

Spring 1964

Influences of independency in Milton's early life

Peter A. Edmunds

Follow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/masters-theses>

Recommended Citation

Edmunds, Peter A., "Influences of independency in Milton's early life" (1964). *Master's Theses*. Paper 216.

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Research at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Master's Theses by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

P. A. Edmunds

INFLUENCES OF INDEPENDENCY

IN

MILTON'S EARLY LIFE

"For my own part, I adhere to the Holy Scriptures alone;
I follow no other heresy or sect."

(Introduction - Christian Doctrine)

BY

PETER A. EDMUNDS, B.A.

LIBRARY
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
VIRGINIA

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

OF THE UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND

IN CANDIDACY

FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH

FEBRUARY, 1964

APPROVED FOR THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL BY

DIRECTOR OF THESIS

CHAIRMAN OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

DEAN OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<u>CHAPTER</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
PREFACE . . . . .	.iv
I. MILTON'S JUVENILIA. . . . .	.1
II. "LYCIDAS". . . . .	.9
III. MILTON'S ANCESTRY . . . . .	.18
IV. THOMAS YOUNG. . . . .	.31
V. ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL . . . . .	.50
VI. THE DIODATI INFLUENCE. . . . .	.71
SUMMARY. . . . .	.92
APPENDIX A. . . . .	.99
APPENDIX B. . . . .	.100
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	.101
VITA. . . . .	.103

PREFACE

This thesis is the first part of a larger study which will develop the hypothesis that Milton throughout his writing career was an independent and individualist whose church was his own church, whose sect was his own sect, whose thinking, while scholarly, was not authoritarian.

Masson, Gardiner, and all twentieth century students hold that Milton's religious and ecclesiastical beliefs were Anglican in his youth. Because of Milton's entrance into the church government controversy in 1641-1642 at the age of thirty-four, he has been labeled a Presbyterian. In 1644, when Milton was thirty-six years old, he published Areopagitica. It was this work according to Miltonic scholars that marked Milton as an independent.

One major exception to the contentions of scholarship as summarized in the preceding paragraph is found in the writings of John Toland. Toland, one of the earlier deists, published a biography that was a preface to the first edition of Milton's prose in 1698. Influenced by his deistic views in matters of toleration, Toland had a rather low opinion of the Presbyterians for their intolerance. His own opinion, he assumed, was similar to that held by Milton, for he states that Milton's denunciation of Episcopacy "was only a service to the Presbyterians by accident" for Milton did not intend "by humbling the Hierarchy, to set the Consistorian Tribunal in the room of it."

Since most scholars accept Milton's Christian Doctrine as proof of his heterodox views, one method of substantiating the contention of the larger study is to show that there was no conflict between the religious

and ecclesiastical views held by Milton in his youth and those views held by him when he wrote the Christian Doctrine. When Milton wrote the anti-Prelatical Tracts, he was not a member of the Presbyterian party as suggested by many scholars but a member of the Root and Branch Party which contained representatives of all groups, including Anglicans. Later, when Milton was Latin Secretary of the Council of State, he wrote a great deal of prose which was more than mere government propaganda. This prose was the result of Milton's personal views. Further evidence of Milton's personal expression is found in A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes (1659). In later life Milton wrote Paradise Lost (1674), Paradise Regained (1671), and Samson Agonistes (1671). I believe that these works were the personal expression of the author and reflected only "by accident" the tenets of the individual religious parties.

Limitations in time and space have not allowed a complete development of this proposed study. The present study is devoted to a thorough examination of the childhood influences which affected John Milton in his formative years. The influences treated in this study are those associated with Milton's ancestry, those of Thomas Young, of Alexander Gill, and of the Diodati family. All these influences guided Milton to the position of heterodoxy found in the Christian Doctrine. This study is negative in one respect. In a survey of Milton's juvenilia, it is pointed out here that no substantial proof can be offered to support the position that Milton was more than a conforming Anglican in his youth.

My thesis is that Milton did develop in his youth, mainly under the influence of Dr. Gill, a belief in his own reason as an arbitrator in

theological disputes. It is this characteristic advanced Protestant view that transcends church and king together with his plea for toleration and his attack on the clergy in "Lycidas" that place him in this early period already somewhat in the tradition of deism suggested by Toland. When Thomas Paine, the revolutionary deist, wrote in The Age of Reason, "My mind is my own church," he was stating a basic belief of Milton. Thomas Jefferson, another famous deist, expressed that same thought in a different manner in a letter to Ezra Styles when he stated, "I am a sect by myself, as far as I know."

The purpose of this paper is to show how Milton's childhood influences could have guided him to a philosophy of religion which would have made it possible for him to give utterance to the two statements quoted in the preceding paragraph.

CHAPTER I
MILTON'S JUVENILIA

No conclusive proof can be extracted in a survey of Milton's juvenilia that would support the statement that he was only a conforming orthodox Anglican. In fact, there is nothing in his juvenilia that directly contradicts the heterodox beliefs that Milton sets forth in the Christian Doctrine.

When one considers Milton's active participation in the church government controversy, it is surprising to discover practically no indication of interest in this matter in his earlier writings.¹ In discussing Milton's later writings from 1625-1626, Rose Macaulay states that "there is little personal expression in any of this Latin verse, except the rustication poem."² One could expand this statement by saying that a review of Milton's earlier works gives no indication of acceptance or rejection to any religious party, nor any indication as to Milton's conception of what the proper church government should be. The one major exception to this is "Lycidas."

The poems selected for this discussion represent Milton's religious writings of this period. If Milton were to show a preference for a religious party in this period, that preference would be noticeable in

¹ For purposes of this study the period of Milton's juvenilia ends with Epitaphium Damonis. See James Holly Hanford, "The Youth of Milton," in Studies in Shakespeare, Milton, and Donne (New York, 1935), p. 154.

² Rose Macaulay, Milton (New York, 1935), p. 13.

one of the poems which will now be discussed. The first poem to be considered is "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity."

"ODE ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY"

On or after Christmas Day in 1629 Milton wrote "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity." This ode has been described as perhaps the most beautiful in the English language. More important to this paper is the title with its theological implications. The poet in the introduction to the "Hymn" represents the ode as a gift to the "infant God" in commemoration of Christmas.

Say, heavenly muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?³

The "Hymn" describes the birth of Christ and its effect on nature and the heathen gods. The Egyptian Oris is among those heathen gods not at ease.⁴

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand;
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyne;
Nor all the Gods beside
Linger dare abide;
Not Typhon huge ending in snakey twine:
Our Babe, to show his godhead true,
Can in his swaddling hands control the damned crew.⁵

As to the actual theological statements found in "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," we find the following:

Wherein the son of Heav'ns eternal
King of wedded maid and virgin born
Our great Redemption. . .

3 "Ode on the Morning of Christ's Nativity," Columbia Edition of the Works of John Milton (New York, 1931-1938), Vol. I, p. 1. (Hereafter C. E.)

4 David Masson, The Life of John Milton (New York, 1946), I, 228-229.

5 C. E., I, 10.

That he our deadly forfeit should
Release, and with his father work
Us perpetual peace. . . wherewith
He want at Heav'ns high
Council-Table, to sit the midst of
Trinal unity.⁶

The Babe lies yet in smiling infancy
That on the bitter cross must redeem
Our less; so both himself and us to glorify.⁷

We learn that Milton believed that Christ was of divine origin and was crucified for our redemption. Milton also believed that Christ continues to work for our Redemption. His expression of "to sit the midst of Trinal unity" may be interpreted as the orthodox expression of the Trinity or it may not. From his statements in the Christian Doctrine, emphasis could be placed on the later interpretation.

One is tempted to make the statement that Milton in making Christ's crucifixion "our great Redemption," has at this early point rejected predestination, and believes that Christ's crucifixion has redeemed everyone. However, as is typical in all of Milton's juvenilia, the orthodox Calvinistic view of predestination can also be construed.

An important figure of the ode is the Platonic music of the spheres, which is equated with the song of the heavenly host and with that which the sons of morning sang together in the book of Job. This thought was not new, as it appeared in Milton's second proclusion. In the "Nativity Ode" he tells us that once the divine music was heard miraculously by men, their penalty of sin being suspended for the moment in honor of the Savior's birth. If

6 Ibid., p. 1.

7 Ibid., p. 7.

this music had continued, sin would have ceased and the golden age would have returned.⁸

That part of the poem which deals with Christ's severely Protestant. Christ is represented as the "power of pure religion, the heroic idea of truth, combating error, binding the old dragon in stricter limits, putting to flight the host of multiform divinities whom man in his ignorance has created and bowed down to."⁹ When contrasting this view with the simplicity of the carols or nativity plays, we see that Milton's devotion is stern and severe. On the other hand there is a thread of clear serenity and reverent wonder which expresses the solemnity of the moment in perhaps an unsurpassable manner.¹⁰

Rose Macaulay has placed her emphasis on a review of the classical and pagan influences in her discussion of the "Nativity Ode." She describes it as follows:

This exciting hymn, too rich, as some think, in irrelevant ornament, too baroque, too many-conceited, is a magnificent burst of emotional vitality and luxuriant imagery. It is not markedly nor exclusively Christian in tone.¹¹

It is decorated not only with the heav'n-born Child. . . . but with Nature and the Sun her lusty paramour, the Halcyon. . . , fettered ghosts and yellow-skirted fays flying after night-steeds. These creatures are introduced with loving exuberance; a damned crew,

8 James Holly Hanford, John Milton, Englishman (New York, 1949), p. 35.

9 Ibid.

10 Ibid.

11 Macaulay, p. 17.

such as Comus lead, forms, in the run of verse,
the pattern of some magnificent figure dance.¹²

Rose Macaulay ends her commentary on the "Nativity Ode" in a highly eulogiac manner when she states:

There is no austerity about the rich riot of the nativity; rather the turbulent intellectual and emotional ecstasy of the young man spreading the wings of his genius, and in love with poetry.¹³

The apparent influence of Virgil and Fletcher on the "Nativity Ode" will not be discussed, as such a discussion is outside the scope of this thesis.¹⁴

Nothing is said in the "Nativity Ode" which conflicts with the views expressed in the Christian Doctrine. Furthermore, we learn nothing about his beliefs in ecclesiastical matters.

"UPON THE CIRCUMCISION"

In 1934 Milton wrote "Upon the Circumcision." This poem is a traditional treatment of two subjects, the antinomian controversy and the Atonement. The traditional views expressed in this poem correspond to those views on antinomianism and the Atonement found in the Christian Doctrine.

O more exceeding love, or law more just?
Just law indeed, but more exceeding love.¹⁵

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 For a brief discussion of these influences see Hanford, John Milton, Englishman, p. 35.

15 "Upon the Circumcision," C. E., I, 26-27.

Love in this sense refers to the Covenant of the New Testament, which promises salvation for those who believe in Christ. The Law is the Mosaic Law, which according to the doctrines preached by Luther and Calvin, was superseded by the New Covenant for the faithful. "Milton finds the Law just, but superseded by Christ's 'more exceeding love!'"¹⁶

Milton treats the Atonement in the same conventional manner.

For we, by rightful doom remediles
 Were lost in death, till he that dwelt above
 High-thron'd in secret bliss, for us frail dust
 Emptied his glory, ev'n to nakednes;
 And that great Cov'nant which we still transgress
 Intirely satisfi'd,
 And the full wrath beside
 Of vengeful Justice have for our excess,
 And seals obedience first with wounding smart
 This day, but ere long
 Huge pangs and strong will pierce more near his heart.¹⁷

Nathaniel H. Henry has pointed out that "the crux of orthodoxy" in the Circumcision poem is: "And that great Cov'nant which we still transgress Intirely satisfi'd."¹⁸ It is by studying this line that the true meaning of the poem unfolds. Christ in being crucified, fulfilled the condition of the New Covenant, not the Old Covenant. Therefore, "that great Covenant" refers to the New Covenant. In the line "And the full wrath beside of vengeful Justice," Milton appears to have meant that Christ died in our place. This is in direct opposition to the Socinian view which held that Christ's death was meant as an example for us to follow as a means to achieve salvation.

¹⁶ Nathaniel H. Henry, Milton's Puritanism (Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1941), p. 334.

¹⁷ "Upon the Circumcision," C. E., I. 27.

¹⁸ Henry, p. 334.

Henry's next statement is important to the development of the thesis that Milton's earlier works were noncommittal in matters of theology. "But Milton's very early poems may be said to be a relation of theological legends rather than dogmatic treatments of the problems of doctrine."¹⁹ How much of Milton's actual theological beliefs are encompassed in this "relation of theological legend" it is difficult to be dogmatic about.

A comparison of the "Nativity Ode" and "Upon the Circumcision" reveals at once striking similarities and dissimilarities. We notice none of the classical and pagan influences which Rose Macaulay pointed out in the "Nativity Ode." "Upon the Circumcision" is exclusively Christian in tone whereas the "Nativity Ode" perhaps is not. Perhaps it is this lack of classical and pagan influences which causes Hanford to say

Milton strives to frame his thoughts to sadness in remembrance of Christ's sacrifice, symbolically suggested according to religious convention by the event which he commemorates, but the Muse withholds her wanted blessing on his endeavor. Only in the opening, where the poet is dealing momentarily with his native theme of the celestial song which attended the birth of Christ, does he achieve real beauty of feeling and expression.²⁰

The similarities are as apparent as the dissimilarities. Milton introduces the image of the Platonic music of the spheres in "Upon the Circumcision," the same image which played such a dominant role in the "Nativity Ode."

Ye flaming Powers, and winged Warriors bright,
That erst with Musick and triumphant song,

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Hanford, "The Youth of Milton," pp. 134-135.

First heard by happy watchful Shepherds ear,
So sweetly sung your Joy the Clouds along,
Through the soft silence of the listning night.²¹

Once again the subject of Atonement is discussed, with a more complete treatment appearing in "Upon the Circumcision." Milton uses the pronouns "we" and "us" in discussing the Atonement, which again makes one wonder whether he believes in Atonement for all, or as in the Calvinistic doctrine, Atonement for the selected few. The conclusion to be drawn is that either interpretation is acceptable.

²¹ "Upon the Circumcision," C. E., I, 26.

CHAPTER II

"LYCIDAS"

On August 10, 1637, Edward King, an alumnus of Christ's College, was drowned in the Irish Sea. "Lycidas" was Milton's contribution to a collection of memorial verses, Latin, Greek, and English, entitled Obsequies to the Memory of Mr. Edward King, Anno Dom. 1638.¹

King had attended Christ's College with Milton and had remained there as Fellow until 1634. Both Milton and King had been destined for the Church, and King may have been on intimate terms with Milton.

Milton seems to have known no details of the drowning, as he omits circumstances which were included in the other contributor's memorial verses. In fact, little knowledge of King as a person is to be gained by reading "Lycidas." "Lycidas is simply the poet apparently destined for God's peculiar service and unaccountably cut off before he has begun to fulfill his destiny."²

The emotional content of "Lycidas" is not sorrow over the death of a promising young clergyman, rather it is the impact which such a death had on Milton. Douglas Bush summarizes the significance of this event in the following manner:

. . . the drowning of a virtuous young man at once crystalizes and releases all Milton's thoughts and feeling about his own past, present, and future and about the great Task-Master's will. And this

1 James Holly Hanford, A Milton Handbook (New York, 1954), p. 166.

2 Hanford, John Milton, Englishman, p. 69.

inexplicable event adds its heavy weight to the ennui, the paralysing doubts, which may attack the most zealous student after five long years of hard and unprofitable toil.³

Bush imagines Milton asking himself whether or not this dedication to a life of learning was of value, whether or not that life could be ended without achieving fame. To Milton the answer lies in the imagery of Revelation. The acceptance of Lycidas into heaven banishes the last shadow of doubt. Bush continues by saying:

Thus beneath the smooth surface of a conventional elegy, ebbing and flowing with motives of the pastoral pattern, the waves of regret, anger, despair, and resolution roll upon one another. The spiritual struggle goes on before our eyes, rising steadily in intensity, momentarily assuages or aggravated by the irregularly sweet or thunderous music, until the last movement asserts the victory of faith in a triumphant glimpse of the sure glory of heaven. Life is vindicated and serenity is won.⁴

Most scholars are in agreement with Bush in feeling that there is little information about Edward King in "Lycidas." It is for this reason, among others, that Dr. Samuel Johnson criticizes "Lycidas."

It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion; for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon the Arethuse and Mincius, nor tells of rough satyrs and 'fauns with cloven heel.' Where there is leisure for fiction there is little grief.⁵

³ Douglas Bush, English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century (Oxford, 1945), p. 386.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Samuel Johnson, Chief Lives of the Poets (New York, 1889), "Milton," ppl 42-43.

The quotation above should be read with the understanding that Johnson did not have a high opinion of the pastoral elegy as a literary form nor of Milton as an individual. He considers this form to be "easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting." Johnson feels all originality is lost in using the pastoral elegy and contends that the improbability inherent in a pastoral elegy "always forces dissatisfaction on the mind."⁶ The current state of scholarship seems to regard "Lycidas" with more esteem than did Johnson.

Even if "Lycidas" were not important as a revelation of Milton's doubts and anxieties concerning his career in 1637, it would still have to be considered in this thesis. The introduction to "Lycidas" in the 1645 edition adds comments of importance to the poem.

In this Monody the author bewails a learned Friend
unfortunately drown'd in his Passage from Chester
on the Irish Seas, 1637. And by occasion foretells
the ruin of our corrupted Clergy then in their height.⁷

This digression begins with line one hundred and nine and continues through line one hundred thirty one. The significance of this passage must be emphasized, for as Nathaniel H. Henry states, "The angry speech of Saint Peter in 'Lycidas' may be taken as Milton's first expressed dissatisfaction with ecclesiastical institutions."⁸

Milton's choice of Saint Peter as the spokesman to deliver such a striking condemnation of the clergymen was a deliberate one. It was to

⁶ Ibid., p. 43.

⁷ "Lycidas," C. E., I, 71.

⁸ Henry, p. 337.

Saint Peter that Christ entrusted the guardianship of His church and the keys to the kingdom of heaven. With this guardianship Saint Peter was looked upon by the early Christians as the first Bishop of Rome. The bishops in Milton's England considered themselves immediate successors to Saint Peter and the apostles, and therefore endowed by the Savior with the same powers as was Saint Peter.⁹

Milton was not being hypocritical when he struck at the prelates through the voice of their beloved First Bishop. He recognized the fact that this position rested primarily on Biblical and historical texts and was both dogmatic and traditional. Proof of this is contained in the Reason of Church Government.

No lesse to the contempt of him whom they fain to be the archfounder of prelaty St. Peter, who by what he writes in the Fifth Chapter of his first Epistle, should seem to be for another man than tradition reports him: There he commits to the presbyters only full authority, both of the feeding the flock and episcopating: and commands that obedience be given to them as to the mighty hand of God, which is his mighty ordinance. Yet all this was as nothing to repel the venturous boldness of innovation that ensued, changing the decrees of God that are immutable, as if they had been breathed by man.¹⁰

Thus Milton, in introducing Saint Peter, is condemning the corrupt clergy not only for breaking the laws of God, but for breaking the Commandments of Saint Peter as well. One has only to look at Saint Peter's first epistle, the fifth chapter, to find the text of Milton's attack against the clergy.

⁹ Vergilius T. A. Ferm, ed., Encyclopedia of Religion (New York, 1945), p. 579.

¹⁰ The Reason of Church Government, C. E., III, 193.

Tend the Flock of God, that is your charge not by constraint but willingly, not for shameful gain but eagerly, not as domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock.

In Matthew: chapter XVI, 19, we find the following:

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

It is from this statement that tradition and dogma give Saint Peter unified and unqualified executive power. The opening lines of the digression on the corruption of the clergy begin "Two massy Keys he bore of metals twain the Golden opes, the Iron shuts amain."¹¹ Milton then begins his attack on the clergy. "Enough of such as for their bellies' sake, creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold." In these lines Milton reveals two grievances against the clergy. The first grievance has to do with the personal character of the clergymen. "For their bellies' sake" indicates Milton's scorn of the clergy for their lack of dedication to their calling and their misplaced sense of values. "Creep, and intrude, and climb into the fold," points out Milton's dissatisfaction with the method of taking ministerial orders in the Church of England. Once again a Bible passage is evidently the source of Milton's words. From John 10: 1

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheep fold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber.

Milton's attack is continued in the following lines:

Of other care they little reck'ning make,
Than how to scramble at the shearer's feast,
And shove away the worthy hidden guest.

¹¹ "Lycidas," C. E., I, 80-81, ll. 103-131.

Milton in this passage attacks the bishops, who were not fulfilling their duties and responsibilities to the people. He feels a strong resentment toward the bishops who were dependent on the "whore Plurality" to benefit themselves.

In the Reason of Church Government Milton expressed his belief that "discipline is the practice work of preaching, directed and applied," and the most important factor in church government. In "Lycidas," five years before the Reason of Church Government, Milton wrote:

Blind Mouths! That scarce themselves know how to hold
A Sheep-hook, or have learnt ought else the least;
That to the faithful Herdman's art belongs.

It appears obvious in this passage that Milton is addressing the Bishops. The term "Blind Mouths!" has been ably explained by John Ruskin.¹² A "Bishop" means "a person who sees." A "Pastor" means "a person who feeds." Therefore a blind bishop and a pastor who, instead of feeding, want to be fed - to be a mouth is perhaps the crowning insult to the bishops in "Lycidas."¹³

Milton not only felt that discipline was the most important factor in church government, but he also felt that discipline was the only removal of disorder in the church. The bishops with "sheep-hook(s)," were not fulfilling the commands of Saint Peter nor their obligation to the people.

¹² John Ruskin, Sesame and Lilies (New York, 1907), pp. 18-19.

¹³ John A. Himes challenges Ruskin's interpretation. Himes, based on the ground that the term blind-mouthed was applied by Strabo to shallow outlets to the sea, interprets "Blind Mouths!" as shallowness rather than greed. See John A. Himes, "Some Interpretations of Milton," Modern Language Notes XXXV (November, 1920) 441.

What reck's it them? What need they? They are sped;
 And when they list, their lean and flashy songs
 Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw.

In this passage Milton is charging the clergy with utter disregard of their church duties and with the preaching of meaningless sermons.

The next three lines of "Lycidas" have as their text Christ's instructions to Saint Peter, which were "feed my sheep," and with these words Saint Peter became the shepherd of His flock. As the first bishop of Rome, Saint Peter and his successors, the bishops, were, according to standard dogma, the spiritual parents of the sheep. The food by which Saint Peter was to feed the sheep was the spiritual food of doctrine.

The hungry Sheep look up and are not fed,
 But swoln with wind, and the rank mist they draw
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread: . . .

Milton is commenting once again on the inability of the prelates and priests to be of any real spiritual benefit to the people even though the church had won a multitude of conversions. Milton writes "Besides what the grim Wolf with privy paw daily devours apace, and nothing said." Much discussion has resulted in Milton's phrase "grim Wolf." Merritt Y. Hughes states that the wolf "is a symbol of the Roman Catholic Church."¹⁴ Other scholars believe that Milton was attacking William Laud specifically and the expression "privy paw" represents the Star-Chamber. Support for the latter theory is found in the diary of William Laud himself. In this diary, on July 7, 1637, he entered the following notation: "Friday, a note was brought to me of a short libel pasted on the cross in Cheapside:

¹⁴ Merritt Y. Hughes, ed., John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose (New York, 1957), pp. 117-118.

That the Arch-Wolf of Cant. had his hand in persecuting the saints and shedding the blood of the martyrs."¹⁵ In view of Laud's "Period of Thorough" and Milton's probable acquaintance with Laud's methods, the latter interpretation is perhaps the better interpretation.

Milton concludes his condemnation of the clergy in the following sentence.

But that two-handed engine at the door,
Stands ready to smite once and smite no more!

Merritt Y. Hughes states that there are over forty guesses as to the meaning of this ambiguous phrase.¹⁶ W. A. Turner in summarizing most of these guesses concludes that the two sanctions of death and damnation are represented by the two-handedness of the engine. This interpretation would then be supported by the imagery of the golden and iron keys, which in the beginning of the digression, also represent the sanctions of death and damnation. Another interpretation by W. J. Grace places the "two-handed engine" in apposition with the "grim Wolf," "Wolf" meaning in this case the Roman Catholic Church. The resulting meaning is that the Roman Catholic Church, working "through its twin superstitious appeals of hope of gain and fear of consequence is ready to mount one more attack on England, although its days are numbered and its defeat is imminent."¹⁷

While W. J. Grace's interpretation is interesting, there seems to be more support for the prevailing tendency, which is to interpret

¹⁵ The Diary of William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury (Wharton, 1694), quoted in Robert P. Tristram Coffin, ed., Seventeenth Century Prose and Poetry (New York, 1946), p. 150.

¹⁶ Hughes, pp. 117-118.

¹⁷ W. J. Grace, "Paradise Lost," Studies in Philology LIII (October, 1955), 583-591.

this passage theologically. In Paradise Lost the following passage is found in support of the theological interpretation of the "two-handed engine."

. . . where the Sword of Michael smote, and fell'd
Squadrons at once, with huge two-handed sway.¹⁸

One is tempted to assume that Milton's position on the church government controversy was the same in "Lycidas" as it was in Milton's anti-Prelatical Tracts begun four years later. However, as Nathaniel H. Henry points out, using Verity's Ode on the Nativity. . .and Lycidas as a reference, Milton was attacking the corrupted clergy within the established church and not the church system itself.¹⁹

18 "Paradise Lost," C. E., II, 186.

19 Henry, p. 338.

CHAPTER III
MILTON'S ANCESTRY

There have been many studies conducted on single important influences during Milton's early life. For instance, studies have been made to determine the extent of the "humanistic" influence on Milton's schooling. Scholars have also amassed a great deal of information on individual people who figure dominantly in Milton's early years. Examples of this type are The English Dialects by Donald Clayton Dorian and John Milton at St. Paul's School by Donald Lemen Clark. What seems to be lacking in the current state of scholarship on Milton is an examination of the similarities to be found among most of the people who influenced Milton during his formative years.

It is the purpose of the survey below to fill this gap in the current state of scholarship, and by so doing, support the thesis of this paper. Almost all of the people who played an important role in Milton's childhood were men of steadfast convictions and were not afraid to defend these publicly if the need arose. Furthermore most of them suffered religious persecution for their theological beliefs. It is the contention of this thesis that these people were the ones who impressed upon Milton, either consciously or unconsciously, the great need for religious toleration. In his childhood Milton had occasion to respect members of the Anglican faith as well as those of the Puritan faith. It would then be a short step for Milton to develop a sense of nonconformity and, finally, complete independency.

A study of Milton's ancestry reveals a great deal of similarity between succeeding generations. Richard Milton, the poet's grandfather, was a Roman Catholic of deep religious conviction. Displaying that trait of nonconformity which was to become more and more prominent with each succeeding generation of the Milton family, he was fined for non-attendance at church in 1601, his name appearing twice on the Rescusant Rolls for that year. This characteristic deep religious conviction and nonconformity was passed on to the elder John Milton, who was disinherited by his father for being a Protestant. John Milton, the poet, carried nonconformity to a greater length as evidenced by his heterodox views set forth in the Christian Doctrine.

The three succeeding generations of Milton's family show an additional trait besides that of nonconformity. This trait is the faith in one's reason to choose the religion which is best for that individual. Again, as in the case of the quality of nonconformity, this tendency grows stronger with each succeeding generation. It is the existence of these characteristic traits that make a survey of the poet's ancestry necessary.

Great difficulty arises when Milton's ancestry is traced beyond the poet's father. The three accounts that serve as a basis from which all later accounts are derived are those of John Aubrey, Anthony a Wood, and John Phillips. In Aubrey's account we find these statements:

Mr. John Milton was of an Oxfordshire familie:
his grandfather. . . [a Rom. Cath.] of Holton
in Oxfordshire, near Shotover. His father was
brought up in Ye Univ. of Oxon at Christ Church;

and his gr-father disinherited him because he kept not to the Catholique Religion [q. he found a Bible in English in his chamber]; so thereupon he came to London and became a scrivener [brought up by a friend of his, Was not an apprentice]. . .and got a plentiful estate by it.¹

Masson deduces from Aubrey's sketch of the pedigree of Milton's family, the following:

(1) That Aubrey had heard that the Christian name of the poet's grandfather, as well as of his father, had been John: (2) That he believed that the Oxfordshire town or village where this grandfather lived, if not Holton, was at all events the 'next town to Forest Hill;' (3) That he had heard that the Milton's thereabouts, this grandfather included, were 'rangers of the Forest' in that neighborhood, ie of the Forest of Shotover.²

Masson's interpretation of Aubrey's manuscript is further substantiated by Anthony a Wood's account of Milton's family written in 1692.

His father, Joh. Milton, who was a scrivener living at the Spread-Eagle in the said street, was a native of Holton in Oxfordshire. . .His grandfather Milton, whose Christian name was John, as he [Aubrey] thinks, was an underranger or keeper of the Forest of Shotover near to the said town of Holton, but descended from those of his name who had lived beyond all record at Milton near Holton and Thane in Oxfordshire. Which grandfather being a zealous Papist did put away, or, as some say, disinherited his son because he was a Protestant; Which made him retire to London to seek, in a manner, his fortune.³

Phillip's account contributes little that is original to Aubrey's account.

^{ed.}
1 Oliver Lawson Dick, Aubrey's Brief Lives (London, 1950), p. 199.

2 Masson, I, 9.

3 Helen Darbishire, ed., Early Lives of Milton (London, 1932), p. 35.

His Father, John Milton, an honest, worthy, and substantial citizen of London, by profession a scrivener; To which profession he voluntarily betook himself, by the advice and assistance of an intimate friend of his eminent in that calling, upon his being cast out by his father, a bigoted Roman Catholic, for embracing, when young, the Protestant faith and abjuring the Papish tenets; for he is said to have been descended of an ancient family of the Miltons of Milton near Abington in Oxfordshire; . . .⁴

Masson states "as to the alleged Miltons of Milton in Oxfordshire, the remote progenitors of the poet, research has been fruitless."⁵ Masson discovered records of Miltons living in the Parish of Stanton St. Johns, but more in Holton. The only records in existence identifying Milton as having lived in Holton are those of Aubrey and Wood. Masson's proof consists of the wills of Henry Milton of Stanton St. Johns, and of Agnes Milton, widow of Henry Milton, found in the Bishop's Registry at Oxford. Masson declares with conviction that these Miltons were definitely the great-grandfather and great-grandmother of the poet. More important, they are described as "remaining faithful to the last to the old Roman Catholic religion."⁶

From this marriage, as shown in both wills, a son Richard was born. Again Masson is positive that this was John Milton's grandfather. Further proof of Richard Milton's existence is found in 1577, when his name appears in the nineteenth Subsidy Roll of Elizabeth. Although the subsidy charged was only three pounds, Masson points out the deception here when determining

⁴ Ibid., pp. 50-51.

⁵ Masson, I, 10.

⁶ Ibid., p. 15.

a man's financial condition. Both lands and goods were assessed at sums a great deal below their real value. Masson feels that the importance of this Subsidy Roll should not be overlooked, for Richard was the only Milton in Oxfordshire assessed on that occasion. Masson has constructed a strong case for naming Richard as the grandfather of the poet, John Milton. His next point seems to confuse rather than substantiate his claim that Richard Milton was indeed the grandfather of the poet. He first mentions that Richard Milton was either serving, or elected to serve, as churchwarden in his parish in 1582. He states that Richard Milton was fined in 1601 for being a Recusant, meaning that he was fined for non-attendance at his parish church. These records, as in the case of the Subsidy Rolls, indicate that Richard Milton was the only Milton whose name occurs on the Recusant Rolls in Oxfordshire. Masson explains these seemingly irreconcilable facts by saying that the election to the post of churchwarden was no election, but merely his turn to serve in this position.⁷ John Fletcher summarizes this confusion when he says that ". . . it is difficult to see how the same individual could have been a churchwarden and could also appear on the Recusant Rolls."⁸

A summary of Milton's geneology might proceed in the following manner. John Milton's father came from an area a little east of Oxford. Richard was the name of the poet's paternal grandfather. If this Richard Milton was the same one discussed by Masson, then John Milton's paternal great-grandparents were Henry and Agnes. Richard Milton had a son, John,

7. Ibid., p. 17.

8 Harris Francis Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton (Urbana, 1956), I, 6.

who became the London scrivener. The London scrivener begat a son who was John Milton the poet.

Fletcher feels that proving that the Richard Milton discussed by Masson was the poet's great-grandfather would be of little value other than pushing Milton's line back nearly half a century. Knowledge of the line, as traced by Masson, sheds little light on Milton's inherent capacities as a poet. Fletcher finds this point striking, "for the peculiar abilities of the poet would seem to stem from a background of intense interest in verbal expression."⁹

Although the proof of this line of ancestry seems of little value to Fletcher, it assumes tremendous importance to this paper when considering the relationship of this line to the church. Henry Milton and his wife, Agnes, according to Masson, represent the first Miltons of record in the poet's ancestral line. Masson says they were both dead by 1562. Assuming this date to be correct, they probably lived through the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary, just touching that of Elizabeth. Masson, without reservation, states that they remained "faithful to the last to the old Roman Catholic Religion." Thus is seen the first seed of nonconformity in Milton's ancestry. Henry and Agnes Milton probably suffered less for their religious beliefs than did their son, Richard. Conformity under the monarchs of their day was far less painful than nonconformity.

There can be no doubt that Richard Milton suffered financially for his religious beliefs. As early as 1582, Masson states that Richard

9 Ibid.

was openly a Roman Catholic, although we are not told the evidence for this claim. Proof of Richard Milton's price of nonconformity can be found in the 1601 Recusant Rolls, where it is written that he was fined sixty pounds for non-attendance at church. This was not the only fine levied on Richard Milton in the year 1601. The first fine covered the time from December, 1600, to February, 1601. Richard Milton was again fined for non-attendance from July thirteenth to October fourth of the same year, the amount being another sixty pounds. Richard Milton, perhaps the poet's grandfather, was a man of strong convictions and suffered for his religious beliefs. If the accounts of the early biographers can be believed, this same Richard Milton disinherited his son, John Milton, the elder, because his son "kept not to the Catholique religion."

If we assume Masson is correct in his tracing of Milton's ancestral line, the influence of this line coincides with other childhood influences treated in this thesis.

JOHN MILTON, THE ELDER

John Milton, the elder, was born probably early in October, 1563, at or near Stanton St. Johns in Oxfordshire. Most biographers agree that the elder John Milton attended Oxford College, but there are no records at Oxford to confirm this fact. His date of attendance is the subject of much controversy. Edward Phillips and John Aubrey indicate that his attendance was at the time of the visit of the Polish Prince, Alasco in 1583. This assumption arises from the fact that a gift was given to Milton from Alasco in recognition of a composition dedicated to Alasco.

The Palatine was not out of character with his token gift to Milton. Reports of Alasco's prodigality are found in almost all of the chronicles. All accounts agree that musical performances were among the entertainments provided the Palatine and that, like the other forms of entertainment, they must have been elaborate. They must have provided a liberal education for the participants as well as the spectators.¹⁰

In 1583, or shortly thereafter, the elder John Milton graduated from Oxford and came to London. On arriving in London, he went to the home of a relative by the name of Christopher Milton who easily persuaded John Milton to become an apprentice in the scrivener's profession. After serving a normal apprenticeship of approximately seven years, he became active in the business and in 1600 was admitted a freeman of the Company.¹¹

The year 1600 can truly be considered the turning point for the scrivener. In this year he married Sarah Jeffreys, was made free of the Scrivener's Company, and acquired a house on Bread Street. In all probability it was the wealth brought to this marriage by the wife which caused the affluence surrounding the poet from birth until the Restoration. For this reason it can be safely assumed that the marriage was probably the first of three major events occurring in 1600 to the elder John Milton.¹²

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 10.

¹¹ This paragraph represents a combination of the views of Harris Francis Fletcher and William Parker concerning the time gap between Milton's graduation and his admission to the Scrivener's Company in 1600. See Fletcher, The Intellectual Development of John Milton, I, 12, and William R. Parker, "John Milton, Scrivener," Modern Language Notes LIX (December, 1944), 534.

¹² Fletcher, p. 16.

With one exception Masson paints a sound picture of the activities of the elder John Milton in his new house on Bread Street. He intimates that the scrivener had "puritanical" leanings.¹³ Nathaniel H. Henry's dissertation on the puritanism of the poet, John Milton, gives the following definition of "Puritanism." "The Puritans were Anglican nonconformists during the reigns of Elizabeth and the Stuarts - English Protestants."¹⁴ In defining Puritanism in such a broad sense, Henry is following the suggestion of Keneth Murdock who states

The literary student needs a definition generous enough to include John Robinson, Roger Williams, Nathaniel Ward, Bradford, and Winthrop, as well as Baxter, Bunyon, Milton, and Marvell, and comprehensive enough to cover Plymouth Separatists as well as Massachusetts Independents, Congregationalists, Baptists and Seeker. . . .¹⁵

Even with this broad definition of Puritanism, it would be difficult to place the scrivener in this group. One of the outstanding reasons for the belief that he was an Anglican is the fact that his relatives were buried in the confines of an Anglican Church. On May 12, 1601, the records of All Hallows Bread Street Church show that a "crysome childe" of John Milton was buried in the church. On February 26, 1611, another relative of the scrivener was buried in the church. This time it was Mrs Helyn

¹³ Ibid., p. 48. Fletcher states, "that he had what Masson called 'puritanical' leanings is today best explained by his friendship with Richard Stock and other rectors and curates of All Hallows Bread Street." I have not been able to locate Fletcher's source for his statement that Masson thought that the elder John Milton had "puritanical" leanings.

¹⁴ Henry, p. 35.

¹⁵ Ibid. Quoted from Keneth Murdock's, "The Puritan Tradition," The Reinterpretation of American Literature (New York, 1928), pp. 88-89.

Jeffreys, who was the elder John Milton's mother-in-law.

More evidence of Milton's importance in the church lies in the manner in which these events were recorded in the church records. The entries involving the Milton family tend to be relatively long and seem to reflect the standing of the scrivener in his parish.¹⁶

Almost all scholars agree that the elder John Milton's business flourished to such an extent that he soon became a substantial citizen and parishioner. Generally his associates could be described as men noticed for their "pious sobriety of conduct in everyday practice," but also for "an easy enjoyment of the more attractive pleasures of life, such as music, painting and the arts generally, coupled with ecclesiastical discussion and disputes."¹⁷

The elder John Milton seems to have been a friendly, kindly individual, who had no difficulty winning one's confidence. As evidenced by the fairly large fortune he amassed, he was shrewd or at least fortunate in his business affairs. He appears to have carried out his family responsibilities with gentle wisdom and was successful in looking after the interests of his kinfolk.¹⁸

We find in Ad Patrem a clear recognition of the debt that John Milton, the poet owed his father. It is unfortunate that the date of this Latin poem is not known, for in this poem the poet definitely rejects the church as his destined profession. One can well imagine the elder John Milton's concern when he found that his son, after extensive training

¹⁶ Fletcher, I, 48, 28-29.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 49.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 50.

for the clergy, wanted to abandon this profession for the seemingly unrewarding one of a poet. The information derived from Ad Patrem substantiates the elder John Milton's character as set forth in the preceding paragraph.

For you would not bid me go where the broad way lies wide open, where the field of lucre is easier and the golden hope of amassing money is glittering and sure; neither do you force me into law and the evil administration of the national statutes. You do not condemn my ears to noisy impertinence; But rather, because you wish to enrich the mind which you have carefully cultivated, you lead me far away from the uproar of cities into these high retreats of delightful leisure. . .¹⁹

What a picture of unselfishness is drawn of the elder John Milton in the preceding passage. As Masson points out, at the time Ad Patrem was written, any controversy over the poet's decision was over and settled amicably.²⁰

Perhaps the most important lines in Ad Patrem are those contained in the first three sentences of the poem.

Now I wish that the Pierian fountains would send their waters flooding through my breast and make my lips the channel for the whole stream that pours from the twin peaks, so that my Muse-- her trivial songs forgotten--might rise on bold wings to do honour to my revered father. . . .Yet I do not know what gifts of mine could more aptly repay yours, for they can not be equalled by any barren gratitude of futile words.²¹

Milton has acknowledged his debt to his father in one of his few genuinely humble passages. The lines reveal the intimate relationship and respect

¹⁹ Hughes, p. 84.

²⁰ Masson, I, 334.

²¹ Hughes, p. 82.

that the two John Miltons had for one another. Masson tells us that Milton has complimented his father far beyond the mere word content of the poem. The very style in which Ad Patrem was written is a tribute to his father's ability "to relish and duly interpret such a piece of Latin as the foregoing Ad Patrem with its highly poetic Miltonisms, and its figures and flowers from classic mythology."²²

Because of the close relationship which existed between the poet, John Milton, and his father, his eventual decision against entering the church must have been a difficult one to make and still more difficult for his father to accept. Perhaps the scrivener recalled his own feelings at the time his father disinherited him for not accepting the Roman Catholic religion. The scrivener's own experience might have created in him a sense of toleration which had been completely lacking in his father, Richard Milton. Certainly there was no complete rupture in the relationship between the poet and his father, as evidenced by the poet's stay at Horton. The poet would not have made his decision to give up a church career without a great deal of soul-searching. Therefore it can be assumed that the conclusions regarding his career, at which John Milton arrived during his period of indecision, were to serve as a basis for his ecclesiastical beliefs throughout his life.

In conclusion, it should be said that the elder John Milton was in the perfect position to influence greatly the precepts of his son. He was a successful businessman, having started in London with little or no prospects. There is little indication that his marriage to Sarah Jeffreys

22 Masson, I, 337.

was anything but a successful one. There can be little doubt that the scrivener was an orthodox Anglican and a leading parishioner in the All Hallows Bread Street Church. In fact, his son, John Milton, the poet, was groomed from infancy to become a clergyman in the Anglican Church. All these factors would definitely win the respect of a son if not his love. There is only one indication that the poet might become something other than an orthodox Anglican. In his family there was a tradition of nonconformity in ecclesiastical matters. His father was disinherited for his nonconformity to the Roman Catholic Church, and his grandfather was fined heavily for his nonconformity to the State Church. Heredity is a somewhat nebulous term with which to deal, but the poet seems to follow his father's inclination to nonconformity.

CHAPTER IV

THOMAS YOUNG

As in the case of the Milton family, a history of nonconformity and deep religious convictions can be traced in the family of the poet's tutor, Thomas Young. William Young, the father of Milton's tutor, was one of forty-two parish ministers who, on July 11, 1609 signed a protestation against the establishment of an Episcopal system of church government. This characteristic of nonconformity was passed on to his son. Strong evidence of this trait is offered by Young's participation in the church government controversy as a member of the Smectymnuans. It is perhaps by a close look at Young's Hope's Encouragement that one can ascertain his influence on Milton. Young shows the same Puritan zeal in this work that characterizes so much of Milton's work.

It is surprising that Thomas Young's influence on John Milton¹ has been largely neglected by many of our current biographers. Few studies in depth have been made other than Masson, James Bass Mullinger's article in The Dictionary of National Biography, and David Laing's Biographical Notices of Thomas Young. This fact becomes even more amazing when we consider the period between 1618-1620, when Young entered Milton's life. John Milton would have been under the tutorship of Thomas Young from the time he was ten to twelve years of age. These years are certainly crucial, impressionable years for a young man, and for this reason Thomas Young is considered in this paper a major influence on John Milton. As the elder John Milton

¹ In this paper, from this point on, "John Milton" refers to the poet, not his father.

influenced his son toward Anglicanism, Thomas Young influenced him toward Puritanism.²

William Young, the father of Milton's tutor, was settled in Luncarty as early as 1576, serving in the subordinate clerical capacity of a "Reader." William Young's clerical career rapidly improved, for in February of 1582 or 1583 he was promoted to the vicarage of Luncarty. In or about 1593, the adjacent parish of Redgarton also fell under his jurisdiction, and still later the parish of Pitcairne became part of his pastorate. He must have been one of the most affluent Scottish parochial clergymen of that time, for in 1593 his income was "£ 61 13s. 1/4d. of Scottish money annually, besides 10 yearly bolls of barley, 8 bolls of meal, his manse and glebe, and the kirk-land of Luncarty."² His religious tenets obviously placed him in the Presbyterian section of the Kirk, for he, along with forty-one other parish ministers, signed the anti-Episcopal Protestation Offered to the Parliament at Perth on July 1, 1609. The Protestation was occasioned by the "persistent attempts of King James to establish a Scottish Episcopacy."³

Thomas Young was born in 1587 or 1588 in Luncarty. He attended grammar school in Perth and later attended St. Leonard's College in the University of St. Andrews, where he received the degree of Master of Arts in July, 1606, before the age of twenty.⁴

2 Masson, I, 69.

3 Ibid.

4 James Bass Mullinger, "Thomas Young," Dictionary of National Biography (London, 1949-50), XXI, 1307.

Fletcher points out that Young was educated in a period of Scottish history when remarkable efforts were being made to improve the Scottish educational system. As early as 1575, the Lords of the Privy Council of Scotland had expressed their concern over the conditions in the Scottish grammar schools. One of the subjects that fell under the scrutiny of the Privy Council was the method by which Latin was being taught. The Council soon made it known that they favored uniformity throughout the entire country in the teaching of Latin grammar. Discussions were held with the tutors of James VI (George Buchanan and Peter Young) and with the schoolmasters at Stirling, Edinburgh, Durham, Haddington, and St. Andrews. A meeting was arranged to be held at Holyrood for the purpose of compiling a grammar text that could be used throughout all the schools in Scotland. Although the conference failed in its primary mission, it succeeded in narrowing the field to four texts. These four texts were similar and closer to the purer Latin of Lily than the previous Paris grammars. When Young attended grammar school in Perth, he was given the benefit of the reformed pattern of instruction, which closely resembled the instruction of Milton at St. Paul's. It was presumably during his year at Perth that Young encountered some tutor who awakened in him the love for classical and Biblical literature that he was to pass on to Milton.⁵

The type of training that Thomas Young received while at St. Andrews might be derived from the library belonging to St. Leonard's College. St. Leonard's College was primarily what is called today a theological

⁵ Fletcher, I, 139-140.

seminary; the library for the most part, was theological in nature. It was large enough to support the teaching of Latin, Greek, Hebrew, and mathematics in addition to the theology.⁶

The true reason for Young's coming to London to seek employment after further pursuing his theological studies⁷ is a matter of conjecture.

Masson states that

Whether because his father had other sons in the Kirk and there was room for no more of the family, or because he could not help that tendency to England for independent reasons which had become an instinct among the Scots after their King James had shown them the example, it was in England that he sought employment.⁸

The exact date of Young's arrival in London is another mystery. Masson says that "he was settled in or near London probably about 1612."⁹ On the other hand, Fletcher is indefinite and states that "Thomas Young reached London sometime after 1606. . .to seek some means of livelihood there."¹⁰

One can assume that Thomas Young was not received with open arms by the London of the early seventeenth century. There were several reasons for this, but the principal one was the ecclesiastical difference between Calvinism and Episcopatism. The Scots also encountered prejudice because of their slightly foreign manners and accents and their obvious advantage with the Scottish Monarch. We find in Thomas Gataker's Discours perhaps

6 Ibid., p. 141.

7 Masson states that Thomas Young might have gone to one of the Protestant Universities of Northern Germany to pursue his theological studies. See Masson, I, 70.

8 Masson, I, 70.

9 Ibid.

10 Fletcher, I, 146.

one of the best summaries of the anti-Scottish sentiment prevalent at the time of Young's arrival in London. In this passage he is refuting charges leveled against him by Richard Carpenter in his sermon The Perfect Law of God.

Thus to curry favor with the Independents, whom he [Carpenter] would fain close with, he courts them. As for the Presbyterians, he can find no language foul, or broad enough to belch up against them or spew out upon them, whom in both his Rabblements fraught with Ribaldrie he bedawbs and bespatters with these, and other like Satyrical and scurrilous titles. Scotch Pharisees, Scotch Manichees; Scotch Barnacles; Scotch Balaks and Balaams with their speaking Asses; Brethren of the Scotch Mist; Jockey Preachers; Tinking-toned Presbyterians; new-found Pulpit men, black Knights of the blew Bonnet, that would tuck up all powers under a Geneva girdle; . . . Jewish Cabalists; Kirk Sea-Monsters; Hungrie Dog-flies; homespun Jesuits; the Devils Janissaries.¹¹

Gataker, influenced by his father's reformed ideas about church government, was in sympathy with the Scots in their ideas about Presbyterian and non-prelatical forms of church organization.. He had expounded and supported anti-prelatical tracts stemming from Scotland.¹²

Thomas Young seems to have joined the Gataker household in the position of curate shortly after reaching London. Serving in the Gataker's household, Young's acquaintance with Mr. Stocke, the rector at All Hallows Bread Street, does appear unlikely. It is probably in this manner, through Mr. Stocke, that the elder John Milton met Young and chose him to tutor his son.

It was about the year 1618 that Young first began his duties as a tutor to the poet. Fletcher admirably defines their relationship and study.

¹¹ Ibid., Quoted from Thomas Gataker's Discours Apologeticall.

¹² Ibid.

It was Thomas Young, revered by his willing pupil as a father, loved as a friend, and respected as a scholar, who lead young Milton into the paths of literature in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Syriac. Young's own training served as a guide, and his inspired love for literature and learning was transmitted to the boy.¹³

In "Milton's Schoolmasters," by Arthur Barker, we find a more encompassing statement than the one made by Fletcher. "The equipment of ideas with which Milton launched forth upon his controversial career is, in fact, essentially that of Young, . . ."¹⁴ As this article is one of the few studies devoted to Young's influence on Milton, its importance can not be overlooked. Barker's main thesis for his statement above is based on a comparison of Young's first and chief work, Dies Dominica,¹⁵ with some of Milton's early anti-prelatical tracts.

In the preface written by Baxter, we find information about Young's reputation at the time The Lord's Day was written. Young is described as "A man eminent in his time for great learning, judgment, piety, [and] humility." Baxter continues by commending highly the book "as of great use at a time when in spite of the commands of men, true Christians ought to strive to observe the day strictly."¹⁶

The Lord's Day is heavily buttressed by theological arguments, but there are essentially two main points which Young is debating. The first argument is that the Lord's day is properly to be observed in place of the

13 Ibid., p. 151.

14 Arthur Barker, "Milton's Schoolmasters," Modern Language Review (October, 1937), XXXII, 518.

15 The complete title is Dies Dominica, Sive Succincta Narratio ex S. Scripturarum and Veverandae Antiquitatis Patrum Testimoniis Concinnata. Dies Dominica was first published pseudonymously in 1639 and appeared in English in 1672 as The Lord's Day. . . ., Barker, p. 518.

16 Barker, p. 517.

Jewish Sabbath as being the day on which Christ arose from the tomb. The second point of discussion involves the occupations to which the Sabbath should and should not be devoted. Young describes the misuses of the Lord's day in the following passage.

This festival hath been solemnized as was fit, in the exercise of piety according to the rule of God's word, but by few; which the many fairs upon it for gainful labour, in all nations, feasts, drunkenness, dancings, and the impious profanations of it by stage-plays do testify.¹⁷

To prove his first point, Young uses the scripture, analogy with the law of the Sabbath, and patristic writings. He concludes his first book with a discussion of those activities of "profaneness and carnal delight," including, with those mentioned above, sports of all kinds, pageants, and "immodest interludes." The second book of The Lord's Day is devoted to the exercises on the Sabbath which Young thought were proper: church services, sermons, prayers, singing of psalms and hymns, gathering of alms, and the private searching of the scripture.¹⁸

Although Milton later rejected Young's thesis on the Lord's day, he echoed Young's opinion in Of Reformation, written in 1641.

. . . but this I am sure, they took the ready way to dispoile us both of manhood and grace at once, and that in the shamefullest and ungodliest manner upon that day which God's Law, and even our own reason both consecrated, that we might have one day at least of seven set apart wherein to examin and encrease our knowledge of God to meditate, and commune of our Faith, our Hope, our eternall City in Heaven, and to quick'n, withall, the study, and exercise of Charity;

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 519. Quoted from The Lord's Day.

¹⁸ Ibid.

at such a time that men should 'bee pluck't from their soberest and saddest thoughts, and by Bishops, the pretended Fathers of the Church instigated by publique Edict, and with earnest indeavor push't forward to gaming, jiggling, wassailing, and mixt dancing is a horror to think.¹⁹

However closely Young's and Milton's ideas coincided on the Sabbath in 1641, they were in wide divergence when Milton wrote the Christian Doctrine.

Neither can the circumstance of Christ's having appeared twice to his disciples on this day, if indeed the words 'after eight days,' John xx. 26. are rightly interpreted the eighth day after, be safely adduced in proof of the divine institution of a new Sabbath; inasmuch as there can be no doubt that he appeared on other days also, Luke xxiv. 36. and John xxi. 3,4. 'Peter saith unto them, I go a-fishing' which was not lawful on the Sabbath; so that the day following, on the morning of which Christ appeared, could not have been the first of the week. Even supposing, however, that it had been so, still the assigning this as a reason for the institution of a new Sabbath is a matter solely of human inference; since no commandment on this subject, nor any reason for such institutions, is found in all scripture.²⁰

Young's reasoning concerning the Lord's day was not solely based on the meagre authority derivable from the recorded observances of the apostles in Acts, but also upon the testimony of "the reverend, ancient fathers." He was noted in his own day for his patristic learning. Baxter speaks of him in his preface as eminent, especially for his acquaintance with the writings of the ancient teachers of the churches and the doctrines practices of former ages. His familiarity is evident in his first treatise, and we must note the contrast between Young's attempt to defend the Lord's day

19 Of Reformation, C. E., III, 53.

20. Christian Doctrine, C. E., XVII, 187.

"both with the authority of scripture and likewise with the consent and records of reverend antiquity plainly attested"²¹ and the attitude of Milton to "that indigested heap and frie of Authors."²² Young states clearly the authorities on which he depends, and indicates a method of settling controversial points that Milton soon was to find very unsound.

The church of Christ in old times appealed to the scriptures, councils, and records of the ancients in deciding of questions whereby the peace of the church was disturbed or course of the gospel retarded; and then the ancients did interpret the scriptures, not as they were by crooked interpretations of sectaries and heretics, accommodated to their own dreams, but according to the analogy of faith, by the consent of other scriptures. In the church there hath always been great profit by and very much need of councils; and in conclusion, if ill-employed men had rejected the records of the ancients, they were forthwith exploded by the church.²³

Young goes on to say, "It is not that I ascribe more to antiquity than truth, for that I leave to the Papists." Young felt that scriptures were vague on the subject of the Sabbath, and it is for this reason that he consults an ancient authority.

Young's belief in scripture is somewhat more realistic than the belief in its all-sufficiency held by Milton. Young felt that the authority of the fathers should be limited to those traditions which have some ground in scripture.

Both Milton and Young believed in reason as a guide in settling controversial ecclesiastical disputes. Milton's reasoning led him to the

21 Barker, p. 520. Quoted from the "Dedication" to The Lord's Day.

22 Of Prelatical Episcopacy, C. E., III, 82.

23 Barker, p. 520. Quoted from the "Dedication" to The Lord's Day.

complete dismissal of the ancient authorities. Young's reasoning led to an apparent solution of the question of the proper reverence owed these same authorities. Young assumes that reason and the consent of all good men must support each other.

Whatever my bleare eyes have observed to be laid up in the deep records of honorable antiquity (which they that love the truth cannot but highly prize) upon this holy subject, I have brought it out to light, that it may be manifested to all who truely favour of godliness how much honour, not only reason itself, but the consent of all good men and learned do attribute to so solemn a festival.²⁴

It is obvious that Milton owed much of his patristic learning to Young's direction; yet, when he writes as an ally of Smectymnuus and largely as pupil of Young, his rejection of the authority of the Fathers and councils is complete. Milton's rejection of uncertain and unsound tradition, on the grounds that the times, the men, and their writings were corrupt, does not indicate a complete separation from the position of Young and of orthodox Puritanism. They, too, preferred, whenever possible, to depend on what was to them the clear and unequivocal authority of scripture.

Milton's belief in reasoning, as in the case of ancient authority, led him to a different position on councils from that of Young. In Animadversions Milton's reply to Hall's argument, based on the decisions of the councils concerning the liturgy, reveals a kind of assertion which is not prominent in the writings of Young: "I shall be bold to say that reason is the gift of God in one man, as well as in a thousand."²⁵ Such

24 Ibid. Quoted from The Lord's Day, p. 406.

25 Animadversions, C. E., III, 126.

appeals rarely occur in the anti-prelatical tracts, as Milton is concerned with demonstrating the limitations of human reasoning rather than its prerogatives. These passages, rare though they may be, point to the path along which Milton separates from Young and his like.²⁶

Strange as it may seem, Milton's tenets on both past councils and the fathers of antiquity might have originated with Young. In spite of his reverence for authority, his orthodoxy, and his impatience with the crooked interpretations of sectaries and heretics, Young is liberal enough to be sympathetic to the essential convictions of the Areopagitica. "Men of every age, studiously following known truth. . . are blessed with a new light of knowledge not observed by their predecessors."²⁷ Christian liberty remained for Young, as for Orthodox Puritanism, a theological concept expressive of purely spiritual condition, a privilege which did not require for its perfection to be "used in the presence of men."²⁸ On the other hand, in Milton's earlier pamphlets, Christian liberty is already associated with the rights of the lay believers, with "those many admirable and heavenly privileges reach out to us by the [gospel]."²⁹ Milton's description of the individual layman's place in church government is taken directly from Smectymman assertions. The account in Of Reformation of the

26 Barker, p. 522.

27 Ibid., p. 523. Quoted from The Lord's Day, p. 15.

28 Calvin: Institutes of Christian Religion, ed., John T. McNeill, (Philadelphia, 1960), p. 135.

29 The Reason of Church Government, C. E., III, 183.

people's part in primitive elections is a repetition of both arguments and materials used by Smectymnuus.³⁰ Another point of similarity is the description of true church censure as exercised by the congregation.³¹

The chief point of disagreement between Young as a member of the Smectymnuus, and Milton, was the manner in which they regarded the first Christian Emperor, Constantine. This disagreement, perhaps more than any other, indicated how far apart were Milton and the Smectymnuans in their thinking. Young and other Smectymnuan members described Constantine as "Blessed Constantine," "Pious religious Constantine," "admired Constantine, that great promoter and patron of the peace of the Christian Church," "the great and most Godly emperor," who "contended by all means that he could to promote our religion."³² For Milton, Constantine is the symbol of corruption and worldly anti-Christianism. In Of Reformation we find Milton's antagonism toward Constantine.

They extol Constantine because he extoled them. . . .
If he had curbed the growing pride, avarice, and luxury of the clergy, then every page of his story should have swelled with his faults.³³

In the preceding passage, Milton shows signs of not only being anti-Episcopal, but anti-clerical as well.

The disgust with an inefficient clergy expressed. . .
in 'Lycidas,' associated now with the dignity of the laity; 'the people of God, redeemed and washed with

30 See An Answer, pp. 33-34., Of Reformation, C. E., III, 12-15.

31 See An Answer, p. 41., and The Reason of Church Government, C. E., III, 71-72.

32 See An Answer, pp. 28, 35., and The Lord's Day, preface, p. 58.

33 Of Reformation, C. E., III, 23.

Christ's blood,³⁴ and in their own right prophets, priests, and Kings,' is to grow through a hatred of Episcopacy and then of Presbytry to a reaction against the whole order, to the attack upon the clergy in the tract on hirelings and to the pronouncement of The Christian Doctrine³⁵ that even the Sacraments are not the monopoly of an ordained ministry.³⁶

In spite of the differences of opinion held by the poet and his tutor, Milton must have read with appreciation the sermon which Young delivered before the House of Commons at their fast on February 28, 1644. This sermon was published immediately by command of the House of Commons under the title of Hope's Encouragement. Regularly once a month, the clergy was allowed to preach to the House of Commons. Hope's Encouragement was a hortatory appeal to further the work of reformation. In this sermon we find a conviction of divine support and direction very like Milton's own and, further, something of the sense of inescapable destiny which moved the poet to enter the church government controversy. Young is characterized in Hope's Encouragement when he says

. . . (W)hen God calls a man to any work, he must not forbear or keep off from doing that which God calls him to, upon fear of what may ensue; but rouse up his spirit and strive to fulfil his work. Therein will appear his courage, in breaking through all difficulties whatsoever, to honour God in obedience to his command.³⁷

Although we can not be certain of the principles which Milton was then

34 Ibid., p. 18-19.

35 Christian Doctrine, G. E., XVI, 205-209.

36 Barker, p. 525.

37 Ibid., p. 526., Quoted from Hope's Encouragement, p. 13.

evolving, the spirit and rhetoric of Hope's Encouragement is similar to his own impassioned appeals to parliament.

The work you are called to is work of great concernment; it is the purging of the church and commonwealth. A work sure enough to be encountered with great opposition; yet, I must say, it is a work with the managing whereof God hath not so honoured others which have gone before you in your places, but hath reserved it to make you the instruments of his glory in advancing it: and that doth much add into your honour. Was it an honour to the Tyrians that they were counted amongst the builders of the temple, when Hiram sent to Solomon things necessary for that work? How then hath God honoured you, reserving to you the care of re-edifying of his church (the house of the living God) and the repairing of the shattered commonwealth (so far borne down before he raised you up to support it) that succeeding ages may with honour to your names say, 'this was the Reforming Parliament?'³⁸

Barker summarizes the tone of the preceding passage: "The authentic voice of Puritan zeal speaks here, and it is a voice which speaks no less clearly in Milton's pages."³⁹

Without Barker's study we still would have evidence of the esteem and regard that Milton had for his childhood tutor. This evidence is found in two letters written to Young by Milton and Elegy IV, addressed to Young. The first letter that has been preserved was written on March 26, 1625, the purpose being to thank Young for the gift of a Hebrew Bible. The letter is expressive of Milton's gratitude to his tutor.

. . . for the boundless and singular gratitude of mind which your deserts justly claim from me was not to be expressed in that metrical numbers/scramped mode of

38 Ibid.

39 Barker, p. 526.

speech. . . . Albeit, in truth, to express sufficiently how much I owe you were a work far greater than my strength, even if I should ransack all those hoards of arguments which Aristotle or which that Diaclectic of Paris has amassed, or even if I should exhaust all the fountains of oratory.⁴⁰

Milton, after stating that he is honored that Young should complain of not hearing from him, continues to show his reverence for Young.

For I call God to witness how much in the light of a Father I regard you, with what singular devotion I have always followed you in thought, and how I feared to trouble you with my writings. . . . Next, as that most vehement desire after you which I feel makes me always fancy you with me, and speak to you and behold you as if you were present, and so (as generally happens in love) soothe my grief by a certain vain imagination of your presence, it is in truth my fear that, as soon as I should meditate a letter to be sent you, it should suddenly come into my mind by what an interval of earth you are distant from me, and so the grief of your absence, already nearly killed, should grow fresh, and break up my sweet dream.⁴¹

The next letter addressed to Young was written on July 21, 1628.

Upon reading this letter, we find that Milton's attitude toward Young has remained unchanged.

That I should suspect that you had forgotten me, however, your so many recent kindnesses to me by no means allow. I do not see, either, how you could dismiss into oblivion one laden with so great benefits by you.⁴²

Milton gives to Young what might be the supreme compliment in his fourth elegy addressed to Young. It is in this elegy that Young is portrayed

⁴⁰ The Familiar Letters of John Milton, Englishman, C. E., XII, 5.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 7.

⁴² Ibid., p. 15.

as a priest that lives up to Milton's stringent standard. Once again Milton expresses his appreciation to his tutor for the education which Young has brought to him.

There dwells a priest renowned, honoured from the days of old for piety, well trained to feed the sheep that follow Christ, He verily, is more than the half of my life; I live, perchance, with but half a life. . . . He [Young] led the way for me, when first I traversed Aonia's retreats and the holy greensward of the twice-cleft ridge, when I drank Pieria's waters, and, favored by Cleo, I thrice sprinkled my happy lips with Castolia's wine.⁴³

The real reason for Milton's composition of the Fourth Elegy is shown in the passage below.

For a long, long time his [Milton] impulse has been to salute you, and Love has suffered him not to prolong delays, for wide-ranging Rumour tells a story. . . that in places which are your neighbors wars are swelling, that you and your city are girt with grim soldiery, and that the Saxon captains have now made ready their arms.⁴⁴

In one of the clearest passages reflecting this respect and reverence which Milton held for Young, the poet states,

But take you heart and courage: let not your hopes perish, crushed by anxieties, and let not fear robbing you of your color, shatter your fame. For, though you are overwhelmed by flashing arms, and though a thousand missiles threaten you with a violent death, yet no weapon will outrage your side, undefended by armour though it be, and no spear point will drink your blood. For you yourself will be kept safe under the flashing aegis of God; . . .⁴⁵

43 "Elegy the Fourth," C. E., I, 187.

44 Ibid., p. 191.

45 Ibid., p. 193.

SUMMARY OF YOUNG'S INFLUENCE ON MILTON

Young's importance as an influence during Milton's childhood can hardly be over emphasized. It is only through a close scrutiny of Young's earlier life and writings that the validity of this statement becomes apparent. The significant points of interest and their probable influence on Milton are listed below.

1.) Young's father was a dedicated Presbyterian minister who, as in the case of Milton's father, was not afraid to speak out for his religion. This dedication was passed on to his son Thomas, who became thoroughly indoctrinated in the Puritan faith. Thus Milton was brought into contact with Puritanism by a man whom he respected and revered. In many ways this religious belief was incompatible with the belief of his father, who was an Anglican.

2.) Young's schooling is important because he had the advantage of attending the grammar school at Perth after remarkable efforts had been made to improve Scottish education. It was while encountering this reformed pattern of instruction that Young was imbued with his remarkable love for classical and Biblical literature. Young passed this love on to Milton.

3.) The fact that Young chose to settle in London rather than to return to Scotland is significant. This indicates that he was not afraid of being a nonconformist as far as his religion was concerned. London was definitely an Anglican stronghold, and one has only to read Gataker's Discours to discover the reception he probably encountered there. Although this particular influence on Milton is not as evident as in points one and two, one must conclude, in light of Milton's own nonconformity as revealed in the Christian Doctrine, that Young influenced him in this direction.

4.) Conclusive proof of Young's influence on Milton is found in Arthur Barker's "Milton's Schoolmasters," in which Barker draws many close parallels in religious beliefs between Young's Dies Dominica and Milton's earlier anti-prelatical tracts.

Just prior to Milton's entrance into St. Paul's School, the poet had encountered two major influences. The first was his father and his family background. This influence would have guided him along the paths of orthodoxy and an eventual position in the Anglican church. The second major influence, however, was Thomas Young, who undoubtedly swayed him to a certain extent away from the paths of orthodoxy. One can well imagine Milton comparing the religion of his father with that of his tutor. It might have been at this point that the poet began to form the planks of his religious platform which were to be expressed so ably in his Christian Doctrine. Perhaps even then he was selecting from both religious views that which he believed to be essentially correct and was discarding that which he did not believe.

There lay ahead of him a third major influence, which, in the person of Dr. Alexander Gill, Sr., was to hasten the solidification of his religious beliefs. Once again Milton was brought face to face with nonconformity. Dr. Gill presented the unusual picture of an Anglican minister who preached that basic Christian beliefs could be reached by man's reason as well as by revelation. This position was held in abhorrence by most of the more conservative members of the Anglican clergy. Milton adopted Gill's method of applying reason to religious beliefs as his own, not to prove the truth of revelation as did Gill, but to establish his own faith. By the application

of the test of reason to the tenets of various sects and denominations and by reference to the Bible, Milton was able to reach a religious position which, in his mind, combined the truth of each denomination. Absorbing their influence, Milton, from the time he left St. Paul's School, built his religious convictions upon reason and the scriptures.

CHAPTER V

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

The next milestone in Milton's education was reached at St. Paul's School. The only documentary evidence of this fact is found in the admission records of Christ's College, Cambridge. However, Edward Phillips, Aubrey, and Wood each specifically name the school as St. Paul's.¹ The date of admittance of Milton to St. Paul's is a subject of controversy and lies outside the scope of this study. The majority of scholars seem to place Milton at St. Paul's from 1617 to 1625.² The choice of St. Paul's as the school was probably influenced by its proximity to Bread Street.

The school had been founded in 1512 by Dr. John Colet, Dean of St. Paul's, who was one of the richest men in London. Colet's purpose in founding the school was to create free education for poor men's children in all sound Christian and grammatical learning. The number of students was to be kept to one hundred and fifty-three, this number being derived from the number of fish which Simon Peter drew to land in the draught.³ Because of Colet's great wealth, he was able to build and furnish the school, and more important, he was to endow it with lands sufficient to provide salaries perpetually for a head-master, a sur-master or usher, and a chaplain. Colet and William Lily, who was appointed the first head-master, worked zealously in bringing the school to perfection. Colet prepared an English Catechism and, with the help of his friend Erasmus, compiled two short introductions

1 See Darbishire, p. 53., Aubrey, p. 2., and Wood, p. 35.

2 See Fletcher, I, 163., and Hughes, xiii. Masson states only that Milton entered St. Paul's no later than 1620. Masson, I, 74.

3 See the Gospel of John, Chapter xxi, verse 11.

to the study of Latin. Lily's own Latin Grammar, which was published in 1513 specifically for the students of St. Paul's, became the foundation of all Latin grammars used in England.⁴

Before his death in 1519, Colet had wisely chosen to leave the management of St. Paul's in the hands of the Mercers Company of London rather than to his successors in the Deanery of St. Paul's. The Mercers were to have the complete management of the school, with power to change the arrangements from time to time. When a vacancy in the headmastership occurred, the Master, Warders, and Assistants were to choose his successor. Qualifications for this post were "a man whole in body, honest, virtuous, and learned in good and clean Latin literature, and also in Greek, if such might be gotten, a wedded man, a single man, or a priest without benefice."⁵

Donald Lemen Clark in the first chapter of his book John Milton at St. Paul's School, points out the similarity of curriculum between "the orators and poets of antiquity" and the curriculum which Milton pursued at St. Paul's. Great emphasis was placed on the linguistic arts of grammar, rhetoric, and logic while the mathematical arts of arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy were honored more than taught. Clark is very definite in his opinion as to what part the humanistic training at St. Paul's played in formulating Milton's genius.

It was at St. Paul's School that he gained that command of Latin which he put to such noble use in the service of his country in his great defenses of English Liberty. Here it was that he first learned to practice rhetorics

⁴ Masson, I, 74-75.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p. 75.

which, when he came a man, enabled him to control his thoughts for effective communication to the world.⁶

Whether or not Cambridge University should share in the honor that Clark seems to give exclusively to St. Paul's is not a point of consideration in this paper. A closer look at the curriculum, however, will be instructive. The typical curriculum of an eight-form grammar school was divided into the "Lower School" and the "Upper School." In the "Lower School" concentration was placed on Latin grammar, easier Latin authors, Latin conversation, and the writings of simple themes and exercises in Latin. The "Upper School" students concentrated on Greek grammar, the reading of Latin poetry and oratory, and, in the highest class, a smattering of Hebrew. Generally, grammar was learned in the morning and authors read in the afternoon from Monday through Thursday. Friday was utilized to review what had been learned during that week.⁷ From this general curriculum used in the grammar schools of Milton's childhood years Clark has composed a conjectured curriculum, which is described in Appendix A. of this paper. Upon reading Clark's conjectured curriculum of St. Paul's School from 1618-1625 in Appendix A of this paper, it is well to remember that we have no knowledge as to the date or to what form Milton was admitted to St. Paul's School. With this thought in mind Fletcher makes the statement that

Much that D. L. Clark and others have written of life at St. Paul's School in Milton's day is probably not very pertinent, for, as seems likely, Milton only attended the upper forms.⁸

6 Donald Lemen Clark, John Milton at St. Paul's School (New York, 1948), p. 4.

7 Ibid., pp. 109-110.

8 Fletcher, I, 162.

It is sufficient to say that Milton received at St. Paul's School a humanistic education which was no better or worse than that obtainable at other schools influenced by the English Renaissance.

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES AT ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

Dr. John Colet, the founder of St. Paul's School, was farsighted enough to leave the management of St. Paul's in the hand of the Mercers Company. He was, however, a religious official in the Anglican Church and, as might be expected, demanded certain religious observances of the children.

They were to hear the Boy Bishops sermon on Childermas Day in the cathedral; they should march in general processions, soberly, and say seven psalms and the litany;

and three times a day they were to prostrate themselves and say their prayers.⁹ Fortunately for Milton, in 1602 the Mercers in Amending Ordinances cancelled these requirements, for they had the appearance of Popery.

Wee doe further ordeyne, that noe other prayers or ceremonies shalbe used in the schole, but suche only as the lawes and statutes of this realme of Englande for the tyme beinge doe or shall permitt and allowe.¹⁰

Milton did participate daily in religious ceremonies and prayers permitted by the laws of England. Two prayers to the boy Jesus, which were used in Milton's time, are still used in St. Paul's School. One of these prayers was attributed to Colet himself, while the other was written by Erasmus and put into the mouth of Gaspar, the schoolboy.¹¹ Both the

9 Clark, p. 44.

10 Ibid., quoted from Gardiner, Admission Registers, p. 390.

11 For Clark's translation see Appendix B.

Amending Ordinances mentioned above and the Canons promulgated by the Convocation in 1604, tended to codify existing customs. Thus we can safely assume that the following passage was in effect at the time Milton entered St. Paul's School.

All schoolmasters shall thoroughly instruct their children in the catechism either in the longer version or in the shorter catechism heretofore published by public authority in Latin, or in English suitable to children's capacity. And so often as a sermon is to be preached upon a holy day or festival within the parish wherein they teach, they shall conduct their pupils to the church wherein the said sermon is to be delivered, they shall take care that they remain there quietly and humbly, and, at some fitting time after their return from church, they shall call up the pupils, one by one, to examine them as to what they have learned from the said sermon. But upon other days, they shall instruct and educate them by means of texts drawn from Holy Scripture, such as seem fitting and especially useful for imbuing their minds with piety.¹²

ALEXANDER GILL, SR.

By far the most important influence on Milton while he attended St. Paul's School was his association with Dr. Alexander Gill, Sr. Dr. Gill was born February 27, 1564, received his A.B. from Corpus Christi College, Oxford, in 1586 and his A.M. in 1589. In 1608, according to Wood

He became the chief master of St. Paul's School within the city of London, in the place of Rich Mulcaster, was esteemed by most persons to be a learned man, a noted Latinist, critic, and divine, and also to have such an excellent way of training up youth, that none in his time went beyond him. Whence 'twas, that many noted persons in church did esteem it the greatest of their happiness, that they had been educated under him.¹³

¹² Clark, p. 47. Quoted from Constitutiones sive Canones Ecclesiastici, 1603-1604, No. 79. See J. W. Adamson, Short History of Education, (Cambridge, 1922), p. 188.

¹³ Anthony a. Wood, Athenae Oxonienses (London, 1691-1692), II, 598.

Although Milton never mentions the elder Gill by name, perhaps it can be assumed that his very silence is an indication of his happiness. Ten years after Milton left St. Paul's School, the elder Gill died on November 17, 1635, in his house in St. Paul's churchyard, part of the original building of St. Paul's School built by Dr. Colet in 1512.

Further information about Dr. Gill's qualifications can be ascertained from the standards set by Constitutions and Canons Ecclesiastical issued by the Church of England in 1604.

No man shall teach either in publicke Schoole, or private house, but such as shall bee allowed by the Bishop of the Diocesse, or Ordinary of the place under his Hand and Seale, being found meete as well for his learning & dexteritie in teaching, as for sober and honest conuersation, and also for right understanding of God's true Religion, and also except he shal first subscribe to the first and third Articles aforementioned simply, and to the first clauses of the second Article.

78. Curates desirous to teach, to bee licenced before others.

In what Parish Church or Chappell soeuer there is a Curate which is a Master of Arts, or Bachelor of Arts, or is otherwise wel able to teach youth, and will willingly so doe, for the better increase of his liuing, and trayning up of children in Principles of true Religion: We will and ordaine, That a Licence to teach youth of the Parish where he serueth, be granted to none by the Ordinarie of that place, but only to the said Curate. . . . And if any Schoolemaster being licenced, and hauing subscribed, as aforesaid, shall offend in any of the premisses, Or either speake, write, or teach against anything whereunto he hath formerly subscribed, (if upon admonition by the Ordinary he doe not amend and reforme himselfe) let him be suspended from teaching Schoole any longer.¹⁴

¹⁴ Fletcher, I, 169. Quoted from Constitutiones sive Canones Ecclesiastici, 1603-1604, No. 77, 78.

There is every reason to believe that Gill was more than qualified to pass the standards set by the Church of England. His appointment to the position of headmaster at St. Paul's School in 1608 is strong evidence of considerable experience and some reputation in the teaching field.¹⁵

As in the case of Thomas Young, it is necessary to review the writings of Gill to understand fully his influence on Milton. These writings indicate that Gill's influence on Milton was not only a literary one but a philosophical one as well. These two areas of influence are presented by Gill's two chief works: Logonomia Anglica qua gentis sermo facilius addiscitur and Sacred Philosophy of the Holy Scripture, Laid down as conclusions upon the Articles of our Faith, commonly called the Apostles Creed, proved by the principles and rules taught and received in the light of understanding.

LOGONOMIA ANGLICA

If Young introduced Milton to the delights of the classical language, it was Gill who directed him to those of the English language. Logonomia Anglica is dedicated to King James in an "Epistola Dedicatonia" which praises the English language even more than it does King James. In the "Dedicatonia" the King is reminded of the care which princes have ever had for the languages of their countries. The preface shows that Gill was an enthusiastic supporter of all things Anglo-Saxon and that this enthusiasm created a prejudice in him against foreign elements in the English vocabulary,

¹⁵ Fletcher, I, 171-172.

especially Latin and French. Gill's prejudice was so strong that he condemned Geoffrey Chaucer for having used so many French and Latin words.¹⁶

The definition that Gill supplies of the word "logonomia" is "the comprehension of the rules by which an unknown language can be learned more easily." Logonomia Anglica is divided into four parts: "Grammatica," "Etymologia," "Syntaxis," and "Prosodia;" "Syntaxis" being expanded to include the tropes and the figures of speech and of thought usually taught in the school rhetoric for English. Milton must have been very interested in chapters XIX-XXVIII of the Logonomia, for they contained a discussion of prosody and the adaptability of classical metres to English poetry.¹⁷

Gill's attitude toward the English language as expressed in Logonomia might have been the original source of Milton's decision opposing Latin in favor of English. Certainly the headmaster of St. Paul's would have approved of Milton's statement in At a Vacation Exercise.

Hail native Language; that by sinews weak
Didst move my first endeavoring tongue to speak.¹⁸

It is to Gill that Fletcher gives the credit for having taught Milton "much of versification in many languages from the high master of St. Paul's."¹⁹

SACRED PHILOSOPHY OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES

Logonomia Anglica was not Gill's most important work. To comprehend his deepest convictions, one must read Gill's Sacred Philosophy of the Holy Scriptures, the first edition appearing in 1635. It is in this work that

16 Barker, p. 527., and Clark, p. 71.

17 Clark, pp. 72-73., Barker, p. 527.

18 At a Vacation Exercise in the Colledge, C. E., I, 19.

19 Fletcher, I, 175.

the headmaster's personality and religious thinking are revealed. Gill remarks that he "had longthought on this work." It appears to have taken shape in his mind as a result of the Short Treatise Concerning the Trinity. This treatise was written at Norwich in 1597 in an attempt to persuade Thomas Mannering, an anabaptist, to the orthodox position of the Trinity. Gill's wording in the following passage is important, for it shows his belief in Mannering's reason²⁰ as sufficient to arrive at the orthodox view of the Trinity. "That by himself; if God would, he might consider and be persuaded."²¹

Gill had gathered notes and arguments since writing the Trinity treatise but refrained from composing his book. "For my profession's sake, I was compelled to poets and their fables, and among children, to speak to their understanding." The second reason he gave for failing to write his book was his advancing years. The most important reason was that he "hoped someone better fitted would engage in the task."²² In the preface, Gill's

20 Italics are mine.

21 Alexander Gill, Sr., Short Treatise Concerning the Trinity (London, 1635), II, 212. All references for the Short Treatise Concerning the Trinity will be taken from the second edition, (London, 1635), which appeared with Sacred Philosophy of the Holy Scriptures in one text. As the preface to the Sacred Philosophy is unnumbered, I have numbered it for ease of reference. The main body of the Sacred Philosophy is divided into Articles. Articles I and II consist of page numbers 1-196. At the beginning of Articles III entitled "which was conceived by," the printer begins again with page 1. For purposes of this paper, "I" and a page number will indicate a passage contained in Articles I and II. A "II" and a page number will indicate a passage in Article III or some later Article. The Short Treatise follows numerically after the second set of numbers from pages 211-232, and therefore the identification will be "II" followed by a page number.

22 Alexander Gill, Sr., The Sacred Philosophy of the Holy Scriptures, II, 207.

personality is revealed. He apologizes for appearing aged and unheralded in the war against atheism in spite of his difficiencies; for

though I have stood all day in the market because no man hath hired me, yet seeing I would fain have the peny as he that hath borne the burden and heat of the day, I would not be idle

and

although it be not lawful for me to handle either sword or spear, yet, because I wish well to these holy wars, I have as a straggler brought my basket of stones, whence the slingers, our Davids, if they please may choose what they like, if any uncircumcised Philistine shall defy the host of Israel.²³

The true significance of the Sacred Philosophy is the defense of Gill's method of asserting the truth of Christian beliefs. Gill is not concerned with the quarrels among Christians but with showing that "the doctrines common to orthodox believers have not merely the support of reason, but are the logical consequences of reasoning on the state of things."²⁴ The purpose of the work appears to be to convince those atheists, Jews, and Turks who do not admit the force of divine revelation and "the novice in Christianity, who therefore doubts of the trueness of his religion because he finds no familiar reason to persuade, but only the rack of authorities to constrain him to acknowledge it."²⁵

It should be noted that Gill did not feel that reason could really be substituted for scripture and revelation. In his own case Gill arrived at his conviction of the truth of Christian doctrines by faith and then proceeded to show them necessarily true even to reason.

23 Gill, preface, pp. 10-12.

24 Barker, p. 528.

25 Gill, The Trinity, II, 211-212.

I examine not these things of faith, whether they be true or no, as the Beveans did; but knowing, acknowledging, and to death holding them true, I brought all the strength of my understanding to approve them so.²⁶

The purpose of the treatise then is to reverse Gill's own personal experience in the obtaining of his faith and to convince those who don't accept the scriptures through force of reason.

My purpose is to add an overplus of proof to the persuasion which the Christian hath, and to justify his faith against all adversaries, not by the authority of scripture only, which with heretics, turks and infidels is of small regard.²⁷

Barker summarizes the importance of Gill's Sacred Philosophy of the Holy Scriptures in the passage below.

The importance of Gill's book is that, as a consequence of his purpose, he thus elects for the moment to set aside even the scriptures, which are the foundations of faith, and to rest his case upon reason and nature, fully confident that, with the support of scripture and authority, the fundamental Christian beliefs must be found true because reasonable.²⁸

In the preface of the Sacred Philosophy, Gill mentions the writers which he claims to have taken as models. This group is significant, for among them we find the great Christian apologists and the pioneers in natural religion. He refers to them in order and indicates the manner in which he finds each unsatisfactory.

A. Aquinas - His deficiency is his raising an endless number of questions.

26 Gill, preface, p. 10.

27 Ibid., p. 13.

28 Barker, p. 529.

B. Raimund de Sabunde - He is "easy and quick," but lacks the method Gill desires.

C. Savonarola - He, like all Schoolmen, omits much that is necessary and includes much that is not.

D. Philippe de Morney - He depends upon the scripture in a manner unsuitable to Gill's purpose.

E. Ramon Lull (Raymond Lulli) - His method "gives more full satisfaction," but he "proposeth his reasons with great confusion."²⁹

This group of writers suggests Gill's preferences and explains to a certain extent his spirited defense of reason. This list further suggests the "atmosphere in which Milton's education was conducted."³⁰

When Gill published his treatise on the Trinity, there were some who condemned it for employing reason as a method of persuading in matters of faith. It was partly due to this condemnation that a lengthy justification of rationalism is found in the Sacred Philosophy. To Gill, however, reason is "the main advantage which we have" since unbelievers question Christian authorities.³¹

Gill's method of dealing with unbelievers is expressed in a sentence strikingly similar to a remark that Chillingworth made about himself. Gill states, "Let us not endeavour to lead them like sheep that follow their shepherd, but drive them like asses with the cudgel of reason."³² Chillingworth

29 The list of Gill's models for his Sacred Philosophy is found in his preface, pp. 13-14. Barker repeats them in "Milton's Schoolmaster's," pp. 529-30.

30 Barker, p. 530.

31 Gill, preface, p. 2.

32 Ibid., II, 68.

states that he will not take anything on trust and is unable "to command myself. . . but most apt and most willing to be lead by reason."³³

Gill was unaware that a Protestant alliance between reason and the freeing of the intellect would become a definite threat to Christianity. This threat was to materialize in the form of popular deism, a form of religion which Gill was bound to abhor. Gill assumes that creation is organized on divinely rational principles, that divine revelation necessarily expresses those principles, and that "common reason rightly guided" is the "image of God in us yet remaining, as is plain."³⁴ He did not foresee the possibility of a conflict between revelation and the conclusions drawn from nature. For those more farsighted than Gill, who saw the danger and denied the validity of reason in religion, Gill answered that it is impossible that "that special and principle gift of God to mankind should not be servicable in drawing man nearer his Creator," for "man alone of all the visible creatures is framed and formed of God into this search, by the outward sense and reason to find the wisdom and power of God in the Creation."³⁵

33 William Chillingworth, The Religion of Protestants. A Safe Way to Salvation (Oxford, 1638), preface, p. 2.

34 Alexander Gill, Sr., preface, p. 2. This statement is similar to Milton's belief as expressed in the Christian Doctrine:

". . . the existence of God is further proved by that feeling, whether we term it conscience, or right reason, which even in the worst of characters is not altogether extinguished. If there were no God, there would be no distinction between right and wrong: the estimate of virtue and vice would depend on the blind opinion of men; none would follow virtue, none would be restrained from vice by any sense of shame, or fear of the laws, unless conscience or right reason did from time to time convince everyone, however unwilling, of the existence of God. . ."

Christian Doctrine, C. E., XIV, 29.

35 Ibid., preface, p. 3.

Like Milton in Comus and Paradise Lost, Gill elsewhere in the treatise indicates man's place in that "scale of nature," which culminates, so far as creatures are concerned, in the Angels³⁶ who

In more excellent manner, though with their differences and degrees of understanding, without either sense or imagination, by the only light of beholding of things, know the truth of their being, properties, and possibilities; or else, in a super-excellent manner, beholding the Creator, know by him his admirable workmanship.³⁷

Gill, as a forerunner of the deistic philosophy of the next century, would thus equate Christianity with "natural religion." Barker states that this "natural religion"

inevitably resulted from the necessity of finding a place within the Christian scheme for those millions of pagans, the fact of whose existence was forced upon the consciousness of the Renaissance by the voyages of discovery, and whose reprobation to eternal hell-hell-fire had in some way to be accounted for in order to preserve Christianity's exclusive right to the possession of the truth.³⁸

By developing the argument that reason is a sufficient substitute for revelation, though not as definite or as conclusive, Gill explains both how "the whole world of infidels and misbelievers bee liable to the justice of God for their ignorance of him, for their neglect, and for their unbelief"³⁹ and how the patriarchs achieved salvation before the promise of scripture was revealed. Accepting rightly guided reason as a substitute for revelation, Gill continues,

³⁶ Barker, p. 531.

³⁷ Gill, preface, pp. 12, 16.

³⁸ Barker, p. 531.

³⁹ Gill, preface, p. 7.

The same glorious faith which we are taught in the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testament. . . must be that very same faith by which all the Saints of God were saved for above two hundred and fifty years before there were any scriptures written,⁴⁰

and that

they who either received it not by tradition, as most of the Gentiles, or understood it not in the Law, as few among the Jews did besides the prophets, must of necessity through the light of reason alone hold with us some main and fundamental points, according to which, if they lived in obedience, they might find mercy.⁴¹

There is a striking similarity between the main point to which Gill arrives "by the light of reason" and those "unshakable foundations of truth supported by universal consent," found in Edward Lord Herbert of Cherbury's De Veritate.⁴²

The Christian rationalist and the student of comparative religion are actually basing their conclusions upon these principles, for Gill's 'right reason' and Herbert's 'universal consent' amount in this respect to the same thing.⁴³

There are differences in the two lists of fundamentals, one list written by Gill, a conservative Christian, and the other by Herbert, a pure rationalist. Herbert's five common religious notions are: "That there is a God, that he is to be worshipped, that virtue and piety are the chief part of worship, that we should repent our sins, and there is reward or punishment after this life."⁴⁴ Herbert maintains that these beliefs have

40 Ibid., preface, p. 4.

41 Ibid., p. 5.

42 Edward Lord Herbert Cherbury, De Veritate (Bristol, 1645), p. 49.

43 Barker, p. 532.

44 Lord Herbert of Cherbury's De Religione Laica, edited and translated with a critical discussion of his life and philosophy by Harold R. Hutcherson, (New Haven, 1944), p. 30.

remained among all men at all times regardless of race or religion, however they may have been obscured by distortions and accretions. All of Herbert's religious points are included, if not specifically, at least by implication, in Gill's fundamental points. He adds to them an essentially Christian idea. His fundamentals are: "That there is a God, infinite in goodness," "that this God is the maker of all things," "that man is immortal," "that salvation must come through a divine meditation, since man himself is obviously in a state of depravity which makes him incapable of saving himself."⁴⁵

It is Gill's stated purpose in the Sacred Philosophy to prove through discursive reasoning those points mentioned above. His one great limitation, however, is that he can never achieve the complete detachment of Herbert. Because of his orthodoxy, he can not allow reason to contradict the conclusions already established as orthodox on other grounds. Reason must be brought in line with authority, with scripture the final standard. Scripture, as Gill is orthodox, must be interpreted according to the Apostle's Creed and the judgment of the Church. His position therefore is very close to that of Chillingworth. Barker compares Gill's position to Milton's in the following manner.

. . . for, if one deducts from Gill's position the element of orthodoxy, one has virtually that which Milton was finally to assume. Both insist upon the necessity of reason in things religious and both insist upon the authority of the scripture; they differ only - but significantly - in that Milton denies the right of any other authority to pass judgment upon the validity of reason's interpretation of scripture.⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Gill, preface, pp. 5-6.

⁴⁶ Barker, p. 532.

In view of his inability to employ reason to its fullest extent, Gill is constantly diverted from his attack on atheism to skirmishes with heretics, his knowledge of them being somewhat amazing. This knowledge prompted Bishop Smalridge to remark, "The best use I have made of [Gill] is to know the heretics who have opposed it [the Creed] and their opinions. Perhaps others have done it better, but I have not heard of them."⁴⁷ Perhaps Milton made a similar use of his master, for it is interesting to discover in Gill many of the heresies which ultimately found a place in Milton's thought.⁴⁸

When Gill's reason led him to a position opposing the beliefs of Christians, he would immediately turn to the scriptures:

For God is not the God of nature only, but much more the God of grace and mercy; and to the knowledge of these principles and the conclusions gathered thereon, we are led by better guides than Aristotle ever knew, that is the Holy Scriptures and the Spirit of Grace, who leads us to the right meaning thereof.⁴⁹

For Gill, "right reason" occurs only when it is directed by the Spirit and functions according to "the infallible rules of God's word." Realizing that even the above qualification does not prevent disagreement and error, he asserts that "nothing is to be taken for truth" which dishonors God, is contrary to any article of the faith, the commandments, the Lord's prayer, "or any revealed doctrine which is plainly taught" in scripture, against "common reason and understanding, or repugnant to civil custom

⁴⁷ Wood, II, 598.

⁴⁸ Barker, p. 533. Milton's idea on the Trinity and the immortality of the soul may trace their origin to Gill's Sacred Philosophy.

⁴⁹ Gill, I, 62.

07

and good manners."⁵⁰ Like all Protestant rationalists, Gill maintains that "though some things be hard, yet the fundamental points of our religion, as the articles of our faith and rules of Christian life are plain and easy to be understood." Those passages which are harder to understand "ought not to be taken for the true meaning. . . which everyone according to his private fancy is able to wring out." The scriptures are "certainly for everyone's interpretation, privately to his own understanding, according to the measure of his capacity."⁵¹ Gill thus indicates the liberalizing tendency of rationalism, which was carried to a further extreme by Milton, their one big difference being that Gill does not set aside the authority of the church as does Milton. For God "requires nothing to be believed for which he doth not abundantly satisfy the understanding if it will enlarge itself and desire to be satisfied,"⁵² and

hath not given us the knowledge of himself in his words
that, as parrots in a cage which with much ado are taught

50 Ibid., II, 155-156. Compare with Chillingworth, who states "right Reason, grounded on divine revelation and common notions, written by God in the hearts of all men, and deducing, according to the never failing rules of logic, consequent deductions from them."
The Religion of Protestants, preface, p. 8.

51 Ibid., II, 154-155. Compare with Milton's statement in Of Reformation: "But it will be reply'd, the Scriptures are difficult to be understood. . . Tis true there be some Books that remain clouded; yet ever that which is most necessary to be known is most easie, and that which is most difficult so farre expounds itself ever, as to tell us how little it imports our saving knowledge. . . . If we will but purge that intellectual ray which God hath planted in us, then we would believe their own plainnes, and perspicuity, calling to them to be instructed, not only the wise, and learned, but the simple, the poor, the babes, foretelling an extraordinary effusion of God's Spirit. . . ."
Of Reformation, C. E., III, 32-33.

52 Ibid., preface, p. 15.

a few words and then can say no more, so we should hold ourselves content when we can say Creed; but that, by continual meditation on his word, our knowledge, and so our love and fear of him, might be increased daily.⁵³

Gill evidently believes that there can ultimately be no opposition between faith and reason. In his belief they are complimentary in one sense, "for reason is busied in the proof of some general conclusion, which is to be held for a truth, and so received of every man; but faith is the application of that conclusion to a man's own self."⁵⁴ In the interpretation more usually taken in the treatise, faith is "a supply of reason in things understandable, as the imagination is of sight in things that are visible."⁵⁵

Barker states that

Like Milton. . . Gill is convinced that what is not understood is yet understandable, is rational, and not mysterious, just as what is beyond the reach of sight is yet 'visible'; and he is convinced that, with divine assistance, human capacity for understanding may be increased.⁵⁶

Gill feels that his tendency of the human soul is inevitable.

Because reasoning and understanding is more natural to the soul of man than to believe, and because the soul, as every other thing, joys in the natural

⁵³ Ibid., I, 65. Compare with Milton's statement in Areopagitica "When God gave him [Adam] reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is but choosing; he had bin else a meer artificiall Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions."

Areopagitica, C. E., IV, 319.

⁵⁴ Ibid., preface, p. 16.

⁵⁵ Ibid., preface, pp. 9-10.

⁵⁶ Barker, p. 535.

abilities of itself, therefore, though the reasonable soul do believe what it is taught by the Spirit of Christ instructing it, yet, if that blessed Spirit vouchsafe further to enable the natural abilities that it may see the reason of the lessons taught, it triumphs more therein.⁵⁷

Milton's basis for the idea expressed in Areopagitica "closing up truth to truth" and his defense of the sects for toleration may well have had its source in Gill's rationalism. As Gill expresses it,

the higher speculation of them whom God shall vouchsafe to enlighten for their further progress from faith to faith, from knowledge to knowledge, till all the Holy Church come to be partakers of those things, new and old, that are kept for him in store, when she shall come unto the fulness of the measure of the age of Christ, that is, the perfect knowledge of all those things which our Lord in his time taught his disciples, who were not able then to hear them, till they had received the light of the Holy Spirit from above.⁵⁸

Just as the zeal of Young's Hope's Encouragement finds an echo in Milton's prose, the spirit of rational faith expressed by Gill finds its reflection there also. Thus it was Gill, and those thinkers like him, that tended to move Milton away from the conservative position of Young. Indeed a majority of Milton's prose is concerned with the concept of "right reason" and the establishment of a society in which such reason could exist. In this respect his thinking is similar to Gill's effort to establish its place in religion.⁵⁹

57 Gill, preface, p. 9.

58 Ibid., preface, p. 18. See Areopagitica:

"To be still searching what we know not, by what we know, still closing up truth to truth as we find it. . . this is the golden rule of Theology. . . , and makes up the best harmony in a Church; not the forc't and outward union of cold neutrall, and inwardly divided minds."
Areopagitica, C. E., IV, 339.

59 Barker, p. 535.

In Paradise Lost, Milton seems to be attempting to explain the failure of "right reason" to achieve its ideal end, and the lesson inculcated in the poem has its counterpart in Gill as well. Gill, however, was not completely unaware of the danger of the full use of reason. In a passage which expresses most clearly the central thought in Milton's prose and poetry, Gill says,

You have need to know that this reason and the like which we make from our understanding, hath a more sure foundation in the truth of God; for therefore is the light of reasoning and understanding in man, as a gloss or image of the divine wisdom, created by him in us (John 1.4; Eph. 4.24) that we might thereby be led unto the knowledge of him and so unto that happiness for which we are created. Therefore the understanding doth evermore apply itself unto the truth and makes the will to enjoy therein and to hate that which is false and impossible. For reason in man being the image of Christ, the second Adam, is set in the Paradise of God, freely to eat of every tree therein, that is, to consider the whole creature, which yields unto reason infinite truths as fruit whereon to feed, to the praise of him who hath created it. But if she that is given to him for his help, that is, the imagination, his Herah, the mother of all living (for by the imagination alone the forms of all things live and are lively presented to reason), if she, I say, deal treacherously with him, and without him entertain speech with the crafty Serpent, then is he by her easily persuaded to taste of the forbidden fruit, to follow her foolish and wicked suggestions and to let into his understanding falsehood and errors, which cannot stand with the light of truth, but are only according to the traditions of arts, falsely so called, and the authorities of men misled by opinions.⁶⁰

It is of little consequence whether or not Milton read the preceding passage. The important thing to note is that Milton came under the tutelage of Dr. Gill, an eminent scholar who held these ideas.

60 Gill, Sacred Philosophy, I, 51-52.

CHAPTER VI
THE DIODATI INFLUENCE

No general biographical research on Milton's earlier life would be complete without a discussion of his most intimate friend, Charles Diodati. Charles Diodati is important for a number of reasons. "Charles Diodati was the only friend of Milton's own age well known to us at any period of his life."¹ We have several extant writings of Milton which clearly indicate the poet's regard for his schoolboy companion. Masson points out that the intimacy which had sprung up between the two boys was surprising because of its intensity and because the boys were not in the same forms. Although they were of similar age, Charles Diodati seems to have been in a higher form than Milton was when the poet came to St. Paul's School.²

The Diodati influence is of significance to the thesis of this paper, for Charles Diodati represents a further attraction for Milton to nonconformity. A review of the Diodati family history as it influenced Milton's friend denotes this trend toward nonconformity in Charles, who in turn must have influenced Milton.

DIODATI'S ANCESTRY

Perhaps the best introduction to the Diodati ancestry would be a quote taken from Donald Clayton Dorian's preface to his book The English Diodatis.

. . . The history of their family in Italy and Geneva did provide the English Diodatis with a strong trad-

1 Fletcher, I, 415.

2 Masson, I, 103.

ition of willingness to make any sacrifices demanded by their convictions and to adjust their plans as radically as necessary to circumstances changed by unavoidable losses and disappointed hopes.³

This "strong tradition of willingness to make any sacrifices demanded by their convictions" is evident in the sixteenth century in Italy, and here we shall proceed with our investigation of the Diodati ancestry.

In the little north Italian republic of Lucca, the Diodatis were honored as one of the oldest patrician families. From the year 1300 their family had been distinguished mainly as physicians and men of liberal culture. In the middle of the fifteenth century, however, the Diodatis turned more often to business and public affairs and were soon established as one of the wealthiest and most influential families in the aristocracy of Lucchese.

In Lucca, a desire to purify the teachings of the church and the conduct of its officers and representatives sprang not so much from the influence of the German and Swiss reformers as from the preaching and example of Pietro Martire Vermigli, commonly known as Peter Martyr. In posts prior to the one in Lucca he had aroused suspicion and resentment by his desire to reform. Shortly after being appointed prior of San Frediano, he established what could be called a separate reformed congregation, of which he became a pastor, and formed a college or seminar for his followers.⁴

³ Donald Clayton Dorian, The English Diodatis (New Brunswick, 1950), preface, pp. xi, xii. This passage could have been used to describe the elder John Milton. For a discussion of the scrivener's disinheritorship for religious beliefs and his abilities to adapt to changes in circumstances, See Chapter IV.

⁴ Ibid., p. 7.

73

A major public event took place in 1541 which was to affect both the reform preacher and the Diodati family. Lucca was chosen to be the conference site between Pope Paul III and the Emperor Charles V, following the Diet of Ratisbon. Vermigli was warned by Cardinal Contarini of a plot against him by the Lucchese monks. The Cardinal cautioned Vermigli to modify his preaching. Contarini had misjudged the character and dedication of the reforming prior, and Vermigli strongly affirmed his intention of declaring the truth. The Diodatis were given the honor of accommodating the Emperor. The choice of Michele Diodati for this honor was a natural one, for he was then "Gonfaloniere" and a munificent patron of arts and letters. In short, he was the leading citizen of the area.

A year after the Pope's visit to Lucca, the Congregations of the Holy Office at Rome began to investigate those groups in Italian towns which had adopted more or less Protestant doctrines. It was not a surprise to Vermigli when he was summoned to the chapter of his order at Genoa and, realizing that he would be treated as a heretic for his teaching, decided to flee from Italy.

The "reformed" church at Lucca continued in spite of the absence of its pastor. In fact, Vermigli's flight served as an inspiration to at least one convert, Nicolao Diodati, the younger brother of Michele. Nicolao dreamed of finding beyond the Alps a new home where he could more openly avow his faith.⁵

With the ascension of Paul IV to the Papal throne, the apparent toleration of Protestantism in Lucca came to an end. The resulting

⁵ Ibid., pp. 8-9.

persecution of the little reformed congregation at Lucca caused some of the members to conform; others preferred to abandon their homes and seek havens in Switzerland or France. The suppression of the Reformation became so severe in Italy that emigration had to be done secretly. All those who chose to flee rather than deny their profound religious faith were sustained by the hope that in a new homeland the freedom to worship openly would be granted.

One of the first expeditions to flee the current religious persecutions in Lucca was lead by Carlo Diodati. He left Lucca ostensibly to serve an apprenticeship in a banking establishment at Lyons. Once he was safe in Lyons, he openly professed his acceptance of the reformed faith. By the end of the year 1567 he had gone to Geneva, where his name was inscribed in the registers of the Italian church. He was the first Diodati to settle in Geneva.

Carlo soon gave indications of his qualities of leadership, for he was received as Habitant de Geneve and became a Bourgeois and a member of the Council of the Two Hundred, all in a few year's time. In 1574, he was chosen commander of a company of Italian soldiers raised for the city's defense against one of the periodic attacks by the Duke of Savoy, and distinguished himself by his violent conduct.⁶

The wealth that Carlo Diodati acquired from an extensive banking operation and in the manufacture of silk was always at the service of his adopted land. His judgment and aptitude for leadership were available as

6 Ibid., pp. 11-12.

well. Carlo took as a "personal duty the responsibility of doing all he could to maintain the political and religious independence of Geneva."⁷ In recognition of Carlo's loyal citizenship, he was for thirty-five years (1584-1619) continuously a member of the Councils of the city. In addition to earning prestige in commercial and public affairs, he became a leading member of the flourishing Italian church. During his rise to a position of influence and respect, Carlo had ten children borne to him by his second wife, Maria Mio. Of these ten children, only two were to exert an influence on Milton: Theodore Diodati, founder of the English branch of the Diodatis; and Giovanni, later famous as a theologian.⁸

THEODORE DIODATI

Theodore Diodati, father of Milton's friend, entered the medical profession eager to succeed on merit alone. Upon reaching the age of twenty-one, he entered Leyden to study medicine. There were two factors involved in his choice of Leyden. His father was a condemned heretic by the Catholics; therefore, Theodore had to choose a Protestant school. Equally as important was Leyden's reputation for a fine medical faculty. This reputation was evidently well earned, for we learn from the title page of a thesis which Diodati published in 1569, that Petrus Pavius was his teacher. Pavius had a wide reputation for his knowledge of botany and anatomy. He also embraced the ancient as well as the modern, the theoretical as well as the practical.⁹

7 Ibid., pp. 23-24.

8 Ibid., p. 24.

9 Ibid., pp. 27-28.

In spite of his progress toward his degree, Theodore Diodati seems to have abandoned Leyden after only two years without finishing the curriculum. He left Holland and went to England to live. An explanation of his premature departure from Leyden might be that a degree was apparently not needed to practice medicine in England. Just as Carlo established a new home for himself in Geneva, Theodore adopted England as his native land.

It should be noted that Theodore Diodati did not immediately practice medicine upon his arrival in England. He became a tutor to the wealthy influential Harrington family. To Theodore's care was entrusted the teaching of John Harrington, the only living son and heir to the Harrington estates. Dorian describes the Harrington position in glowing terms.

The Harringtons not only possessed great wealth and bright political prospects; they were highly regarded for their excellent moral and religious principles, and their blood relationships and cultural interests linked them closely to many representatives of the best in English life and literature at the time.¹⁰

There can be no doubt that the association with the Harrington family assured Diodati the best possible associations and promised almost unlimited opportunities for his professional advancement.

In April, 1603, James I was making his leisurely trip from Edinburgh to London to ascend the throne. Sir John Harrington entertained the royal party at Burley, one of his two estates in Rutlandshire, while his wife, with other English ladies, went to Scotland to greet the new queen. The Countess of Bedford was promptly appointed lady of her majesty's bed chamber, and Sir John was created Baron Harrington of Exton. A greater show of royal favor

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 36.

was bestowed on the Harringtons when the King signed a privy seal order committing Elizabeth, the heir to the throne, to their care. The King's choice was based on sound judgment, for Lord Harrington had gained the reputation of devout Protestantism and dependability of character. Furthermore he had shown his interest in education by the care he took in providing for his own son. Theodore Diodati's main responsibility probably was to continue to supervise the education of John Harrington. It would not be unlikely, however, that he became one of the tutors of the Princess in French or Italian or both.

Because of the prominent roles that Sir John and the Princess were to play it was inevitable that they should leave the quiet country surroundings. On July 6, 1607, Sir John was admitted a fellow-commoner at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge. The Princess, receiving more and more demands for her appearance at court, found the Combe Abbey too remote. Before the end of the year 1608, she was granted, at the age of twelve, an establishment of her own. Her change of residence did not relieve the Harringtons of their duty as guardians, and Diodati remained with the family in their new location in close attendance upon the Princess.¹¹

Dorian summarizes Theodore Diodati's position in England at the end of his first decade there.

By the end of 1608, then, at the close of his first decade in England, Theodore Diodati was in the favorable situation of being a trusted and responsible attendant in one of the most prominent families in the nation. He had made his contribution to the education of Sir John Harrington, who was now one of

¹¹ Ibid., pp. 42-43, 46.

the intimates of the heir apparent to the throne. He continued in the service of the family, his attendance now being rather on the princess herself. Under such distinguished auspices he had laid a solid foundation for his later career in England.¹²

In 1603 Diodati's duties began to change from those of a tutor to those of a physician. This change came about gradually as the usefulness of his medical knowledge became apparent. By 1612 the transition from the duties of tutor to those of physician was complete.¹³

At this stage in Theodore Diodati's life it seemed as if nothing could prevent him from having a successful career as a physician. In a stunning series of misfortunes, Diodati saw his excellent prospects disappear.

By early 1614, Princess Elizabeth had married and had left England, Baron Harrington and his son were dead, and Lady Harrington was left practically impoverished, the family's estate wasted away through the costly privilege of bringing up the King's daughter.¹⁴

This series of misfortunes did not shake Diodati's determination to practice medicine in England. In 1615 he returned to Leyden, passed his examination there, and then appeared before a committee of the Royal College of Physicians. Without their consent Diodati could never become a fully licensed physician, able to practice in London as well as in England's countryside. In 1617 he passed their examination and settled in the parish of Saint Mary Magdalen, a neighborhood noted as a medical center.

¹² Ibid., p. 41.

¹³ For a commentary on how an unlicensed physician such as Theodore Diodati could practice medicine and become Elizabeth's personal physician, see Donald Clayton Dorian, The English Diodatis, pp. 64-72.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 79.

A comparison of Theodore Diodati's career with that of his father, Carlo Diodati, reveals striking similarities. Both men achieved a significant social and financial position in a foreign country in a relatively short time. Both men achieved this position not through influence, but through their own native abilities, overcoming the normal hostility given a foreigner. Both men were dedicated to their convictions. Carlo was dedicated to the preservation of religious toleration in Geneva, while Theodore was dedicated to the pursuit of his career in medicine. The heritage that belonged to Charles Diodati was indeed one of which he could be proud. John Milton, his close friend and classmate at St. Paul's, must have been very familiar with this heritage, and one can imagine the effect that it had on the poet.

GIOVANNI DIODATI

Carlo Diodati had another son who was to exert a profound influence on Milton. On June 6, 1576, Giovanni Diodati was born in Lucca. He was among those who were forced to flee religious prosecution in Italy. Giovanni, a youth of eighteen when Theodore departed, had meantime achieved distinction as a theologian, writer, and international spokesman for Protestantism. Dorian describes him as attaining "eminence in new fields by his independent merits and efforts, without the benefit of family predecessors in whose footsteps to follow."¹⁵

In his highly successful career he showed such early promise that he was made professor of Hebrew at the Academy of Geneva at the age of twenty-one.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

Two years later he began to teach theology in addition to Hebrew. Giovanni's influence did not stay within the cloistered walls of the Academy. After 1608, when he was ordained, he gained wide fame as a minister, visiting many Protestant churches in France in an official capacity in 1611 and staying at Nimes for some time in 1614.

In 1603 Giovanni gained an international literary reputation by translating the whole Bible into Italian. This work is recognized today as one of the important Protestant versions. In 1608 he added to his literary fame by translating the Psalms into Italian verse. These two literary accomplishments indicate what could be regarded as Giovanni's driving ambition in life: to convert his native land, and especially the republic of Venice, to his own creed.¹⁶

Giovanni's reputation as a theologian was confirmed when he was chosen as one of the two representatives sent by Geneva to the Synod of Dort, called for November, 1618. The purpose of the Synod was to settle the theological disputes that had arisen between the followers of Jacobus Arminius (1560-1609) and those of Franciscus Gomarus (1563-1641). Arminius had taught the doctrine of modified free will while at Leyden, and Gomarus had insisted on teaching the doctrine of predestination by election. Both representatives from Geneva took the side of Gomarus and it was perhaps through their influence that the issue was decided in favor of predestination. Diodati was chosen as one of the deputies to draw up the definition of the Synod's action.¹⁷

¹⁶ Eugene Choisy, "Giovanni Diodati," The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, ed., Samuel Macauley Jackson (New York, London, 1909), III, 439.

¹⁷ Fletcher, I, 418.

It was in the following year, 1619, that Giovanni made his first trip to England. Fresh from his recent triumph at the Synod of Dort, Giovanni must have made quite an impression on his nephew Charles. If John Milton was acquainted at this time with Charles, there may have been a casual meeting between the youth and the celebrated theologian.

It is an established fact that Giovanni Diodati and John Milton did meet during Milton's Italian trip. By this time Giovanni had gained a reputation for instructing young men of rank from various parts of Europe who boarded in his house. At the time of Milton's visit, it is possible that he might have met Charles Gustavus, later King of Sweden, and several princes of German Protestant houses who were all studying with Diodati at that time. Masson quotes Milton as saying "at Geneva, I was daily in the society of John Diodati, the most learned professor of Theology."¹⁸ Masson also states that in all likelihood it was from Giovanni Diodati that Milton learned of the death of his friend, Charles.

If Milton had met Giovanni Diodati in 1619, his second encounter was made under quite different circumstances. Milton had finished his college training and had just completed a rigorous reading program. He arrived in Geneva with fresh praises ringing in his ears from numerous hosts on his Italian and European tour. This meeting, then, was a meeting of two educated theologians; one had already earned his reputation as a strict adherent of the Calvinistic faith, while the other had yet to earn his reputation as a nonconformist whose principles of toleration could not accept Calvinism.

¹⁸ Masson, I, 833. It is difficult to tell from Masson's reference which one of Milton's works he is quoting.

62

It is perhaps to Giovanni Diodati, as well as to Thomas Young, that Milton owes his theological knowledge of Calvinism in the form of Presbyterianism. Something occurred during Milton's Italian journey which later was to cause him to reject a career as an Anglican minister, and one wonders if this rejection was the result of his visit to Giovanni Diodati.

CHARLES DIODATI

Charles Diodati was born in 1608, the son of Theodore Diodati.

Donald Clayton Dorian remarks,

It is unlikely. . . that any of his [Charles Diodati's] experiences in the schoolroom were as significant to his later life as two new personal relationships, one probably and the other certainly dating from this time. The first was his introduction to his celebrated uncle, Jean (Giovanni) Diodati, and the other his friendship with John Milton.¹⁹

It is the intimate personal relationship which existed between Charles and Milton that bears close examination. The influence of Charles is evident in many of Milton's childhood decisions.

There are at least two factors which caused the youths to come in constant contact with one another. Both went to St. Paul's School, and both lived within a hundred yards of the school. Evidently they quickly discovered their congeniality, for they soon formed a friendship which was to survive many separations for many years to come.

Scholarship has proved that, although Milton and Diodati were the same age, Diodati was ahead of Milton in his scholastic career by at least two years. This fact assumes greater importance in a comparison of the careers of these two men, a comparison which points out a striking number

¹⁹ Dorian, p. 98.

of instances in which Milton follows the example set by Charles.

When Diodati received his Master of Arts degree, he was not yet ready to choose a profession and qualify for its practice. In all probability, he went to live at his father's home with no immediate plans for a professional career of any kind. Four years later, Milton began his stay at his father's estate at Horton, not venturing upon a professional career because he, too, was unable to make a choice. Even the types of careers which lay open to Diodati and Milton were similar. The selection for Milton was:

1. The church, which was his parent's hope and to which most of his schooling was directed.
2. A commercial career, for which a successful foundation had been built by his father and the influence of the Diodati family.
3. A law career, in which his father could have given him much assistance.

For Charles the choices were:

1. A commercial career, in which he was almost assured of success because of his family connections.
2. A medical career, in which his father would be of great assistance.
3. A theological career, in which his uncle Giovanni Diodati would have been of great assistance.

Milton's nature would not allow him to accept any of the choices which lay open to him. He felt entirely unsuited for the business or law profession and, for the reason expressed in "Lycidas," could not enter the Church. Therefore, he accepted his father's generous offer and retired to Horton

to develop his literary abilities. Diodati rejected a business career for reasons similar to Milton's. Medicine appealed to him, but the ill-fortune that his father suffered, through no fault of his own, was an example too close to home for him to ignore. Upon eliminating the first two choices, Diodati found theology more and more attractive. His uncle had gained high esteem at home and abroad, as preacher, writer, and theologian. In addition, the field of theology had given Giovanni a wide scope for his linguistic and literary abilities. For this reason Charles made his decision in favor of his uncle's profession rather than that of his father.²⁰

Charles' personalty contained the basic ingredients that generally make a successful minister. He had a naturally cheerful disposition and a sensitive enjoyment of such simple pleasures as the outdoors. He firmly believed in moderation and became conscientiously serious about matters of real weight. A genuine interest in linguistic and literary attainments was added to all his other attributes. Charles Diodati could be classified as a well-rounded man of the Renaissance. Dorian states that Diodati was

Humane enough in tastes, understanding enough in his sympathies, to be Milton's most congenial companion in all his varied moods, he also fully satisfied in character and intellect, his exacting friend's high requirements for a prospective clergyman of the English Church.²¹

Diodati enrolled in the Academy of Geneva on April 16, 1630, instead of attaching himself to the University faculty of theology and spending seven years there in pursuit of his Bachelor of Divinity degree. This change was undoubtedly influenced by his family connections with the Swiss Institution

20 Ibid., pp. 124-126.

21 Ibid., p. 126.

and the city. The doctrinal illiberality of Geneva must have been distasteful to a man of Diodati's cultural breadth and genial temperament; therefore, a strong reason, such as dissatisfaction with the English University's plan of theological preparation, must be advanced to explain his decision.²²

Perhaps the most striking evidence of the similarity in temperaments between John Milton and Diodati is revealed in Diodati's final rejection of the Calvinist approach to theology. Dorian describes Diodati's reaction to the training he received in Geneva. "The longer he stayed in Geneva the less he found himself in sympathy with its rigid, almost fanatically intolerant Calvinism."²³ Unfortunately Diodati had chosen a time to go to Geneva when the leaders of the Protestant Reformation in Switzerland were ruthlessly suppressing heterodoxy with the same kind of zealous cruelty which caused Carlo Diodati to flee Catholic Italy. Charles returned to England with shaken hopes and disillusionment in the Church. Soon after his return, he began his study of medicine. Diodati's reaction to the intolerant fanaticism of Calvinism would certainly have been Milton's reaction also. Milton would either have been disgusted with the lack of erudition of the instructors of England or shocked at the intolerance of the reformed churches of Calvinism. It is not unlikely that Charles Diodati's failure to adjust to the illiberality of the Calvinistic churches of Geneva was the main topic of conversation between him and John Milton for many months. Perhaps at this

²² Ibid., pp. 127, 130-131.

²³ Ibid., p. 138.

point, Milton took the final step toward nonconformity and toleration in his religious beliefs. On rejecting Anglicanism and Calvinism, he might have thought of the sentiments expressed in Alexander Gill's Sacred Philosophy and determined that from now on he would trust only his reason and the divine word of the scripture.

EPITAPHIUM DAMONIS

Milton's sincere devotion to his boyhood friend, Charles Diodati, is substantiated in Milton's Epitaphium Damonis. This Latin elegy is the sole remnant of Milton's writing at this particular period in his life.

As in "Lycidas," Milton has chosen once again the pastoral as the form in which he expresses his grief. There is a difference between the two pastorals, however, for Diodati was Milton's friend in his boyhood, youth, and early manhood. Masson expresses well the differences between "Lycidas" and Epitaphium Damonis.

Hence Milton's grief for the death of Diodati, as it is expressed in the Epitaphium Damonis, is of a much more personal and intimate nature, far more suggestive of actual tears and sobs from him in his solitude, than anything discernible in the 'Lycidas'. . .²⁴

The puzzling thing about Epitaphium Damonis is its artificiality of form; not only is it written in Latin, but the verse is hexameter. The principles of the pastoral are rigidly imitated. Despite this artificiality of form, Masson describes it as "one of the noblest things that Milton has left us, and certainly one of the most interesting in its personal revelation."²⁵

²⁴ Masson, II, 85.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 85.

Hanford points out that Milton was essentially under the influence of his Italian trip and wrote Epitaphium Damonis with the Florentine audience in mind. In spite of this fact, Hanford concurs with Masson's opinion when he writes "the expression of grief on loneliness, despite the artificial medium, is as sincere as it is beautiful."²⁶

Epitaphium Damonis is described by Dorian as "unique among Milton's mature writings in the poet's complete preoccupation with his own plainly expressed emotion - to the exclusion of any other participant's emotion."²⁷ It is concerning this matter that Milton breaks from literary tradition. All the necessary figures of the pastoral form do not grieve for Damon (Diodati) directly, but through Thyrsis (Milton). The nymphs of Himera are invoked to assist Thyrsis in his lament for Damon. The sheep and the crops do not suffer for sorrow of Damon but through Thyrsis's neglect of them. The many shepherds and shepherdesses named in the poem attempt only to console Thyrsis, but do not mourn Damon as a lost comrade. In these respects Epitaphium Damonis is the complete antithesis of "Lycidas," in which many mourners answer the call "who would not sing for Lycidas?"

The poem, with its emphasis on Milton's personal bereavement, tells us considerably less than most pastoral elegies of the departed shepherd. The few passages that deal with Milton's high opinion of Diodati are very meaningful in view of the qualities which are emphasized. The following passage relates Diodati's devotion to true piety, upright conduct, and the arts of Pallas.

²⁶ Hanford, John Milton, Englishman, p. 98.

²⁷ Dorian, pp. 177-178.

To you, as second only to Daphnis, as long as Poles, as long as Faunus shall love the country-side, if it counts for ought to have cherished faith like the faith of olden days, to have cherished righteousness, and the arts of Pallas, and to have had as comrade a man of song.²⁸

Diodati, as a man of cheerful conversation, polished wit, and merry companion, is described in the following quotation.

Who will teach me to lighten consuming cares, who to beguile the long nights with sweet converse, . . . while the evil South Wind confounds all the world outdoors, and thunders down through the elm? . . . Or, in the summer-time, . . . who will renew for me your blandishments, your laughter, your sallies of Cecropian wit, and your cultured graces?²⁹

Diodati's medical inclination is indicated in the following passage:

You will run through, for me, your healing potions, your herbs, the hellebore, and the lowly crocus. . . , and the arts too, of the healers.³⁰

Milton describes Diodati's moral and spiritual purity in these lines:

You, too, have a place among the gods - no elusive hope beguiles me, Damon; you, too, surely have a place among them, for to what other place would your sweet and holy candor have made her way, whither your snow-white manhood?³¹

Two additional revealing passages from Epitaphium Damonis should be examined. In the first of these two quotations, Milton draws a vivid contrast between the casual associations of animals and birds, so easily replaced if death ends some comradeship, and the lasting isolation of that man who, having

28 Epitaphium Damonis, C. E., I, 299.

29 Ibid., p. 301.

30 Ibid., p. 311.

31 Ibid., p. 315.

been fortunate enough to find one true comrade, has forever lost him in death.

How alike are the bullocks that frolic over the meadows! Of one heart are they, one with another, by the Law's decree, close comrades all. Not one sets apart from the herd or this or that as his (particular) friend. . . . The lowly sparrow always has someone with whom to spend his days, with whom to fly gladly about all the heaps of spelt, visiting again, late, his own shelter: but if chance has done this mate to death. . . straightway the sparrow, flying from the spot, seeks another to be his comrade. But we mortals are a rugged race, a race harried by accursed fates, alien one to another in soul, and discordant in spirit: hardly does man find out of a thousand one - only one - that matches himself, or, if fortune. . . at last vouchsafes one to our prayers, him someday, in an hour whenever one expects it not, steals from us leaving us lost, everlasting, on into the (endless) ages.³²

The preceding quotation represents an unusual departure from the style typical of Milton's Latin poetry. As he attempts to give meaning to his loss, Milton frees himself from models and precedents, and in a series of original images expresses his deep sorrow over Diodati's death.³³

The second revealing passage pictures Milton's frustration caused by the death of Diodati as well as his own inability to compose lofty verse.

Alas, perish the herbs, perish too, the arts of healers, the plants, since they profited not at all him who was their master. I myself too - my pipe was sounding forth some lofty strain, I know not what - another day is come, the day following the eleventh night - . I myself, as it chanced, had set my lips to pipes, pipes that were new: none the less, bursting their joinings, they leaped asunder, and could brook no longer the weighty strains.³⁴

32 Ibid., pp. 306-307.

33 Dorian, p. 180.

34 Epitaphium Damonis, C. E., I, 311.

These lines are described as "achieving the almost impossible concord between a genuine outcry of grief and coherent artistic expression."³⁵

SUMMARY OF THE DIODATI INFLUENCE

A great deal of attention has been devoted not only to Charles Diodati but to his family as well. In view of the intimate relationship existing between Charles and John Milton, a study has been made of Charles' family and background.

From the history of the Diodati family in the little province of Lucca, Italy, we can see that one of the strong characteristics of this family is courage of conviction. The Diodati family, as well as the elder John Milton, suffered for their religious beliefs. They chose to abandon social prominence, wealth, and political influence to keep faith with the new reformed religion. To a smaller degree Theodore Diodati demonstrates this family trait when he resolves to be a registered physician even while suffering a series of misfortunes that would have crushed a lesser man.

Another strong character trait of the Diodati family is independence. They desired to achieve success through individual merit rather than through influence. After leaving behind wealth, political influence, and social prominence in Italy, Carlo Diodati was able to establish himself on his own merit in a relatively short time as one of the leading citizens of Geneva. Theodore Diodati was able to accomplish the same thing in England, where, within a decade of his arrival, he was able to become "a trusted and responsible attendant in one of the most prominent families in the nation," tutoring both Sir John Harrington and Princess Elizabeth.

35 Dorian, p. 181.

This same Diodati family produced one of the leading international spokesmen for Protestantism in Giovanni Diodati. Giovanni had no family predecessor in whose footsteps he could follow. He excelled in his theological profession through merit alone, as did the physician, Theodore Diodati. Due to his literary accomplishment and his translations of the Bible into Italian and the Psalms into Italian verse, he became one of the best known of the Diodatis.

The family's background and traditions are important for an understanding of Charles Diodati, Milton's closest friend. Charles was justly proud of his family, and undoubtedly Milton was thoroughly aware of and admired these family attributes. Perhaps he mentally compared the religious persecution of his father, by Richard Milton, to the persecution experienced by Carlo Diodati in Italy. Certainly he became more aware of the horror and uselessness of religious persecution. In this respect, the Diodati family guided Milton closer to toleration of all sects, excepting Roman Catholicism.

Charles Diodati's trip to Geneva in pursuit of a theological career is an event of great importance in connection with this thesis. It is his rejection of the illiberality of the Calvinistic doctrine of Geneva that must have influenced Milton. To reject this doctrine must have been difficult for Charles, for it would have been painful for his Uncle Giovanni Diodati to accept. Once again, this demonstrates the nonconforming tendency of the Diodati family.

The Epitaphium Damonis describes the powerful attraction that Charles Diodati and John Milton had for each other. His influence upon Milton's thinking must have been profound in many areas.

THESIS SUMMARY

The religious beliefs of John Milton are readily available for the student's perusal in the Christian Doctrine. In that remarkable statement John Milton reflects a bold independence of mind in both theological and ecclesiastical matters. Based on his two guidelines of scripture and reason, Milton has chosen from each sect or denomination that which he believes within himself to be right. The purpose of this thesis has been to show that the position to which Milton arrived on religious matters was the direct result of the childhood influences discussed in this paper.

Milton's juvenilia through Epitaphium Damonis reveals little inclination toward the heresies set forth in the Christian Doctrine. Even those topics which are theological in nature are treated non-controversially. The famous "Nativity Ode," and the minor poem "Upon the Circumcision," can be interpreted as orthodox or unorthodox. Whether Milton intended this deliberately is not the subject of this investigation. One does receive a hint of Milton's doctrine of free will which is a considerable factor in his attempt to "Justify the ways of God to men" in Paradise Lost, in the "Nativity Ode," and to a lesser extent in "Upon the Circumcision."

The one exception to the statement above is "Lycidas." In "Lycidas" there is no equivocation concerning Milton's position on the clergy. In a startling and effective image, Milton attacks the corrupt clergy through St. Peter, the first bishop of Rome and the guardian of the gates of heaven. "Lycidas" is significant for it is considered perhaps the only work of Milton's early period that shows dissatisfaction with either the theological or ecclesiastical principles of the Anglican Church. In this sense "Lycidas"

indicates Milton's leanings toward nonconformity. "Lycidas," however, does not attack the institution of Prelacy so much as the people who have become Prelates. It is a biting, lashing satire on the corruption of the clergy, but it does not enter into the controversy of apostolic succession, which was to become the central argument in the church government controversy of the early sixteen forties.

A review of Milton's juvenilia does not shed light on the position he assumed in the Christian Doctrine. To account for the heterodox positions shown therein, a study in this thesis has been made of the personal influences exerted on Milton during his formative years. Those people treated as influences include John Milton's father, Thomas Young, Alexander Gill, Sr., and Charles Diodati.

A curious pattern becomes apparent as a result of the study of these personal associations. From this pattern evolve two chief characteristics: nonconformity and unshakable religious convictions. Not only are these traits apparent in the four persons previously mentioned, but in Milton's ancestry as well. Richard Milton, the poet's grandfather, was a Roman Catholic under the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary, and briefly Elizabeth, and suffered great financial loss as a result. The poet's father was disinherited for his protestant beliefs.

The next dominant person to influence Milton was Thomas Young. In the preface to his chief work, The Lord's Day, Thomas Young is revealed as a man of great learning, judgment, piety, and humility. Young was a figure who might well gain the admiration and respect of John Milton. Just as the elder John Milton attracted the poet towards Anglicanism, Thomas Young in-

fluenced him toward Puritanism. Young's father had been a dedicated Presbyterian minister who, as in the case of Milton's father, was not afraid to speak out for his religion. This dedication was passed on to his son Thomas, who, as a member of Smectymnus, ably defended his religion. The extent of Young's penetration into Milton's religious views is clearly shown in Arthur Barker's "Milton's Schoolmasters," in which Barker draws many close parallels in religious beliefs between Young's Dies Dominica and Milton's early anti-prelatical tracts.

Young fits the pattern set by the earlier influences on Milton. He showed strong signs of nonconformity by coming to England to start his profession. As London was still an Anglican stronghold at the time, his reception must have been somewhat trying. The similarities in religious viewpoints outlined in Dies Dominica and in Milton's early anti-prelatical tracts indicate Young's willingness to speak out for his religion even in the orthodox home of the elder John Milton. His participation in the church government controversy further demonstrates his nonconformity.

More important than the other influences which Young exerted on Milton was the love for classical and biblical literature which the tutor passed on to the poet. The last evidence of Young's effect on Milton is found in Thomas Young's sermon entitled Hope's Encouragement, delivered to the House of Commons on February 28, 1644. In this sermon there is a conviction of divine support and direction very similar to Milton's own, and beyond that a sense of inescapable destiny which moved the poet to enter the church government controversy.

The close relationship of the poet and the tutor undoubtedly sowed the seeds of conflict in Milton's mind. Milton respected and loved his father and

95

writes of it in Ad Patrem; however, he also respected and had great affection for Thomas Young. Both men were excellent representatives of their respective faiths. This conflict may have caused Milton to select what he felt was superior in each religion, adopting that portion as his own belief.

This tendency to pick and choose from each denomination perhaps became stronger in Milton during his years at St. Paul's School. It was under the guidance of Alexander Gill, Sr., that Milton came into contact with the philosophy of reason in theological arguments. Alexander Gill, Sr. presents the unusual picture of a devout Anglican minister defending his religion not by divine revelation, but by reason. Gill could not become a complete rationalist, however, for he could not allow reason to conflict with divine revelation or the conclusions already established as orthodox on other grounds. Gill did not see the danger which a Protestant alliance with reason and the subsequent freeing of the intellect might cause Christianity. This danger may have materialized in the form of popular deism, a form which Gill was bound to abhor. Both Gill and Milton insisted upon the necessity of reason in things religious, and both insisted upon the authority of the scripture. They differ, however, on a fundamental point: where Gill's position contains the elements of orthodoxy, Milton denies the right of any other authority to pass judgment upon the validity of reason's interpretation of scripture.¹

In view of his inability to employ reason to its fullest extent, Gill was constantly diverted from his attack on atheism to skirmishing with heretics, his knowledge thereof being amazing. It is interesting to note that many of the heresies attacked in Gill's Sacred Philosophy were to find a place in

¹ Christian Doctrine, C. E., XIV, 15.

Milton's later theological tenets.

Although Sacred Philosophy is the expression of Gill's deepest convictions, it is not his best known work. This honor is given to Logonomia Anglica. In this work Gill defends the English language as proper for literary works. Gill even goes so far as to criticize Chaucer for his use of imported French and Italian words. It is possible that Gill planted the thought in Milton's mind which eventually led the poet to forgo a career as a Latinist in favor of writing in the English language.

Gill also fits the pattern of the influences of Milton's childhood. If Gill had been a conformist, he would never have entertained the ideas expressed in the Sacred Philosophy. Furthermore, to support his religion he was willing to publish these thoughts in the face of opposition.

The last influence discussed in this thesis was that of the Diodati family. Epitaphium Damonis embodies dramatic evidence of the close relationship between John Milton and Charles Diodati. The closeness of this relationship assumes significance as it presupposes that Milton was well acquainted with the Diodati background. Like Milton's ancestors, the Diodati ancestors suffered for their religious beliefs, turning to the reformed religion in the midst of Catholic Italy. The Diodatis were nonconformists and were determined in religious matters. The family's adherence to their principles, and their qualities of leadership, were illustrated by Carlo in Geneva and Theodore in England. Charles was a worthy inheritor of the Diodati tradition, and Milton respected him for his fine lineage.

The careers of John Milton and Charles Diodati were very similar, the one exception being that Charles was from two to four years ahead in his

scholastic endeavor. This similarity assumes greater importance when Charles' brief sojourn as a theologian is considered. Charles had all the qualities that constitute a good minister. Yet in a short time he completely rejected the illiberality of Calvinism in the reformed church of Geneva. The familiar pattern appears once again. Charles, even though his uncle Giovanni Diodati was a leading theological figure in Geneva, rejected a theological career in favor of a medical career. Charles Diodati and his family represent yet another influence toward nonconformity and self-determination in religious affairs.

Milton was surrounded in his early days by examples of nonconformity in people whom he loved, respected, and admired. Nonconformity in each instance demanded courage in religious convictions. The scale seems almost equally balanced between influences in the direction of Anglicanism, represented by his father and by Alexander Gill, Sr., and influences toward Puritanism, represented by Thomas Young and Charles Diodati. It is not difficult to assume that Milton came to the conclusion that neither religion was entirely right or wrong. Gill supplied the determining factor on which Milton was to base his religious beliefs. This factor was rationalism applied to religious controversies. Thus, in all the influences treated in this paper, the same pattern of nonconformity and adherence to deep personal religious convictions guided Milton to establish a religious platform which was drawn from many different denominations and faiths.

A full development of this study will show that Milton throughout his career was an independent and an individualist whose church is his own church and whose sect is his own sect. There is no indication in Milton's juvenilia

of the heterodox views which he was later to assume in the Christian Doctrine. Therefore it is my contention that this belief was formed by Milton perhaps as the direct result of his childhood influences. Milton's participation in the church government controversy was as a member of the Root and Branch Party and not as a member of the Presbyterian Party. Finally, the heterodox views in the Christian Doctrine were the same views that he held at an early age.

George Newton Conklin in Biblical Criticism and Heresy in Milton states the thesis of my proposed study in the following manner:

What must be particularly noticed in Milton's treatment of this fundamental basis of purely scriptural theology is his insistence on absolute independence and originality. This insistence on Milton's part. . . was not simply a matter of the undesirability of dependence on human authority. On the contrary, to Milton, any dependency but to scripture alone under Divine guidance was expressly forbidden; for, indeed, such a procedure would impose a yoke on the Holy Spirit itself. . .²

² George Newton Conklin, Biblical Criticism and Heresy in Milton (Columbia, 1949), p. 32.

APPENDIX A

Conjectured Curriculum of St. Paul's School.
1618 - 1625

The exercises and themes were correlated with the authors and guided by textbooks of grammar and rhetoric.

- Class I. Latin Grammar. Read Sententiae Pueriles and Lily, Carmen de Moribus.
- Class II. Latin Grammar. Read Cato, Disticha Moralia and Aesop, Fabulae (in Latin).
- Class III. Latin Grammar. Read Erasmus, Colloquies and Terrence, Comedies, for colloquial Latin, and Ovid, De Tristibus, to begin poetry.
- Class IV. Latin Grammar. Read Ovid, Epistles and Metamorphoses (and perhaps other elegiac poets), and Caesar and perhaps Justin for History.
- Class V. Begin Greek Grammar, and continue with some review of Latin Grammar. Read Sallust for history and begin Virgil, Bucolics.
- Class VI. Greek Grammar and the Greek Testament in the morning. Begin Cicero (possible Epistles and Offices), continue Virgil (and perhaps take up Martial).
- Class VII. Greek Grammar. Read minor Greek poets (perhaps chosen from Hesiod, Theognis, Pindar, and Theocritus), Cicero, Orations, and Horace.
- Class VIII. Hebrew Grammar and Psalter in the morning. Read Homer, Euripides, and Isocrates (and perhaps Demosthenes), Persius and Juvenal. (Perhaps Dionysius for history and Aratus).

APPENDIX B

The following two prayers are ones with which Milton was very familiar, as they were spoken every day at St. Paul's School.

A Little Prayer to the Boy Jesus

Sweet Jesus, my Lord, who, as a boy in the twelfth year of thine age didst dispute in the temple at Jerusalem among the doctors so that they all marveled with amazement at thy superexcellent wisdom, I petition thee that in this thy school, of which thou art protector and defender, wherein I am taught daily in letters and wisdom, that, till that through knowledge of thee I worship thee and imitate thee, and so in this brief life to walk in the path of thy teaching, following in thy footsteps, so that departing from this life I may through thy grace happily arrive at some part of that glory to which thou hast attained.

Gaspar's Prayer

We pray unto thee, Jesus Christ, who as a boy twelve years old, seated in the temple, taught the teachers themselves, to whom I am well pleased: hear him; who art the perfection of all the eternal wisdom of the Father, deign to illuminate our minds so that we learn thoroughly the lessons of virtuous literature, and that we use them to thy glory, who liveth and reigneth, with the Father and Holy Ghost, ever one God, world without end.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Aubrey, John. Aubrey's Brief Lives. Edited by Oliver Lawson Dick. London: Secker and Warburg, 1950.
- Barker, Arthur E. "Milton's Schoolmasters." Modern Language Review, XXXII (October, 1937), 517-536.
- Bush, Douglas. English Literature in the Earlier Seventeenth Century, 1600-1660. Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1945.
- Cherbury, Edward Lord Herbert. De Veritate. Translated with introduction by Meynick H. Carré. University of Bristol: J. W. Arrowsmith, Ltd., 1645.
- Chillingworth, William. The Religion of Protestants, a Safe Way to Salvation. Oxford: Leonard Lichfield, 1638.
- Choisy, Eugene. "Giovanni Diodati." The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge. Edited by Samuel Macauley Jackson. New York and London: Funk and Wagnalls Co., III, 1909.
- Clark, Donald Lemen. John Milton at St. Paul's School. New York: Columbia University Press, 1948.
- Conklin, George Newton. Biblical Criticism and Heresy in Milton. New York: The Columbia University Press, 1949.
- Darbishire, Helen. The Early Lives of Milton. London: Constable and Co., Ltd., 1932.
- Dorian, Donald Clayton. The English Diodatis. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1950.
- Encyclopedia of Religion. Edited by Vergillius T. A. Ferm. New York: The Philosophical Library, 1945.
- Fletcher, Harris Francis. The Intellectual Development of John Milton. Urbana: The University of Illinois Press, 2 vols., 1956.
- Gill, Alexander Sr. The Sacred Philosophy of the Holy Scriptures. Including the Second Edition of A Short Treatise Concerning the Trinity. London: Anne Griffin for Joyce Norton, and Rich. Whātaker, 1635.
- Grace, W. J. "Paradise Lost." Studies in Philology, III (October, 1955), 583-591.
- Hanford, James H. A Milton Handbook. New York: F. S. Crofts and Co., 1939.
- Hanford, James H. John Milton, Englishman. New York: F. S. Crofts and Co., 1924.

- Hanford, James H. "The Youth of Milton." Studies in Shakespeare, Milton and Donne. New York: The Macmillan Co., 1925.
- Henry, Nathaniel H. Milton's Puritanism. Doctoral Dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1941.
- Jefferson, Thomas. The Writings of Thomas Jefferson. Edited by Andrew A. Lipscomb. Washington, D. C.: The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, XV, 1903.
- Johnson, Samuel. Chief Lives of the Poets. "Milton." New York: Holt, 1889.
- Lord Herbert of Cherbury's De Religione Laia. Edited and translated with a critical discussion of his life and philosophy by Harold R. Hutcheson. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1944.
- Masson, David. The Life of John Milton: Narrated in Connection with the Political, Ecclesiastical and Literary History of His Time. New York: P. Smith and Co., 1946.
- Macaulay, Rose. Milton. New York and London: Harper and Brothers, 1935.
- McNeill, John T., editor. Calvin: Institutes of Christian Religion. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1960.
- Milton, John. John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose. Edited by Merritt Y. Hughes, New York: The Odyssey Press, 1957.
- Milton John. The Works of John Milton. Edited by Frank A. Patterson. New York: The Columbia University Press, 1931-1938.
- Mullinger, James Bass. "Thomas Young." Dictionary of National Biography. Edited by Sir Leslie Stephens and Sir Sidney Lee Camberlege. London: Oxford University Press, 1921-1922, 1937-1938, 1949-1950.
- Parker, William R. "John Milton, Scrivener." Modern Language Notes, LIX (December, 1944), 532-537.
- Paine, Thomas. The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine. Edited by Phillips Foner. New York: The Citadel Press, I, 1945.
- The Seventeenth-Century Prose and Poetry. Edited by Robert P. T. Coffin and Alexander M. Witherspoon. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1929.
- Toland, John, editor. The Prose Works of John Milton. 2 vols., London: 1698.
- Wood, Anthony a. Athenae Oxonienses. 2 vols., London: 1691-1692.

VITA

Peter Allen Edmunds was born in Amsterdam, New York, 21 September, 1935. He moved shortly thereafter to Mississippi. Up to the fifth grade he received his elementary school education in Tennessee, Maryland, and Illinois. In April, 1945, Mr. Edmunds moved to Richmond, Virginia where he received the remainder of his elementary school education. He graduated from Thomas Jefferson High School in June, 1953.

In September, 1953, the graduate enrolled at the University of Richmond, Richmond, Virginia, in pursuit of the Liberal Arts degree. Peter Edmunds, having completed his studies in English Literature, received the Bachelor of Arts degree in June, 1957. In March of the same year Peter Edmunds married the former Helen Mary Snedeker, and in June went to work for Prudential Insurance Company of America in Newark, New Jersey.

After working with the Prudential Insurance Company for three and one half years in Systems work, the candidate, desiring to move back to Virginia, accepted a position with Celanese Corporation of America in Pearisburg, Virginia .

Realizing that his main desire was to teach, the candidate resigned his job with the Celanese Corporation and returned to Richmond with his wife and three sons. He entered the Graduate School of the University of Richmond in February, 1963. Upon completing the requirements for the Master of Arts degree, the candidate plans to continue his graduate studies at the University of North Carolina or Michigan State University in the fall of 1964.