his own dreams in his *Confessions*.

dream was satanically-inspired calls our attention again to demonic dreams as a form of spiritual warfare and raises important questions about the role of reason and will in all such warfare after the fall. Thus, the problem of reason and will in postlapsarian dreams as implied in Augustine's *Confessions* and the controversy surrounding Pilate's wife's dream are further reabsorbed in the greater epistemological question regarding the nature of reason itself as a result of the fall.

Temptation can take many and varied forms in the fallen world, and we will examine only a few here. First, we will continue the discussion of demonic dreams begun in the previous chapter. There the focus was on the dynamics involved in Eve's prelapsarian dream. Here we will briefly consider Milton's poetic accounts of Adam and Eve's postlapsarian dreams and then look more fully at the demonic dreams in Richard Norwood's spiritual autobiography, a compelling prose testimonial of spiritual warfare which addresses the defects of reason.

Then we will examine further Milton's explorations of the work of reason in spiritual warfare after the fall in both his early and his late work, as represented by *Comus* and *Samson Agonistes*. Milton portrays two different kinds of spiritual warfare in these two texts, rather similar to the two kinds of temptation (Eve's and then Adam's) encountered in *Paradise Lost*. That is, in *Comus*, the spiritual warfare is external—the Lady is tempted and tested by the external force of Comus. In *Samson Agonistes*, however, the spiritual conflict is an internal one; Samson struggles with his own demons through each encounter with the various people in his life. These three texts represent the reliance on reason in different ways and to different degrees, but they all suggest that

reason after the fall must necessarily be informed by grace if it is to work properly in the temptations of spiritual warfare, even as spiritual warfare is necessary to restore the relationship between the Creator and the sinner.

"Wrestl[ing] with the Devil by Night": Norwood's Demonic Dreams

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton reveals his concern not only with Eve's prelapsarian dream but also with the intersection of evil and dreams after the fall. In *Paradise Lost*, as previously noted, immediately after the fall, Adam and Eve fall into a kind of frenzy of sin of various forms, sometimes subtle, as with the seven deadly sins, sometimes more obvious as in the case of sexual lust. The sleep that had formerly provided them rest and comfort from their daily toil now oppresses them after their exhaustion from their lustful play. This is now a "grosser sleep / Bred of unkindly fumes, with conscious dreams / Encumbered" (9.1049-51). It is also when they awaken from these dreams that Adam and Eve become aware of what they have lost, as they realize "thir Eyes how op'nd, and thir minds / How dark'nd; innocence, that as a veile / Had shadowed them from knowing ill, was gone" (9.1053-55). This new, uncomforting sleep is marked by "conscious dreams"—dreams that disturb the parties waking from them. These are the first truly evil dreams, dreams that arise out of the sins committed by Adam and Eve, and there is no real rest for the fallen to escape their sins and their effects.[2]

[2] It might be useful to clarify what is meant here by "Satanic" or "demonic dreams." The two terms are essentially interchangeable in meaning, but I generally use that term which is most appropriate in context in terms of their origin from Satan or from demons. In the case of Eve's dream, there is little ambiguity in the designation of her dream as satanic, since her dream clearly originates in the character of Satan, present at her ear in *Paradise Lost*. It is less obvious in Augustine's case that his dreams originate from the specific person of Satan, leading me to designate them as "demonic" rather than "satanic," but it

We have seen the richness of the implications of Milton's literary invention of Eve's dream, and the richness of the ruminations of Adam and Eve on the nature of that dream. Yet the non-fictional literature about demonic dreams, their content and their effect, and the role of reason in this kind of spiritual warfare, is almost as rich as Milton's poetic creations.

Two of the most compelling works of non-fiction regarding spiritual warfare share the same title: Augustine's *Confessions* and Richard Norwood's *Confessions*.[3] Both men reveal the concerns facing fallen humans in the problem of satanic and tempting dreams. Both Norwood and Augustine suggest that their disturbing dreams are signs or manifestations of their actual sins, despite their will *not* to have such dreams and commit such sins. Moreover, both men imply that they, unlike the unfallen Eve in *Paradise Lost*, cannot entirely escape the responsibility they continue to feel for the occurrence of disturbing dreams.[4]

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would still not be inappropriate to call his dreams of temptation and sin "satanic" in the sense that Satan remains the primary figure of man's tempter, so that any dream which tempts man must in some sense originate from Satan, even if it is one's own memory that serves as the means for that temptation. Both terms are used to imply that spiritual force with which humans must contend and which seeks to pull them away from God. I would also include waking visions in the discussion of satanic dreams because, as Augustine notes, sleep is only one of several possible times when reason and the senses are not dominant—other instances include when people are "disturbed from their inward structure, as in the case of madmen, or distracted in some other mode, as in that of diviners and prophets" (Augustine, *On the Trinity*, 11.4, p. 148).

[3] Norwood began writing his *Confessions* in 1639, at the age of 49, and he emphasizes that he began writing them out of a need to remember: "I endeavored to call to mind the whole course of my life past, and how the Lord dealt with me. At which time I perceived that some things began to grow out of memory, which I thought I should scarce ever have forgotten; and considering that as age cam eon, forgetfulness would increase upon me, I determined then to set down in writing" (3).

[4] Frank Paul Bowman identifies a certain tension in the dual motives for writing spiritual autobiography in the period: these Christian believers write because they want to show the work of divine grace in them, but also so that other believers may pray for them as terrible sinners. Bowman thus suggests that there is a basic paradox at work in these dual motives: "the greater the sin, the greater the grace" (38). This is borne out in Norwood's journal as well, in his epigraph: "*Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*" (4).

In *Paradise Lost*, we recall that Adam and Eve never identify Satan as the source of Eve's disturbing dream. In his *Confessions*, Norwood has no doubt regarding the source of his disturbing dreams. The source is Satan who, for Norwood, is certainly no fictional character, even if he is otherwise invisible. Norwood relates to his reader numerous times and without equivocation that Satan is present in his life. Norwood clearly sees himself in an unceasing spiritual war with Satan, who is a constant threat, tempting Norwood and trying to lead him to evil and away from God, especially through his dreams.[5]

Yet it is equally clear from Norwood's *Confessions* that Norwood does not believe it is Satan alone who is at work in tempting him. Rather, Norwood confesses that he, Norwood himself, essentially aids Satan by carelessly and irrationally placing himself in circumstances, great and small, that make him more susceptible to Satan's evil work. He reflects in particular on his decision to go to Rome, and the necessity of his conversion in order to do so, which he later views as trials of a war waged only on the spiritual level: "But miserable and foolish man, I understood not the many dangers of soul and body whereinto I cast myself, and how every step I went, as it was further from my native country so it led me and alienated my heart farther from God" (22). Looking back on that particular episode in his life, Norwood believes that "Satan was leading away in triumph his poor vanquished vassal, never likely to have been recovered again out of his hands had not the Lord, who hath the hearts of all men in his hands, by his

[5] In one of the very few articles written about Norwood's *Confessions*, Charles Whitney explores Norwood's recorded struggles with despair and guilt, as well as his apparent nightly battles with demonic terrors and dreams, but he reads them within the context of Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*.

almighty power and gracious providence brought me back again" (22). Norwood reveals here some of the particular implications of his Calvinist beliefs. Though he would resist the more extreme forms of Puritanism (Craven xxxi), it is also clear that Norwood does not share Milton's belief in the primacy of the human will. Here, indeed, we sense that Norwood is almost passive in his susceptibility to Satan as well as to God's grace. Norwood seems to accept the Calvinist doctrine of irresistible grace—that being a reprobate or a regenerate is not a case of free will, in that each person chooses to accept or deny God's grace given to all, but rather that God chooses to whom He will give his grace freely, and that person is able only to accept, never to reject, that grace. Yet even Norwood allows for some action of his will and reason, as evident in the previous quotation—he willingly chooses, without *understanding* the spiritual consequences of his choice, to go to Rome. His reason has failed to direct him properly, and Satan leads him triumphantly away from God and truth and the good.

If Satan can be that effective in tempting and deluding a person awake, the danger Satan would pose in dreams is even greater. And, of course, so constant is the war with Satan that it should not be surprising that Satan would employ sleep as a means by which to wage his part in the spiritual war. That is why arguably the most striking element in Norwood's *Confessions*, at least for our purposes here, is his accounts of "that nightly disease which we call the mare" (26). The *Oxford English Dictionary* offers the following definitions for "mare" as Norwood appears to use it: "A spirit

believed to produce a feeling of suffocation in a sleeping person or animal; a feeling of suffocation experienced during sleep; an oppressive or terrifying dream."[6]

Norwood's most fascinating accounts of his nightly afflictions, or the "mare," come in two rather detailed narratives of dreams—one that came before his "true" conversion and one that came after. Norwood is first struck by this "disease" in his journey to Italy, and he blames himself in part for being subject to the mare because it is he who allowed himself to be subject to the "dangers" to both body and soul when he set off on the arduous trip to Rome. Norwood relates the ill effects of the mare upon him at this time in his life:

> I was scarce any night free from it, and seldom it left me without nocturnal pollutions; besides, whilst it was upon me I had horrible dreams and visions. Oft-times I verily thought that I descended into Hell and there felt the pains of the damned, with many hideous things. Usually in my dreams methought I saw my father always grievously angry with me. … And sometimes I seemed to see a thing on my breast or belly like a hare or cat, etc.; whereupon I have sometimes taken a naked knife in my hand when I went to sleep, thinking therewith to strike at it, and it was God's mercy that I had not by this means slain myself. But after I had observed the danger whereinto the wily fiend was like to draw me, I left of that. (26-27)

[6] *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, "mare" (2nd entry). Recorded in the history of this particular use of the word "mare" is T. Cooper's use in 1565 in his *Thesaurus*; under the word "Ephialtes" is listed "the disease called the mare," a phrase directly echoed in Norwood's *Confessions*.

Of perhaps minimal interest here is Norwood's mention of the "nocturnal pollutions," or wet dreams, which plague him with this disease. Norwood seems to consider his wet dreams a mere symptom of his sins rather than an actual sin on his part.[7] Yet, at the very least those nocturnal emissions are reminders of the depth of his capacity for evil even after very consciously eschewing evil.

For Norwood, the most significant part of suffering from disturbing dreams is more complex than the mere issue of the nature or function of nocturnal emissions. Perhaps that is why Norwood, as compared with Augustine, presents basically only a passing reference to nocturnal pollutions.[8] Instead, other aspects of Norwood's dreams and visions are much more telling and important for Norwood, dreams of both temptation and damnation, some of which he describes in great detail.

One of Norwood's dreams is so real to him that it spurs him to believe he is already damned and suffering in Hell. And therewith he dreams of his father's anger with him. It is clear from other passages in the *Confessions* that Norwood believes he had committed grave sins against his parents, and thereby against God as well, perhaps the primary of which was that of abandoning his apprenticeship without their blessing:

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[7] Norwood says in the same paragraph as that quoted above that he "was altogether freed from those nocturnal pollutions" after his conversion at the age of twenty-six, though he continued to suffer from the "mare" even to the time of writing his *Confessions* (27). Perhaps it is for that reason that Norwood is not as obsessed with his wet dreams to the considerable extent that he is with his "master sin" of masturbation (70).

[8] Augustine confesses that he also suffered such "nocturnal pollutions," which at one point are the principal subject of Book 10, Chapter 30, from which I have already quoted extensively in the previous chapter. For his part, Augustine views his wet dreams as the very sign of the sin of his dreams—they are an indication of the "clinging mire of concupiscence" that lingers after he has given his life to Christ and renounced the sins of his early life. Those wet dreams are actual exercises in evil by the individual himself, according to Augustine. They are "base corrupting deeds, brought on through corporeal images even to bodily pollution" in his sleep, without his consent. (10.30). For his part, Norwood is not as critical as Augustine regarding nocturnal emissions.

"having forsaken the calling wherein my parents had placed me, and betaken myself to another course of life without and against their liking and without any due calling or encouragement from God or men, I met with many troubles" (16).[9] It seems that Norwood believes he might have violated the commandment of honoring his father and mother when he decided to go his own way rather than the way his parents preferred, and this willful choice—without either parental or divine blessing—led him to further spiritual trials.

But Norwood's *Confessions* show how he has to deal with more bizarre images that play a role in his spiritual warfare, temptations presented in the form of visions of animals sitting on his chest. His first instinct is to kill such animals without regard to the danger to his own person.[10] This he regards as a direct temptation of Satan, "the wily fiend" who draws Norwood into such dangers as would jeopardize his soul; that is, here, he would be drawn into suicide.

Although Norwood has not experienced his conversion at this point in his narrative, it is clear that he believes, reflecting upon these experiences and his conversion years later, that God's grace is working in his life even at this early point, and more significantly, even when he still believed he was to be damned.[11] Looking back especially at the bizarre dreams that seemed to spur him to suicide, even suicide in his sleep, Norwood believes that it was only by "God's mercy that I had not by this

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[9] Stachniewski notes that "acceptance of parental choice of calling was regarded, especially by puritans, as an absolute filial imperative" (257n.129).

[10] Consider again the *OED* definition of "mare" as a *spirit* that induces a feeling of suffocation in the sleeping person.

[11] This suggests belief in the doctrine of predestination—that God had already chosen Norwood as one of the regenerate, even if the time was not proper to Norwood to know that, so that God's grace is already at work in Norwood's life, also unbeknownst to him then, but known now at the time of writing.

means slain myself" (26). Although he is tempted and misled by Satan, Norwood truly believes that it is only by God—and God's grace—that he is prevented from falling into sin entirely. And, again, Norwood blames himself in part for the seeming constancy of Satan's attacks, waking and sleeping. Norwood concludes that God allows him to be tormented by Satan so regularly because of the bad choices he, Norwood, has made in his life, bad choices that make him ever more susceptible to Satan's attacks.

The principal choice which Norwood associates with his affliction of satanic dreams and satanic visions is his decision to go to Rome. In order to go to Rome, he had to "pretend" to convert to Catholicism.[12] Thus, Norwood can reflect, after his "true" conversion, that is, to the Puritan faith, as opposed to his earlier "false" conversion to Catholicism, that he "was often checked inwardly for dissembling myself to be of that religion which I denied in my heart; to avoid which check of conscience I was willing for that time of my travel to have been persuaded of the truth of that religion" (23).[13] Since his conscience smote him for lying in his conversion to Catholicism, Norwood suggests that he makes a conscious choice to become Catholic, thus persuading

[12] The reader cannot help but think that Norwood was at this point sincere in his conversion to Catholicism, which makes it crucial to remember that it is only from his perspective of reflection after his conversion in the "true faith" of a puritan that he writes, "I very desperately dissembled seeming to be convinced and to embrace that religion, confessed to a priest, and received their sacrament" (23).

Another such choice, though not linked, in Norwood's narrative, to his early dreams and visions is his conscious choice to delay his true conversion, as when he writes, "I seemed willing at sundry times in my own apprehension to be delivered from those corruptions, yet to some of them my wretched heart clave very close. I thought upon a renouncing of all worldly pleasures, and that after conversion an austere and a single life would be fittest if not necessary. … But because of that austerity and renouncing of all pleasure which I proposed to myself, I often thought: It is not best to make too much haste, lest I should return again to my sinful delights" (59-60).

[13] I use quotation marks around "true" and "false" here not to suggest that the respective faiths are themselves true or false, but to indicate how Norwood himself perceives his two conversions.

himself—at least momentarily—of the truth of Catholicism so as not to go obviously against his conscience.

From this internal conflict between his reason, will, and conscience, Norwood then concludes that so many of his disturbing dreams were the result of this pseudo-conversion to Catholicism. Looking back in the writing of his *Confessions*, Norwood claims he was never sincere in his conversion to Catholicism and that his conversion was only undertaken for the expediency of traveling to Rome. Hence, in reflection, Norwood believes he deserved the many tormenting dreams from which he suffered: Norwood deserved to be tormented regularly by Satan at that time because for some time he had allowed himself to be deceived by his belief in Catholicism. And, even when Norwood realized the false nature of Catholicism, he still finds himself guilty in the entire episode for convincing himself so fully that he truly did believe that his conversion was sincere in order to repudiate his own conscience that would have told him he was living a lie—all to make his trip to Rome more convenient.

As Norwood later observes—and I would again emphasize that he reflects on this years after the fact—"when I departed out of Italy to go for England this disease began to abate, and afterwards more when I came into England" (27). Norwood believes that once he made the turn away from Rome, and thus away from false religion, God relieved him of his suffering, if only for a time. Norwood tells us that even though the disturbing dreams abated after the resolution of the complications of his pseudo-conversion, he continued to experience mares up to three or four times a year. It was after his true conversion experience, that is, his full embrace of the Puritan faith, facilitated in large

part by Augustine, that Norwood found himself in some ways even more susceptible to Satan than before.[14] Wesley Frank Craven observes that "So warming had been the initial experience of his conversion that Norwood seemingly overtaxed both body and spirit in an attempt to keep the fire alive. … [F]ighting off heretical notions by day, he wrestled with the devil by night" (xxxi-xxxii).

Norwood himself gives a rather particular account of these elements of spiritual warfare. Norwood acknowledges that he had spent so much time fasting and praying and reading that he had become weak both physically and mentally, making him "more liable to the buffetings of Satan" as he entered into spiritual combat (91). As in moments in Augustine's *Confessions* and other confessional literature, Norwood suggests that Satan sometimes seems to fight the hardest the closer one is to true piety. It is very important for Norwood, and for those studying him, to note the paradox that in his very conscious engagement in spiritual warfare Norwood comes to the belief that his spiritual state, at least for a time, is worsened rather than strengthened. That is, the more Norwood seemed to engage in spiritual combat consciously, he likewise found "more prevalency of corrupt thoughts and affections and less ability against them or for holy duties" (92). Rather than finding strength in his faith in God, Norwood begins to despair of his salvation as "the wily fiend would secretly persuade me all was but in jest, and to make me afraid" that he was not truly delivered by God from Satan's assaults (93).

[14] Norwood writes that he "resolved that in points of religion to be believed or practiced, which I did not sufficiently understand by the Holy Sciptures, I would be regulated by Augustine, though I had read little or nothing of his writings at that time … because not only in sermons but almost in all authors which I had read, whether divine or human, there was honourable mention of him, and he seemed to be generally most approved of for piety and learning" (61). Augustine's *Confessions* are included among the works of Augustine which Norwood mentions (61).

Accompanying this spiritual combat is a return of the visions of Satan with which Norwood had battled years earlier before his conversion—"a very sensible annoyance of Satan, sometimes waking, sometimes sleeping, which in short time also grew to be almost continual" (93). Norwood spends considerably more time describing his satanic dreams and visions *after* his conversion than he spent narrating his earlier afflictions, which speaks to the greater significance of this later spiritual combat.[15] Although the earlier dreams are significant from a reflective point of view—Norwood is able to see how his dreams fit into the sinful pattern his life had taken in his youth, despite the work of God's grace throughout his life—his post-conversion battles with Satan are more spiritually significant for Norwood. Now, Norwood has been regenerated by God's grace and the Holy Spirit. But these new assaults by Satan tempt him to despair, to believe that God could withdraw the grace already bestowed upon him.[16] It is at this time that he finds that his "wonted apprehensions of the joyful presence of God's Holy Spirit were turned into an apprehension of the presence of Satan in soul and body, stirring up horrible blasphemies in my mind and sundry annoyances in my body" (93).

It is here that the function of reason is most pronounced in Norwood's accounts of spiritual warfare. In moments when he thinks he is most on guard, Norwood's reason fails him, leading him to accept falsehoods about God. This is the kind of state Milton

[15] Whereas Norwood spends approximately four pages in the earlier account of his dreams before his conversion, he spends closer to fifteen pages on the later account of his satanic visions after his conversion.

[16] Consider Norwood's hesitation to share his "greatest grievances and fears, supposing that if I should lay open all I should be rejected of Christians as a reprobate, a man forsaken of God and given over unto Satan" (101).

would claim is the case with the faculty of reason in fallen man.[17] These satanic attacks which began as attacks on his physical body, as Norwood lies in his bed at night, progress to attacks on his mind. Satan or the demons are

> sometimes pressing, sometimes creeping to and fro, sometimes ready to take away my breath, sometimes lifting up the bed, sometimes the pillow, sometimes pulling the clothes or striking on the bed or on the pillow; sometimes as it were flashing in my head and all my body, sometimes working a strange and stirring fear and amazedness, whether I would or not, though I was firmly resolved against them; and often an expectation of some apparition. (93)

Here we see more similarities with Augustine's many accounts of Satanic attacks. Though Norwood is "firmly resolved against" the demons who fill his mind with "a strange and stirring fear and amazedness," his firm resolve yet fails him much as Augustine's resolution sometimes fails him in his sleep. This calamity in the faculty of reason leads Norwood to unfounded fears and, more significantly, to greater sins: blasphemy and, eventually, despair.

Norwood's experiences of error and especially despair recall a passage from *On the Trinity* in which Augustine writes of "untrue recollections, such as we commonly experience in sleep, when we fancy we remember, as though we had done or seen it, what we never did or saw at all; and that the minds of these persons, even though awake,

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[17] Compare C. A. Patrides' point concerning the success of the temptation scene in *Paradise Lost*: "Since the fruit was prohibited to man as a test of fidelity, it is not surprising that Satan's capital aim was to undermine man's faith in God by inducing him to question the terms of that prohibition. As Lancelot Andrewes observed of Satan's scheming, 'It is our faith that he aimes at. … For having ouerthrowne that, disobedience soone will follow'" (105).

were affected in this way at the suggestion of malignant and deceptive spirits, whose care it is to confirm or to sow some false belief" (12.15).[18] Augustine thus believes that demons are able to lead men to false conceptions of the soul, such as those Norwood experiences directly.

The erroneous opinions to which Satan leads Norwood are primarily, or most significantly, the blasphemies in his mind and his lack of faith in God's grace—his temptation "to doubt whether I were a man indeed embued with a reasonable soul, or whether I were not rather a devil incarnate in the likeness of man, and a very enemy to God, and therefore did seem to wish that I had never been or that I might fly somewhere from God" (95). Norwood himself is able to recognize that his faculty of reason seems lost at various points in his combat—he cannot find his reason to rely on it to combat Satan's temptations—such that he begins to doubt whether he has or ever had such a faculty. But Norwood then is tempted further to make the wildly illogical leap from doubting that he is a creature of reason to believing that he himself must then be an actual devil and an enemy of God.

For Norwood, his inability to use his reason eventually results in a decisive lack of faith and despair, until he finally "began to perceive my foolishness and how I had been deluded by Satan when I was drawn to lay down the shield of faith which would have sheltered me from the fiery darts of the devil unto which I had laid myself so open and had gotten so many deep wounds both in soul and body" (94). Yet, even as

[18] Though Augustine is discussing the problems he finds with the Platonic theory of "learning as recollection," he clearly takes those false recollections to be included in the general category of "such as we commonly experience during sleep, [etc.]" so that Norwood's visions and the "suggestion of the malignant and deceptive spirits" to which he is susceptible can also be subsumed in the larger implications of Augustine's argument in this passage.

Norwood acknowledges his own attempts and failures, by acts of reason, to return to his former faith that seems to have left him, he also believes that Satan recognizes his intentions and "therefore did assault me more furiously than before" (95). Thus once again, as before his conversion, Norwood describes being

> troubled with the disease called the "mare" (wherein a man seems to be neither quite awake nor quite asleep) and in that fit I was most suddenly and vehemently assaulted with a number of blasphemous and horrible thoughts and temptations or persuasions, as that God was not just and faithful in his word, that he was hard and unmerciful, etc. And that he had now certainly given me over to Satan and that I was now become a companion of the devil and his angels, and that I did hate God and rage against Him as the damned spirits do. And surely my heart seemed to be in a manner so disposed for a moment. But then it pleased the Lord to bring it to my remembrance and knowledge that all this was but a temptation, and that things were not so indeed as they seemed to be, but was only a delusion of Satan and provocation to blasphemy. (95-96)

The real turning point for Norwood in his spiritual warfare is an essentially two-edged awareness: the recognition that he "was too much afraid of Satan, [and] too distrustful of the constant mercy of God" (97).

In effect, in the final analysis, Norwood returns to the position Milton maintained in *Paradise Lost*: that proper piety is inextricably linked with the use of right reason. Norwood is right all along for blaming himself for making himself vulnerable to Satan's

attacks by making bad choices. But Norwood also comes to realize that the passion with which he was waging spiritual war was, in a sense, too passionate and not rational enough. Norwood concludes it was, indeed, his responsibility to act "with a good heart and in earnest, or from a good judgment, and not to perform spiritual duties as I was led by passions and affections but to guide myself by knowledge and judgment and discretion and truth" (97). With those many mares, Norwood again was the problem, along with Satan, because Norwood had been following his passions—especially in his fear and despair—rather than reason and his knowledge of the truth, so that Satan was effectively able to draw Norwood away from God. While Norwood "was exceedingly oppressed and deprived in the powers and faculties of my mind and soul, and all things seemed to my sight, hearing, and other senses very deadly, and as the shadow of death," he was still susceptible to the temptations of blasphemy. But when he lets his mind once again rule his passions, Norwood is able to recall "Scriptures contrary to these temptations" (99). Thus, again, we find in Norwood's writings, as we already found in Milton's and Augustine's, the notion that the ability for humans to overcome the temptations offered in satanic dreams and visions is considerably lessened because the faculty of reason is no longer fully in control while the person is asleep, allowing instead the fancy or the passions to rule the soul and to guide the will. And for Norwood, his dreams are so powerful that he seems to experience the same loss of reason even when he is awake and being tempted by Satan.[19]

[19] Frank Paul Bowman finds it is common in spiritual autobiographies that the "authors are not *reasonable* people in the strict sense; they have doubts about the efficacy of the reason to lead them to a true or the good. Indeed, through possession or madness they may for a time abandon reason entirely" (34).

Yet in an inversion of his earlier loss of reason and faith because of his demonic dreams, Norwood's ability to recall Scriptures in the battle with Satan allows him to find his faith again, which in turn allows his reason once again to rule his passions and to direct his will toward God. Finally, Norwood can even say that "this temptation, the thought whereof hath been always some abhorring to me and dampening of spirit, seems upon due consideration to have been most expedient and profitable and a further pledge of God's free grace and mercy to me in Christ" (110).

Norwood and Augustine both end their *Confessions* with a prayer to be delivered from their afflictions with Satan. Augustine initially speaks particularly about his dreams, asking, "Is not your hand, O God all-powerful, powerful to heal all diseases of my soul, and, by your more abundant grace, to quench even the lustful movements of my sleep" (10.30). But he goes on to acknowledge that these dreams reveal a greater weakness on his part, which can only be healed by God: "But what I still may be in this type of evil I have now said to my good Lord, 'rejoicing with trembling' for what you have given to me, lamenting in that in which I remain incomplete, hoping that you will make perfect in me your mercies even unto the fullness of peace, which my inward and outward members will have with you, when 'death is swallowed up in victory'" (10.30).

Norwood similarly gives thanks for God's deliverances from the evil that has pursued him, and he further asks that the Lord keep these deliverances in his memory—"Make me mindful of that great deliverance out of Egypt from those cruel taskmasters who would soon have made me wholly unfit for earth, much more unfit for heaven, spoiling me daily of whatsoever good thou hadst given me, and hurrying me forwards

unto everlasting destruction" (110).[20] But he then continues his prayer with the knowledge that he is still vulnerable to temptation, so he asks that God "Fit me unto the trials and temptations whereunto thus hast reserved me. Strengthen me to stand in the evil day. Thou hast engaged thy faithfulness. Leave me not to be tempted above what I am able, but give a comfortable issue with the temptation that I may be able to bear it" (110). And, finally, he asks, "That I may know him and the virtue of his resurrection and the fellowship of his afflictions, and be made conformable unto his death if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead" (110). This, of course, is the ultimate aim of spiritual warfare—to be made a fit companion among God's people.

"Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthralled": The Lady's Encounter with Comus

Demonic dreams are one type of spiritual warfare, but dreams are certainly not the only arena in which humans face spiritual tests and temptations. Moreover, while dreams are a particularly problematic form of spiritual warfare precisely because reason is less active during sleep, other forms of spiritual tests and temptations allow and even demand a more active response and vigilance on the part of reason. Milton's *Comus* imagines and represents a spiritual conflict between a human being, the Lady, and a tempter who is physically present, Comus. Though the masque has a seemingly pagan setting and cast, with virtually no explicit references to the Christian God or Christian theology, Milton's emphasis on the Lady's virtue and her use of reason to withstand

[20] The need to remember the work of reason—what has been learned in previous battles—is a further aspect of spiritual warfare that will be addresses in the next chapter.

Comus's temptation resonate with the Christian arguments found in many of his major works and the other texts in this study.[21]

The spiritual battle between the Lady and Comus is the central conflict of this poem. The Lady is virtuous, as the reader knows almost immediately from the Attendant Spirit when he informs the audience that he has been sent down to guard one "favour'd of high Jove" (78).[22] Though the Lady is traveling with her two brothers through the woods towards their home, she suddenly finds herself alone in the darkness when they leave her to find some sort of refreshment for her. She has heard the rowdy noises of Comus's merriment with his followers, and though she understands the sort of crowd who would be making such riotous noises, she also realizes that she has little choice but to seek out whatever kind of help she can find. More importantly, though she is fearful of the kinds of danger in which she may very well find herself, she is also quite secure in her sense that "These thoughts may startle well, but not astound / The vertuous mind, that ever walks attended / By a strong siding champion Conscience" (210-12). She suggests that thoughts of evil may very well startle the faithful person, but such thoughts cannot take over the virtuous mind that is led by conscience. With faith and hope, her reason tells her that God will help guard her virtue, her honor, and her life in this dire time of need.

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[21] Elisabeth Frost points out that "as in *Areopagitica*, the first part of *Comus* asserts that 'our faith and knowledge thrives [sic] by exercise,' and, furthermore, that without knowledge of evil, without trial and the possibility of failure, there can be no true virtue. *Comus*, like Milton's later political tract, is based on the power of reason to conquer evil, the necessity of trial in affirming virtue, and the reliance on will as a means of understanding the nature of temptation" (88).

[22] It is, of course, a commonplace notion that Jove can be understood as referring to the Christian God so that the pagan setting features a Christian subtext without being explicitly Christian.

Comus himself is aware of the Lady's virtue before he ever sees her, as he breaks off the Bacchanalian dancing when he "feel[s] the different pace, / Of som chast footing neer about" (145-46). Yet when Comus first presents himself to the Lady, he does so in disguise. It is his way to greet unwary travelers

> under fair pretence of friendly ends,
> And well plac't words of glozing courtesie
> Baited with reasons not unplausible
> Wind me into the easie-hearted man,
> And hugg him into snares.
>
> (160-64)

Like Satan in *Paradise Lost*, Comus is a master of sophistry. He is able to make the most sinful of arguments sound reasonable to bring the unsuspecting person into his waiting trap.[23] Yet there is another, darker purpose which Comus has in mind for the Lady. Comus is immediately taken with the Lady when he hears her singing, and he desires to have her not only in his entourage, but also as his queen.

Despite his intentions for the Lady, Comus initially presents himself to her as a "gentle Shepherd" (271) and offers to take her to a cottage where she can rest safely until her missing brothers can be found. She accepts his help without reservation: "I take thy word, / And trust thy honest offer'd courtesie" (271-72). The Lady does not see through the disguise of Comus to realize what he really is and what he intends, but it is important that she really has no reason at this moment to mistrust what this seemingly

[23] Elisabeth Frost argues that "Comus represents the dangers of reason, its transmutation into the logic and false philosophy of the fallen" (91).

good and gentle shepherd has told her, no reason to doubt that he speaks the truth to her.[24] That said, however, she still understands the precariousness of her situation, which gives her little choice in whether to proceed with this presumed shepherd, and asks that God's providence watch over her and "square [her] triall / To [her] proportion'd strength" (329-30).

After Comus and the Lady exit, the reader is introduced to the two brothers. The younger brother is rightly concerned about his sister's safety and welfare, but the older brother, while also concerned, has found a certain comfort in the knowledge of his sister's chastity, which he feels will keep her from harm. Even when he discovers through the Attendant Spirit (also in disguise as a gentle shepherd, but this time as one who is familiar to the boys) that she has been found by Comus and is therefore in greater danger than he had wanted to think possible, he insists that "Vertue may be assail'd, but never hurt, / Surpriz'd by unjust force, but not enthrall'd" (589-90). In a sentiment which echoes that which we already discovered in *Paradise Lost*—that evil can enter the mind of God or man and leave no stain behind—the older brother insists that their sister's virtue, even if attacked and surprised by the evil in the wood, will not be enthralled by the persuasive powers of that evil.

Indeed, the reader sees very soon after that the elder brother was entirely correct in his trust in his sister's virtue. The next time we see the Lady with Comus, it becomes quickly apparent that she has already seen through his disguises and knows Comus for

[24] Daniel Colvin argues that before the actual seduction of the Lady, Comus "blur[s] her sense of sight, her natural means for distinguishing between good and evil, between appearance and reality. The 'false presentments' will then subvert her understanding, a faculty which retained a vestigial capacity even after man's fall. … The attack, then, is to be made not directly on the Lady's virtue, but on the powers of reason and will by way of the appetites inherent in her particular nature" (11).

who and what he truly is. Moreover, she refuses to submit to the powers of which he boasts.

Comus has taken the Lady not to an humble cottage but to a grand palace, and he has placed her in an "inchanted Chair" before tables laden with "all manner of deliciousness" (s.d. 153). Though he offers the Lady a drink, she wisely sets it aside and attempts to rise out of her chair. Comus detains her, threatening to use his magic wand to bind her to the chair in which she sits, which he does indeed do.[25] But this does not particularly worry the Lady as she undertakes what she now knows is a spiritual battle with Comus. Though he boasts of his power over her, she insists, "Thou canst not touch the freedom of my minde / With all thy charms, although this corporeal rinde / Thou haste immanacl'd, while Heav'n sees good" (663-65). The Lady's words again resonate with the belief that her mind and will are of utmost importance here; it does not matter what Comus does to her body, as long as her mind refuses to believe his lies and her will does not consent to do what he suggests.[26] More importantly, God knows what is in her mind and will, so He sees the good she wants to do but is prevented from doing because of the evil of others.

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[25] Debora Shuger relates the entrapment of the Lady to Augustine's treatment of his wet dreams in his *Confessions*, where he laments his "inability to achieve the perfect continence God demands" (3), and in *City of God*, where he compares wet dreams to rape, insisting that both are free of guilt for what happens to and with their bodies. The Lady is as free from guilt from her entrapment as Eve, Augustine, and Norwood are from the sins in their dreams. But as with Norwood and Augustine, the implications for the Lady are different than they are for Eve, because they live in an already fallen world.

[26] Shuger sees these lines as Milton's affirmation of a Catholic distinction between sinful consent and unwilling arousals: "the fact that the Lady preserves her moral freedom and purity despite being trapped on a 'venom'd seat' (916) counters the dark and Protestant understanding of human sinfulness" (7). Kathryn Schwarz, in looking at the ways in which Milton attributes the virtue of chastity to the feminine will, suggests that the reader "may feel a certain skepticism, suspecting a more intimate mind-body connection than [the Lady] admits. But she is proved right, sustained in her conviction by the masque's events" (273).

Throughout *Comus*, both in the dialogue between the two brothers and in the encounter between the Lady and Comus, Milton explores a particular idea of chastity and virtue that is linked with the free exercise of the mind and will. The elder brother is absolutely certain that his dear sister's chastity—her virtue not only of body, but more importantly of mind—will be her "hidden strength" that will not allow her to be overcome by Comus's evil (415).[27]

At this point in the masque, Comus and the Lady engage in a debate as he attempts to persuade her that what he desires is not really as evil as she perceives it to be.[28] He urges her to see the pleasures available to her and offers her reasons that she should accept them. Comus charges that the Lady "invert[s] the cov'nants of her trust, / And harshly deal[s] like an ill borrower / With that which [she] receiv'd on other terms" (682-84), suggesting that she is somewhat cruel to herself in denying herself these

[27] Paula Loscocco addresses the Lady's chastity and compares it to Samson's heroic chastity. James Obertino argues that chastity is "important as a virtue in its own right, as well as a pervasive metonymy for charity, which binds Creator and creature, grace and nature together" (21). Such a reading of virtue, Obertino suggests, aligns Milton more closely with the Catholic theology of Aquinas than with the Reformation theologies of either Luther or Calvin. Debora Shuger also conceives of the Lady's chastity in terms of masculine virtue/chastity: "For a man, sex (that is, heterosexual intercourse) requires consent, and therefore his virtue can protect his virginity. However, while a man cannot be raped, his chastity can be threatened, and hence tested, by sexual temptation. Thus, in both Renaissance and modern usage, when a woman says she has been ravished, she means that she has been sexually assaulted; if a man makes the same claim, he means that he has been sexually aroused. Both sorts of ravishing involve coercion, but whereas women must fall back on pepper spray (or a couple of sword-bearing brothers) to ward off unwanted assaults, their own virtue suffices to protect men from all dangers *except* the 'birdlime of concupiscence'" (5).

Elisabeth Frost maintains that the Lady "bears out the Elder's prediction: armed with reason, and the inner light of chastity, the Lady remains steadfast against Comus's tangle of false reasoning, demonstrating the victory of innocence in the face of bold seduction. … [O]nly because the Lady remains pure in body and spirit, and carries her strength within herself, can she resist the seductive power of false reasoning" (93-94).

[28] Frost suggests that "throughout this first part of the poem, reason is at odds with the forces striving to depose it—perverse sophistry and sensuality. Reason governs the structure of the action, which centers on argument, dialogue, and debate" (90).

pleasures and violates the covenant which she implicitly has with Nature who has bestowed this beauty upon her.

Comus then moves to appeal to the Lady's understandable thirst and hunger after traveling for the day and becoming lost at night. Comus thus questions why she should deny herself "Refreshment after toil, ease after pain, / That have been tir'd all day without repast," particularly since all humans require such sustenance (687-88). Comus suggests that such need is a mark of a general frailty among human beings, rather than a sign of any individual weakness on her part. He concludes the first of his arguments with the urging that she drink what he has offered because it "will restore all soon" (690)—her strength will be restored so that she could presumably continue her journey.

The Lady, however, is not deceived by Comus's rhetoric.[29] She delivers a blistering tirade against the falsehoods he has told: "'Twill not false traitor, / 'Twill not restore the truth and honesty / That thou hast banish't from thy tongue with lies" (690-92). She points out that he lied when he told her he was taking her to a safe and humble cottage, but even more importantly she recognizes that the beast-like creatures surrounding him must also have been enchanted by Comus's evil offer of refreshment. She thus continues her accusation against Comus:

> Hence with thy brew'd inchantments, foul deceiver,
> Hast thou betrai'd my credulous innocence
> With visor'd falshood, and base forgery,

[29] Jean Graham, analyzing the Lady's silence and deafness in the masque, argues that "the Lady possesses the ability to understand and judge the virtue of words, and the will to shield her mind from unvirtuous words as soon as she recognizes them, just as Eve escapes pollution from Satan's dream, according to Adam" (6).

> And wouldst thou seek again to trap me here
>
> With lickerish baits fit to ensnare a brute?
>
> (696-700)

The Lady again offers her innocence in her defense in coming even thus far with Comus. She admits that she initially believed the lies that Comus told her—she was trusting of his lies in her innocence, but there was also no sign that he was less than he seemed when they met.[30] Furthermore, in comparing the enticements Comus has offered her to baits fit to snare brutes, she implicitly suggests that her reason—that which separates her and all humans from mere beasts—puts her above his appeal to merely physical desires. Her suggestion also shows a recognition that in appealing to his victims' purely physical desires, and having them succumb to his physical offerings, Comus renders them mere brutes—no longer capable of reason or rational thought.[31]

The Lady reiterates again in this portion of her argument that she "would not taste [his] treasonous offer" (702). In seeing Comus's offer as a form of treason, we are led to ask for whom this offer is treason—for Comus or for the Lady. In what way, or against whom, is this offer a form of treason? There are various ways to answer this question, each of which resonate with the implications I would read into this passage.

First, the Lady could be understood as saying that Comus himself is committing treason in making this offer—treason against God or the Heavens in attempting to lure unsuspecting humans into his sins. She also understands Comus as committing treason

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[30] Recall, however, that she also acknowledges that her choices were very limited when she decided to go with him, so that at that moment, he seemed no worse than the lesser of two evils, as it were.

[31] Daniel Colvin suggests that "in the process of being transformed by Comus, each subject loses that which, according to Milton, connects him with his creator and defines him as human: the faculties of understanding and will" (9).

against her—he has already betrayed her in telling her he would help her while intending to seduce her.

The most significant reading of this passage, however, implies that the Lady also understands that the offer Comus makes to her would lead her to a significant betrayal of herself—of her virtue, her mind, and her soul. Were she to accept the drink and promises offered by Comus, the Lady would be committing treason against herself, and also against her God.[32]

The Lady concludes her argument against Comus's enticement to drink his potion with an adamant statement that appeals to reason and wisdom: she would find no pleasures in his drink because "that which is not good, is not delicious / To a wel-govern'd and wise appetite" (704-5). The Lady's claim here emphasizes the subordination of appetite to mind. While the drink Comus offers might indeed be pleasurable to the appetite, which by nature has hunger and thirst for refreshment, the appetite would not yearn for such sensuous satisfaction if reason and wisdom governed it. She suggests, therefore, that the mind moved by wisdom and right reason, as hers is, would find no pleasure in Comus's drink, not because it does not taste good (it may), but because it is being offered for sinful purposes.

Comus immediately dismisses the Lady's arguments as the "foolishness of men," and instead points her again to the persuasion of Nature who provides all this wonderful

[32] The Lady then suggests that it is not necessarily the potion itself that is evil, but that it is rendered evil by the one who offers it. In a way, the potion offered by Comus is symbolically significant in ways that echo the symbolic significance of the fruit in Eden. That is, neither the fruit nor the potion is inherently evil, but they are rendered so when they are used in manners directly against the commandments of God. In drinking the potion that is against God's will for human beings, the Lady would be committing treason in the same way that Adam and Eve did when they ate what was forbidden.

bounty which is intended to be enjoyed. Yet he has already made this argument, and it failed to persuade the Lady. So Comus then moves to persuade her by conflating his notion of Nature with the Lady's belief in God:

> if all the world
> Should in a pet of temperance feed on Pulse,
> Drink the clear stream, and nothing wear but Freize,
> Th' all-giver would be unthank't, would be unprais'd,
> Not half his riches known, and yet despis'd,
> And we should serve him as a grudging master
> As a penurious niggard of his wealth,
> And live like Natures bastards, not her sons.
>
> (720-27)

The "all-giver" does not appear to be nature, in part because of the different pronouns Comus uses for each: the all-giver is male, nature is female. Yet Comus moves easily between talking about the all-giver and nature such that they are essentially the same. Comus is a rank naturalist, a kind of perverse pantheist, and a virtual animist. Comus's naturalism has no proper place for reason, and is even antithetical to reason. We see this especially in the clever pun in the last line of Comus's argument on the whole in this context. In Comus's rank naturalistic world-view, humans almost have a duty to incline to excess sensuality so as to relieve Nature of her abundance, to keep nature from being "strangl'd with her waste fertility" (729). Comus almost seems to expect that the Lady,

who is feminine like nature, cannot employ reason that would discern that there is something beyond the merely natural and sensual.

Comus then concludes his argument with his most brazen appeal to the Lady. He offers her this sinful advice:

> List Lady be not coy, and be not cosen'd
> With that same vaunted name Virginity,
> Beauty is natures coyn, must not be hoorded,
> But must be currant, and the good thereof
> Consists in mutual and partak'n bliss
> Unsavoury in th' injoyment of it self
> If you let slip time, like a neglected rose
> It withers on the stalk with languish't head.
> Beauty is natures brag and must be shown
> In courts, at feasts, and high solemnities
> …
> There was another meaning in these gifts,
> Think what, and be adviz'd, you are but young yet.
>
> (737-55)

Comus implies here that the Lady has been fooled into thinking that virginity is something to be prized and praised and instead argues that in keeping her virginity and chastity, the beautiful Lady is cheating both nature, who gave the Lady her beauty in order to see it spent in the indulgence of natural pleasures, and herself, for she could

experience the bliss of those same pleasures. In Comus's argument, the fact that nature has seen fit to bestow such beauty on the Lady is the very reason that the Lady should now indulge in the natural and sensual goods offered by and in the person of Comus.

Again, the Lady is not fooled by Comus, and she responds even more vehemently than before:

> I had not thought to have unlockt my lips
> In this unhallow'd air, but that this Jugler
> Would think, to charm my judgement, as mine eyes
> Obtruding false rules pranckt in reasons garb.
> I hate when vice can bolt her arguments
> And vertue has no tongue to check her pride.
>
> (756-61)

The Lady will not let Comus deceive her. She even attacks his view of nature. Countering Comus's crude naturalism, the Lady claims that there is, somewhat as in Stoicism, an inherent and functionally rational virtue in nature; that nature makes the greatest provision for those who live according to the laws of temperance. The Lady argues that the

> giver would be better thank't,
> His praise due paid, for swinish gluttony
> Ne're looks to Heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,

> But with besotted base ingratitude
>
> Cramms, and blasphemes his feeder.
>
> (775-79)

The Lady then asks Comus rhetorically, "Shall I go on?" (779), and she does indeed continue her speech on the value and power of chastity, the sublimity and mystery of which she acknowledges Comus will never be able to understand.

Comus knows the Lady speaks only truths, as he reveals to the audience that he "fear[s] / Her words set off by som superior power," and he reacts physically to her words in the same way he reacts when he feels the power and wrath of Jove (800-1). Despite this, however, Comus is still determined to "dissemble, / And try her yet more strongly" (805-6).

He barely begins his persuasions anew, however, when the Lady's brothers rush into the palace, take the glass from his hand, and break it against the floor. Unfortunately, the brothers failed to follow the Attendant Spirit's precise instructions to take Comus's magic wand. Comus therefore manages to escape, and the brothers are unable to "free the Lady that sits here / In stony fetters fixt, and motionless" (818-19).

Despite the Lady's impressive use of reason in the face of Comus's temptation, Milton suggests that the Lady's ability to withstand Comus nonetheless does not come entirely from her own mind. The Lady yet needs some external aid added to her own virtue to be entirely free from the sinful fetters with which Comus attempts to bind her. The Attendant Spirit thus calls on Sabrina, a "Virgin pure," who was transformed into a river goddess so as to avoid her potential rapist (826). The Attendant Spirit believes

Sabrina will be willing and able to help the Lady, "For maid'nhood she loves, and will be swift / To aid a Virgin, such as was her self / In hard besetting need" (855-57). Sabrina is indeed willing and able to release the Lady from Comus's spell, and she does so by sprinkling a sort of holy water from Sabrina's fountain onto the Lady's chest and rubbing the water three times on her finger tip and on her lip. This scene between Sabrina and the Lady suggests the act of Christian baptism, particularly with the use of water and the repetition of the number three.

Upon this cleansing rite at the hand of Sabrina, the "spell hath lost his hold" on the Lady (919). Furthering the analogy with Christianity, at least Miltonian Christianity, I argue that Comus is able to bind the Lady to his chair, despite her otherwise perfect use of reason to resist temptation, as a sign that the Lady, and all of humanity, is yet subject to the frailty of reason that is the most deleterious effect of original sin. The Lady's right reason guides her to the truths about Comus such that she is able to see through his false arguments and maintain her virtue. But he can still bind her body because her soul is still marked, in the context of the pagan masque, by something like the sins of Adam and Eve. The Lady employs right reason throughout, better than Adam and Eve did, but, in the terms of Thomas Aquinas, she was still potentially corruptible, a state poetically symbolized in her being stuck in Comus's spell. Sabrina, then, becomes a figure of God's grace as she cleanses the Lady in such a way that Comus has lost entirely his power over her. Milton himself makes this connection between Sabrina and God's grace

explicit when the Attendant Spirit urges the Lady to leave Comus's lair "while Heaven lends us grace" (938).[33]

Milton's argument concerning spiritual warfare in *Comus* is essentially the same as that *Paradise Lost*: right reason is foundational in spiritual temptation. The subtle difference in presentation between *Comus* and *Paradise Lost* is that in the latter Adam and Eve fall by the failure to employ right reason, and the effects of that fall, the dementing of humanity, are on rather full display. In *Comus*, the Lady, unlike Adam and Eve, employs right reason from beginning to end. Yet, she still needs a kind of baptism as a reminder that she is still potentially if not actually fallen at any moment. *Comus* operates as more of a cautionary tale than *Paradise Lost*. The Lady succeeds with reason, yet she is still subject to the enemy, and needs some form of prevenient grace to sustain her virtue.[34]

At the end of *Comus*, Milton offers a sort of summary statement concerning the worthwhile endeavor of spiritual warfare.[35] The Attendant Spirit tells the parents of the children:

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[33] Sacvan Bercovitch cites A. S. P. Woodhouse's outline of the action of the masque as a "movement from 'nature' to 'grace alone,' with an intermediate 'area where nature and grace are met' as 'adjoining and are interpenetrating orders'" (357). Nancy Weitz Miller suggests that the Lady's "steadfast refusal to yield to coercion, though physically bound to Comus's chair, merits divine aid. … [E]ven a hint of lust in her would tarnish her chastity, prevent divine intervention, and leave her entirely (bodily and spiritually) in Comus's power" (162-63).

[34] Daniel Colvin takes the lesson of *Comus* to be that "Only when a person recognizes his own nature can he exercise his faculties in a proper way. Significant action is indeed possible in a fallen world, but only with the proper knowledge of the self and the world and a concentrated exercise of the proper faculties" (16).

[35] James Obertino points out that the Attendant Spirit tells Lord and Lady Egerton that "all that has transpired has helped to perfect their children," but Obertino also acknowledge that Milton knows that the trials are not finished, for "nature will continue to mix the ingredients of trial with blessedness" (37).

> Heav'n hath timely tri'd their youth,
>
> Their faith, their patience, and their truth.
>
> And sent them here through hard assays
>
> With a crown of deathless Praise,
>
> To triumph in victorious dance
>
> O're sensual folly, and Intemperance.
>
> (970-75)

The Lady beats Comus's sensual folly and intemperance with right reason; but her momentary imprisonment and her liberating baptism reminds her that the next time she would be "timely tri'd" she would still need God's grace to guide her right reason.[36] Even in the last moments of the masque, Milton seeks to affirm for his audience that Heaven's grace would always help to sustain the work of reason and virtue in the face of such powerful temptations as Comus presented.[37]

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[36] Catherine Thomas suggests that the Lady will be better prepared for the next battle because "the test of her virtue [here] may be less that she deny all feelings and maintain unblemished notions of virginity and more that she learn to temper the passions she feels and those others feel toward her" (448). Responding to critics who suggest that the Lady's chastity has faltered, leading to her being bound to the chair, Debora Shuger points out that the praise offered by the Attendant Spirit for the Lady's triumph makes it difficult to read the Lady's entrapment as evidence of sin on her part: "The masque insists upon the Lady's virtue, without ever disclosing why she falls victim to the glutinous gums" (2).

[37] Arguing that Milton offers positive views of both Eve in *Paradise Lost* and the Lady in *Comus*, Jeanie Grant Moore yet suggests that their differences—"the failure of Eve in her unfallen state and the success of the Lady in a fallen world—are accounted for "in the paradox that only through the fall could Eve attain that which would have saved her: the knowledge of good and evil" (2). What Moore seems to ignore is just how Milton understands that knowledge of good and evil—"good lost, evil gained" rather than a particular kind of knowledge that could have prevented the fall had Eve had it. Milton's point is precisely that Eve was always sufficient to withstand the temptation of Satan.

"The tumors of a troubl'd mind": Samson's Battles Within

The Lady's spiritual battle with Comus offers an example of a rather obvious kind of spiritual warfare in which people must encounter a tempter who offers them something external to themselves. The Lady's mind was already strong when she met Comus, and she simply (though it is never really simple) had to maintain that strength of mind in order to see through the lies that Comus used in his attempt to persuade her to his side with the worldly and sensual delights offered. In *Samson Agonistes*, however, we find a kind of spiritual warfare that is deeply internalized so that the presence of others (who may or may not be functioning as tempters) is secondary to the battle being waged in one's own mind. For Samson, each of his visitors tempts him in a way that is contrary to what he feels he must do, but those temptations are less important than his battle against his despair which informs his encounters with his visitors. Insofar as Samson is (and has always seen himself as) an active rather than a contemplative man, his particular form of spiritual warfare is also rendered rather paradoxical. That is, this man of action finds his spiritual warfare centered mainly on his despair resulting from his failure to act properly in order to overcome temptation. He is forced to reflect upon his relations with those around him, but especially upon his relationship with God, as he realizes that the external deeds by which he expected to fulfill God's purpose for his life and his people were insignificant in light of the sins he committed against God.

Part of the power of Samson's spiritual battles is that he is fully, recognizably human in being marked by all the flaws of fallen humanity, unlike the Lady, for we never see her failing in her spiritual battles. Even more than the Lady who also

necessarily lives in the fallen world, Samson represents the struggles of fallen humanity in powerful ways, especially as he first recognizes his own weaknesses, and succumbs to those weaknesses, before he comes to the greater knowledge he needs in order to overcome those weaknesses.[38] In addressing Samson's weaknesses and humanity, critics of *Samson Agonistes* seem to be divided between the "traditional" view of Samson as redeemed through his repentance and the "revisionist" view of Samson as problematic because of his violence.[39] I offer an alternative to the extremes in this traditional/revisionist dichotomy by focusing on Samson as fully human—a human who sins and fails in the initial trials with which he is presented, but one who is also capable of redemption through God's grace in cooperation with human reason, as indeed is the case with all persons.

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[38] Camille Slights writes that "in *Samson Agonistes* Milton shows us the fallen world where doubting men struggle among the bewilderingly deceptive forms taken by good and evil where virtue is possible only when doubt is overcome" (395). Franklin R. Baruch argues that "the play has been centrally concerned, not with Samson, but rather with the way in which the Old Testament hero's story could be made to figure forth the nature of spiritual strength and insight, and of the kind of activity needed to achieve these objectives"(319). Baruch further suggests that Samson serves to show both a godliness that has been difficult to achieve (in the virtue of Samson) and the limiting nature of those who stop only at the admiration of such persons rather than seeking such virtue for themselves (in the distorted vision of the Chorus), such that the images at the conclusion of the poem "serve simultaneously to suggest Samson's victory and the Chorus' very limited and significantly distorted sense of what his mission has meant for them" (320).

[39] See Alan Rudrum's history of scholarship on *Samson Agonistes*. He identifies the traditional view (epitomized in the work of Mary Ann Radzinowicz and Joan S. Bennett) as seeing Samson as a hero who "through a process of repentance and renewal of spirit charted through the poem's major episodes, becomes enabled for the role to which he had been dedicated by angelic promise," and the revisionist view (epitomized in the work of Joseph Wittreich and John Carey) of Samson as a false hero who commits "morally disgusting" acts and whose actions should be contrasted with those of the Son in *Paradise Regained* (465). I realize that I cannot entirely escape this dichotomy, and I also recognize that my view tends toward the traditionalist, for I cannot see Samson's final actions (which are the focus for revisionist critics) as "morally disgusting" either in the historical biblical telling or in Milton's version. That said, I appreciate Rudrum pointing out that the revisionist view, in basing its understanding of Samson on the premise that Samson cannot be a hero because he did bad and sinful things, "ignores the Christian view of God's forgiveness of sins; it also fails to take human experience into account" (475). He also highlights Joan S. Bennett's attack (in *Reviving Liberty*) on "the shallow liberal assumptions that have fueled the revisionist thesis from the beginning" (479).

Thus, despite the focus in *Samson Agonistes* on the internal spiritual battle of the blind Samson on the day of his death and his defeat of the Philistines, Milton's closet drama yet implicitly deals with other kinds of spiritual battles as well. Otherwise, and not accidentally, Milton often refers to an earlier spiritual battle which Samson lost, a defeat that has haunted Samson in crucial ways—his failure to resist the temptation by Dalila to reveal the secret of his strength. The defeated Samson is distressed by the knowledge that he made a series of bad choices regarding his marriage to Dalila, choices which essentially rendered Samson a man incapable of action and brought him to this state of despair and to his final spiritual battle.

First, Samson reflects upon his very decision to marry Dalila. Samson had been married before, and in that case, Samson "knew / From intimate impulse" that God directed him to marry his first wife (222-23), despite the fact that she was the "daughter of an Infidel" (221). Though God directed Samson to marry his first wife, upon reflection Samson concedes that there was no similar divine impulse directing Samson to marry Dalila. Samson admits regarding his marriage to Dalila that he "thought it lawful from [his] former act" (231), assuming that what God had sanctioned the first time must also be allowed the second.[40] Samson assumed that he knew the will of God, and, not heeding reason properly, he proceeded according to a problematic inference.

[40] Michael Bryson argues that "in choosing to present Samson's story in dramatic form, Milton focuses our attention on the subjective and potentially unreliable nature of his Samson's [as opposed to the Biblical Samson's] claim to divine impulsion. What Judges establishes as truth, Milton's *Samson Agonistes* opens to doubt and skepticism" (27). Yet I would ask what purpose Milton would have in calling into question the truth of Samson's claim. Milton's ongoing work of "justifying the ways of God to man" would hardly be served by calling into question the truth of Holy Scriptures.

Samson must also reflect upon his choice to tell Dalila the secret of his strength, which is reminiscent of the choices Adam and Eve made in *Paradise Lost*. In succumbing to the temptations offered by Dalila, Samson mirrors the fall of Adam and Eve in Eden in several important ways, including the terms of obedience and the effects of the fall.

Samson's hair has a symbolic function similar to that of the fruit in the Bible and in *Paradise Lost* where matters of ultimate consequence are intertwined with the most insignificant objects, fruit and hair. Harapha mocks Samson and Samson's God for having his strength placed in his hair, suggesting even that Samson is a freakish pretender since his strength "from Heaven / … was giv'n [him] in [his] hair, / Where strength can least abide" (1134-36). Samson, in a superficial response, tells Harapha that his strength, like Harapha's, is diffused throughout his body, its muscles, its sinews. Yet, Samson really knows what Harapha does not, that Samson's strength is not his own and is a fragile gift from God that, though fragile, was intended to be used to defeat the enemies of God's chosen people, and, despite its fragility, would nonetheless be efficacious for Samson's cause and call. The hair itself, of course, is not the source of Samson's strength, except as it is "the pledge of [his] unviolated vow" to God (1144)—the visible sign of the covenant between God and Samson. Samson's strength will remain only if he keeps his hair uncut—i.e., only if he keeps his covenant with God. As the fruit in *Paradise Lost* was a sign of Adam and Eve's obedience, Samson's unshorn hair is significant only as a sign of Samson's obedience to God. As long as the hair remains uncut as a sign of Samson's obedience, then his strength remains, but when

Samson reveals the secret of his covenant with God, he also breaks that covenant.[41] The consequences of that break are dire for Samson, as his hair is cut by his enemies, thereby robbing him of his God-given strength, and he is blinded to ensure that he will pose no further harm to the Philistines, the enemy of God's chosen people whom Samson was summoned to defeat.

Samson's blindness that results from his fall is a also comparable to the effects of the fall on Adam and Eve and all humankind. His blindness functions as a metaphor for the mental and spiritual blindness, or the diminution of rational faculties, which all humans must endure as an effect of the sins of Adam and Eve, as well as their own sins. While Adam and Eve, and by extension all fallen humanity, enter into a spiritual and intellectual darkness, Samson enters a physical darkness when the Philistines blind him in their revenge. Such a metaphorical view of Samson was common in the seventeenth century, as evidenced by the analogy John Brayne poses in his treatise, *The Rules of Dispute*: "Order being observed … truth will have preserved to it its strength and freedom, which by the subtilty and sophistry of mens deceitful ways and wit, is weakned and captivated: and men contending for truth denyed this, are disarmed; and the people, as Samson, have their eyes put out, and made grinde in the Mills of error and ignorance" (7).

[41] William Kerrigan conceives of Samson's hair as a symbol of the "internal marriage" of strength and wisdom which Samson should have, and Kerrigan therefore relates Samson's hair, and the necessity that he leave it uncut, to a woman's preservation of her chastity, such that his "internal marriage represents in this sense spiritual virginity—strength intact, guarded by wisdom" (230). The loss of his hair is therefore also comparable to a woman's loss of her virignity. Paula Loscocco also conceives of Samson as a hero of chastity, focusing on Samson's "role as God's recuperated spouse" (192), and arguing that "Samson's chastity is, in its end, a bride's virtue that is first rendered male to purify its heroism from effeminate carnality but is then set in female spousal relation to the husbandly Lamb" (197).

Though Samson's blindness can be understood in terms of the fallen human condition, the punishments which Samson endures for his sins, especially his blindness, also come to have particular symbolic significance for Samson himself. He realizes that his physical blindness is insignificant compared to the metaphorical blindness he experienced in his relationship with Dalila.[42] He bemoans the loss of his sight eloquently at the opening of the poem, considering this blindness "a living death, / And buried … / My self my Sepulcher, a moving Grave" (100-2), but Samson comes to recognize in the course of the poem that "that blindness [was] worse then this [blindness], / That saw not how degeneratly I serv'd" (418-19). Being physically blinded, however, is the necessary condition for Samson to overcome the blindness that overcame him, and all of humanity, when he and they, following Adam and Eve, sinned against God in the first place. Moreover, the spiritual warfare in the case of Samson is that much more acute as it is so manifestly and profoundly internal in light of Samson's blindness.

So, Samson's all-important spiritual battle lies centrally in his struggle with his own despair. Next to pride, despair is just about the worst of sins, because it means one

[42] Michael Bryson similarly suggests that "Samson does not merely suffer his blindness, he is his blindness—so thoroughly and completely does Samson inhabit the darkness that blindness has cast him into, that he, like Nicholas of Cusa's 'every creature,' quite literally 'is darkness'" (29). Caroline McAlister argues that "Milton employs images of sentience—particularly seeing and hearing—as an analogue for internal, spiritual perception" (59). McAlister further considers Samson's failed perceptions as related to his spiritual imprisonment: "The opening scene makes the point that to indulge the external senses at the expense of the internal faculties of sentience is to imprison oneself in the flesh. … While prison, airless and drab, is in part one cause for his lack of sentience, lack of sentience is also in itself a kind of prison. … Likewise, vision, the faculty of perception most frequently associated metaphorically with the imagination, is also a means of escaping one's immediate, physical boundaries. … Samson's true imprisonment is thus internal and metaphorical as well as literal—a loss of sentience that prevents him from contact with the spiritual realm. Samson's impaired external vision becomes a metaphor for the partiality and vulnerability of all forms of human perception as contrasted with the completeness, the absoluteness of divine illumination" (62).

has lost all hope and has given up on God's work in one's life.[43] In his state of despair, Samson encounters various people from his past on this day which he has been given to rest. Each visitor pities Samson somewhat and even offers possible ways out of his torture and toil. Thus the genius of Milton: each visitor offers Samson temptations of sorts, temptations that represent and reveal parts of the arguments the fallen Samson has had with himself, and are now all the more intense in his blindness. These visitors come to see Samson on a day of his bodily rest, yet their presence and virtual temptations serve only to stimulate Samson's mind into the most complex of internal, mental turmoil. I would go so far as to suggest that these faceless voices that tempt Samson serve to internalize Samson's own self-communication in spiritual warfare and that Samson really is to be regarded as functioning as his own tempter throughout the poem. As a result, even the Satan-figure in the dramatic poem is no less than Samson himself.[44]

For the longest time, Samson's mind is not entirely capable of the reasoning needed to free himself from the despair in which he finds himself, such that his real battle throughout the dramatic poem is with himself and in his mind—he has brought himself to unreasonable despair, and he will have to reason and will himself out of that sorry state by the end of the poem, with the aid of grace. As Samson struggles within his mind to reconcile himself to the knowledge that his sins have brought him to the low point in which he finds himself, he eventually comes to a peace of mind about his

[43] Pride is the root of all sins, but despair is the belief that God has abandoned a person.

[44] Nancy Rosenfeld suggests that "in Samson we also see … what Milton's Satan had become: a man limited by his human vision, yet retaining certain superhuman abilities as the leader and prophet: the ironic human counterpart of Satan, the false heavenly deliverer" (187). Though she admits that Samson is often considered a precursor to Christ as a "great Deliverer," Rosenfeld yet suggests that Samson's very humanity and his cycle of sin, repentance, and more sin reflect a Satanic pattern rather than a divine one, though unlike Satan, Samson is able to be redeemed and reconciled with God.

relationship with God when he begins to employ right reason and understand that he can be forgiven even for what amounts to a betrayal of God's promise to him and his covenant with God.

Samson's current condition is such that he is being allowed some bodily rest from his servile toil on this day of feasting as the Philistines honor their god, Dagon, whom they believe to have defeated the God of the Israelites. Samson's body is ostensibly at rest, but his mind is in utter turmoil, full of "restless thoughts, that like a deadly swarm / Of Hornets arm'd, no sooner found alone, / But rush upon [him] thronging" (19-21). Focused on the disparity between "what once [he] was, and what am now" (22), Samson's mind allows him no real rest as he questions why God foretold the great feats Samson would accomplish. Yet, the formerly great and strong Samson questions his sorry condition:

> Betray'd, Captiv'd, and both my Eyes put out,
> Made of my Enemies the scorn and gaze;
> To grind in Brazen Fetters under task
> With this Heav'n-gifted strength?
>
> (33-36)

In his spiritual warfare, Samson has to remind himself that he should "not rashly call in doubt / Divine Prediction" when all that had been promised by God might have been accomplished if Samson had not "default[ed]" on his part of the bargain (43-45).

Yet even in this small admission of responsibility, Samson's words would suggest that he believes God did not make him entirely sufficient to maintain his

strength because of a certain "impotence of mind" on his part (52). Echoing the language in *Paradise Lost* concerning ideas of will, mind, and reason in spiritual battles, Samson questions his own strengths and weaknesses:

> what is strength without a double share
> Of wisdom, vast, unwieldy, burdensom,
> Proudly secure, yet liable to fall
> By weakest suttleties, not made to rule,
> But to subserve where wisdom bears command
> (53-57).

Samson's declaration that he is "proudly secure, yet liable to fall" echoes the similar claim about Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* that they were created "Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall" (3.99). Through the similar phrases, Milton compels the reader to recall the line and idea from *Paradise Lost*, if only to note the difference in the circumstance relative to Samson. Instead of emphasizing, as with Adam and Eve, the freedom of Samson's will in his choice to fall, Milton reveals Samson's own perception of himself as always "liable to fall" (55). Moreover, Samson emerges as a figure even more problematic than Adam and Eve. Samson dissociates his liability to fall from his postlapsarian status as he proceeds through the course of events with the idea that God did not endow him with the ability, especially the wisdom, to withstand the temptation that would take his strength away from him. In attempting to blame God for his own weakness (which is what Adam and Eve did eventually as well), Samson fails to understand that his own pride played a major part in his downfall—he was not only

falsely secure in his strength with which God endowed him at his conception and held in his hair, but he was also excessively proud of the strength of will he imagined he had but discovered that he did not.[45]

Similarly, Samson's statement that his strength should have served his wisdom and followed wisdom's command echoes the idea that pervades *Paradise Lost* that the will should follow reason's command. Samson does not consider is that he had sufficient wisdom to guide his strength and his will to God's purpose and to reject the temptation offered by Dalila, because it is easier to blame God than to take complete responsibility for his blindness and enslavement at the hands of his enemies.

In this state of mind, Samson first hears the approach of the Chorus, but he is uncertain whether those who are coming are his friends coming to pity him or his enemies coming to mock him, so he becomes quiet. The Chorus is indeed comprised of Samson's friends from his Jewish tribe, but they are likewise hesitant to approach Samson in his sorry condition. They initially view him from afar, not wanting to disturb what little peace Samson may have on this day of rest, but they also recognize that Samson is not at peace—they understand that his state of mind is reflected in his very appearance before them:

> See how he lies at random, carelesly diffus'd,
>
> With languish't head unpropt,

[45] Samson's false sense of his own strength of will also echoes Eve's decision to leave Adam's side in *Paradise Lost*, insofar as she does not expect that she will ever willingly disobey God's commandment not to eat the fruit; she, too, was proud in the conception of herself as being able to withstand any temptation before her.

As one past hope, abandon'd,

And by himself given over.

(118-21)

Samson's very posture and clothing reveal the despair in which he finds himself, and his friends cannot comprehend the difference between the warrior Samson and the captive Samson. These friends ask themselves if it is possible that "this be hee, / That Heroic, that Renown'd, / Irresitible *Samson*" (124-26). They comment to themselves upon the changes in Samson until Samson begins to speak again, and then they finally announce themselves his friends and neighbors. Their hopes for their visit are that

Counsel or Consolation we may bring,

Salve to thy Sores, apt words have power to swage

The tumors of a troubl'd mind,

And are as Balm to fester'd wounds.

(183-86)

Samson's troubled mind and festered wounds are precisely what need to be healed in the course of the dramatic poem, and the Chorus will indeed help him, but Samson will have to do the redemptive mental work for himself.

Samson is somewhat comforted by the presence of his Chorus of friends, yet he is perturbed further when he realizes how few of his friends have come to see him in his demeaning state. Even his blindness offers him some small comfort at this point as it means that he cannot see their scorn, and perhaps even a sense self-righteousness that Samson has deserved what has befallen him. The only defense he can offer of himself is

that while they could see his immense strength, they could not see that his wisdom was "nothing more then mean" (207). The Chorus of friends seeks to reassure him that even "wisest Men / Have err'd, and by bad Women been deceiv'd" (210-11), so Samson's poor judgment would be understandable even for men renowned for their wisdom.

Yet the Chorus continues by questioning Samson's reasons for marrying Dalila in the first place. Though they are more focused on his reasons for marrying her and his failure to free the Israelites from the Philistines, Samson seeks to defend that failure by placing some of the blame on Israel's governors who "not at all consider'd / Deliverance offerd" by Samson's great and heroic deeds (245-46). Instead of following Samson's numerous victories over the Philistines with complete defeat of their enemies, the people of Israel, Samson suggests,

> had grown corrupt,
> And by thir vices brought to servitude,
> Then to love Bondage more then Liberty,
> Bondage with ease then strenuous liberty.
>
> (268-71)

He suggests a certain unwillingness on the part of the Israelites to do the arduous work that gaining their freedom will require, for it is sometimes easier to remain in easy bondage than work for freedom. Though Samson may only intend to speak of the Israelites, the subject at issue is really Samson himself. His vices—listening and succumbing to his wife's temptation—have brought him to servitude, and there is a certain complacency in his bondage because of the despair in which he finds himself.

Samson's physical strength eventually returns, but he cannot find easily the strength of will to gain his freedom from the Philistines, nor does he believe that it will be at all possible for him to deliver his people as promised by God, unless "Gods propos'd deliverance" makes it possible (292). Even making such an allowance, it does not seem that Samson has much hope that such a deliverance will be possible with him as God's instrument.

Samson's point about God's providence, however, turns the conversation to the topic of God's justice.[46] Samson's friends lament that there are so many people who

> doubt his ways not just,
> As to his own edicts, found contradicting,
> Then give the rains to wandring thought,
> Regardless of his glories diminution;
> Till by thir own perplexities involv'd
> They ravel more, still less resolv'd,
> But never find self-satisfying solution.
>
> (300-6)

Though the Chorus seems to be talking in generalizations about people who doubt God's justice, they are again unwittingly referring to Samson's own state of mind, his doubts about God's justice, and his despair over his condition. Samson is one who has given himself over to wandering thoughts, becoming ever more entangled by the snares provided by his own uncertainties.

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[46] In another echo of *Paradise Lost*, the Chorus reminds Samson that "Just are the ways of God, / And justifiable to Men" (293-94).

The Chorus also speaks directly to Samson's own experiences by pointing out that God's justice and providence must have been at work in his two marriages to Philistian women, if God desired that Samson, a chaste Nazarite, marry an unclean women.[47] The Chorus then urges Samson to suppress the vain reasonings by which he has brought himself to despair: " Down Reason then, at least vain reasonings down, / Though Reason here aver / That moral verdit quits her of unclean" (322-24). The Chorus is speaking very particularly about the blame which belongs to Dalila rather than to Samson in her betrayal of her husband, but their words also speak to Samson's state of mind. He needs to shut down his "vain reasonings" which have focused on the illicit aim to call God's justice into question. Instead, the implications of the Chorus' statement are that Samson needs to redirect his use of reason toward God, His purpose, and his own place and role in God's plan for his life and his people.

Samson does not respond to the Chorus' points about God's justice and Samson's role in God's plan, for they are interrupted by the arrival of Manoa, Samson's father. Yet, Samson internalizes their points, and employs right reason to draw the analogy between the status of the Israelites overall and his own situation. Then, in most of the remainder of the poem, he is able to use right reason as a means to emerge from his despair. As a result, Samson becomes resolute in his conclusion that God has been just all along.

Samson's emergence from despair with the help of right reason occurs especially when Samson begins to speak to Manoa, his father, as Manoa's arrival poses yet another

[47] The Chorus is seemingly gentle in their handling of Samson at this point, as they avoid the suggestion that Samson did not have God's permission to marry Dalila.

trial for Samson. Manoa also doubts that God's justice is at work in his son's life. Manoa believes that because Samson was so manifestly chosen by God for exceptional work, God "should not so o'rewhelm [him], and as a thrall / Subject him to so foul indignities" (370-71). But a more contrite Samson is beginning to employ right reason and confidently reminds his father that he should

> Appoint not heavenly disposition, Father,
> Nothing of all these evils hath befall'n me
> But justly; I my self have brought them on,
> Sole Author I, sole cause.
>
> (373-76)

Taking full responsibility for his own fallen condition, Samson now confesses he knew what Dalila sought and what it would cost him were he to succumb to her temptation. He knew "How openly, and what impudence / She purpos'd to betray [him]" (398-99), and he understood that giving into her wishes would make him "Traytor to [him] self" (401). Samson recognizes that succumbing to Dalila's temptation essentially rendered him her servant, effecting his betrayal not only of himself and his people, but also a betrayal of his sacred duty to them and to God. In giving into Dalila's "blandisht parlies, feminine assaults," Samson failed to heed or uphold his reason which might have allowed him to remain strong against her false claims and arguments (403). Samson therefore sees a great justice at work insofar as his formerly "servil mind / [Is] Rewarded well with servil punishment" (412-13). Though he now finds himself a slave to the Philistines, he realizes that his enslavement to Dalila's beauty and arguments was the

prior, worse, and more consequential enslavement. Yet, now while his body is enslaved, his mind, formerly enslaved by Dalila's sway, is becoming free again.

But there is another effect of Samson's sin: on this very day the Philistines are honoring their pagan god, Dagon, in celebration of their victory over Samson. Manoa presses his blind and enslaved son to realize that

> *Dagon* will be magnified, and God,
> Besides whom is no God, compar'd with Idols,
> Disglorifi'd, blasphem'd, and had in scorn
> By th' Idolatrous rout amidst thir wine;
> Which to have come to pass by means of thee,
> *Samson*, of all thy sufferings think the heaviest,
> Of all reproach the most with shame that ever
> Could have befall'n thee and thy Fathers house.
>
> (440-47)

Manoa's words here provide Samson occasion to heed the corrective counsel Samson just heard from the Chorus. The Chorus recommended Samson "down" his "vain reasonings," and now that we hear the words of Samson's father, we can see whence Samson might have inherited his "vain reasonings." Such reasonings are "vain" in at least two senses. First, Samson's previous reasonings, and now Manoa's reasonings, are vain in the sense of being unproductive. They go nowhere; they do not improve the circumstance. And they are also vain as in vainglorious. Manoa's words in particular to Samson regarding the shame brought upon "thy father's house" reveal Manoa's rather

remarkable vanity. Manoa thinks the ultimate suffering in this circumstance is not really the diminution of his and Samson's God, the suffering of the Israelites, or even Samson's blindness, but the dishonor that will befall Manoa in particular for being Samson's father. Manoa is too preoccupied with his own private domain, his "house."

Manoa's vain words give us a greater glimpse into Samson's own "vain reasonings," his deliberations that go nowhere and his vanity. Yet, in this very confrontation with the "vain reasonings" of his own father, Samson continues his right-reasoning emergence from despair. Where he previously believed that he was entirely without hope and had been abandoned by his God, he now speaks again of hope: "This only hope relieves me, that the strife / With me hath end; all the contest is now / 'Twixt God and *Dagon*" (460-61). Samson has no doubt that their God will prove victorious over Dagon, despite Samson's own defeat. And Samson reassures his father that Dagon will soon receive "Such a discomfit, as shall quite despoil him / Of all these boasted Trophies won on me, / And with confusion blank his Worshippers" (469-71).

Manoa is comforted by Samson's words, taking them as a divine prophecy that God will neither "long defer / To vindicate the glory of his name / Against all competition" (474-76), nor will He "long / Endure it, doubtful whether God be Lord, / Or *Dagon*" (476-78). But despite that reassurance offered by his son, Manoa again turns his attention to the condition of his son, telling Samson that he seeks to ransom him from the Philistines.

But Samson insists that it is just for him to remain a slave to the Philistines. He asks Manoa to "let him here, / As I deserve, pay on my punishment; / And expiate, if

possible, my crime" (488-90). He believes that his punishment must be harsh to make up for the extent of his crime—"shameful garrulity" (491)—which would have been a bad enough crime if he had betrayed only a friend with his excessive talkativeness, but he had betrayed God Himself by revealing his and God's secret. He reminds his father:

> I Gods counsel have not kept, his holy secret
> Presumptously have publish'd, impiously,
> Weakly at least, and shamefully.
>
> (497-99)

Samson feels he must remain in bondage to pay for his sins, but Manoa persists, further urging his son to work towards his own preservation. Even while urging Samson to "Be penitent and for thy fault contrite" (502), Manoa also urges his son to "act not in [his] own affliction" (503). Manoa thinks Samson can repent for his sins without suffering punishment for them, but Samson, the right-reasoning Samson, knows better. His punishment is just and necessary and must be endured.[48]

Yet even at this moment of acceptance of his state, Samson has not completely left his despair. Manoa attempts to convince Samson that God is as happy with the sinner who "imploring mercy sues for life" as He is with the sinner "who self-rigorous chooses death as due" (512-13). Manoa even goes so far as to suggest that Samson is being harder on himself than God would be. But Samson replies that while he earnestly

[48] Philip Dust points out that Milton's representation of Samson's penitence for his sins follows Aquinas's treatment of penitence as a virtue: "Aquinas defines penitence as 'to grieve over something one has done previously.' As such it is an act of the will and … it is 'the habit of choosing according to right reason'" (15). Dust therefore argues that Samson's habit of consciously maintaining a state of penitence toward God, whom he has wronged through his various sins, but especially in telling his secret to Dalila, allows him to "achieve[] true freedom through God's grace" (15).

desires God's pardon for his sins, he sees no point in asking for life because his life would have no purpose, no end to which he would aim. Samson has no desire to return to the Israelites and live "blind, disheartn'd, sham'd, dishonour'd, quell'd" (563), and his despair causes him to believe that God would have no use for such a life where he could serve neither his nation nor his God but only "sit idle on the houshold hearth, / A burdensome drone; to visitants a gaze, / Or pitied object" (566-68). While Samson is sure he could live a long easy life in such a state, he is also sure that he does not want to live "To a contemptible old age obscure" (572). Instead, it is infinitely more appealing to him to work as a slave for the Philistines "Till vermin or the draff of servil food / Consume me, and oft-invocated death / Hast'n the welcom end of all my pains" (574-76). Samson would prefer death under the Philistines to an easy life with his father among the Israelites. Samson is ready for death, or so he thinks, and despite a few more right-reasoned judgments, he yet reverts to despair. Again, Samson, inclined to fall, is falling yet again even as, for the most part, he is emerging into the light of right reason.

In a hasty attempt to bring Samson out of this despair, Manoa offers the hope that God might give Samson back his vision. Manoa is not entirely wrong in thinking that the same God that has worked other miracles in Samson's life (like the fountain that sprung from dry ground after Samson's prayer for water to drink) could also work a miracle to make Samson see again—such would be within the powers of God. But Manoa foolishly seems to place all his hope in such a miracle. He is right in thinking that because Samson's strength returned with his hair God's strength does not continue "in thee for naught, / Nor shall his wondrous gifts be frustrate thus" (588-89). Manoa

hopes for a miracle of returned sight because Manoa still harbors hope that Samson might one day return to the battlefield and defeat the Philistines, and, of course, return honor the house of Manoa. Yet, here Manoa reveals his own blindness, his spiritual blindness. Manoa cannot imagine that Samson could use his strength to defeat the Philistines without his sight.

Samson cannot imagine it, either. Indeed, he is so convinced of his uselessness that he admits to Manoa:

> So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
> My hopes all flat, nature within me seems
> In all her functions weary of her self;
> My race of glory run, and race of shame,
> And I shall shortly be with them that rest.
>
> (594-98)

Again, the only hope that Samson can bring himself to have, even now, is that death will soon come to him—all other hopes have fallen flat, their possibilities ringing hollow.

Manoa understands that Samson is suffering from "anguish of the mind and humours black" (600), but he still insists, despite Samson's protests, that he will attempt to ransom Samson from the Philistines. While he goes about that business, he therefore asks that the Chorus offer some "healing words" to his troubled son (605). In response to that request, Samson confirms for the Chorus the extent to which his mind remains troubled:

> Thoughts my Tormenters arm'd with deadly stings
> Mangle my apprehensive tenderest parts,
> Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise
> Dire inflammation …
> Sleep hath forsook and giv'n me o're
> To deaths benumming Opium as my only cure.
> Thence faintings, swounings of despair,
> And sense of Heav'ns desertion.
>
> (623-32)

Samson recalls here the image in the opening of the poem: his thoughts torment and sting him like a swarm of hornets. But he also emphasizes in this speech that the torment in his mind, the battle being waged there against his hopelessness and despair and his desire for death, is much worse than the struggles endured by his body, both in the past and in the present. His body can find rest, but his mind has no reprieve, not even in sleep. Death, therefore, seems to offer him the only possible reprieve. But with that "thence," Samson seems to realize that the assumption that death may be his only reprieve is what actually drives him to the despair and to the sense that God has deserted him. If he could come to peace with his situation in life, with his responsibility for that situation, such that his mind and thoughts could end their torment, he would not still feel that he has been abandoned by God. Samson thinks he needs peace of mind in order to emerge from his despair. Yet, here is where Samson's last lapse away from right reason will converge with his sad insight that death may be his only reprieve. At this point he

does not realize it, but, in a sense, he is right: he will find his final cause, in Aristotle's terms, in his death, but it will be a death that will also be his victory over his enemy as God promised. For all of Samson's right reasoning as the poem proceeds to its end, he still, until the very end, cannot completely escape despair and the wrong reasoning, which confuses cause with effect, and yet he needs peace of mind in order to be free of despair.

Yet that recognition alone is not sufficient to bring him out of despair, and he concludes this speech with yet another clear statement of his hopelessness and despair:

> Nor am I in the list of them that hope;
> Hopeless are all my evils, all remediless;
> This one prayer yet remains, might I be heard,
> No long petition, speedy death,
> The close of all my miseries, and the balm.
>
> (647-51)

Samson is clearly still deeply immersed in his despair. He has returned to his sense of his own hopelessness, that there is no hope for his life, other than death.

In that frame of mind, Samson encounters his next visitor—his wife, Dalila. He does not want to be near his wife, but he is helpless to prevent either her appearance or her conversation. Samson's encounter with Dalila is crucial, as he must deal with her temptation all over again. This will be a defining moment for Samson, as he must refute Dalila's logic to prevent becoming enslaved to her again.

Though Dalila initially claims to have repented for her actions which brought about Samson's enslavement and blindness, Samson understands that her presence and her words will be another temptation for him to withstand. There is a strong misogynistic attitude in Samson's words as he makes generalizations about women, but he is talking specifically about *false* women—not all women. More importantly, what he believes about Dalila's motives, and the motives of women like her, is that she intends "to try / her husband, how far urg'd his patience bears, / His vertue or weakness which way to assail" (754-56). Samson intuits he will once again be tested, and he prepares himself for this crucial mental battle.[49]

Dalila attempts to appease Samson, even as she offers a variety of defenses of her past actions: her weakness as a woman, her jealousy of his love, that she was looking out for his safety (which was promised to her by those who sought to know Samson's weakness). Dalila mostly lies to Samson, but there is one truth she speaks that Samson cannot dispute, nor does he have any desire dispute it. She reminds him that "what I did thou shewdst me first the way" (781). They both revealed a secret that should have been kept secret—Samson revealed his secret to Dalila; Dalila revealed it to the Philistines. Despite her appearance of repentance, and despite the truth that she speaks about following Samson's example of revealing secrets, Samson sees her present disclaimer as an extension of her previous and continued cruelty:

[49] Samson seems much less susceptible to Dalila's physical presence than he was before. Though he may have given in partly because of her beauty the first time he fell, now he cannot see her beauty, and he instead has to see through her arguments as she attempts to persuade him to come live with her again.

> How cunningly the sorceress displays
> Her own transgressions, to upbraid me mine?
> That malice not repentance brought thee hither,
> By this appears.
>
> (819-22)

To Samson, Dalila's attempt to exonerate herself because of his example only makes her more culpable. He accepts her "bitter reproach" as true, even if a harsh taste of reality (823), but mostly because he realizes that "I to my self was false e'er thou to me" (824). Therefore, he unexpectedly accepts her premise that their crimes were equivalent, and he will give her "Such pardon … as I give my folly" (825). His offering of pardon and forgiveness is ironic, of course, because what Dalila miscalculated was the extent to which Samson has already damned himself because of his weakness in giving into her demands.

Dalila also misjudges the extent to which Samson will heed her false arguments. Samson does not entirely ignore the defenses Dalila offers for her actions, but he reasons through them, rejecting all of them as false, but especially her claim to have acted out of love for him. He reasons that she could have no hope of his love when she "tookst the way / To raise in [him] inexpiable hate, / Knowing, as needs [he] must, by [her] betray'd" (838-40).

Dalila then tries a different mode of attack: she tries to make Samson pity her. She asks him to "Hear what assaults [she] had, what snares besides, / What sieges girt me round, e're [she] consented" (845-46). She suggests that she was also tempted and

threatened by the Philistines if she did not fulfill her "bonds of civil Duty / And of Religion" (853-54). If Samson had a duty to his people and his God, she claims the same for herself in acting the way she did. Yet Samson claims to have anticipated that Dalila would end precisely with these arguments—"In feign'd Religion, smooth hypocrisie" (872). He counters her claim with the argument that it was her duty as his wife to leave her family and country and enter under his own protection rather than theirs, so that her loyalty should have been with her husband rather than the Philistines.

Dalila then makes one more attempt to earn her husband's unqualified forgiveness by claiming outright that she seeks his forgiveness and wants to take care of him with "redoubl'd love and care" (923), so that "what by me thou hast lost thou least shalt miss" (927). She wants to persuade Samson that her comfort in his old age and blindness will give him Samson such relief that he will not miss either his vision or his strength. Samson is not swayed. He knows that if Dalila could treat him as she did when he was "in my flower of youth and strength, when all men / Lov'd, honour'd, fear'd me" (938-39), she will potentially treat him worse when he is "blind, and thereby / Deceivable, in most things as a child / Helpless, thence easily contemn'd, and scorn'd" (941-43). He cannot even begin to imagine the ways in which she would betray and humiliate him. He realizes, now in full, a truth he willingly ignored earlier in the poem—he is in a greater position of freedom, and sees more clearly, now than he was before in his marriage to her. "This Gaol [he] count[s] the house of Liberty" compared to the truer enslavement he would endure if he were to return to her house (949).

Dalila realizes she has lost to Samson's reason in his recognition of what she is, but she makes one final effort—to touch his hand. Samson recoils from the possibility of her touch, which perhaps he intuits would likely be more successful than her other approaches, instead offering her the forgiveness she supposedly has sought from him. Yet even in that forgiveness, Samson's words ring with bitterness and accusation as he tells her to "Bewail thy falshood, and the pious works / It hath brought forth to make thee memorable / Among illustrious wives" (955-57). But such a dismissal from Samson only enrages Dalila to the point that the façade she has upheld throughout her meeting with Samson finally falls away. If he places the "brand / Of infamy upon [her] name" (967-68), then she can exalt in the knowledge that she

> shall be nam'd among the famousest
> Of women, sung at solemn festivals,
> Living and dead recorded, who to save
> Her countrey from a fierce destroyer, chose
> Above the faith of wedlock-bands.
>
> (982-86)

Dalila willingly embraces Samson's judgment because infamy among his people will mean fame among her own, and this, perhaps, is what she sought all along.

Dalila thus leaves Samson, but both he and the Chorus are now fully aware of Dalila's true nature—"a manifest Serpent by her sting / Discover'd in the end, till now conceal'd" (997-98). Here is an explicit connection between Dalila and Satan, as both are figured as serpents. Insofar as Dalila was Samson's original tempter in the

"backstory" of the poem, she also functions to some extent as Samson's tempter here. But Dalila as temptress is important for the way in which it lends to Samson's struggles with himself. In arguing with Dalila, Samson is really having to come to terms with his own weakness which allowed him to succumb to her the first time. Recognizing those weaknesses, Samson is able to struggle with them more consciously rather than giving into them. Thus Samson dismisses not only the person of Dalila, but even discussion of her.[50] He tells the Chorus:

> So let her go, God sent her to debase me,
> And aggravate my folly who committed
> To such a viper his most sacred trust
> Of secresie, my safety, and my life.
>
> (999-1002)

Though Samson seems to believe that the encounter with Dalila has left him debased and his folly even more exposed, in truth, he emerges from this encounter victorious over her temptations. For if he were truly foolish, he would have given into what she offered. But in remaining strong of will now, he is more prepared for his next encounter with Harapha, which will be "another kind of tempest" for Samson to endure (1063).

Harapha comes in part to taunt Samson, though he is not willing to test Samson's strength in combat as Samson proposes. Instead, his primary task is to suggest that Samson's God is weak and ineffectual compared to Dagon. Harapha makes precisely

[50] Susan B. Iwanisziw stresses the idea that Samson both reestablishes himself as the patriarch in his marriage and regains the spiritual authority of his Nazarite vow in this, his final rejection of Dalila and her temptations: "In this closet drama, then, Samson consciously separates himself from the pleasures of Dalila's body in pursuit of his spiritual salvation, the fulfillment of his Nazarite vow" (118).

the kind of arguments about Samson's presumed relationship with God that the cynical Samson has so often made: that he is without hope of being redeemed. Harapha tells Samson to

> Presume not on thy God, what e're he be,
> Thee he regards not, owns not, hath cut off
> Quite from his people, and delivered up
> Into thy Enemies hand, permitted them
> To put out both thine eyes, and fetter'd send thee
> Into the common Prison, there to grind
> Among the Slaves and Asses thy comrades,
> As good for nothing else, no better service.
>
> (1156-63)

Harapha critically expresses about Samson's case the same despair Samson himself has spoken. Samson has felt that he has been abandoned by God, rightly, and that he is good for nothing beyond the slavish toils he now performs. But in hearing these words spoken by Harapha, Samson finally finds hope in his situation—hope that he is not completely lost and that God can still work through him.[51] He can therefore speak to Harapha with confidence:

> These evils I deserve and more,
> Acknowledge them from God inflicted on me
> Justly, yet despair not of his final pardon

[51] Albert Fields argues that "it is by means of Harapha … that [Samson's] self-realization is ultimately effected, for Harapha represents the darker self which has come to rule Samson" (399).

Whose ear is ever open; and his eye

Gracious to re-admit the suppliant.

(1169-73)

Throughout his conversation with Harapha, Samson grows more confident, both that God has not left him and that, even though blind, he could defeat the giant Harapha.[52] He is not given the opportunity to prove the latter, however, because Harapha cowardly leaves Samson, claiming an unevenness of battle that would give him no glory in defeating the blind Samson.

After all these visitors on this day of rest in which his mind wrestles with his thoughts and his despair, Samson has one final test. When the Philistine officer comes to take him to perform feats of strength at the feast in honor of Dagon, Samson initially refuses to perform for his captors. He first cites the Hebrew Law which "forbids at thir Religious Rites / My presence" (1320-21). This answer does not please the officer, so he questions Samson again, emphasizing the care Samson should have for himself because of the likely retribution when he refuses the command. But Samson grows ever more certain of himself at this point, responding to the officer:

My self? my conscience and internal peace.

Can they think me so broken, so debas'd

With corporal servitude, that my mind ever

[52] Philip Dust suggests that the temptation which Harapha presents is "one more temptation to act out of self-interest … [b]ut for Samson to do combat with Harapha solely on the basis of his strength would also be a betrayal of his habit of penitence, since that strength comes from the power of God" (18) Dust argues that Samson's justification in the theater and before God depended on his own cooperation in his habit of penitence and in his affirmation that God alone is the source of his strength (19).

Will condescend to such absurd commands?

… I will not come.

(1334-42)

Samson's actions and choices are clearly being guided by his conscience, and acting according to his conscience gives him a certain amount of peace that he has been missing since his captivity. Up until this point, Samson has complacently done what has been asked of him by the Philistines, but he has reached a point where the stakes are too high to do whatever they ask without question. In realizing that he is not as truly broken and debased as he himself seemed to think at the beginning of the poem, Samson's mind is able to come out of the depths of despair. His reason refutes the absurdity of the command which he has been given, and he is able to take a stand against it.

Even when the Chorus is worried because Samson refused the Philistines' order, Samson clarifies his reasons further for refusing:

Shall I abuse this Consecrated gift

Of strength, again returning with my hair

After my great transgression, so require

Favour renew'd, and add a greater sin

By prostituting holy things to Idols;

A *Nazarite* in place abominable

Vaunting my strength in honour to thir *Dagon*?

> Besides how vile, contemptible, ridiculous,
>
> What act more execrably unclean, prophane?
>
> (1354-62)

In Samson's mind, according to his conscience, performing such feats in honor of Dagon would be a greater sin against his God than that which he has already committed. Samson refuses to commit such a vile and profane act against God.[53] When the Chorus questions him, then, as to why he uses his strength to work for the Philistines, Samson defends himself by claiming that such work is lawful and honest work, done to gain food, and because he is under their power. Being called to the feast for Dagon, however, is not at all comparable; there would be nothing honest in such a performance of strength because it would be done for idolatrous rather than honest purposes. Samson thus emphasizes again that his free will determines what actions he will take, and how he will be held accountable for those actions, even when the actions are commanded:[54]

> Commands are no constraints. If I obey them,
>
> I do it freely; venturing to displease
>
> God for the fear of Man, and Man prefer,

---

[53] Yet John C. Ulreich, Jr. suggests that "Samson's own unconscious idolatry" when he degenerately served Dalila is more deplorable than any possible actions he could take in the feast to Dagon, such that "[t]he process of Samson's regeneration is essentially a struggle to free himself from the vain idols of his own imagination. And it is this iconoclastic impulse that gives meaning to Samson's final act of violence…. Samson's symbolic destruction of Dagon represents his final liberation from idolatry" (29).

[54] The Chorus echoes an idea which Milton also presents in other writings, especially in *Comus*: "Where the heart joins not, outward acts defile not" (1368). Milton shows in *Comus* that the Lady, though her body is enthralled by Comus's spell, remains virtuous because her mind never consented. But he also seems to imply that at least an attempt to abstain from the "outward acts" is required to be truly innocent. With regard to Samson, he may ultimately be forced to perform for the Philistines, but he at least attempts to forestall such a performance on his part. In resisting in this way, his heart clearly does not join in his performance.

Set God behind: which in his jealousie

Shall never, unrepented, find forgiveness.

(1372-76)

Samson has already shown his preference for a woman over God's commands, but he has repented and found forgiveness. He cannot bring himself to choose worldly goods once again at the expense of his relationship with God.

Despite such willful certainty and his refusal to do what the Philistines have commanded, Samson changes his mind about performing for the Philistian feast. When the officer returns to insist that Samson return to the feast with him, Samson is ready to give in to the command. He offers reassurances to the Chorus:

Be of good courage, I begin to feel

Some rousing motions in me which dispose

To something extraordinary my thoughts.

…

Nothing to do, be sure, that may dishonour

Our Law, or stain my vow of *Nazarite*.

If there be aught of presage in my mind,

This day will be remarkable in my life

By some great act, or of my days the last.

(1381-89)

Samson, through the work of his mind and reason, came to the decision not to attend the feast because it would amount to another betrayal of his God. But now, he has another

influence upon his mind which will supersede what his reason told him to do. Knowing that Samson has had "divine impulses" in the past which led him to act in ways contrary to the laws and customs of his people (namely, in his first marriage to the woman of Timna, but noticeably lacking with his marriage to Dalila), it is not unreasonable to see that Samson has received some sense of God's will in what he is to do, even if it runs counter to the laws and reasons he has already offered in his refusal.[55] Yet even in willingly attending the feast, Samson assures his friends in the Chorus that he will "in nothing to comply / Scandalous or forbidden in our Law."

Samson does not know at this point what God intends, but he feels God's grace guiding him to the feast to fulfill some purpose for God.[56] He therefore seeks to reassure them one final time before leaving with the officer:

> Happ'n what may, of me expect to hear
>
> Nothing dishonourable, impure, unworthy

[55] Feisal Mohamed suggests that "for Samson's final act to be justified, it cannot be causally related to the fleshly, rational concerns of his three major dialogues; it must instead take its impulse from the immediate divine illumination residing entirely outside the events with which we are presented" (334). In contrast, Daniel T. Lochman argues that "analysis of Samson's peripety (that is, his determination to accompany the officer to the temple) indicates that reason plays a major, if not absolute, role in his exercise of judgment; however, the unique force of his reason is negative, iconoclastic, deconstructive in that it breaks down prior conclusions rooted in unwarranted assumption, legal absolutes, and destructive ratiocination" (275). Lochman further argues that Samson uses not merely reason in the logical sense but "right reason": reason which "involves a willing acceptance of things as they are; … a rational admission that obeying and loving God with fear are the 'best' modes of acting; … [and which] ought to culminate in opening oneself to Providence and in performing God's will in 'Deeds' 'answerable' to one's knowledge" (278). I would further argue that those events, and the work of right reason with which Samson engaged throughout those events, were crucial insofar as they enable him to be open to such divine illumination as he receives in his final moments. Indeed, that illumination itself contributes more fully to his right reason that allows him to see what God intended him to do. If he had still been immersed in his despair rather than working himself out of those depths, then Samson would not have been likely to see that divine purpose. While Lochman suggests that "Samson's use of reason to restrain reason permits him to enact God's justice" (285), the point I would stress is that Samson uses right reason to restrain the use of pure reason in order to act according to God's will for his life.

[56] Caroline McAlister argues that *Samson Agonistes* is a play "about the mysterious communication of grace … [and] about the formation of a new community" (58).

> Our God, our Law, my Nation, or my self,
>
> The last of me or no I cannot warrant.
>
> (1423-26)

Though Samson speaks as he if intuits that he will likely die in performing God's will, it is crucial to note the difference between his expectation of possible death here and the longing which he had for death in the earlier parts in the poem. No longer is he actively seeking his death as the only possible reprieve from his misery, but he is now calm in the assurance that God can still find use for him, even as a blind slave to his enemies.[57]

Sometime after Samson leaves with the officer, the Chorus reports several noises to the reader: first, the shouts of applause from the audience as Samson is brought before them; next, a "hideous noise" or "universal groan / As if the whole inhabitation perish'd" (1509, 1511-12). The Chorus and Manoa have no way of knowing what that second noise signified, or who caused it, until a Hebrew messenger finds them in the street. The messenger's first answer to their questions is simply that "*Gaza* yet stands, but all her Sons are fall'n, / All in a moment overwhelm'd and fall'n" (1558-59). Further learning

[57] Michael Bryson, among others, points to the dangers associated with emphasizes the difficulties associated with Samson's final moments and his claim to be acting according to the will of God. For Bryson, "what we think we know about God can always only be provisional, and this lesson must be kept in mind especially at the point where such knowledge enters the realm of violent certitude, the conviction that the 'Infidel' deserves death at one's own hand" (38). Dennis Brown makes a similar argument about Samson's interpretation of God's will, suggesting that Samson is "overhasty in equating his impulses with God's will" (101), such that his tragic flaw is not his weakness with women (as he thinks), but rather "the deeper sin of *hubris*—equating his own whim with God's will" (102). Bryson and Brown, and other revisionst critics such as Feisel Mohamed, are particularly concerned to show that Milton calls into question the justificaiton for Samson's violence at the end of his life, but to do so is in part to ignore Milton's Christian interpretation—especially a typological one—of the events of Samson's life and the Old Testatment at large. Even more importantly, the drama itself suggests that Samson made the mistake of assuming his own will was God's will—in his marriage to Dalila. Samson has paid a horrible price for that mistake, and he does not want to make that same mistake again. Therefore, when he brings the house down upon the Philistians and himself, he pauses to reflect and discern that it is God's will that he do so, and not merely his own.

that Samson brought forth this utter destruction of the people of Philistine, Manoa and the Chorus find a reason for joy rather than sorrow, but the messenger is forced to relay the remaining details of Samson's victory over the Philistines. Manoa is confused initially when the messenger reports that Samson fell by his own hands. Manoa laments that Samson was "lastly over-strong against thy self" (1590), but he then asks the messenger for a full description of Samson's final moments. The messenger describes Samson's entrance to the theater and the feats of strength he performed—notably without any combatant because no one dared to be his opponent. Samson was finally given an opportunity to rest, and he is placed between the two pillars which support the roof of the theater. The messenger claims he was standing near enough to be able to hear Samson conversing with his guide, asking if he could rest his arms on the two pillars, to which request the guide conceded, without any suspicion of what was to come.

The reader is given only two clues into Samson's final state of mind.[58] The messenger offers the reader some insight as he reports Samson's demeanor between the time at which he was brought to the pillars and when he began his final speech to the Philistines. They report that Samson, with the pillars in his hands, stood "with head a while enclin'd, / And eyes fast fixt he stood, as one who pray'd, / Or some great matter in his mind revolv'd" (1637-39). Though we cannot know with any real certainty what Samson was thinking at these moments, it is reasonable to accept the messenger's descriptions as accurate—that Samson was indeed praying, and he was indeed resolving

[58] Paula Loscocco laments that "however carefully we trace the evidence of Samson's recuperation, we are never sure that such recuperation takes place. Samson rarely speaks. When he does, it is often in ways that are inexplicably different from previous ways he has spoken. And his late speeches are often ambiguous or …riddling" (192).

some great dilemma in his mind. Samson's words to the Chorus as he departed with the officer already told us that he had a sign from God that there was some purpose for him to go to the festival. In being given such an opportunity as he obviously had in resting himself between the pillars, Samson would want to be certain that this was what God intended, that in acting in such a way, he would in no way be violating God's law.

The reader is also given Samson's final words to the Philistines, but there is as much vagueness in them as there was in the messenger's report. Samson reminds his audience that he has performed the tasks asked of him thus far, but he now offers them "of my accord such other tryal / … to shew you of my strength, yet greater; / As with amaze shall strike all who behold" (1643-45). Samson must have felt confident that he was doing God's will, as he announces that he acts according to his conscience and with his own free will.

Though there are questions even within the text about the legitimacy of Samson's decision to bring the house down upon himself as well as on the Philistines, he does not seem to choose to do so out of the despair that drove him throughout the poem to wish for death.[59] Instead, he makes the choice out of a reassurance from God that he is still

[59] Several critics—including Feisel G. Mohamed, Dennis Brown, and Michael Bryson-- in recent years have questioned the legitimacy of Samson's final decision and have related Samson's violence at the end to the religious violence in the Middle East and terrorist attacks on the United States and England. Dennis Brown emphasizes that *Samson Agonistes* is "a tragedy rather than a morality play" (100), in part because it presents an ethical problem—the hero is also a mass-murderer—"that must divide our sympathy from our moral responsibility" (101).

Baruch suggests that the questions arise out of the Chorus's failure to understand what Samson has done, arguing that "Milton has of course intended Samson's bodily strength and the physical dimension of his final act to be only signs of his spiritual state, so he controls the development of the final choral passages … in order that they may suggest the failure of the Danites to probe the spiritual reality of what they have just heard related by the messenger, and to learn from that insight and become absorbed actively into that experience in the Temple of Dagon" (328). For this reason, Baruch insists "we will not

able to fulfill the work of God which God intended him to complete, despite being blind and imprisoned.[60] His friends and father also interpret Samson's final events in this way. They believe that "Living or dying [Samson] hast fulfill'd / The work for which [he] wast foretold / To *Israel*" (1661-63).

The Chorus also imagines Samson as the phoenix:

> But he though blind of sight,
>
> Despis'd and thought extinguish't quite,
>
> With inward eyes illuminated
>
> His fierie vertue rouz'd
>
> From under ashes into sudden flame.
>
> (1687-91)

Though blind, Samson's "inward eyes"—his mind and reason—were illuminated by God's grace that revived Samson's virtue out of his despair to allow him to fulfill God's

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see the ending correctly unless we read it in the light of Milton's lifelong concern for individual, active, relentlessly committed questing after truth, by means of reason informed by grace" (338).

Caroline McAlister likewise admits that "after extensive searching, after the opening to view of [Samson's] tenderest parts, we are denied a view of his inner self at the crucial moment." And yet, she goes on, she sees Milton as "suggest[ing] that occasionally there are outward signs [of the internal action of grace], and the burden rests on the viewer to perceive and interpret this kind of evidence" (64). Moreover, she concludes that "[t]he ability to recognize signs of grace in others requires in itself a special insight into the workings of things, a special insight into things spiritual and internal. In other words, the perception and interpretation of the action of grace in another sets off a similar action within the viewer. The action of grace is thus reciprocal, and it is reciprocated through interpretation" (65).

[60] William Kerrigan criticizes Mary Ann Radzinowicz's claim that in his final actions Samson "goes to do what his will directs in obedience to his reason," suggesting that Radzinowicz "has shifted ground from the sort of reason, right reason, that counts in this interpretive debate, and might distinguish one reading of the play from another, to the sort of reason without which, in the Renaissance view of man, no one could get up in the morning" (223). And yet Kerrigan's own claim that Samson "cannot by unaided reason get the idea of destroying the temple because a forbidding law stands between him and toppled pillars," with the point that "God put the illumination there" (223), would seem to support the notion of right reason. That is, the use of "pure reason" would not enable Samson to make such a choice, but his use of "right reason"—reason informed by God's grace and his own conscience—allows him to judge what right actions to take in the theater that will be in accord with God's will.

purpose for his life, even in his broken state. Such a comparison between Samson and the phoenix, and more generally, Samson's process of temptation and redemption, reveals that even when the believer falls into temptation and loses a spiritual battle, all is not lost. Believing and repentant persons can still be redeemed through the work of God's grace in their lives.[61] And that redemptive grace likewise enables their reason to work as God intended it to work—to direct the human will ever to the eternal goods of the God's will—especially when the benefits of grace and right reason are kept properly in the memory, ready for use at any time.

[61] Philip Dust, in concluding his analysis of Samson's penitence, writes that "[h]aving found grace with God through penitence, Samson also regains his God-given strength to bring the temple of Dagon crashing down on the heads of the Philistines" (19).

CHAPTER V

THE HEIGHTS OF HUMAN REASON

For warfaring Christians in the fallen world, the outcome of spiritual warfare is never entirely certain, for there is always the possibility of falling yet again into sin, despite whatever virtue one has attained in life.[1] The representations of spiritual warfare in the previous chapter, though dealing with the work of reason in the fallen world, were focused on the successful work of reason (though that success is never guaranteed) with the aid of divine grace. This chapter will consider a more particular aspect of spiritual warfare in the fallen world by looking at two texts which insist that spiritual combatants, even reduced to positions of extreme weakness physically, may yet ascend to the greatest spiritual heights by virtue of their mental activity, and therefore may finally enter into the presence of God.[2]

The opening consideration of this chapter is Milton's depiction of Christ in *Paradise Regained*. Set in the desert where Christ has fasted for forty days and nights, *Paradise Regained* puts a clear emphasis on Christ's physical weakness. But Milton's emphasis on Christ's physical weakness from so much fasting and deprivation serves to

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[1] Benjamin Myers writes about the Reformation theologians' conception of "conversion as a process that continues throughout the Christian life. … [R]epentance is not a single isolated event but a race in which believers must 'run throughout the whole course of their lives,' so that regeneration is accomplished not 'in a moment, a day, or a year,' but only by a long process. … [T]he human beings who have experienced conversion remain always subject to the possibility of falling again" (30).

[2] Myers continues, "Even for those who have been converted by grace, the goal of salvation is by no means assured. Human beings do not yet possess the security of salvation; they are on the way to eternal life, but are not yet 'safe,' and have not yet 'arriv[d].' Persistence is therefore necessary—a persistent choice to follow the internal light of conscience, a persistent exercise of freedom in which the human agent turns away from sin and toward God. In short, a moment-by-moment conversion is necessary if the individual is finally to 'arrive' safely at the bliss of eternal salvation" (31).

stress, complementarily, Christ's reliance upon right reason, for it is by the use of right judgment that he is able to resist the temptations placed before him by Satan. Given his state of almost complete physical vulnerability, Christ's strength and power of mind comes more clearly into focus as the proper means to win in spiritual warfare. His victory over temptation, wherein he expresses and attains the very heights of human reason, is to serve as the ideal model which all humans should attempt to realize relative to their own temptations, even and especially in positions of extraordinary weakness.

Following Christ's example is John Bunyan's allegorical representation of the spiritual battles of Christian in *Pilgrim's Progress*.[3] Bunyan's allegory is significant for its portrayal of spiritual battles as partly physical battles in light of the allegory's personification of ideas such as Despair or Shame. In every one of these virtually physical moments—battles which often take the form of bewildering conversations or outright captivity—Christian's primary recourse is to the proper use of his mental activities, particularly memory and reason, in order to triumph over those traps and finally enter the City of God at his journey's end. Though Christian does not immediately attain the perfection of reason that Christ exhibits in *Paradise Regained*, his progress from sinner to saint exhibits the gradual perfection of a fallen human to "make" his soul and restore him to communion with God.[4]

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[3] In Bunyan's allegory, we see the culmination of the use of reason in spiritual warfare in the fallen world. This distinguishes *Pilgrim's Progress* from other works addressed in previous chapters, as those works depicted spiritual battles which required reason for victory, but which also resulted in states in which the warfaring person was yet subject to fail again in some future test.

[4] See John Hick and G. R. Evans for their discussions of the Augustinian notion of "soul-making."

"To vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles": The Son's Victory over Satan

Though *Samson Agonistes* followed *Paradise Regained* in publication, it is useful to think of *Samson Agonistes* as an intermediate text between *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Samson's spiritual battles are both reminiscent of the spiritual warfare in Eden in *Paradise Lost* and anticipatory of the spiritual battles which Jesus faces in the desert in *Paradise Regained*.[5] But the progression from *Paradise Lost*, to *Samson Agonistes*, to *Paradise Regained* is not only a linear one. As its title suggests, *Paradise Regained* circles back to *Paradise Lost*, so that humankind comes full circle since paradise was lost with the fall of Adam and Eve. It is there in the desert, a locale entirely opposed to the garden of Eden, where Christ overcomes Satan's temptations by upholding perfect reasoning. Christ would eventually suffer, die, and be resurrected, but in Milton's estimation, it is, in essence, then and there in the desert that Paradise is regained. Christ restores for humankind the state of perfection lost by Adam and Eve due to their failure to use proper reason. Milton signals this return when he begins his minor epic on the redemption of humankind with references to the actions described in *Paradise Lost*: the happy garden lost because of "one man's disobedience" (1.2). He will argue that Eden is regained or recovered "By one man's firm obedience fully tried / Through all temptation" (1.4-5). What was lost through Adam's succumbing to

[5] There are also significant parallels between the stories of Samson and Jesus: the same narrative model, the appearance of an angel to announce their births, the promise of deliverance, their pious upbringings, a divine mission, a self-sacrifice for the good of their people. Feisel G. Mohamed, Nancy Rosenfeld, and Dennis Brown have all suggested ways in which this typology is complicated in Milton's poetry and in theology in general, particularly because of Samson's violence. Brown explores the parallels between Samson and Christ to consider the different moral effects of the deaths of Samson and Jesus, such that the "postmodern reader" questions the revenge-morality offered by the traditional reading of *Samson Agonistes* in favor of the pacifistic morality offered by the Son.

temptation, due to a failure of reason and will, is regained through Christ's resistance of temptation, achieved by the proper use of reason and will. Human nature does not return to a state of innocence, of course, for that particular aspect of Adam and Eve's state cannot be regained. But the power of death over humans as their punishment comes to an end with Christ's sacrifice of himself and his resurrection. More importantly, Christ's triumph over Satan in the desert, and then ultimately his Crucifixion and Resurrection, makes it possible for humans to come once again into the presence of God. But Milton ingeniously emphasizes the thesis of the proper use of reason in the desert. Christ's employment of right reason to resist the temptations in the desert was the condition for the possibility of the fullness of Christ's later soteriological labor.

In systematic Christian thought, Christ is understood to be the mediator between God and humans. Augustine writes in *On the Trinity* that Christ is "the one mediator of life, … through whom alone is wrought the true cleansing of the soul" (4.1, headnote). Milton certainly shares that view in Book III of *Paradise Lost* wherein the Son offers himself as the mediator between God's just anger and human sinfulness, and again in Book IX when the Son offers Adam and Eve's repentance to God. And in *Paradise Regained*, the temptation of Christ is the primary of many operating premises relative to Christ's role as mediator. In *Paradise Regained*, Milton in essence seconds Augustine's treatment of the temptation of Christ in *On the Trinity*. Augustine argues that Christ allowed himself to be tempted by Satan so as to prove worthy of being the mediator between God and man. Moreover, in resisting the most daunting temptations, especially by the use of reason, Christ provides the supreme example as to how to overcome

temptations, especially when a person is in an extremely weakened position, as Christ was after forty days in the desert. And following Augustine, Calvin also expresses the same ideas that Milton will express in *Paradise Regained*: that "Christ, therefore, holds himself out as the goal to which our faith ought to be directed, and by means of which it will easily find that on which it can rest. … It is one of the leading articles of our faith, that our faith ought to be directed to Christ alone, that it may not wander through long windings; and that it ought to be fixed on him, that it may not waver in the midst of temptation" (qtd. in Edmondson 182).[6] Yet, Milton is more elaborate than Calvin. For Milton, a fixed focus on Christ, coupled with a determined effort to act according to reason, is the key to victory in spiritual warfare.

One of the functions of Christ as mediator, of course, is that of restorer. Given the status of fallen humanity, Christ allows the relationship between God and humans to be restored. This restoration is the reason Christ was willing to endure temptations and suffer as a human being. Augustine emphasizes the extent to which humans are unfit to know God and to be in His presence without the intercession of God-made-man: "God, made a righteous man, interceded with God for man the sinner. For the sinner is not congruous to the righteous, but man is congruous to man. By joining therefore to us the likeness of His humanity, He took away the unlikeness of our unrighteousness; and by being made partaker of our mortality, He made us partakers of His divinity" (*On the Trinity* 4.2.4).[7] This line of thinking in Augustine—which argues that Christ's

[6] From Calvin's *Commentary on John*.

[7] Wendy Miller Roberts likewise reminds us that "it is virtue alone that elevates a person in Christ's economy, and this virtue grows most clearly out of one's unity with Christ's identification with humanity. To be like Christ is to be like Christ literally—poor, despised, and powerless" (23).

incarnation, suffering, death, and resurrection are the sole means by which humans can find unification with God—would be echoed in other forms of systematic Christian theology for centuries. [8]

Milton's reasons for choosing the temptation of Christ in the wilderness rather than the Crucifixion and Resurrection as his subject matter in his minor epic on the redemption of humankind have often been discussed by critics.[9] But I argue that the substance of Milton's reasons for choosing the temptation episode in the life of Jesus centers on both Milton's understanding of Christ's role as mediator and the fundamental importance for Milton of the use of reason in spiritual warfare.[10] While systematic Christian thought, which Augustine articulated so extraordinarily and which Milton knew well, argues that the fullness of Christ's work as mediator requires the totality of the events of incarnation, suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, the genius of Milton is such that he argues, by his poetry, that the crux of all of these events can be gleaned from the episodes of the temptations of Christ in the desert.[11]

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[8] Edmondson describes Calvin's intentions in terms similar to Augustine: "When Calvin sets out to describe Christ's office as Mediator, he begins with our estrangement from fellowship with God, a fellowship in which we dare not hope because we in our sin perceive that we have cut ourselves off from God—we are like Adam hiding in the garden, fleeing from God's approach. So Christ, for Calvin, is the one in whom God has drawn near and touched us" (202).

[9] Regina M. Schwartz questions why Milton would choose the temptation as the defining moment for Christ's salvation of humankind, when it "has not, in any theological tradition, been called upon to suffice as the definition of the redemption of mankind" (27). She argues, however, that Milton chose the temptation because, "for Milton, salvation is a mystery, the mystery of a divine goodness unmerited by man, and he is careful to maintain that mystery as such" (27). Kari Boyd McBride and John C. Ulreich argue that "the agon in the wilderness represents even more starkly than the agony on the cross what Milton called 'Christs comming in the flesh against the flesh" (351).

[10] His choice, I think, also reflects his understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son. Since the Son, as man, does not share in the foreknowledge of the Father, as Milton understands it, Jesus is not completely aware of what he will have to do to redeem humankind. He knows that God is his Father, but he does not know what redemption for God's people will cost him.

[11] Amlan das Gupta argues for a similar treatment of Christ in Milton's *Paradise Regained* and Augustine's *City of God*: in having Christ regain paradise "by asserting spiritual values, by rejecting

No less a person than Milton's God speaks about the necessity of the Son's temptation, and His conversation with Gabriel reminds the reader of the purpose of all spiritual warfare for believers. God is allowing Jesus to be exposed to and tempted by Satan as a form of spiritual exercise whereby "he shall first lay down the rudiments / Of his great warfare, e're I send him forth / To conquer sin and Death the two grand foes" (1.157-59). The temptation in the desert is intended by God to be a preparation for Jesus, an exercise that will prepare him for the final battle he must wage against Satan, Sin, and Death.[12] Even in a state of physical weakness, induced by his forty-day fast in the wilderness, Jesus will yet prevail over Satan's power and strength, for his strength of mind will penetrate the deceptions and temptations Satan delivers.

While the temptation of Jesus is in part a means of preparing for the final battle against Satan, it is through Satan's failure to bring Jesus to sin that Satan will come to understand that his rule is near its end. Moreover, without this extraordinary temptation in the wilderness, Christ's actions on earth, while alive, would have been rendered virtually meaningless. Though Jesus has been pronounced the Son of God upon his baptism, such a pronouncement would lack credibility unless his goodness and virtue were proven through incredible tests and trials.[13] Likewise, in winning these battles

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worldly action, and the various temptations that Satan holds forth," Milton, like Augustine, "reject[s] miraculous and millenarian solutions to historical problems, in order to underline the importance of the human role in this process of transformation, and put forward an ideal of personal reform. Paradoxically, human action is defined in terms of abstaining, of waiting upon God's will: in the process both Milton and Augustine reject the splendours of the world; military glory and power; earthly kingdoms; oracular wisdom and pagan learning" (87).

[12] It is one of the great paradoxes of Christianity that humans have nothing to fear in death because it is the moment of physical death that allows one to enter into eternal life, so that again we can see the correspondence between the weakness of the body and the strength of the mind/soul.

[13] Though God knows through his foreknowledge that His Son will succeed in his spiritual trials, that he will always obey what God commands, the test must still be undertaken to enact that obedience.

against Satan, Jesus is virtually confirmed as the victor in the final battle, as Satan realizes. Jesus's victory over Satan will therefore confirm who and what he is and what he will be able to do, even before his actual death and resurrection, so that paradise is, indeed, regained through the Son's victory in the desert.

Being told the reasons for this testing of the Son's virtue and mind, and despite being virtually assured of the outcome of the temptations, the heavenly choir yet prays for the Son's pending triumph over Satan:

> Victory and Triumph to the Son of God
> Now entring his great duel, not of arms,
> But to vanquish by wisdom hellish wiles.
> The Father knows the Son; therefore secure
> Ventures his filial Vertue, though untri'd,
> Against whate're may tempt, whate're seduce,
> Allure, or terrifie, or undermine.
>
> (1.173-79)

The heavenly choir, too, realizes the nature of this battle to take place between the Son and Satan in the desert, reiterating for the reader that this battle is not going to be a physical battle in the same way that the War in Heaven (described in Book VI of *Paradise Lost*) was concluded. This will be another "great duel" between the Son and Satan, but in emphasizing that this is a duel "not of arms" and that Satan will be

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God's foreknowledge of Jesus's obedience does not, of course, take away from his freedom to obey or disobey. As Milton describes in Book III of *Paradise Lost*, God also foreknew that Adam and Eve would fall without taking away their free choice to stand or fall.

"vanquish[ed] by wisdom," Milton makes us mindful of the differences between these two duels. The Son in Heaven exhibited a magnificent physical strength when he threw Satan and his army out of Heaven and into Hell; as man, the Son is physically weak, but he will win this battle by wisdom—by his strength of mind rather than his strength of body.[14] The angels also understand that Jesus has been "untried" until now—his virtue has not been tested. And though they are rather certain that he will be victorious in this trial, it is apparent that they recognize the need for such virtue to be proven rather than assumed, in both Heaven and on earth. Thus, they appear to prepare to watch and wait until the coming battle is completed and Jesus triumphs over Satan's temptation.

Jesus's temptation in the desert immediately follows his baptism. Jesus's baptism is important to Milton for several reasons, but primarily because it marks Jesus's entrance into public life; this is the moment he begins to walk the path he was born to take. Though Jesus's life up until this point has primarily been private and contemplative, his baptism enters him into a public life, and his coming temptation enters him into an active life. But Jesus's public and active life are still largely determined and guided by his mental activity and spiritual virtue, as his public work as king and savior of God's people is consistently, if paradoxically, done by putting himself into positions of extraordinary physical weakness, even to the point of death.

[14] Indeed, Jesus's mind seems to grow stronger even as his body grows weaker through his long fast in the wilderness. Steven Goldsmith responds to some critics' attention to Jesus's passivity, arguing instead that, while "his style remains temperate and succinct, the Son steadily speaks at greater length and in the process of debate consistently renders Satan mute until the adversary's final silence is the emblem of nonexistence, spiritual substancelessness" (125). Mary Ann Radzinowicz argues that Milton "gives to the Son an inspired hermeneutic to defeat Satan's strategy, opposing higher reason to common sense or sophistry" (99).

Christ's baptism and the pronouncement which followed it also mark the moment, in Milton's mind, that Satan becomes truly invested in what Jesus is doing.[15] While Satan therefore resolves to tempt the Son, Jesus himself is led into the desert by the Holy Spirit to begin preparations for this battle with Satan. Milton wastes no time in setting up the terms of this coming battle, framing the temptation in the desert in terms of war and glorious warriors: "this glorious Eremite" has been led by the Holy Spirit "Into the desert, his victorious field / Against the spiritual foe" (1.8-10). Yet the very fact that the Son's "deeds / Above heroic" are "in secret done" points to the far-reaching spiritual implications of this battle. These battles are not undertaken for personal glory, but to redeem humankind. Though it is undertaken in private, it will affect all. It is not necessary that humans observe the battle Jesus waged, but it is absolutely necessary that Jesus experience the same kinds of trials and tribulations as his fellow human beings if he is to fulfill his role as mediator between them and God. Of course, the crucial difference is that he stands while they fall over and over again, in many forms and fashions replicating the fall of Adam, but always with the same efficient cause, the failure of right reason to guide their wills to God.

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[15] Satan suggests he has been long aware of the promises surrounding Jesus since his birth, but until now, Satan saw nothing remarkable in the life of Jesus that would make him suspect he actually has anything to fear from this low-born man. Now, however, he realizes that Jesus has become a man "displaying / All vertue, grace and wisdom to atchieve / Things highest, greatest" (1.67-69), and Satan becomes truly worried about his own defeat. At God's pronouncement of His pleasure in His Son, Satan is overcome with fear and wonder at the recognition that Jesus truly is his long-promised foe. He thus tells his comrades: "Who this is we must learn, for man he seems / In all his lineaments, though in his face / The glimpses of his Fathers glory shine" (1.91-93). Satan suggests to the other fallen angels that he should tempt Jesus in the desert in order to learn more about his new foe, but he does not yet realize that this is the same Son who vanquished him once before in the war in Heaven. This meeting among the fallen angels must also necessarily recall their first meeting in Hell in *Paradise Lost*. Here, like there, the fallen angels agree with whatever Satan recommends. While Satan has maintained the appearance of a democratic government among the fallen angels, with the appearance of a fair vote, in truth, the fallen angels continue to do Satan's bidding.

Though everyone—God, Satan, the Holy Spirit, the Heavenly Choir, the narrator, the reader—seems to know what is about to commence almost immediately after Jesus's baptism, Jesus himself does not understand why he has been led by the Holy Spirit into the wilderness. Jesus's state of mind when he enters the desert shows that he is confused to some extent about what is to be expected of him from this point on. He describes "a multitude of thoughts [that] at once / Awakn'd in me swarm" (1.196-97). A substantial part of his confusion concerns the differences between "What from within I feel my self" and "what from without comes often to my ears" (1.198-99). Stemming from his almost Arian understanding of the Trinity, Milton again emphasizes how little Jesus, as man, knows what he will have to do.[16] Yet Jesus is not completely without any understanding of what awaits him, as he has spent substantial time reading and studying the Holy Scriptures. He is aware that he is the Messiah and that "my way must lie / Through many a hard assay even to the death" (1.263-64).

Jesus intuits that the time has come for him to do God's work, but he is not completely certain what he is supposed to do from this point after he is led into the desert. Unlike Samson's swarming thoughts at the beginning of *Samson Agonistes*, however, Jesus is able to find peace and put those swarming thoughts to rest. He finds comfort in the thought that he is led by the Holy Spirit and needs nothing else:

> And now by some strong motion I am led
> Into this Wilderness, to what intent

[16] In Milton's conception of the Trinity, the Son as Christ (the Son Incarnate) does not share the Father's knowledge. Jesus would have no memory of the conversation that he (as the Son) had with the Father in Heaven in Book III of *Paradise Lost*.

> I learn not yet, perhaps I need not know;
> For what concerns my knowledge God reveals.
>
> (1.290-93)

Jesus's statement here reveals in part what was lacking in Adam and Eve's failure. They believed themselves "sufficient to stand"—but on their own rather than with God's help. But despite his own virtue, the Son realizes that he has no strength or knowledge independent of God's power. He acknowledges that he is in a position of weakness, even as he accepts that he can trust the Father to reveal to him whatever he needs to know about this moment or his future when he needs to know it.

For forty days, then, Jesus pursues "His holy Meditations" (1.195). He reflects upon his childhood spent not in play but in learning and the pursuit of knowledge of God and His Laws. He recalls his time spent in the Temple when his parents could not find him and, more significantly, his realization that he is the promised Messiah and will have to endure a "hard assay even to the death" (1.264). He also reflects upon the period in which he waited for the promised time for his work to begin, the time which has finally come with his baptism when God "pronounc'd me his, / Me his beloved Son, in whom alone / He was well pleas'd" (1.284-86). Even here we see a function of reason. In remembering constantly what he has learned thus far in his life, Jesus is preparing himself for the battles to come. It is no minor function for Christ to keep in mind what he knows about his task: he knows that this knowledge itself constitutes his relation to God, and he knows that his relation to God will be his strength against Satan's temptations.

For forty days, then, Jesus is consumed with thoughts of "things past and to come / Lodg'd in his breast" (1.300-1). It is this maintenance of high thought that sustains him, for he is untouched by hunger for those forty days. At the end of these forty days, however, he is hungry for the first time since he entered the wilderness, and in this weakened state he is also greeted by the first person he has met in the desert—Satan in disguise.[17] He sees "an aged man in rural weeds" who appears to be searching for a stray sheep or kindling (1.314). But the old man's very first words suggest he has something sinister in mind: "what ill chance hath brought thee to this place / So far from path or road of men" (1.321-22)? Though Satan's question and his description of the isolated and desolate land which follow seem innocuous enough, the implications of what he suggests are not missed by the Son. Jesus responds with a clear statement of his faith that God will bring him out of this wilderness: "Who brought me hither / Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek" (1.335-36). While Satan insinuates that Jesus had poor luck in being brought to this wretched state and that he is likely to die there, Jesus maintains that he has been led there for a reason and will be led out again when the time is right.

In the initial parts of this conversation with Jesus, Satan also implies that he recognizes Jesus from Jesus's baptism, after which he was proclaimed the Son of God. But Satan quickly reveals his true motives, to test whether or not this man is the Son of God, when he turns almost immediately to appeal to the Son's appetite after forty long days in the desert. Satan suggests that Jesus "Command / That out of these hard stones

[17] Compare Comus's similar use of disguise when he first greets the Lady.

be made thee bread; / So shalt thou save thy self and us relieve" (1.342-44). Satan's motives here are twofold. First, Satan either knows or assumes that Jesus is terribly hungry after his time in the desert where food is scarce, and thus he urges Jesus to use his power as the Son of God to turn stones into bread to abate his hunger. But that also leads to a second possible motive for Satan's suggestion. Satan does not only seek to bring about Jesus's fall; he also desires to know exactly what his position as Son of God entails, what the Father meant in proclaiming this man the Son of God.

Jesus is not at all fooled by Satan's suggestion. His answer is based on Scripture:

> "Think'st thou such force in Bread? is it not written
> (For I discern thee other than thou seem'st)
> Man lives not by Bread alone, but each Word
> Proceeding from the mouth of God
>
> (1.347-50)[18]

Jesus sees through Satan's deception, and he does so through the use of reason. Jesus's discernment that Satan is other than what he seems is not grounded in his assessment of Satan's appearance but in his assessment of Satan's arguments. With his perfect use of reason, Jesus discerns what is false and dangerous in what Satan is saying, and therefore asks, "Why dost thou then suggest to me distrust, / Knowing who I am, as I know who thou art?" (1.355-56).

Satan immediately sheds his disguise, but he begins a circuitous and winding statement about his relationship with God and with humankind. He insists that he is not

[18] Jesus refers to Deuteronomy 8:2-3.

truly the foe of humankind, since it is through their sins that he has gained power in the world. He even suggests that he has often helped them by offering "my advice by presages and signs, / And answers, oracles, portents and dreams, / Whereby they may direct their future life" (1.394-96).[19] Satan concludes his speech with a plea for pity: "This wounds me most (what can it less) that Man, / Man fall'n shall be restor'd, I never more" (1.404-5). Though human beings are Satan's companions in sin, humans will be redeemed, while he will suffer for eternity.

Jesus responds "sternly" to Satan's speech, declaring that "Deservedly thou griev'st, compos'd of lyes / From the beginning, and in lies wilt end" (1.406-8). Though Jesus is presumably talking about Satan's speech as composed of lies, there is also a sense that he is referring to Satan's entire existence (as Satan, rather than Lucifer) which began and will end in his lies. Indeed, Jesus insists that Satan's entire existence depends upon his lies, "For lying is thy sustenance, thy food" (1.429).

Jesus proceeds to answer each part of Satan's preceding argument, but focuses especially on Satan's claims for helping humans through signs and oracles. Jesus first emphasizes the ambiguity of meaning in Satan's signs. Again, we see an emphasis on Jesus's ability to reason. Satan's signs are so ambiguous that few if any who consulted the demons' shrines or oracles ever "Return'd the wiser, or the more instruct / To flye or follow what concern'd him most, / And run not sooner to his fatal snare" (1.439-41). Jesus does concede the point that God has allowed Satan to influence humans in this way, but even then there is an implied emphasis on the importance of reason. If humans

[19] Even here Milton has not entirely left his concern for the effects of Satanic dreams on human beings and the temptations therein offered to humans.

used right reason, they would be able to see Satan's deceits for what they are, as many forms of idolatry: "For God hath justly giv'n the Nations up / To thy Delusions; justly, since they fell / Idolatrous" (1.442-44). Adam and Eve's idolatrous fall began a cycle of idolatry that would pervade humankind until the coming of the Son of God. Jesus thereby leads Satan to recognize that Satan has power over human beings only because people allow themselves to be deceived by the failure to use right reason. While God has therefore allowed this condition to exist for a time, in truth, Satan's deceptions are yet a means to work God's justice. Jesus then announces that the time is near when

> this thy glory shall soon be retrench'd;
> No more shalt thou by oracling abuse
> The Gentiles; henceforth Oracles are ceast,
> And thou no more with Pomp and Sacrifice
> Shalt be enquir'd at *Delphos* or elsewhere,
> At least in vain, for they shall find thee mute.
> God hath now sent his living Oracle
> Into the World, to teach his final will,
> And sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell
> In pious Hearts, an inward Oracle
> To all truth requisite for men to know.
>
> (1.454-64)

Though Satan has been able to claim an uncertain power over humankind, Jesus makes it clear that Satan's power is soon to be rendered void. Humans will no longer have to

seek the oracles of the pagan gods, because Jesus himself is God's living oracle, sent to teach God's will to humans.[20] Humans will no longer have to seek elsewhere for knowledge of what is to come, for the Holy Spirit will dwell in their hearts, giving them knowledge of the truths humans need to know—namely, knowledge of God and his redeeming grace. Jesus also seems to allude to the idea that conscience, informed by grace and proper knowledge, will enable human beings to make proper choices according to reason, and they can do so with the knowledge that they will come into eternal life. Excessive concern for matters of this world, which excessive concern first drove people to idolatry especially in the forms of the pagan oracles, will be obliterated by the use of right reason, and the retention of thought that the use of right reason, in the imitation of Christ, will secure their knowledge that eternal life awaits them.

Jesus's calm answer "inly stung [Satan] with anger and disdain" (1.466). But Satan, ever subtle, continues his lies and replies with "Answer smooth," as he argues that he simply wants to be in the presence of the ever-virtuous and wise Jesus (1.467). Though Satan continues to taunt Jesus with numerous lies, Jesus responds only by saying, "Thy coming hither, though I know thy scope, / I bid not or forbid; do as thou find'st / Permission from above; thou canst not more" (1.494-96). There is much implied in Jesus's simple answer to Satan. Jesus does not even bother to address the absurdity of Satan's arguments, but he emphasizes again that he knows Satan for what he is. More particularly, Jesus reiterates that he knows why Satan is present, despite

[20] Milton makes a similar statement in "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" about the pagan oracles, which he sees not as being empty but as being occupied by fallen angels. In the earlier poem, Milton suggests that with the birth of Christ, "The oracles are dumm, / No voice or hideous hum/ Runs through the arched roof in word deceiving" (173-75), then proceeds to catalog the laments of various pagan gods and fallen angels.

whatever claims Satan makes about being there from a love of virtue. No matter what Satan says, Jesus knows it is a lie, and whatever logic lies behind Satan's lies, Jesus sees through it.

Yet Jesus also seems to concede to Satan's final plea—Jesus will make no effort to escape or force Satan to leave. Jesus will permit Satan's presence before him, though he neither called him to his presence nor forbade his being there, because Jesus knows that Satan has no real power. The only power Satan has in his confrontation with Jesus is that which God allows him. Jesus accepts Satan's presence here, then, because he understands it must be ordained. But he also knows that Satan will not be able to do more to him than God allows, and he trusts that God will not give Satan the power to do more than Jesus will be able to overcome. Thus, with an infallible strength of mind and faith in the Father, Jesus mentally dismisses Satan and all his false arguments. Satan has no answer, so he "bow[s] low" and "disappear[s] / Into thin Air" (1.497-99).

After Satan leaves him, Jesus resumes his meditations which continue to feed his spirit as he waits for Satan's expected return. Satan is no longer certain of his victory over Jesus, so he briefly returns to his comrades to warn them that he may very well be defeated in this temptation. Having "found him, view'd him, tasted him," Satan recognizes that the temptations he offered Eve, and the temptations she offered Adam, will not work for this man (2.131). He realizes that the reason for this is that they were far inferior to Jesus, as he is not simply human, but possesses certain gifts bestowed upon him by Heaven: "Perfections absolute, Graces divine, / And amplitude of mind to greatest Deeds" (2.138-39). For the first time, we see Satan begin to doubt himself and

his powers; where he once "Thought none my equal," he worries that he will "now be over-match'd" (2.146). He thus tells his fellow fallen angels that he may need their assistance to assure their victory over the Son.[21]

Belial understandably suggests that they entice Jesus with women, but Satan intuits that such will have little effect on Jesus. He points out that "Beauty stands / In the admiration only of weak minds / Led captive," but Satan has already learned just how strong Jesus's mind is (2.220-22). Satan concludes that they should find a more subtle form of temptation, "that which only seems to satisfie / Lawful desires of Nature, not beyond" (229-30). Satan is intelligent enough to know that obvious temptations, as with beautiful women, will not be successful, but he yet hopes to persuade Jesus to sin by offering him things that are not obviously sinful, and indeed are lawful, if taken in the proper mind and spirit. Knowing Jesus is hungry and there is no food to be found, Satan resolves to tempt Jesus once more with food.

After Satan's deliberations with his comrades, the action in Milton's epic returns to Jesus's isolation in the wilderness. Again Milton emphasizes Jesus's hunger, since that state of deprivation will be the focus of the coming temptation. Milton tells us again that Jesus has endured these forty days without eating, not through the virtue of fasting,

[21] This is an important change in Satan's demeanor. He has asked the other angels for suggestions in the past, but it has been only nominally. Perhaps it is a nominal plea for help here as well, for Satan does refuse the suggestion that Belial offers, but there is a stronger sense that Satan is not completely sure that his plan to tempt the Son will actually work or that he can succeed alone. Even if he does not take Belial's suggestion here, he still asks that the demons be ready to assist him in the temptation at any moment, for he cannot risk taking all the glory for himself if there is also such a strong chance of failure.

but because he never felt the natural need to eat.[22] Now, however, Jesus is actually hungry for the first time, and his hunger puts him in a state of weakness and vulnerability in light of Satan's intended temptation with food. But as Jesus employs and maintains right reason from the start and throughout, his thoughts about his hunger help anticipate the kinds of arguments Satan will make in his temptation:

> But now I feel hunger, which declares
> Nature hath need of what she asks; yet God
> Can satisfie that need some other way,
> Though hunger still remain: so it remain
> Without this bodies wasting, I content me,
> And from the sting of Famine fear no harm,
> Nor mind it, fed with better thoughts that feed
> Me hungring more to do my Fathers will.
>
> (2.252-59)

Using right reason *a priori* in relation to the passions, Jesus essentially works through the temptation Satan is about to offer even before it is offered. Though Jesus is physically hungry, he resolves in his mind to let God satisfy his hunger as He sees fit, finding his holy meditations to be a more substantial food for his mind than any food he

[22] Jesus says, "that Fast / To Vertue I impute not, or count part / of what I suffer here; if Nature need not, / Or God support Nature without repast / Though needing, what praise is it to endure?" (2.247-51). Milton thus reveals that the mere fact of Jesus's fasting is of far less importance than the fact that he was sustained by God through those forty days. Though it would have been natural to have been hungry, Jesus felt no hunger because he was fed by his "holiest meditations" (2.110). Milton does not want Jesus to be praised for his fasting, because his fast was not done through sacrifice on his part but through God's support for him. The praise is properly reserved for Jesus's victory over Satan's temptation when he is hungry.

could provide for his body. His spiritual food is the proper food as it feeds his desire to do his Father's will, no matter the circumstance.

When Satan returns to Jesus, Satan now appears in courtly array rather than as a rustic shepherd. Satan immediately addresses Jesus with "fair speech" as he recalls several Biblical figures (including the entire race of Israel) who wandered the desert but had food provided them by God (2.301). Jesus responds simply that "They all had need, I as thou seest have none" (2.318). Satan questions how Jesus can say he has no need for food when he has been without food for forty days and is even now hungry, and he then asks, "if Food were now before thee set, / would'st thou not eat?" (2.321-22). But Jesus responds, "Thereafter as I like / The giver," insisting that he would only eat food placed before him by God (2.322-23).[23]

Satan, ever subtle, immediately invites Jesus to claim his power over the natural world so that food would not actually be placed before him by Satan but of Jesus's own will and desire. He shifts quickly, however, to suggest quite slyly that the food he himself would offer Jesus would not be "proferr'd by an Enemy" (2.330), though he yet qualifies that with an added question of "who / Would scruple that, with want opprest?" (2.330-31). With this series of questions, Satan has moved quickly from trying to

[23] Here, Jesus seems to recall his dreams of food from the previous night's sleep, before Satan returned. His dream might be misread as a tempting dream wrought by what his appetite wanted, but really Jesus has had a dream that prepares him for or shows him the way through this temptation by Satan. He dreamt first of standing by Elijah who was, "Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what [the Ravens] brought" (2.269). He then dreamt of Elijah fleeing from the ravens into the desert where he fell asleep under a juniper tree only to find food prepared for him by the angel when he awoke. Though this is a dream of food in the midst of Jesus's hunger, it is also a dream of resisting the wrong kinds of food and of God providing for His chosen ones. Jesus must follow the example of Elijah when he is tempted by Satan, trusting that God will provide him the sustenance he needs.

legitimize Jesus's desire for food, and Jesus's rightful power to provide it for himself, to suggesting that Jesus could lawfully accept food from Satan himself.

Parts of Satan's arguments are indeed legitimate. It is possible that Jesus could command the natural world to provide food for him. However, it would be a sin were he to do so to the extent that he did not trust that God would provide him what he needs. Satan seems to know that, while his own argument's premise is correct—that Jesus could command the natural world to provide him food instantaneously—his argument on the whole will not persuade Jesus to act accordingly. Yet, all along in this particular temptation, Satan's real aim is to entice Jesus with a banquet of foods offered by the enemy, although, of course, Satan denies that he is Jesus's enemy.

With that aim in mind, Satan "spake no dream" (2.337), but the words which he speaks to Jesus are immediately materialized before him: "A Table richly spred, in regal mode, / With dishes pil'd, and meats of noblest sort / And savour" (2.340-42). Milton contrasts the sumptuous feast placed before Jesus with "that crude Apple that diverted Eve" (2.349), pointing out how much more tempting this feast is than the apple which enticed Eve to eat—the sensual appeal of the apple is nothing compared to the delicacies of the table Satan offers. The comparison of this feast in the desert to the apple in the garden emphasizes the greater temptation Jesus faces and the greater fall of Eve. Jesus is much more vulnerable than Eve was—he actually needs bodily sustenance to satisfy his hunger—while Eve had no real physical need to eat the fruit. If Eve could not withstand the temptation of the apple, she could never withstand this temptation. Her fall is therefore worse because it comes after the appetite and desire of something as

simple and "crude" as an apple. Jesus's ability to withstand this temptation emphasizes his greater virtue and the glory he deserves for his ability to maintain his mind and reason despite his physical vulnerability.[24]

To further his aim of enticing Jesus to eat the food before him, Satan renews his invitation to eat by arguing for the naturalness and even rightness of eating such food:

> These are not Fruits forbidden, no interdict
> Defends the touching of these viands pure,
> Thir taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
> But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
> Hunger, with sweet restorative delight.
>
> (2.369-73)

It is natural for Jesus to be hungry after forty days without food. And eating when the body feels hunger, in itself, is not an unlawful act. But Jesus has already resolved to trust that God will provide him the food he needs, and he understands that taking the food Satan offers is not God's provision for his sustenance. He also recognizes that eating such food offered in the spirit in which Satan offers it would be in violation of his relationship with and trust in the Father. Satan's own references to the apple in the temptation of Adam and Eve serve to emphasize this element. Satan alludes to the fruit forbidden to Adam and Eve was from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, but he

[24] Emilie Babcox, noting that this banquet temptation and the temptation of classical learning in Athens have a history of troubling readers, argues that these two extra-biblical temptations are "connected in purpose and in their identification of hunger and curiosity, and together illuminate a definition of Jesus as the satisfaction of a hunger that has its source in Adam's eating of the apple in Eden. Since physical hunger has been associated with intellectual and spiritual hunger since the garden of Eden, it is appropriate to find them woven together in the texture of *Paradise Regained*" (36).

chooses to ignore the actual implications of eating that fruit—knowledge of good lost and evil gained. Though this food does not carry the same official title, eating such food would have similar implications for Jesus. Not eating the food Satan offers is as much a test of obedience for Jesus as the apple was for Adam and Eve, and in remaining obedient where they failed, Jesus regains what they lost.

Jesus answers Satan with temperance. Seeming to concede that he does indeed have the right to all things in the world, he asks Satan, "who withholds my pow'r that right to use? / Shall I receive by gift what of my own, / When and where likes me best, I can command?" (2.380-82). He then claims he could, just as easily as Satan, command a table to be presented before him, but a table would be brought to him by angels rather than demons. And even though Jesus could command such a table, he also knows that it is not yet the proper time for him to eat and satisfy his hunger. He then denounces Satan's attempt to offer him food, asking, "with my hunger what hast thou to do?" (2.389), and condemning "thy pompous Delicacies … / And count[ing] thy specious gifts no gifts but guiles" (2.390-91).

Upon Jesus's rejection of the sumptuous feast, Satan is forced to admit that Jesus's temperance makes him impervious to the temptation of food, "For no allurement yields to appetite, / And all thy heart is set on high designs, / High actions" (2.408-10).[25] Satan is correct in his realization that Jesus will not be persuaded by mere appetite to eat what he should not, but Satan misjudges Jesus yet again in turn. Satan presumes,

[25] Aquinas's conception of temperance is pertinent here, as he also emphasizes this virtue as related to the work of reason: "temperance withdraws man from things which seduce the appetite from obeying reason" (*ST* 2.141.2).

because Jesus is not interested in eating, that Jesus's heart is set on much higher designs and actions, so Satan will make magnificence the focus of his next temptation.

Jesus does indeed aspire to the highest designs—to do the will of His Father—but his aspirations do not lie with the kinds of vain desires with which Satan associates success. Satan erroneously believes that because Jesus was not so interested in merely eating, he must be concerned with ostentatious deeds. Satan argues that "Great acts require great means of enterprise," and he sees that Jesus lacks significant means in every area of his life (2.412). Satan suggests that Jesus will need great wealth to do great things, and Satan is prepared to provide it. Satan even goes so far as to argue that the world will be deprived of the goods of Jesus's soul if there is not first an abundance of wealth out of which they might operate: "Virtue, Valour, Wisdom sit in want," unable to achieve anything without a foundation in great wealth (2.431).

But Jesus is patient and resolute. Jesus argues in response to Satan's arguments that wealth alone, unaccompanied by virtue, valor, and wisdom, is powerless in the world, or if it gains power, is helpless to keep it. He then offers examples of men (Gideon, Japhtha, and David) who moved from poverty to "highest deeds" when endowed with virtue and wisdom. Yet his most pronounced rejection of Satan's argument comes when he deems riches to be

> the toyl of Fools,
> The wise mans cumbrance if not snare, more apt

To slacken Virtue, and abate her edge,

Then prompt her to do aught may merit praise.

(2.453-56)

Jesus insists that he will be much better served, much better able to do his virtuous work in the world, if he eschews the empty promises of wealth and fortune, which will only distract him from his virtues and render him foolish rather than wise. Remaining in this position of seeming weakness in terms of the temporal world's value will allow Jesus to gain more fully the victory in the spiritual, eternal world.

And even though Satan has promised Jesus his own kingdom, Jesus argues what being a true king entails:

His Honour, Vertue, Merit and chief Praise,

That for the Publick all this weight he bears.

Yet he who reigns within himself, and rules

Passions, Desires, and Fears, is more a King;

Which every wise and virtuous man attains:

And who attains not, ill aspires to rule

Cities of men or head-strong Multitudes,

Subject himself to Anarchy within,

Or lawless passions in him which he serves.

(2.464-72)

True kings are rulers of themselves—their passions, desires, and fears—before they are rulers of others. People who do not aspire to or attain such virtue do not make good

rulers, as their souls are subject to the kind of anarchy to which they abandon their subjects. It is therefore more desirable to aspire first and foremost to be virtuous and wise rather than to aspire to be a king.

And yet knowing that he is to be king, though not of any earthly city but rather of the heavenly city, Jesus describes the true function of the office of a king:

> But to guide Nations in the way of truth
> By saving Doctrine, and from errour lead
> To know, and knowing worship God aright,
> Is yet more Kingly, this attracts the Soul,
> Governs the inner man, the nobler part,
> That other o're the body only reigns,
> And oft by force, which to a generous mind
> So reigning can be no sincere delight.
>
> (2.473-80)

Insofar as the best rulers are first good rulers of themselves, it is also their duty to care not for their subjects' bodies, but for their souls, the "inner man, the nobler part." Making this the priority and function of kingship, the king will be able to lead the people, and thereby the nation, to God and truth. Underlying this part of the debate between Satan and Jesus is the reader's knowledge that Jesus would derogatorily be called "king of the Jews" and would have a crown of thorns placed upon his head at his Crucifixion. At that moment of Christ's greatest weakness, dying upon the cross, when he will have committed his mind and spirit completely to the will of God and sacrificed

himself completely for the souls of his subjects, Jesus's power as king, savior, and mediator will be completely, fully realized.

With that argument, Jesus renders Satan confounded and silent. Satan does not know "what to say, / What to reply, confuted and convinc't / Of his weak arguing, and fallacious drift" (3.2-4). When he manages to gather his thoughts again, Satan attempts to soothe Jesus, admitting that he "see[s] thou know'st what is of use to know, / … / Thy actions to thy words accord" (3.7-9). What Satan is really admitting, however, is that there is no hypocrisy in Jesus for Satan to exploit, so Satan must change tactics yet again. This time Satan urges Jesus to seek glory and fame before he is too old to gain it. Satan asks why Jesus is hiding in the wilderness where he "deprive[s] / All Earth her wonder at thy acts, thy self / The fame and glory" (3.23-25), and he suggests that Jesus's "years are ripe, and over-ripe" for winning such glory (3.31). Satan's examples for this part of his argument are Philip of Macedonia and Julius Caesar, both of whom won glory among men in their relative youth, though Caesar laments the years that he lived ingloriously, according to Satan.

Jesus yet remains calm in the face of this new assault upon his mind, replying, "Thou neither dost perswade me to seek wealth / For Empires sake, nor Empires to affect / For glories sake by all thy argument" (3.44-46). Jesus realizes there is a kind of logical progression in Satan's temptations from the previous book to this one, but Jesus is no more persuaded by these most recent temptations than he was by the previous ones. Jesus claims that Fame among the many is insignificant: the "miscellaneous rabble, who extol / Things vulgar, & well weigh'd, scarce worth the praise, / They praise and they

admire they know not what" (3.50-52). Jesus continues his rebuttal by pointing out how so few among that rabble are intelligent and wise, and how even fewer of them are praised in glory by the rabble. Jesus thus dismisses entirely the need for an earthly fame and instead argues that he is seeking a heavenly fame:

> This is true glory and renown, when God
> Looking on the Earth, with approbation marks
> The just man, and divulges him through Heaven
> To all his Angels, who with true applause
> Recount his praises.
>
> (3.60-64)

For Jesus, it is preferable to be "Famous … in Heaven, on Earth less known," as Job was (3.68), the "just man" among the "rabble."[26] Jesus continues by defining what glory on earth entails—"a false glory, attributed / To things not glorious, men not worthy of fame" (3.69-70)—and points out that anything good in glory could also be attained by other, more virtuous means, "Without ambition, war, or violence; / By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent, / By patience, temperance" (3.89-91). Moreover, if the great deeds which earn humans glory on earth are done only for the sake of gaining glory and fame, then the very deeds are rendered inglorious and are not worthy of praise. So Jesus asks Satan another question that emerges through his initial reactions to Satan's suggestion that he seek fame: "Shall I seek glory then, as vain men seek / Oft not deserv'd? I seek not mine, but his / Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am" (3.105-7).

[26] Blake Greenway discusses the significance of the "one just man" in Milton's thought and writing, but focuses on the historical and political implications of being the "one just man."

Jesus's response to Satan's temptation proves to be a temptation Satan himself cannot resist. Satan's inclination to curse God for all of the ills that befall him brings Satan back to his old "murmuring[s]" against God in Heaven (3.108).[27] But most importantly, Jesus is moved to a fervent reply by the ridiculousness of Satan's arguments against the Father. Jesus's first words in response to Satan's cursing of the Father are "And reason" (3.122): There is good reason for God to be glorified and to exact such glory even from the fallen angels. He reminds Satan that God created the world not for His own glory but "to show forth his goodness, and impart / His good communicable to every soul / Freely" (3.124-26). Even then, however, Jesus insists that such glory is not demanded, but that God only asks that he be given thanks by the angels and humans whom He has created. And Jesus is exacting in stating again the nature of the crime Satan first committed against God, and urged human beings to commit as well. God's rational creatures should be giving consistent thanks to God for His creation, as such gratitude is

> The slightest, easiest, readiest recompence
> From them who could return him nothing else,
> And not returning that would likeliest render
> Contempt instead, dishonor, obloquy.
>
> (3.128-131)

[27] The word "murmuring" always suggests a certain dangerous quality to what Satan says—something that is said in the shadows because not dared to be uttered in plain sight. Satan's words echo his arguments against God in *Paradise Lost*. Satan has not forgotten that he believes God's actions are based on a desire for his own glory rather than love. Nor does Satan believe that God actually deserves glory and praise from his subjects, insisting that such glory is demanded rather than earned. In recalling the depths of his jealousy and hatred of God, Satan forgets, at least momentarily, what he seeks to achieve in tempting the Son.

Rational creatures could and should give thanks to their Creator by giving him the glory due Him for His good works. If humans or angels withhold that gratitude, which is otherwise easy to demonstrate, then they are holding God in contempt and dishonoring Him. And such a refusal to show God the proper honor and glory renders them "recreant to God, ingrate and false, / And so of all true good himself despoil'd" (3.138-39). With a statement pointed directly towards Satan's own particular sins against God, Jesus argues that it would be sacrilege to seek for himself the fame and glory that he would deny God, to Whom all glory should rightly belong.

Yet Jesus also insists that God is generous insofar as it is a sign of His grace and goodness that He is willing to share his glory with those "who advance his glory, not thir own, / Them he himself to glory will advance" (3.143-44). If glory is sought for God rather than oneself, then God will bestow glory upon his people. Even more importantly, Jesus knows that he does not have to pursue great power in order for God to be glorified through his life and works; indeed, God is more properly glorified through his utter subjection to the will of God, even to the point of abject weakness and death.

Jesus's fervent reply again renders Satan speechless. Satan becomes even more aware of his own guilt for his sin, as it was precisely for his own glory that he fought the war in Heaven. Yet Satan is not finished. He challenges Jesus with a reminder that Jesus has been promised a kingdom, which he will not be able to attain by sitting still in the wilderness. That is, Satan suggests that Jesus should possess a certain zeal and duty to reclaim the throne of David for his people—the "Zeal of thy Fathers house, Duty to

free / Thy Country from her Heathen servitude" that should inspire him to hurry and perform those feats for the people of God (3.175-76).

Jesus, however, feels no pressure of time to fulfill the duties for which he was incarnated. He reminds Satan that "All things are best fullfil'd in their due time, / And time there is for all things" (3.182-83). He also acknowledges what Satan wishes to deny, that God is in control of all things, that His hand rules all seasons and determines the proper time for all actions.

Jesus then asks Satan why he should be willing to do things on his own time when God knows the proper time for all things, including these very temptations from Satan:

> What if he hath decreed that I shall first
> Be try'd in humble state, and things adverse,
> By tribulations, injuries, insults,
> Contempts, and scorns, and snares, and violence,
> Suffering, abstaining, quietly expecting
> Without distrust or doubt, that he may know
> What I can suffer, how obey? who best
> Can suffer, best can do; best reign, who first
> Well hath obey'd; just tryal e're I merit
> My exaltation without change or end.
>
> (3.189-97)

Again, Milton's almost Arian inclination comes to the fore, as Milton does not believe that the Son shares the omniscience of the Father. While the Son is told in Book III of *Paradise Lost* what will be expected of him in his sacrifice for humankind, Jesus, the Son incarnate, does not know or remember what he will actually have to do to redeem humanity.[28] Yet Jesus has studied the Scriptures and already knows that his "way must lie / Through many a hard assay even to the death" (1.263-64). From that knowledge, combined with his faith in his Father, Jesus is prepared to trust that there is a purpose for these temptations. And because of his diligent study and his trust in the Father, Jesus has resolved to endure the temptations patiently.

There is also an added purpose for Jesus's spiritual temptations. Though spiritual warfare aims at reestablishing the relationship between God and humans, fallen humans are always going to fail at some point in their spiritual battles. No matter what or how many spiritual battles they win, humans can never be redeemed through their own merit. Though Jesus's spiritual battles serve to cement his relationship with God, they serve another deeper purpose as well. Jesus's relationship with God is never in question the way it is for other human beings, but Jesus must demonstrate that he deserves the exaltation bestowed upon him by the Father. Jesus recognizes that his present temptations are preparing him for his reign in Heaven. In his victory over these spiritual temptations, and the ones to come, Jesus reveals that he alone can merit the exaltation and redemption from death, so that he alone can atone for the sins of humankind.

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[28] This understanding of the Son is also supported earlier in *Paradise Regained* where only Jesus's diligence in studying the Holy Scriptures allowed him to know that the way before him would include great suffering and pain. Milton also emphasizes in Book III of *Paradise Lost* that the Son will have "been found / By merit more then Birthright Son of God, / Found worthiest to be so by being Good" (3.308-10).

Momentarily diverted, Satan soon continues his attacks on Jesus by insinuating doubts on the part of Jesus: "Perhaps thou linger'st in deep thoughts detain'd / Of the enterprise so hazardous and high" (3.227-28). Satan again points out that Jesus has led an essentially private rather than a public life. Therefore, as Satan's argument goes, Jesus must necessarily doubt that he can achieve what he has been sent to do, as he is so fundamentally unaware of the ways of the world. To remedy that lack of knowledge which Jesus could presumably have attained from empires, kings, and courts, the "Best school[s] of experience, quickest in sight / In all things that to great actions lead" (3.238-39), Satan resolves to bring before Jesus all the kingdoms of the world.

Thus entering another phase of his temptation of Jesus, Satan takes Jesus up to the highest point on a mountain from which to view simultaneously all the glory of the kingdoms of the world.[29] But this temptation, like the others, finds no weakness in Jesus. Though Jesus is himself unmoved by the view of the military glory of the earthly kingdoms, the sight so moves Satan that he "yet more presum'd, / And to our Saviour thus his words renew'd" (3.345-46). Satan's presumptions are many, but they are the same that he has had throughout these temptations. He again presumes that Jesus's kingdom will be an earthly kingdom as these before him are. He presumes that Jesus will have to undertake military endeavors to become king of the Jews and to obtain his promised kingdom. And he presumes that Jesus will have to choose between winning by

[29] At this point, Milton inserts a commentary by the narrator which serves to remind the reader of the limitations within which Satan functions at this moment—and has functioned since his fall from Heaven. Satan takes Jesus up the mountain with "such power was giv'n him then" (3.251). Like the moment in *Paradise Lost* when Satan is enabled to rise from the fiery lake, he is only able to do so because God allows it. Thus we are forcibly reminded by Milton (in the voice of the narrator) that Satan is allowed to tempt Jesus in this way only because God allows it, so that even now, as always, Satan is fulfilling God's purposes and plans.

conquest or by joining in league with one of the earthly kingdoms in order to regain the throne of David.

Jesus is unmoved by Satan's arguments and again discerns the hypocrisy in Satan's presumptions. Jesus first argues against Satan's apparent desire to help him free the people of Israel from their captivity to the Roman Empire. Jesus recalls the many times in the past when the work of Satan has rendered Israel captive and near destruction, knowing that "such zeal / to *Israel* then, the same that now to me" (3.412-13). But that recollection is even secondary to Jesus's real argument against Satan's temptation in this case, and in all of the other cases: one has to wait for God's time for all things. Jesus claims that the people of Israel have "wrought their own captivity" in the vain worship of idols and their refusal to be humble and penitent (3.415). He therefore claims that it is not his business to free the people of Israel on his own terms and time, when they would yet remain "Unhumbl'd, unrepentant, unreform'd" and only return to their old, sinful ways (3.429). Instead, however, if he waits for God's time, Jesus knows without a doubt that God "by some wond'rous call / May bring them back repentant and sincere" (3.434-35), so that the only real choice is to leave the people of Israel, and his role in their redemption, "To [God's] due time and providence" (3.440).

Upon that statement by Jesus, Milton concludes this book by recalling what Jesus has already said about true kingship: "So spake *Israel's* true king, and to the Fiend / Made answer meet, that made void all his wiles. / So fares it when with truth falshood contends" (3.441-43). Milton does not leave much room for the reader to question the

nature of Jesus's arguments against Satan. The Son's exemplar use of reason exposes the poor logic of all of Satan's wiles and arguments.

As Book IV begins, Satan finds himself "Perplex'd and troubl'd at his bad success / … / Discover'd in his fraud, thrown from his hope" (4.1-3). Satan had earlier presumed in his typical self-deception that he would be proven stronger than Jesus, but now he is truly aware of Jesus's strength and that Jesus is "far his over-match" despite all of the apparent weaknesses of Jesus (4.7). Despite what he now knows to be the case, that he will be defeated by Jesus, Satan yet resolves not to leave the fight. Instead he maintains his "Vain battry" if only as a salve for his own pride and out of spite at the pending loss (4.20).

Thus resolved, Satan essentially continues where he left off earlier—with the notion of kingship. Satan obviously believes that Jesus's purpose on earth is to gain an earthly throne, for he now shows Jesus the glories of Rome, suggesting that with the help of Satan's power, Jesus could remove the current emperor of Rome from the throne and assume it for himself. But Jesus remains, as always, unmoved by Satan's appeals to power and grandeur:

> Nor doth this grandeur and majestic show
> Of luxury, though call'd magnificence,
> More then of arms before, allure mine eye,
> Much less my mind.
>
> (4.110-13)

Jesus's mind remains untouched, untempted by all that Satan offers. He reiterates for Satan what Satan has failed to do in this temptation—that which Satan succeeded so easily in doing with Adam and Eve. Satan has always sought to undermine human virtue and obedience by appealing to the senses, but Jesus points out that he has failed even in appealing to his sight and other senses, much less in appealing to his mind and reason. Jesus is not to be tempted as Adam and Eve were.

Jesus then answers some of Satan's temptations more specifically, particularly that he would be able to overcome the emperor of Rome and take his place. While Satan has suggested that Jesus could "expel / A brutish monster" (4.127-28), Jesus offers another hypothetical possibility: "what if I withal / Expel a Devil who first made him such?" (4.128-29). While resolving to let the Emperor's "tormenter Conscience find him out" (4.130), Jesus's rhetorical question does not leave Satan much room to worry about what Jesus intends to do, indeed what his very purpose in coming to earth is. Satan knows as well as Jesus does that he, Satan, is the devil who helped to make the Emperor the sinful man he is. He is the same devil who helps make all human beings the sinful creatures they are. The work of Satan has rendered the Emperor what he is, and Satan, as the source of sin and darkness in the world, will be cast out rather than the sinful humans alone.

Jesus therefore reveals more fully to Satan that his objectives in coming to earth were not to rid the earth of sinful humans, nor to free the vile and base people who deserve to be vassals to such an Emperor. It is not within Jesus's power at this point to free such people because they are not simply physically enslaved, but spiritually and

mentally enslaved. It would do no good for him to free their bodies, because his concern is not for their bodies but for their souls, and he cannot free their souls unless they are willing to be so freed.[30] Jesus knows that there will be a time when his eternal and heavenly kingdom will be obtained, but "what the means, / Is not for thee [Satan] to know, nor me to tell" (4.152-53). And until the time for his kingdom comes, his true strength comes from his humility before God and his acknowledgement of his own weaknesses in light of God's strength.

Irritated by Jesus's refusal to consider his offer, Satan becomes "impudent" in his demands, telling Jesus that he would not offer all these kingdoms and power without something in return. But what Satan demands is absolutely outrageous:

> On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
> And worship me as thy superior Lord,
> Easily done, and hold them all of me;
> For what can less so great a gift deserve?
>
> (4.166-69)

Satan seems quite desperate at this point, for he cannot imagine that such demands would not be persuasive. He momentarily loses his composure and his subtlety, instead baldly revealing what the cost of succumbing to his temptations would be.

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[30] Milton must necessarily link the Rome of the ancient world to Catholicism of his own time, particularly in terms of what he saw as the Catholic Church's suppression of free thought. Laura Lunger Knoppers reads this part of *Paradise Regained* as a sustained and profound critique of Catholicism: "Aligned with Reformation polemic, Milton targets the history of the Roman Catholic Church and points his attack in part at the golden age of the papacy, marked by the rebirth of art and learning. The painting, sculpture, and architecture of Renaissance Rome, along with the rediscovery of Greek and Latin learning, helped to shape and promulgate the imperial and ecclesiastical mission of the papacy. The poverty and humility of the Son of God in the wilderness and his rejection of satanic offers of wealth, power, glory, and learning boldly redefine spirituality as the inner discipline of hearing and obeying the word of God" (70).

Jesus's disdain is immediate in reaction to Satan's demand: "I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less, / Now both abhor, since thou hast dar'd to utter / The abominable terms, impious condition" (4.171-73). Though Jesus has patiently endured Satan's temptations up to this point, he cannot endure Satan's blasphemous suggestion that he would ever worship Satan as if he were God.[31] Jesus then presents Satan with the many reasons that his argument is weak and sinful. Jesus's first recourse in his answer to Satan comes in the appeal to God's law. The first commandment demands that a person have no other gods before God, so Jesus finds it ridiculous that Satan would suggest that the Son of God should worship Satan as a god. The absurdity of the suggestion is increased with the reminder that Satan is accursed already, for his own fall and for the fall of Adam and Eve. And Jesus suggests that Satan will find himself even more accursed for this attempt against the Son of God because it is even bolder and more blasphemous than his temptations of Adam and Eve.

Jesus then reminds Satan more precisely of the nature of Satan's power in the world. The kingdoms of the world were not given to Satan outright, so such kingdoms are not really Satan's to give away. But Satan has been permitted by God to usurp those kingdoms for a time because of the failure of subjects or citizens to discern right rule from wrong. Upon that point, Jesus triumphantly declares the absurdity of Satan's presumption to offer Jesus that which already belongs to Jesus as the Son of God:

[31] Jesus has denounced Satan for his blasphemous and idolatrous demands, yet he also admits that he will continue to endure Satan's outrageous sinfulness for the period of time that Satan "hast permission on [him]" (4.175). Jesus understands that God has permitted Satan to tempt him for a time, so that he must continue to endure that trial with patience and strength of mind.

> Wert thou so void of fear or shame,
>
> As offer them to me the Son of God,
>
> To me my own, on such abhorred pact,
>
> That I fall down and worship thee as God?
>
> (4.189-92)

Jesus clearly discerns Satan for what he is: "That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd" (4.194).

It seems that this is the moment when Satan finally recognizes that this Son of God is the same Son of God who vanquished him during the War in Heaven, that same Son from *Paradise Lost*. Satan is truly fearful and abashed for the first time since we have seen him. He immediately attempts to soothe the Son's ire.[32] He again attempts to persuade Jesus that he had virtually no choice in offering these temptations, for he needed to know whether Jesus was the Son of God in a sense greater than the typical understanding of the children of God—both angels and humans. He claims that it was also of great concern to him to find out who the Son is, since his "coming is foretold / To me so fatal" (4.204-5). Moreover, Satan argues that he has gained no advantage in this temptation, since he failed in his goals. And Jesus is in no way damaged or endangered for the attempt and, indeed, has rather gained honor and esteem for it.

Satan also seems to intuit correctly that Jesus will not be seeking the worldly thrones with which Satan has tried to tempt him, for he "seem'st otherwise inclin'd /

[32] It is significant here that Satan now fears the Son's ire, when earlier he claimed to hope that Jesus would serve as a mediator between him and God's ire. Now, Satan is aware that he has just as much to fear from the Son as he does from the Father.

Then to a worldly Crown, addicted more, / To contemplation and profound dispute" (4.212-14). In claiming an "addiction" on Jesus's part for contemplation, then, Satan also finds the source of his final temptation of Jesus—a temptation of wisdom.

Satan admits that Jesus is already quite wise, but he suggests that Jesus could gain fame and power if he were to assume something of a divine knowledge: "as thy Empire must extend, / So let extend thy mind o're all the world, / In knowledge, all things in it comprehend" (4.222-24). Satan questions how Jesus would be able to rule his people "by persuasion" if he were not familiar with their modes of learning (4.230): "How wilt thou reason with them, how refute / Thir Idolisms, Traditions, Paradoxes?" (4.233-34). Implying that Jesus's knowledge is insufficient for the task Satan claims is before him, that Jesus's strength of mind is deficient, Satan offers to share with Jesus all the wisdom of the world, associated primarily with Athens, the seat of classical learning in the ancient world. There, Satan suggests, Jesus could learn the power of music, tragedy, oration, philosophy, the contemplation of which, either in Greece or at home, would "render thee a King compleat / Within thy self, much more with Empire joyn'd" (4.283-84).

Jesus answers Satan's suggestions "sagely," with the wisdom and knowledge he already possesses in perfect abundance (4.285):[33]

> Think not but that I know these things, or think
> I know them not; not therefore am I short

[33] Milton's use of the word "sagely" here is recorded in the *OED*, which also gives the following definition of "sage": "A.1) Of a person: Wise, discreet, judicious. b) Of advice, conduct, etc.: Characterized by profound wisdom; based on sound judgment." Both senses of the word sage reflect the position of wisdom and judgment with which we already associate Jesus in this encounter with Satan.

> Of knowing what I aught: he who receives
> Light from above, from the fountain of light,
> No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
> But these are false, or little else but dreams,
> Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm.
> (4.286-92)

Rejecting essentially all of the philosophical schools and knowledge with which Satan tempts him, Jesus dismisses the knowledge they might offer to him.[34] He points out the many ways in which Satan errs in his assumption that Jesus needs these kinds of knowledge. It matters not whether Jesus has knowledge of these matters. Any knowledge Jesus might attain on Earth through these various philosophical schools will appear as dim knowledge when compared to that which he knows from the light and truth of God. The philosophers, "Ignorant of themselves, of God much more, / And how the world began, and how man fell / Degraded by himself, on grace depending," can teach humans little and mislead them greatly (4.310-12). Jesus echoes here what we saw is the case for all fallen humans: human reason, when it attempts to work alone, is fallible. It must be assisted by divine grace in order to be an effective tool in spiritual warfare. Whatever work reason is able to do in this world, it must be joined by a "spirit and judgment equal or superior" (4.324).

With Jesus's response, grounded in reason and truth, Satan finds himself "Quite at a loss, for all his darts were spent" (4.365). Satan essentially surrenders in disgust,

[34] Jesus appreciates only Socrates' admission that the only knowledge he has is that he knows nothing. Jesus especially rejects the Stoics' definition of virtue.

asking rhetorically why Jesus has come into this world at all since he has rejected all that it has to offer. And yet Satan is not completely finished. His final statements to Jesus, however, are less a temptation than a sign of his own confusion. Satan suggests that Jesus will have cause to regret rejecting Satan's offers, for he has seen visions of what will befall Jesus: " Sorrows, and labours, opposition, hate, / Attends thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries, / Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death" (4.386-88). This is perhaps truly spoken by Satan—perhaps he has had visions of what will happen to Jesus—but in the typical ambiguity associated with demonic visions, Satan does not completely understand what such a death will mean, even for himself. He does not comprehend at this point that Jesus's sinless death will render Satan's reign over humans void.

Returning Jesus to the wilderness where he found him, Satan "feign[s] to disappear" (4.398). Milton emphasizes that Satan has not actually left Jesus alone, though Jesus remains "meek, and with untroubl'd mind" when he prepares to rest for the night (4.401). Yet Jesus will not find the rest he seeks in sleep, for Satan watches and waits for the opportunity to plague Jesus's sleep in various ways. He first bothers Jesus's sleep "with ugly dreams" that wake Jesus from his sleep (4.408). Satan then controls nature to work against the eternally patient Son, so that rain is pouring down, thunder is bellowing, and the winds are howling. But Jesus "only stoodst / Unshaken" in the face of the terrors that Satan brings upon him (4.420-21). And so Satan's terrors continued: "Infernal Ghosts, and Hellish Furies, round / Environ'd [Jesus], some howl'd, some yell'd, some shriek'd, / Some bent at [him] thir fiery darts" (4.422-24). Even

surrounded by demons and in a miserable physical state, Jesus can yet sit "unappall'd in calm and sinless peace," his mind unbothered by the assaults upon his person (4.425).[35]

After the night of terrors has passed, Satan returns one final time with "his last affront resolv'd" (4.444), but his intention is primarily "to vent his rage, / And mad despight to be so oft repell'd" (4.445-46). Yet, as always, Jesus rejects Satan's final attempts "in brief" (4.485). Jesus maintains that he is nothing worse than wet for having endured the night's storm. While Satan might argue that such things were signs of the harms to come, Jesus knows that such false portents are the work of Satan rather than God. Jesus concludes his argument with a command that Satan "desist, thou art discern'd / And toil'st in vain, nor me in vain molest" (4.497-98).

Jesus's dismissal enrages Satan to such an extent that he reveals that he has been watching Jesus throughout his entire life, since the annunciation by Gabriel. He also admits that he has been trying throughout these temptations to discern in just what sense Jesus is the Son of God—for Satan himself could be considered a son of God, as indeed are all men. In recognizing through the course of the temptations that Jesus is his mortal enemy, he therefore also sought to understand his adversary more completely—"who / And what he is, his wisdom, power, intent" (4.527-28)—while also trying "to win him, or win from him what I can" (4.530). Satan has been able to win nothing from Jesus. All he has really discovered is that Jesus is "Proof against all temptation as a rock / Of

[35] We are reminded again of the demons in Norwood's dreams, and we can compare Norwood's reactions to Jesus's reactions here. The key difference is that Jesus remains calm in the face of the demonic assault, while Norwood moves to despair. But the moral implications of their respective assaults also differ because Jesus is sinless where Norwood was not.

Adamant, and as a Center, firm / To the utmost of meer man both wise and good" (4.533-35).

Satan therefore resolves to make one final attempt to determine what is meant by Jesus's designation as the Son of God. He takes Jesus to the highest point in Jerusalem and demands that he throw himself to the ground with the expectation that angels will save him from harm. Jesus's response is his simplest response throughout these temptations, but it also the most profound: "also it is written, / Tempt not the Lord thy God, he said and stood" (4.560-61). While Adam and Eve were created "sufficient to [stand] but free to fall," Christ alone remains standing when faced with the determined temptations of Satan. Though Jesus has seemed to be weak—in his lowly birth; his quiet, removed life; his unwillingness to pursue what Satan deems he needs to achieve great things—his strength of mind and his constant virtue render him the stronger and Satan the weaker for his attempts. Satan, rather than the human, falls again. Jesus remains standing after all Satan's attempts, but Satan, in his own false pride, "Fell whence he stood to see his Victor fall" (4.571). Though Satan has imagined himself supreme in his power over humans, Jesus's resolute and reasoned victory over Satan's temptations renders Satan's fall to hell complete. Now, Jesus is ready to enter "on [his] glorious work / … and begin to save mankind" (4.634-35), for his victory over temptation firmly marks his entry into his public life and into his work of the salvation of humankind, even as he knows and accepts that great suffering awaits him.

"Take heed that thou turn not aside again": Christian's Progress to the Celestial City

One subtle appeal of *Paradise Regained* is how the poem invites the reader to conceive of the near impossibility of any human other than Christ overcoming moments of marked physical weaknesses to resist the temptations offered by Satan in the desert. And, given the setting of *Paradise Regained*, the harshness of the desert, we also see that an appreciation of the strength needed in spiritual warfare must take into account an awareness of human weaknesses out of which great strength can emerge. Yet, the point of this minor epic is quite evident. In observing the Son's use of perfect and steadfast reason, we are to realize the ways in which human reason can (again) function properly, at least potentially, with the attendant aid of God's grace. Christ's triumph in the desert against Satan's temptations, and then his crucifixion and resurrection, creates the condition for the possibility of the Christian to realize fully the triumph over temptation, even in the face of great weakness.

Yet John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* is also suggestive of the work of perfect, or virtually perfect, reason in a fallen world, and the work of reason in a setting suggestive of debilitating human frailty. Though Christian's use of reason in *The Pilgrim's Progress* cannot attain the heights and perfection of reason that the Son reaches in *Paradise Regained*, in this allegory of the Christian's progress to Heaven, Christian actually makes it to the Celestial City. But in Bunyan's allegory, Christian's spiritual journey is represented as an actual one. Likewise, his numerous spiritual battles are rendered as physical, and his spiritual weakness are personified or manifested in the people he meets and the places he travels. This allegory thus offers a look at the

culmination of the work of reason in spiritual warfare. In Christian, we see a man who is limited and marked by the sins of Adam and Eve. He struggles through many kinds of spiritual battles—internal and external. Sometimes he temporarily fails, but through his continued use of reason and memory and his will to reach the Celestial City, he is able to attain that perfection that was lost to humanity with the fall of Adam and Eve. Here, we see a man who has completed the process of soul-making that Augustine identifies as the aim of all spiritual warfare.

Bunyan attempts to justify his choice of allegory in the prefatory poem to his prose.[36] He argues that there is truth to what he says, even if it is wrapped in the "swaddling-clouts" of allegory, and that truth, he argues,

> Informs the judgement, rectifies the mind,
> Pleases the understanding, makes the will
> Submit; the memory too it doth fill
> With what doth our imagination please,
> Likewise it tends our troubles to appease.
>
> ("Apology" lines 147-52)

Bunyan introduces a number of important themes in these few lines, themes that resonate throughout his text and with Christ's temptation in the desert. These themes are

[36] Bunyan's narrator begins *The Pilgrim's Progress* by telling the reader that the allegory is written "in the similitude of a dream" (11). This dream, without question, is a divine rather than demonic dream; it is a vision granted by God to the narrator of the allegory. It is intended not as a temptation itself, but as a means to overcome the temptation with which humans are presented. It shows the ways in which humans should respond to temptations, even when they first seem too weak to withstand those temptations. Thomas H. Luxon and Brenda Machosky discuss what Bunyan means when he says that he "Fell suddenly into an allegory" ("The Author's Apology," l.9). Machosky writes, "the fall into allegory is analogous to the fall from the realm of heaven and true light into the dark and profane world in which we live, implying that the fallen world is always already allegorical" (179).

aligned with key words: judgment, mind, understanding, will, and memory.[37] His intentions are to show how a Christian believer is to make the journey to Heaven, and what strength of mind is required to make that journey successfully and to overcome the necessary spiritual battles.

In *The Pilgrim's Progress*, there are concerning the use of reason two ideas in particular, actually intertwined, that are quite pronounced. One has to do with the importance of memory; the other has to do with the mind proper and its faculties, including both understanding and judgment. Christian and his fellow pilgrims are continuously being urged to remember the lessons they have learned. But when they fail to remember properly, they usually find themselves in situations of grave physical danger and weakness. When they finally do remember what they ought to know, the dangers and weaknesses are diminished as their minds become stronger. Memory, therefore, has much to do with the work of reason in the progress toward the Celestial City, as its function is tied to the capacity for genuine understanding and right judgment. Moreover, each spiritual battle the pilgrims endure provides a unique lesson that gives the pilgrim a greater understanding of both himself and God, especially God's grace, and prepare the pilgrim for his entrance into the Celestial City. Genuine understanding and

[37] Augustine discusses the trinity of the memory, understanding, and will extensively in *On the Trinity*. In the final book (15), Augustine states, "if any one intelligently regards [the memory, understanding, and the will] as by nature divinely appointed in his own mind, and remembers by memory, contemplates by understanding, embraces by love, how great a thing that is in the mind, whereby even the eternal and unchangeable nature can be recollected, beheld, desired, doubtless that man finds an image of that highest Trinity" (15.20, pp. 220-21). For Augustine, reflecting upon the nature of human memory, understanding, and will become a means to understand more profoundly the nature of the Holy Trinity. For Bunyan, Christian must employ the trinity of memory, reason, and will in order to use the knowledge and virtue he has gained to come before the presence of God.

right judgment are to accrue from this progressive collection of lessons won by the use of right reason and retained in the mind by diligent memory.

In addition to remembering and recollecting what has already been learned from previous moments of weakness, Bunyan also insists that the Christian pilgrim should take care to remember the weaknesses themselves. In this, Bunyan's allegory is thoroughly Puritan in its theology, for he emphasizes that true conversion begins with the conviction of one's own sinful nature.[38] Recognizing his own weaknesses, then, Christian, Bunyan's hero, has a "tremendous need to find a righteousness not his own by which to be saved," which need serves as Christian's impetus for leaving his family and friends in the City of Destruction to seek out the Celestial City.[39] In the end, Christian finds his own righteousness, of course, not merely on his own but by the grace of God in conjunction with his progressively astute memory of the lessons he learns in his ongoing spiritual warfare. And in finding that righteousness, he finds a strength of mind he did not realize he possessed all along, but which he realizes he perfected in some sense.[40] Bunyan's position here echoes Augustine in *On the Trinity*, where he insists that

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[38] Faithful's discussion with Talkative later in the allegory echoes these points. Faithful points again to that first step in the process of Puritan conversion: the first revelation of the work of grace is the conviction of sin and the recognition of the fallen state of humankind. But he qualifies that to some extent by describing what often happens next in the mind and heart of the sinner: "though I say it discovereth itself thus unto him yet it is but seldom that he is able to conclude that this is a work of grace, because his corruptions now, and his abused reason makes his mind to misjudge in this matter; therefore in him that hath this work there is required a very sound judgement before he can with steadiness conclude that this is a work of grace" (74). The human who is suddenly aware of the corruption of the soul is also newly aware of the corruption of reason, which causes doubts about the ability to judge what is true and false. To make the right judgment that the work of grace is the cause of this very awareness, reason clearly needs the aid of grace. Thus, the work of grace is twofold for Christian believers—to give the believers the conviction of sin and to help their faculty of reason to make the correct judgment of what that conviction means.

[39] Roger Sharrock, Introduction to Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress*, xi. One is reminded of Augustine's *The City of God*, which also imagines the distinctions between the earthly city and the heavenly city in similar ways.

[40] In this, Christian can be contrasted to the poor character, Ignorance, who makes it all the way to the portal of the Celestial City, but does not make it into the Celestial City, and in the end is damned.

knowing we can never merit God's gift of grace, "we shall not trust in ourselves; and this is to be made weak," but this weakness will not be to our detriment, for "He so dealt with us, that we might the rather profit by His strength, and that so in the weakness of humility the virtue of charity might be perfected" (4.1.2).

When the reader first meets Christian, Christian is dressed in rags and possesses a great burden upon his back. The reader learns as the allegory continues that this burden is Christian's consciousness and conviction of his own sinful nature—that first crucial step in the process of conversion. Given the conviction of his own sinful nature, brought about by reading the Bible, Christian is rendered unable to act. Though Christian has made that first fundamental step in his progression to the Heavenly City, in accordance with the Puritan model of conversion—his awareness of his sins and his inherently sinful nature—he does not know what he should do to have that burden eased or which way he should go to escape the destruction he knows awaits those in the City of Destruction. The Evangelist, representative of Bunyan's ideal of the Christian minister, comes to Christian's aid, pointing him to the Wicket Gate, the gate through which Christian must pass in order to set himself upon the path to Heaven, or the Celestial City.[41]

Yet even at this early point in his journey to the Heavenly City—he has barely started—Christian succumbs to his fears and doubts, and he soon falls into the Slough of Despond. Help, who pulls Christian from the Slough, describes the Slough of Despond

[41] Bunyan alludes here to Luke 13.24: "Strive to enter through the narrow gate, for many, I tell you, will attempt to enter but will not be strong enough" (New American Bible). Though Christian has become aware of his sinfulness, he has not proven strong enough to enter the gate and thereby truly received God' grace.

as “the descent whither the scum and filth that attends conviction for sin doth continually run, … for still as the sinner is awakened about his lost condition, there ariseth in his soul many fears, and doubts, and discouraging apprehensions, which all of them get together, and settle in this place” (17). According to Help, the fears and doubts from which Christian must emerge are a direct result of the new awareness of his fallen condition, but represented in the allegory, Christian is literally trapped and drowning in his own despair, and it is only with Help that he is able to overcome these fears that he will never be worthy of entering the gates of the Heavenly City. Like Samson, Christian will have to battle his despair at various times in his journey, and those battles will be a significant part of his spiritual growth. He will have to recall God’s promises to mind in order to bring himself out of despair time and time again.

When Christian makes it to the wicket gate, he is admitted through it by Good Will. Good Will asks Christian to recount the trials he has endured thus far in his travels. This is the first of many times throughout Bunyan’s allegory that Christian will be asked to recount what he has experienced thus far. Far from being mere repetitions of the events which have passed, these retellings of the battles fought serve an important thematic purpose in Bunyan’s allegory and his theological position. Being continuously asked to recall his mishaps, the dangers he has encountered, and the means by which he overcame them, Christian is invited to remember what has been learned thus far along the journey and to keep what he has learned in mind to prepare him mentally for what yet lays ahead. Each battle teaches a particular lesson, and it is the crucial task of

memory to keep those lessons in mind so reason and judgment can keep the pilgrims on the straight and narrow path which they have been instructed by Good Will to follow.[42]

Good Will also directs Christian to the House of the Interpreter, who will "show him excellent things" (27). Like Good Will, the Interpreter also hints at the joint work of memory, understanding, and will. When the Interpreter shows Christian the man in the iron cage of despair, he tells Christian, "Let this man's misery be remembered by thee, and be an everlasting caution to thee" (33).[43] When he has shown Christian all he needs to show him, the Interpreter reminds Christian to "keep all things so in mind, that they may be as a goad in thy sides, to prick thee forward in the way thou must go" (35). Christian leaves the Interpreter, singing this song:

> Here I have seen things rare, and profitable;
>
> Things pleasant, dreadful, things to make me stable
>
> In what I have begun to take in hand:
>
> Then let me think on them, and understand
>
> Wherefore they showed me was. (35)

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[42] Good Will teaches Christian about the narrow path he must follow: "Look before thee; does thou see this narrow way? That is the way thou must go … and it is as straight as a rule can make it." Given his past that he is supposed to remember, to say nothing of his awareness of his fallen state, Christian is rightfully worried that he might lose his way along the path. But Good Will reassures him, "Yes, there are many ways butt down upon this; and they are crooked and wide; but thus thou may'st distinguish the right from the wrong, that only being straight and narrow" (27). When Christian fails to remember to stay on that path, diverted from what he should remember by his physical pain and fatigue, he puts himself into further spiritual dangers.

[43] Bunyan, 33. George Butler suggests that "Bunyan's concern with 'the unpardonable sin' was constant. In his spiritual autobiography, … he reviews his wrestling with the question of whether he had committed this offense, and reveals its deep significance for him" (34). Butler further explains the dangers of despair, which "prevents the sinner from asking forgiveness. The voluntary rejection of grace, with the inevitable consequence of damnation, was a conventional interpretation of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit" (36).

By thinking upon the things he has been shown and gaining a better understanding of what they mean, Christian rightfully expects that these things should stay within his memory to help him fight the coming spiritual battles, but he will find at various crucial moments that he does forget these lessons, and the consequences of that forgetfulness put him in grave spiritual danger.

Leaving the House of the Interpreter, Christian makes his way to the Wall of Salvation, where he sees a Cross. The sight of this Cross loosens the burden from his back until it drops into a sepulcher, never to be seen or felt upon his back again. Christian is also stripped of his ragged clothing and given new clothes. Furthermore, he is given a mark upon his forehead, and a scroll with a seal that will get him entrance into the Celestial City. No longer burdened by his sins, Christian is ready to continue his journey to the gates of Heaven, but his first task is to climb the Hill of Difficulty, where he falls asleep where he was intended only to rest momentarily in the midst of those difficulties. Here he learns an important lesson about the dangers of sleeping at the wrong time and wrong place, for he very nearly lost the precious scroll. Christian laments "his evil of sleeping," saying, "That I should sleep in the midst of difficulty! That I should so indulge the flesh as to use that rest for ease to my flesh which the Lord of the Hill hath erected only for the relief of the spirits of pilgrims!" (41).[44] Christian must remember later the costs of sleeping "in the midst of difficulty." He learns that he

[44] Implied here is that sleeping poses such particular dangers because one cannot then be spiritually and mentally alert to the dangers around one. The lapse in mental alertness (when reason is asleep) makes one potentially vulnerable to satanic dreams, as well as other spiritual troubles.

should stay awake during crucial times so as not to leave himself spiritually and mentally vulnerable to even more kinds of spiritual dangers.

Christian is punished for sleeping in the wrong place at the wrong time by having to continue his journey in darkness, in which darkness he grows fearful from the noises in the dark and comes close to despair once again. Finally, however, he reaches the Castle Beautiful where he will be able to rest for the night. Before being allowed entrance, however, Christian must first answer the questions of Discretion, "a grave and beautiful damsel" and a virgin belonging to the castle Beautiful (43). Once he satisfies her questions, she calls to others in the family—Prudence, Piety, and Charity—who then catechize Christian further, as did Good Will at the wicket gate.[45] Like Good Will, they ask him what he has learned, what he remembers, as well as questions about the life and family he left behind. It seems that these ladies already know what Christian has endured, as when Piety asks, "But you saw more than this, did you not?" (45). But the aim of the questions is directed less toward their need to know what Christian has endured, and more toward forcing Christian to keep these events fresh in his memory. These questions give Christian the occasion to use his memory and to reflect upon what he has done, so he will be better prepared for battles still to come. The women of the castle also prepare Christian for the coming battles by taking him into the armory and fitting him with the spiritual armor provided by their Lord.

[45] This is not a catechism in the formal sense, but it might be considered such in its quick succession of questions and answers designed to help Christian remember what he needs to know. Dennis Danielson, in "Catechism," writes of Bunyan's interest in catechisms (having composed one) and his "emphasis on the *process* of acquiring knowledge" (47)

When Christian leaves the Castle Beautiful, he must immediately descend into the Valley of Humiliation. Soon after leaving his hostesses, Christian there encounters the "foul fiend" Apollyon who seeks to reclaim Christian as one of his subjects or to put him to shameful death because he refuses to return to his service (51). To escape Apollyon, Christian must engage in a tremendously difficult battle with the weapons just given him. Apollyon first taunts Christian with reminders of Christian's failings on his journey, but most subtly of all, Apollyon suggests that Christian is "inwardly desirous of vainglory in all that thou sayest or doest" (53). This is a subtle temptation because it would be a natural inclination to deny such a spiritual weakness, but Christian does not attempt to deny this or any of the other sins he has committed; he humbly admits his weaknesses and accepts Apollyon's humiliation of him: "All this is true, and much more, which thou hast left out" (53). Admitting his weaknesses, Christian is able to rely more fully on God's strength and support in this battle.

Apollyon desires to kill Christian, and Christian is wounded despite his efforts to use his new sword and shield to thwart the darts Apollyon throws at him. Still, Christian resists succumbing to Apollyon, even though "this sore combat lasted for above half a day, even till Christian was almost quite spent. For you must know, that Christian, by reason of his wounds, must needs grow weaker and weaker" (54). Christian's humiliation and near-defeat by Apollyon emphasize again the weak state in which human beings encounter evil in the world. But even in this weakened state, Christian trusts that he can rely on God's strength, for "the Prince whom I serve and honour is merciful and ready to forgive" (54). Though Christian unfortunately takes "a dreadful

fall" and loses his sword, making him completely vulnerable to the wrath of Apollyon, it is here, at the moment of his greatest weakness, when he is closest to death, that Christian is given victory over Apollyon (54). Just when Apollyon is preparing to strike his final blow, Christian finds his sword and delivers such a thrust that Apollyon flies away as though he had been given a mortal blow. Because Christian accepted his weaknesses with proper humility and trusted rightfully in God's strength, God was able to use Christian's weaknesses to His advantage and to endow Christian with new virtue, just as Christ was able to do in the desert.

Christian is given time to heal and be refreshed, but he soon must enter the Valley of the Shadow of Death. Though surrounded by physical dangers in the valley, the most dangerous aspect of this trial are the fiends and demons which surround Christian and beguile his mind:

> Christian was so confounded that he did not know his own voice, … just when he was come over against the mouth of the burning pit, one of the wicked ones got behind him, and stepped up softly to him, and whisperingly suggested many grievous blasphemies to him which he verily thought had proceeded from his own mind. This put Christian more to it than anything that he met with before, even to think that he should now blaspheme him that he loved so much before; yet could he have helped it, he would not have done it: but he had not the discretion neither to stop his ears, nor to know from whence those blasphemies came. (57)

This is the most subtle of Christian's spiritual battles. Christian essentially seems to lose his free will when he hears the voices of the demons—he might as well be asleep, given the power other forces have over his mind at this point, for he suddenly has no power to discern what is true from what is false. He lacks the ability to know the origin of the blasphemies he is hearing in his mind, so he assumes they originate in him, even if he never before believed he would utter such blasphemies. What brings Christian out of this desolate and disconsolate state is another voice—this time a voice uttering a Psalm of comfort: "Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death, I will fear none ill, for thou art with me" (58).[46] Hearing that voice, Christian is reminded that he is not alone and that God is with him even here in the darkest and most dangerous valley, and he trusts once again in God's power to guide him through these evils. Though he had forgotten this reassurance for himself, hearing it spoken aloud brings it back into his memory so that his mind can once again be calm and assured in his trust in God.

When he emerges from the Valley of the Shadow of Death, Christian finally catches up with his fellow pilgrim, Faithful (whose voice brought Christian to recollect that he was not alone). As he has been asked on several occasions to recount his own pilgrimage, Christian now asks Faithful to tell of his journey. Faithful therefore tells of his meeting with Shame, who argued that "a tender conscience was so unmanly thing, and that for man to watch over his words and ways, so as to tie up himself from that hectoring liberty that the brave spirits of the times accustom themselves unto would make him the ridicule of the times" (65). Faithful is initially shamed because he can find

[46] Faithful is reciting Psalm 23.

no response to Shame's argument that he is acting unmanly—unlike a man who prides himself upon his conceptions of his own freedom and bravery. But Faithful recalls that God cares nothing for the things of men, so he is finally able to respond to Shame's argument by pointing out that "what God says is best, though all the men in the world are against it. Seeing then that God prefers his religion, seeing God prefers a tender conscience, seeing they that make themselves fools for the Kingdom of Heaven are wisest" (65-66). There is a telling correspondence here between being foolish and weak in the eyes of the temporal world and being wise and strong in the eyes of God. Faithful comes to see the truth of this paradox: that those who seem foolish according to men are wise according to God. If humans consider a tender conscience—a conscience that guides one to virtue and is affronted by movements toward sin—unmanly, then Faithful realizes he does not want to be held to the standards of the world, but only of God. He therefore sings to himself, "O let the pilgrims, let the pilgrims then / Be vigilant, and quit themselves like men" (66).[47] Faithful recognizes that the truly vigilant pilgrims, those who will act according to their own consciences and strive to enter the heavenly kingdom, must act not as mere men, but as the children of God they desire to be. Making the choice to act in such a way will leave him weak in the eyes of other humankind, but strong in the eyes of God.

Continuing on their journey, Christian and Faithful eventually meet Evangelist once again. Christian is happy to see the minister whose "countenance brings to my remembrance thy ancient kindness and unwearied laboring for my eternal good" (76).

[47] The sense of "quit" here seems to be "To abandon, relinquish, or renounce; to give up the use, possession, or benefit of" (*OED,* 10a).

Again, the work of memory is so very important. Remembering the good shown him thus far will enable Christian to continue in his pursuit of the good. And once again, the pilgrims are asked to recall their travels and the difficulties they have faced. When they finish narrating what has passed, Evangelist says to them, "Right glad am I … not that you have met with trials, but that you have been victors; and for that you have, notwithstanding many weaknesses, continued in the way to this very day" (77). Evangelist's words reveal again that Bunyan's allegory stresses human weaknesses, and yet the strength they might find, by grace, in and through that weakness. Through their steady progression, through these battles, they will eventually find the strength and attain the perfection to enter the Celestial City.

Yet Evangelist also warns them that their weaknesses will soon be tested again, for one of them will die in the next town of Vanity.[48] Upon their arrival in that town, Christian and Faithful are caged and beaten. But the words of Evangelist seem to have put them in the proper mind for withstanding their imprisonment, and their words and manners yet reflect what they have learned on their journey, for they "behave[e] themselves all the while very wisely and soberly" (81). Here, at least, Christian remembers what he should know and all that he has learned; he is not overcome with doubts and fears, but acts instead with wisdom in the face of vanity. As Evangelist foretold would happen, Faithful is sentenced to death, and he is beaten, stoned, and burned at the stake in the town of Vanity. Though he dies a terrible death, his death also

[48] Bunyan alludes to another temptation of Christ in the town of Vanity: Christ is tempted by Beelzebub who "showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a little time," but Jesus "had no mind to the merchandise" (79).

signifies the completion of his journey. Christian witnesses the angels ushering Faithful to the Heavenly City with some small regret that he could not be so ushered in as well, but his journey and growth is not yet complete. Through God's providence, Christian is eventually able to escape from Vanity to continue and complete his spiritual journey to the Celestial City, and he is now joined by Hopeful, who witnessed the words and actions of the pilgrims in Vanity with new understanding of their truth.

In continuing on their journey, Christian and Hopeful once again find themselves in the midst of difficulties: "the way from the River was rough, and their feet tender by reason of their travels; so the soul of the pilgrims was much discouraged, because of the way" (97-98). At just that moment when they have "wished for better way," there is a stile to the left side the path which leads to By-Path Meadow. Christian is so overcome by the physical difficulties he faces along this rough path that he forgets what the Interpreter told him at the very beginning of this journey about staying on the straight and narrow. Hopeful is yet hesitant to take this path, fearing that they will be taken out of their way, but Christian is able to persuade him to leave the difficult path on which they find themselves to take the easier path through the meadow. Christian's misjudgment and his failure to remember the advice he had been given, however, will lead the pilgrims to the gravest dangers yet.

It is not long, actually, before Christian realizes his error. As they walk along this new path, they see a fellow pilgrim, Vain-confidence, walking ahead. When it becomes dark, however, Christian and Hopeful hear Vain-confidence fall into a deep pit. At that point, they become aware that they have strayed from the true path. Hopeful's

earlier fears are realized, but Christian is completely distraught by his own foolishness: "Who could have thought that this path should have led us out of the way?" (98). Christian intuits that *he* should have thought so, which makes him even more distraught by the danger into which he has brought his fellow pilgrim. He repents of that sin, and Hopeful forgives him, but it is too late to remove them from the dangers that await them on this path though they prepare to return to the proper path.

Christian insists that he should be the one to lead them back to the proper path; should there be any dangers, he thinks they should befall him rather than his companion. But Hopeful's response is telling: "No, said Hopeful, you shall not go first, for your mind being troubled may lead you out of the way again" (99). Hopeful's answer suggests the importance of a clear mind, of right reason to bring one out of danger, and Hopeful knows that Christian is so overwhelmed at the moment by what he has done to put them both in danger that his reason cannot function as it should. More importantly, the cloudiness of his mind continues when the pilgrims are caught by the giant Despair and placed in the dungeon of his home, Doubting-Castle.[49]

Their capture by Despair puts Christian in "double sorrow, because 'twas through his unadvised haste that they were brought into distress" (100). Thus, Christian, compared with Hopeful, is much more susceptible to the temptations of Despair when Despair attempts to persuade them to commit suicide to escape their imprisonment and torture. Christian would readily seek death rather than life, but the importance of

[49] Struggling to make their way back to the path, the pilgrims are eventually forced to stop because of the dangers of darkness and flood. Though their intentions were to rest and take shelter only briefly, they both fall asleep in their weariness. Sleep, again, puts them in danger because of the place in which they sleep—the land which belongs to Despair.

memory comes into play again. Hopeful is able to recall the commandment not to murder, and he reiterates to Christian that self-murder is the worst form of murder, for "he that kills another can but commit murder upon his body; but for one to kill himself is to kill body and soul at once" (101). Hopeful, urging patience, is therefore able to temper to some extent the despair of Christian and keep him from committing the sin to which he is sorely tempted. Yet when Despair attempts a second time to persuade the pair to commit suicide, Christian is still too vulnerable to Despair's temptation. Hopeful again has to make the counter-argument against what Christian appears to desire, but this time, Hopeful appeals more strongly to Christian's memories of what he has overcome: "rememberest thou not how valiant thou hast been heretofore?" (102). He puts the various events of his journey into Christian's memory once again—his battle with Apollyon, his journey through the Valley of the Shadow of the Death—urging him to "bear up with patience as well as we can," hoping that those memories will bring Christian out of despair and enable him to think rightly once again and look to God for deliverance (102).

After being beaten yet once again the following day, Christian and Hopeful find themselves even deeper in despair, and they lay all day "in a lamentable case, as before" (103). But something changes that night when the two pilgrims finally "began to pray, and continued in prayer till almost break of day, after which Christian suddenly remembers that he possesses a key, called Promise" (103).[50] That key is supposed to

[50] George Butler links Christian's and Hopeful's imprisonment with the man in the iron cage of despair whom Christian met at the House of the Interpreter: "Like the desperate prisoner, Christian and his companion are confined by their own doubts. But Christian has a key. … Though Christian and the

open the locks and set them free from Doubting-Castle, as indeed it does. Christian had been so overwhelmed by his despair that it seems he was unable to pray and seek God's strength. Remembering only his own weaknesses, Christian is left powerless, but when he recalls God's strength, and recalls that he can ask God to lend him some of that strength, Christian is also able to recall what he needed to know, indeed what he already knew but had forgotten. All they needed to escape Doubting-Castle and its owner Despair, was the recollection of God's Promise, which frees them from the despair which has consumed and imprisoned them.[51]

Christian and Hopeful are free to continue on their journey, and they soon find themselves at the Delectable Mountains where they meet the shepherds named Knowledge, Experience, Watchful, and Sincere. These shepherds, who have been directed by the Lord of the Mountains "not to be forgetful to entertain strangers," welcome Christian and Hopeful, so they welcome them to all they have to offer. Here, too, however, the pilgrims are questioned about their journey, in particular the means by which they have persevered thus far, for the shepherds, impressed, know that "but few of them that begin to come hither, do show their face on these Mountains" (105). But here, too, Christian and Hopeful will have things revealed to them that they will need to remember in order to complete their journey.

The shepherds show the pilgrims various mountains, but they are especially moved by the sight of blind men stumbling among tombs, for they learn that these were

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desperate man are imprisoned by their own guilt, the key to each jail is as much a part of each prisoner as the despair that confines him" (37).

[51] Samson's battles with despair in *Samson Agonistes* again provide a telling parallel—Samson also needed to recall God's promises to/for him in order to attain peace of mind at his death.

men captured by Despair and imprisoned in Doubting-Castle until they were blinded and left to wander among the tombs. Christian and Hopeful are thus made even more aware of the dangers in which they had placed themselves, and the dangers they had escaped mainly by the grace of God. The shepherds also offer Christian and Hopeful their first glimpse of the Celestial City through their "perspective glass," but it is telling that the pilgrims "essayed to look, but the remembrance of that last thing that the shepherds had showed them made their hands shake; by means of which impediment they could not look steadily through the glass" (107). Now, the effects and memories of their sins and mortal weaknesses prevent them from being able to see clearly the glory of their destination, whereas the proper memories would have prevented the very events that now cloud their memories and minds.

Christian and Hopeful are nonetheless refreshed by the brief and blurry glimpses they are given of their final destination, and they are ready to continue their pilgrimage. Before they leave, however, the shepherds offer them several pieces of advice to help them complete their journey. They are given a note with directions to take on the path. They are told to "beware the flatterer" and to "take heed that they sleep not upon the Enchanted Ground" (107). Christian and Hopeful will need to remember what is said here, for they will face more temptations along the path to Heaven.

Soon thereafter, the pilgrims come to a fork in the road where the two paths seem equally straight and narrow, and they stand in a quandary wondering which way they should go. While they consider the matter, a "man black of flesh, but covered with a very light robe" comes toward them and says he will direct them down the correct path

(116). The path down which he takes them, however, twists and turns so that very soon, the travelers are no longer turned toward the Celestial City. Yet Christian and Hopeful do not think to refuse to follow this man, whom they do not realize is the flatterer about whom they were warned. Soon, "before they were aware, he led them both within the compass of a net, in which they were both so entangled that they knew not what to do; and with that, the white robe fell off the black man's back: then they saw where they were" (116).[52] As they are captured in this net set by this flatterer, Christian and Hopeful come to two important realizations related to what they have failed to remember at the appropriate time. They have been temporarily blinded to where this man was leading them, or more pointedly, where he was not leading them, despite the shepherds' warning to beware of the flatterer. And thus we see again the importance of memory: Christian and Hopeful also realize the shepherds gave them a note that would have directed them down the correct path, but they forgot to read it. These two failures of memory render the two pilgrims once again in a position of weakness and vulnerability to temptation, unable to continue on their journey to the Celestial City.

With these realizations and remembrances which have come too late, Christian and Hopeful remain trapped in the net until a Shining One comes to their aid. The Shining One tears the net and releases the pilgrims. Their savior, however, is not happy with them when he hears their admissions that they forgot or did not think that such a fine man would be a flatterer. For these admissions, Christian and Hopeful are told to lie

[52] Bunyan, 116. This mirrors the ways in which Comus tempts the unwary travelers—the men whom he turns into beasts are not even aware of the peril in which they find themselves. At least Christian's and Hopeful's blindness is only temporary, as they are able to see what the flatterer really, whereas the men/beasts in Comus's gathering never discover Comus's false nature.

upon the ground, "which when they did, he chastised them sore, to teach them the good way wherein they should walk" (117). Though Christian and Hopeful have failed to remember properly, all is not lost. They are rebuked and chastised by him who loves them, and he gives them a chance to repent and be redeemed as they continue on their journey. Next time, though, they are expected to remember what they have been taught. Though they have had a temporary setback in their progress, this lesson too makes the pilgrims stronger and allows them to move closer to the perfection awaiting them in the Celestial City.

Thus, when the pair come to the Enchanted Ground, "a certain country, whose air naturally tended to make one drowsy, if he came a stranger into it," Christian does remember the warning given to them by the Shepherds, and he is therefore insistent that they do whatever is necessary to remain awake (118). Hopeful is drowsy, but Christian reminds him, "Do you not remember, that one of the shepherds bid us beware of the Enchanted Ground? He meant by that that we should beware of sleeping; wherefore let us not sleep as do others, but let us watch and be sober" (119).[53] Christian has learned the lesson from his last failure to remember, and he keeps the shepherds' helpful words in mind in order to overcome this new difficulty. Christian therefore suggests that the two of them "fall into good discourse" to keep themselves awake (119). Their discourse in the Enchanted itself is an exercise in reason as they process what they have learned in their journey thus far.

[53] Again, the pilgrims are faced with the potential dangers of sleeping.

Christian asks Hopeful to tell his conversion story, which, like Christian's, mirrors the Puritan model of conversion. It begins, typically, with an awakening awareness of his sins, quickly followed by doubts and fears that he is capable of redemption. But Hopeful's story is remarkable for its vision of Christ. Hopeful had prayed that the Father would show him the Son, and Hopeful did finally see him, not "with my bodily eyes, but with the eyes of mine understanding" (124). Hopeful asks Jesus how he can be redeemed when he is such a great sinner, and Jesus tells him, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. He is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believes. He died for our sins, and rose again for our justification. He loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood. He is mediator between God and us. He ever liveth to make intercession for us" (124). With this vision of the Son, we return to the understanding of the Son as the mediator between God the Father and humans that we saw in *Paradise Regained*. Because of his mediation via his perfection in overcoming temptation and his willingness to die, the Son pays the penalty for all human sins. Because he is resurrected, he forever lives as the intercessor for humans. Christian asks Hopeful what effect this vision of Christ had upon him, and Hopeful offers this answer:

> It made me see that all the world, notwithstanding all the righteousness thereof, is in a state of condemnation. It made me see that God the Father, though he be just, can justly justify the coming sinner. It made me greatly ashamed of the vileness of my former life, and confounded me with the sense of mine own ignorance; for there never came thought into

> mine heart before now that showed me so the beauty of Jesus Christ. It made me love a holy life, and long to do something for the honour and glory of the name of the Lord Jesus. (125)[54]

In being made more fully aware of his own ignorance and weakness, Hopeful comes to have a more profound knowledge of God and Christ, and he also finds new strength to do good rather than evil.

Though Christian has not had the miraculous vision of Christ that Hopeful has had, Christian has yet also come to understand what is meant by a "true justifying faith" in the redeeming work of the Son, and his definition echoes what Hopeful has already said: "true justifying faith puts the soul (as sensible of its lost condition by the law) upon flying for refuge unto Christ's righteousness (which righteousness of *his* is not an act of grace by which he maketh for justification *thy* obedience accepted with God, but *his* personal obedience to the law in doing and suffering for us what that required at our hands)" (129). The sentiments expressed by both Hopeful and Christian here also

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[54] These last conversations in the allegory really serve as an opportunity for Bunyan to expound upon the tenets of his Puritan/Calvinist theology. Here we have the necessity of the conviction of sin. Thereafter, Christian will discuss justification by faith rather than works. Bunyan is going to great lengths to emphasize the Calvinist point about the depravity of human nature. Humans must conceive of their own sinfulness and evil proclivities in order to judge themselves as God would judge them.

This conversation about Hopeful's former ignorance calls to mind for both pilgrims their lingering companion, Ignorance. So, they resolve to wait for him in order to talk with him and attempt to persuade him of the truths they know. Offered the occasion, Christian asks Ignorance, "How stands it between God and your soul now?" (125). Ignorance foolishly argues that he has been redeemed because his heart has good thoughts, which have led him to live a good life. But Christian argues that "it is one thing indeed to have these, and another thing only to think so" (126). Christian's point is clear—Ignorance thinks he has a good heart, good thoughts, a good life, but he has refused to judge himself as God and His Word might judge him. The truly good thoughts human beings can have is to think of themselves as the sinners they are, not of the good that is in them, for "There is none righteous, there is none that doth good. … [E]very imagination of the heart of man is only evil, and that continually. … The imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth" (127). When Ignorance insists that he has never believed and never will believe that he is thus deprived of all good, Christian tells him that he must never have had even one good thought, despite all his insistence otherwise.

resonate with Milton's sentiments that paradise is regained through Christ's victory over temptation. Adam and Eve, and all humans, were asked to remain obedient to God, but have failed, temptation after temptation; Jesus alone has remained obedient throughout all temptations. But despite repeated failings, Christian (and Hopeful) will finally be redeemed through the progress of this spiritual journey because of Christ's perfect obedience.

Recognizing that humans always remain susceptible to sin and temptation, Christian and Hopeful turn their discussion to the reasons humans return to their sinful ways even after experiencing a conviction of sin. Not having made their way completely across the Enchanted Ground, Christian and Hopeful continue their theological discussion. They discuss again the conviction of sin, but now they talk about the cause of returning to sinful ways even after such a conviction occurs. Christian offers four possible causes of backsliding, but eventually reduces them all to the issue that resonates repeatedly in this allegory, the failure of memory: "They draw off their thoughts all that they may from the remembrance of God, death, and judgement to come" (134). Failing to remember what one has learned and what one ought to know leads one away from God and more firmly into temptations and sinfulness. Implied here is the suggestion that remembering what one has learned leads one ever closer to God and to the attainment of that virtue and obedience that God desires from His people.

With the conclusion of this conversation about the failure of memory, Christian and Hopeful leave the Enchanted Ground and enter Beulah where "they met with abundance of what they had sought for in all their pilgrimage" (135). But this is not

their final place of rest, for the pilgrims must still pass through the river to make it to the gates of the Celestial City. Christian in particular must again face his despair—he grows fearful even at the thought of passing through the river and seeks some means to escape that river crossing. This becomes the most important spiritual battle the pilgrims will face as they are told that the depth of the river is inversely proportionate to the amount of faith they have in God to save them—the more faith they have, the shallower the water will be.

As Hopeful begins to cross the river, he is able to feel the bottom and therefore offers comfort and reassurances to his struggling friend who feels despair as the thoughts of his sinfulness, even as visions of demons press upon and around him in the water. Memory comes into play once again. Hopeful reminds Christian of the purpose of this spiritual test and indeed of all the tests they have endured thus far: "These troubles and distresses that you go through in these waters are no sign that God hath forsaken you, but are sent to try you whether you will call to mind that which heretofore you have received of his goodness, and live upon him in your distresses" (137). Though Christian may yet be weak and vulnerable, he has only to look to God to find the strength to emerge from the depths in which he flounders. Hopeful adds one more word of comfort—"Be of good cheer, Jesus Christ maketh thee whole," and with those words, Christian remembers what he knows and so he believes he will find the strength to make it through these waters with the aid of grace.

Christian and Hopeful lose their "mortal garments" in the river, and when they enter the gates, "they were transfigured, and they had raiment put on that shone like

gold" (138, 140-41). They are greeted with all the joy of Heaven after enduring all the hardships that come with trying to maintain the straight and narrow path to the Celestial City. They finally come into the presence of God, and their souls once again attain the glory that God had always wanted and intended for His human creatures.

But Bunyan's final statements in the story are telling. After entering the gates, Christian looks back to see Ignorance, another pilgrim, also crossing the river to get to the gates. Ignorance had revealed to Christian and Hopeful earlier in the allegory his ignorance about crucial matters of faith, yet they see him cross the river much more easily than did Christian. Rather than struggling through the water himself, Ignorance uses the ferry of Vain-hope. However, having come to the straight and narrow path by a short-cut rather than through the wicket gate, Ignorance has nothing to show when he is asked for the certificate that he would have received at the wicket gate. The same angels that brought Christian and Hopeful into the Celestial City therefore bind Ignorance and carry him to a door in the side of the hill. Bunyan's dream vision ends with the image that "there was a way to Hell, even from the Gates of Heaven, as well as from the City of Destruction" (142).

Bunyan's point in ending this allegory with an image of damnation rather than the image of Christian entering the Celestial City serves as one final reminder to his readers. Bunyan has been invested throughout in the work of memory in relation to reason. He wants his readers to keep their own weaknesses in mind and rely instead on the strength of Christ so as to gain the knowledge necessary to keep them from following

the path of Ignorance. By not heeding memory and reason, they, too, can be cast down to Hell, even from the very gates of Heaven.

Together, Milton's Christ and Bunyan's Christian reveal the ideal of the warfaring Christian that Milton admires. Such Christians should strive to match the perfect reasoning and will of Christ, even if they are bound to fail, even as Christian does throughout the allegory. But if they heed the work of reason and memory as they direct the will toward God, the warfaring Christians, like Bunyan's Christian, can complete the journey to the Celestial City and attain that glorious state won by Christ's suffering for humankind.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

This dissertation has traced the use of reason in conceptions and representations of spiritual warfare—from failures of reason in the fall of Adam and Eve to the triumphs of reason by fallen humans even to the point of soul-making and the final glorification of fallen humans who have been redeemed by Christ. In these literary texts, we have seen how reason after the fall must be aided by grace in order to function as "right reason," but when it does function as it should, such reason can enable spiritual combatants to emerge from moments of tremendous weakness revealing great strength of mind. Moreover, spiritual combatants should employ their memory to remember the knowledge gained from previous battles in order to be better prepared for subsequent ones, for those memories will also inform the work of right reason in spiritual warfare.

Despite the general tendency of Reformation theology, especially in its Calvinist tenets, to discount or mistrust the use of reason because of its inherent fallibility, this study shows that there are yet some radical reform writers who share a remarkable emphasis on the use of reason in spiritual warfare. These writers are even seen as celebrating the use of reason when it is informed by divine grace to approach its former function, especially in matters of spiritual warfare. Faced with trials and temptations of sin and evil, the godly persons in these texts must rely on their ability to reason, as guided by grace, conscience, and their memories of what is good, in order to discern what is good and to overcome what is evil.

This treatment of reformist writers opens the way for several further studies on this topic. First, there are many more texts that could reveal the ways in which this emphasis on reason is borne out in the lived experiences of Christians. There is a proliferation of spiritual autobiographies, advice manuals, sermons, political tracts, and much more, which suggest that such considerations of reason were not relegated only to the abstractions of theology but had real significance in the spiritual lives of Christians in the seventeenth century.[1]

Second, though my study complicates the way in which we might conceive the theological relationships among Catholicism, Protestantism, and radical Protestantism, particularly as concerns the use of reason in the early- to mid-seventeenth century when the texts I address were written and published, these relations are further complicated in the late decades of the seventeenth century when there came to be a much more pronounced "rhetoric of 'reason'" in Anglican theology and in the anti-Catholic and anti-Puritan polemics issued by Anglicans.[2] Raymond Tumbleson suggests that "in attacking Catholicism, Anglican theologians redefined religion itself as based more on reason than on faith, because Papists could lay equal claim to faith, but only the Church

[1] For example, Milton saw the battle against the corruption of the prelates as being fundamentally a spiritual battle against evil that demanded the use of reason to win.

[2] Cf. Raymond Tumbleson, "'Reason and Religion': The Science of Anglicanism," in *Journal of the History of Ideas* 57, no. 1 (Jan. 1996): 131-56. Tumbleson argues that "apologists for the Church of England offered a … clinching argument against Catholicsm—that reason itself was with them. They saw no contradiction between what Richard Sherlock calls a 'scripture-based argumentative framework' and 'the priority of natural reason'" (131). Yet I would suggest that such a response from the Anglican Church stems in part from two major cultural concerns: 1) the political and theological concerns that surrounded first the Restoration of the monarchy against the supposed irrationalism of the Interregnum and later the Catholicism of King James II in the 1680s, who was eventually deposed to allow his Protestant daughter and son-in-law to assume the English throne; and 2) the significant shift towards scientific experimentalism, which the Anglican theologians sought to appropriate in order to be seen as a religion of reason.

of England possessed reason as they defined it" (132). Yet John Spurr points out the limited scope of reason for the English Protestant: "the Protestant had only to follow his own 'reason' until he was persuaded of the truth of the scriptures…. [O]nce human reason has demonstrated that scripture is truly the Word of God, its work is done, scripture becomes the rule of the Protestant's faith and the mysteries which it contains remain beyond the ken of reason" (569).

Though Anglicans would seek to show that Puritans are as irrational as the Catholics, I would point out that the Puritan texts I have examined here would suggest far otherwise, and that the Puritan reliance on reason is more profound than the kind of argument for the use of reason that Spurr suggests the Anglicans make. Yet there is also a considerable trickiness to these appropriations as Anglican theologians simplify what they mean by "reason," even as Anglican theology and the new scientific experimentalism share some complicated aspects.[3] Most problematically for the issue of reason and religious experience, however, there seems to be a greater slippage in this later period in the distinctions between "pure reason" and "right reason."

These distinctions are crucial to conceptions of the proper use of reason in spiritual warfare, as my study has shown that concerns for the use of right reason in spiritual warfare are pervasive in radical reform accounts of spiritual battles and temptations. Though the fall of Adam and Eve, through a tremendous failure of reason, results in a significant darkening of reason, these writers yet reveal that right reason,

[3] Tumbleson points out: "If experimental science in the late seventeenth century is deliberately incomplete in its assumptions, it parallels theological and political structures of thought confronted by the alarming demand that they construct a logic, whether of reason, spirituality, or government, deprived of former hierarchical absolutes" (156). Spurr also talks about the different conceptions of reason which were at play in this period (569-71).

informed by grace and joined with memory and free will, are crucial tools if the Christian is to triumph over evil and temptations in the fallen world, to complete the process of "soul-making," and finally to attain that state of glory in Heaven in the presence of God.

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