

sense, as the Spirit of God gives it. David is assured of himself even, that, because God is with him, death has no power over him, and his way leads to fulness of joy and eternal pleasures before the face of God. From the same consciousness of life, flowing from fellowship with God, and pervading his whole being and thought, Abraham also believed in an awakening from the dead, while in the same manner the O. T. believers generally hoped for eternal reward in the heavenly city of the living God.

Thus are we well assured that the author of the epistle to the Hebrews does no violence to the sense of the Old Testament; but only unfolds it to us for the first time in its full depth, with that apostolic exegesis which Paul characterizes in 1 Cor. 2: 13—16, which, if it shall often seem to us like a hard saying, will be better and better appreciated by our theology.

ARTICLE IV.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND OPINIONS OF JOHN MILTON.

BY REV. A. D. BARBER, WILLISTON, VT.

MORE biographies have been written of John Milton than of any other man that has lived in modern times; more perhaps than of any other man that has ever lived. Mr. Reed, in 1841, enumerated no less than twenty-five. Three are known to the author to have appeared since. These biographies are tinged with every variety and shade of opinion, poetical, political, moral, and theological. They have, as Mr. Reed says, "issued from the pens of poets, of antiquaries, of divines, of scholars, of painters, from Churchmen and Dissenters, from Infidels, from the heightened Aristocrat, the Whig, and the Chartist."

Besides the biographers there have been hosts of critics

and commentators, as diverse in character and fitness for their work as it is possible for men to be. They have left us a medley, — a hash, in which, if it be difficult to find the truth, it is not at all difficult to find something to gratify every variety of taste, and confirm every diversity of opinion.

“If a man would set himself down,” says Arch-Deacon Blackburne, in Hollis's Memoirs, “to devise one of the highest entertainments his imagination could furnish, he could not succeed better, if he was a man of genius and judgment, than in exhibiting a conversation between Shakspeare and Milton, in the shades, on the operations of their several critics and commentators. What infinite pleasantry would arise from their several observations! Shakspeare would appear in as mangeld a condition as Deiphobus; Milton's wounds might perhaps be counted:

Bis sex thoraca petitum
Perfossunque locis,

but would amount to ten times the number of those of Mezentius.” [Hollis's Memoirs, vol. II., p. 552, 4to. Lond. 1780.]

It is not our purpose to criticise the critics, or clear up the contradictions of the commentators. This we shall do only so far as to show how some of the erroneous opinions that are now entertained concerning Milton, have come to prevail, and to bring out what Milton himself held on some fundamental subjects in theology and religion, — particularly the doctrines of the Trinity, and the Persons in the Godhead. If in doing this we are compelled to dissent from, and convict of error, any of the great and good men, who in real affection and veneration of Milton, have endeavored to hold him up for the world's admiration, this we sincerely regret. “We could find no pleasure,” to use the fine figure of Dr. Channing, “in sacrificing one great name to the manes of another.” Nor do we wish to be thought so vain as “to stretch to the tiptoe height of our small stature to strike a blow at lofty names.” We deem it due however to Milton, and to truth, to vindicate, if possible, his name and memory from any aspersions that accident, or haste, or hate, or imperfect knowledge, may have thrown upon him.

“*Religiosissimi mortales,*” says the historian Sallust, in

describing the character of the early Romans. Without flattery or abatement, this characterizes John Milton. He is indeed the most religious of mortals. Solemnity and sanctity thoroughly permeate and pervade his very spirit. They are the sub-stratum of his character, cropping out continually in the bold prominences of his thought and feeling, and of his words and deeds. These all come up from religious depths, and naturally flow out in religious channels. More than any other man, John Milton makes upon us the impression of one who is all the time conscious of the Divine presence, and under the powers of the world to come. His conduct is everywhere of the sanctity of a vow. As we might expect them, when we consider the depth and clearness of his mind, his control of language, giving him unlimited power of expression, his religious opinions are clearly conceived, firmly held, precisely and broadly stated. They are seen too wherever Milton is seen, because they belong to the man. They are the man. They peer out from all his works in poetry and prose; from his controversial writings, from his political treatises, from his histories, state papers, tracts, and letters, as well as his strictly doctrinal and devotional works. References without number might be made to verify this statement. Thus in his "Reformation in England," "Prelatical Episcopacy," "Animadversions upon Rem. Defence," and no less in the "History of Great Britain," as well as in "Paradise Lost," it can easily be learned how he held the doctrine of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit; how he regarded worship, especially the chief part of it, prayer and praise. Also in "Areopagitica," "Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," "Likeliest Way to Remove Hirelings out of the Church," it is not difficult to ascertain the reverence Milton paid the Holy Scriptures, the Sabbath, the Church, and what he thought of Creation and Providence, of the primitive state of man, sin, freedom, predestination, and necessity, and generally of the doctrines of the Christian religion. Religion was Milton's imperial theme. It was the controlling and harmonizing idea of his life.

"It is impressive to hear the boy Milton," says the lamented Reed, "in his early verses, pleading with his father that poetry is a *holy thing*; and again, to hear him in the prime of manhood, amid the stern words of one of his controversial publications, announcing that the great achievements of poetry must rest on devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out His seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases."

There is doubtless in the case of Milton, as in that of other great minds, as there ever must be where there is any intellectual and moral growth, a progress of opinion towards completion and perfection, so that what is held and said to-day is not always harmonious, much less equal in depth and extent of understanding and meaning with what was held and said yesterday, or shall be held and said next year, or at the end of the next quarter of a century. Opinion in Milton, and especially in his youth, is what he most justly says of it in the good man, "only knowledge in the growth." Milton's works at large, then, and particularly those that he gave birth to in the fulness of his development, are the works that must have most weight in the search we have undertaken. We must lay fast hold of those opinions by which Milton himself would wish to be known and judged. These are not the opinions of his youth and school-boy days, correct as many of these were, but of the writer of "*Areopagitica*," "*The Defence*," "*Paradise Lost*." The former are to the latter what "the pang and the throe are to the living birth." By taking the opinions of youth as equal to those of manhood and old age, and much more as preponderating over them, we match the boy against the man, and nullify the maxim, that wisdom dwells with age, and experience with gray hairs.

The Discovery of Milton's Theological Treatise,—The Christian Doctrine: Knowledge of it among his Contemporaries.

In the year of our Lord 1823, there was discovered, in the State Paper Office of Great Britain, a theological treatise,

in manuscript, written in Latin, and professing to be the work of John Milton, but diverse in sentiment and style from all that had hitherto been known as his.

It seems to have been known to some of the contemporaries and friends of our author, that he engaged in the compilation of a theological work. At least Anthony Wood, who was the first to write and publish any account of Milton that has come down to us, mentions such a work. In the *Fasti Oxonienses*, published in 1691, seventeen years after Milton's decease, Wood gives a brief but connected narrative of Milton's life and works. The facts embodied in this narrative, Wood does not pretend to give from personal acquaintance with Milton, but on the authority of a friend, who, he says, "was well acquainted with Milton, and had from him, and from his relatives after his death, most of this account of his life and writings following," i. e., the life and writings in which Wood mentions the *Theological Treatise*.

The name of the friend Wood does not give. Biographers of Milton, however, say this friend was John Aubrey, the antiquarian. He made "Collections for the Life of Milton" in 1681, and left them in manuscript.¹ They further say that Wood was allowed the use of these Collections when he compiled his account of Milton in the *Fasti Oxon.* above referred to. (See Godwin's *Lives of Edward and John Philips*, pp. 274, 335: 4to., Lond., 1815. Hollis's *Memoirs*, vol. I. p. 238. Warton in *Hol. Mem.*, II. p. 542: 4to., Lond. 1780. Todd's *Life of Milton*, in his *Edit. of the Poet. Works*, vol. I. p. 13: 12mo., Lond. 1826, 3rd Ed.)

Edward Philips, also, Milton's nephew and pupil, in his *Life of Milton*, in 1694, speaks definitely of a theological work, which the pupils of Milton, he among the number, were required, at their master's dictation, to write, as a part of their Sunday's Work. (*Philips's Life of Milton*, in Godwin's *Lives*, p. 363.)

¹ These Collections were preserved in MS. in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, till 1815, when they were printed by William Godwin, in connection with his *Lives of Edward and John Philips*. The author has a copy of Godwin's *Lives* with Aubrey's Collections.

Aubrey and Philips are the only friends and biographers of Milton, so far as we can discover, that speak from anything like personal knowledge of Milton's *Theological Treatise*. In regard to Aubrey, there is reason to doubt, as we shall show, whether he had any other than hearsay knowledge of this treatise; rather there is reason to believe that he knew nothing reliable about it.

Toland, the next of Milton's biographers, and after him Newton, Symmons, Todd, Mitford, Bridges, Keightley, and others, refer to the *Theological Treatise*; but it is evident from the manner of their reference, that they had no other knowledge of it than what they gained from Aubrey and Wood, and refer to it only on the authority of these biographers.

Toland's reference is in these words: "He wrote likewise a *System of Divinity*, but whether intended for public view, or collected merely for his own use, I cannot determine." (Toland's *Life of John Milton*, p. 136: 12mo., Lond. 1699 and 1761.) Newton, in his reference to the work, gives Toland as authority. (See Newton's *Life of Milton* in his *Edition of Paradise Lost*, vol. I. p. 54: 4to., Lond. 1754.) Symmons gives Wood as authority. (See Symmons's *Life of Milton*, in his *Edition of the Prose Works*, vol. VII., p. 500: Lond. 1806.) Todd gives Aubrey and Wood. (See Todd's *Life of Milton*, in his *edition of the Poetical Works*, vol. I. p. 293: 3rd Ed., Lond. 1826.) Mitford refers to Toland, Aubrey, and Wood. (Mitford's *Life of Milton* in his *edition of the Poetical Works*, vol. I. p. 96: 8vo., Boston, 1845.)

Aubrey and Philips are the only authorities we have concerning the *Theological Treatise* in question. Their accounts are contradictory. Which is to be credited we shall see hereafter.

Ignorance of Milton's Contemporaries and Early Biographers, of his Theological Work.

The early biographers of our author inform us that he entered upon the composition of a theological work. This is

about all they seem to have known of it. At least, it is about all that can be learned from them concerning it. None of them inform us of the specific character of this work, or of its object, whether it was intended for public, or only for private use.

Toland, with all his advantages for finding out these things, and they were not few,—for besides the collections of Aubrey, the *Life* by Philips, and that by Wood, Toland had access to both Milton's works in the original manuscripts, and to Milton's nearest relatives and friends. In his Introduction to his *Life of Milton*, he says :

“The amplest part of my materials I had from his own books, where, constrained by the diffamations of his enemies, he often gives an account of himself. I learnt some particulars from a person that had bin once his amanuensis, which were confirm'd to me by his daughter now dwelling in London, and by a letter written to me at my desire from his last wife, who is still alive. I perused the papers of one of his nephews; learnt what I could in discourse with the other; and lastly consulted such of his acquaintance as, after the best inquiry, I was able to discover.” — *Toland's Life of Milton*, p. 3 and 4. 12mo. Lond. 1699 and 1761.

With all of these advantages and pains, Toland says of Milton's *System of Divinity*, as he calls it, “whether it was intended for public view, or collected merely for his own use, I cannot determine.”¹—*Id.* p. 136.

Besides the lack of reliable information, in Milton's early biographers, concerning the time, specific character, and object of his theological work, there is the same lack concerning the title it bore, and even the language in which it was written. Aubrey, and Wood after him, call it “*Idea Theologiæ*.” (See Aubrey's *Collections*, in *Godwin's Lives*, p. 348. 4to. Lond. 1815. Also, *Fasti Oxon.* Vol. I. p. 266. Fol. Lond. 1721.) They are supposed, as Todd says, “to

¹ It is well to recollect that Toland was the first to collect and publish Milton's *Prose Works*. This he did in 1698. In his *Life of Milton*, prefixed to this edition of the *Prose Works*, Toland gives a complete Catalogue of them, and shows no slight acquaintance with both their matter and spirit. “This *Life*,” says Godwin, “is upon the whole perhaps the biographical monument most in unison with its subject, that has yet been erected to the memory of Milton.” — *Godwin's Lives*, p. 282.

have been in error." Certainly "*Idea Theologiæ*" is not the title the work now bears. 'This is *De Doctrina Christiana ex Sacris Duntaxat Libris Petita, Disquisitionum Libri Duo Posthumi.*" This title however is believed, both by Todd and Mitford, on good grounds as we think, to have been added to the work after Milton's death, by those into whose hands the manuscript fell. (See Todd's *Life of Milton*, Vol. I. p. xcvi. Boston, 1845.)

Of the language in which the work was written, Dr. Sumner remarks :

"It is observable that neither Wood, nor any of the subsequent biographers of Milton, have mentioned the language in which his theological treatise was written. To prefix a learned title to an English composition, would be so consistent with Milton's own practice, as well as with the prevailing taste of his age, that the circumstance of Aubrey's ascribing to it a Latin name affords no certain proof that the work itself was originally written in that language."—*Preliminary Observations to Dr. Sumner's Translation of Christian Doctrine in Milton's Prose Works*. Vol. IV. p. vii. Bohn's Edit. Lond. 1853.

We have thought it fitting to state these facts, to show how little dependence can be placed upon the statements of Milton's early biographers concerning his theological work. They are, indeed, good authority that such a work was undertaken by John Milton; but of the time when it was begun, and completed, and of the character and object of the work, they tell us very little that is reliable. They inform us that it was, last, in the hands of Cyriac Skiuner. Discoveries since 1823, the time when the work was found, trace it into the hands of Daniel Skinner, and show that he began a correspondence with Daniel Elzevir of Amsterdam, for the purpose of publishing it, and actually sent the work, in manuscript, to Elzevir for this purpose. Elzevir, on account of the heresy contained in the work, refused to publish it; whereupon Skinner took away the manuscript. (See Todd's *Life*, Vol. I. p. 296-7; also, Bohn's Edit. of *Milt. Prose Works*. Vol. IV. p. xcvi.)

Notwithstanding the omissions and uncertainties of Milton's early biographers concerning his theological work,

there is now no doubt but that John Milton composed a theological treatise, and that the *Christian Doctrine*, found in 1823, and translated by Dr. Sumner, is this treatise.

When was Milton's Theological Work, The Christian Doctrine, compiled? Dr. Sumner's Statement and his Authorities, Anthony Wood and John Aubrey.

On the settlement of this question all depends, because "The *Christian Doctrine*" is not only in its style different, but maintains opinions, and advocates doctrines, directly contradictory to those that are found in all of Milton's other works, the time of whose composition is known. Was the *Christian Doctrine* compiled in the fulness of Milton's development, so that it exhibits his opinions matured and settled; or in his youth, so that it exhibits the same in the process of inquiry and growth only? By which would Milton himself wish to be known and judged, the opinions and sentiments of the *Christian Doctrine*, or those found in all the other of his great works, extending through a period of more than a third of a century?

The general impression, among a certain class of writers and readers, that have only cursorily examined the question of the *Christian Doctrine*, is, I believe, this: that it is one of Milton's last works, and intended to be posthumous.

The impression that the *Christian Doctrine* was intended to be a posthumous publication, arises probably from two facts. 1st, It was not published until after the author's death; 2d, and chiefly, from the title the manuscript bore when found in 1823. (See the title above given.) This is the ground on which Dr. Sumner, the translator of the *Christian Doctrine*, bases his conclusion.

"It appears from the title," he says (Preliminary Observations, p. xi.), "that the work was originally intended to be a posthumous publication." And he goes on to give reasons, or conjectures rather, for this: "The reproaches to which its author had been exposed in consequence of opinions contained in his early controversial writings, may have induced him to avoid attracting the notice of the public, during the ascendancy of his political opponents, by a frank avowal of his religious sentiments."

But judge all who know John Milton, if such a supposition be not contradictory to the whole spirit and practice of the man. When did he shrink from openly and boldly declaring his opinions, or fearlessly advocating what he held as truth? Yea, when did he manifest any prudence or self-regard in this matter? Such a conclusion is unworthy of his able translator. Dr. Sumner himself, in another part of his Preliminary Observations, refutes it. Having added to what we have just quoted, as follows: that "high-church principles were at the zenith of their popularity," at the time Milton departed "so far from received opinions," — and, "it would have been the height of imprudence," if not inconsistent with the "safety of the author," to have provoked, by publishing his opinions, the animosity of that party in the state to whose lenity he already owed his life and fortune, he says:

"But of all the charges which private or political prejudice has created against the author, that of being a "time-server," according to the reproach of Warburton, seems to have been the least deserved. The honesty of his sentiments is sufficiently vindicated by the boldness with which he uniformly expressed them in times when freedom of speech was more than ordinarily dangerous, as well as by his consistent exposure of what he conceived to be erroneous, whether advocated by his own friends or by his opponents. Thus, on discovering that 'new presbyter was but old priest writ large,' he resisted the encroachments of the Presbyterians as resolutely as he had before contributed to overthrow Prelacy; and if it were necessary, his political independence might be no less successfully vindicated by adducing the spirited language which he addressed to Cromwell, in the plenitude of his power."

In this connection, too, to show Milton's independence and fearlessness, Dr. Sumner points us to his conduct while abroad, in the papal dominions, when, he says, Milton was "at so little pains to moderate his zeal for the reformed religion, as to be exposed to insult and personal danger in consequence of his known principles." (Id. p. xxv. and xxvi.)

Besides the violence that Dr. Sumner's conjecture does to the character of Milton, there is good reason to believe, as Todd and Mitford say, that the title to which Dr. Sumner refers as the ground of his conjecture, is not original, but

added by those into whose hands the manuscript fell after Milton's decease.

All that can be gleaned from the Dedication goes to show, that Milton expected the work would be published, and published in his life-time. He writes just as if he intended to make it public at once. After having stated his personal and individual reasons for undertaking it, he says :

“If I communicate the result of my inquiries to the world at large ; if, as God is my witness, it be with a friendly and benignant feeling towards mankind, that I *readily give as wide a circulation as possible to what I esteem my best and richest possession*, I hope to meet with a candid reception from all parties, and that none, at least, will take unjust offence, even though many things should be brought to light which will at once be seen to differ from certain received opinions. I earnestly beseech all lovers of truth not to cry out that the church is thrown into confusion by that freedom of discussion and inquiry which is granted to the schools, and ought certainly to be refused to no believer, since we are ordered ‘to prove all things,’ and since the daily progress of the light of truth is productive far less of disturbance to the church, than of illumination and edification. Nor do I see how the church can be more disturbed by the investigation of truth, than were the Gentiles by the first promulgation of the gospel ; since, so far from recommending or imposing anything on my own authority, it is my particular advice that every one should suspend his opinion on whatever points he may not feel himself fully satisfied, till the evidence of scripture prevail, and persuade his reason into assent and faith. Concealment is not my object ; it is to the learned that I address myself, or if it be thought that the learned are not the best umpires and judges of such things, I should at least wish to submit my opinions to men of mature and manly understanding, possessing a thorough knowledge of the doctrines of the gospel ; on whose judgments I should rely with far more confidence, than on those of novices in these matters. And whereas the greater part of those who have written most largely on these subjects, have been wont to fill whole pages with explanations of their own opinions, thrusting into the margin the texts in support of their doctrine with a summary reference to the chapter and verse, I have chosen, on the contrary, to fill my pages, even to redundancy, with quotations from scripture, that so, as little space as possible might be left for my own words, even when they arise from the context of revelation itself.

It has also been my object to make it appear from the opinions I shall be found to have advanced, whether new or old, of how much consequence to the Christian religion is the liberty not only of winnowing and sifting every doctrine, but also of thinking, and even writing respecting it, according to our individual faith and persuasion ; an inference which will be stronger in proportion to the weight and importance of those opinions, or

rather in proportion to the authority of scripture, on the abundant testimony of which they rest. Without this liberty there is neither religion nor gospel, — force alone prevails, — by which it is disgraceful for the Christian religion to be supported. Without this liberty we are still enslaved; not, indeed, as formerly, under the divine law, but, what is worst of all, under the law of man; or, to speak more truly, under a barbarous tyranny. But I do not expect from candid and judicious readers, a conduct so unworthy of them, — that, like certain unjust and foolish men, they should stamp with the invidious name of heretic, or heresy, whatever appears to them to differ from the received opinions, without trying the doctrine by a comparison with scripture testimonies." (Milton's Prose Works, Vol. IV., pp. 4—7. H. G. Bohn's Edition, London, 1853. See also the remainder of the Dedication. See too *The Reason of Church Government*, etc. Id. Vol. II., p. 475; and *Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*. Id. p. 528, for similar passages.)

All of this makes it quite clear that Milton was not restrained from publishing his theological work, as Dr. Sumner supposes, but that he intended to give it to the public in his own lifetime. Why should he fear to give such a work as he esteemed this to be, — his "*best and richest possession*," — in the very words of scripture too for the most part, to the public while he was living? "Concealment," he expressly says, "is not my object;" but that his opinions might be brought to the test of scripture by others as well as himself. Does he not all along manifest readiness and desire to change and retract his opinions, provided they can be shown to be contradictory to the word of God? But this desire could only be met by the publication of these opinions in his lifetime, and by the discussion which he expected they would call out. It could have no effect on him after his death. He had confidence not only in his own opinions, but in the judgment that the "men of mature and manly understanding," to which he submitted them, would form concerning them. He expected they would "meet with a candid reception," and be judiciously considered. Why then should he fear?

It is well known, too, that Milton published all his other works, many of which were as obnoxious to the prevailing sentiment of that time, and as much endangering their author as this, as they came from his hand. He scattered

abroad his thoughts while they were hot and hissing. He left no posthumous treatises besides this. Why should he make this, his "best and richest," an exception?

From Milton's own testimony, then, in the Dedication of *Christian Doctrine*, and from his general practice, we doubt not he intended to "communicate the results of his inquiries to the world at large" during his life, and at the time he wrote them. Nor can we so well understand how he failed to do this, as by the supposition that, having written, he soon changed his views on those points in which the *Christian Doctrine* differs from his other works, and from the commonly received opinions of that and the present time. He compiled *Christian Doctrine* early in life, before 1641, when he was in the thirty-third year of his age, with the intention of publishing it; but before it was sent to the press — before 1641 — possibly before it was finished, — for the work seems to have been left in an unfinished state,¹ — he came to hold views of the Son of God, and the Spirit of God, different from those he advocates in *Christian Doctrine*.

We say he changed his views before 1641, for in the works written and published this year, viz., "*Of Reformation in England*," "*Prelatical Episcopacy*," and "*Animadversions upon Remonstrant's Defence*," he maintains opinions respecting the Trinity, and the Persons of the Godhead, utterly irreconcilable with those of *Christian Doctrine*. And not only in the works of 1641, but in all his works published afterwards, till the day of his death. Can we believe, then, that John Milton left, to be published after his death, a work that contradicts all he wrote and published during his life; and this too without giving us any explanation or reason for thus retracting and contradicting himself? Is not the conjecture made above, — that *Christian Doctrine*, esteemed so high by its author at the time of its composition, was with-

¹ See the work, especially its close. Upon this Todd remarks: "The treatise closes so abruptly as to support an opinion that it is an unfinished composition. And certainly the interlineations, corrections, and pasted slips of writing in the manuscript, excite a belief that further revision was probably intended." — *Todd's Life of Milton*, p. 345.

held from the public, because its author, soon after its completion, changed his views on certain doctrines maintained therein, or at least saw reason to doubt the correctness of his views, — is not this, we say, the most reasonable conjecture that the case allows?

Weight is added to this conjecture by the fact that the doctrines in the *Christian Doctrine* obnoxious to those in all his later works, and upon which there must have been a change of view, according to the conjecture now made, viz., the doctrines concerning the Son and Spirit of God, are treated near the beginning of *Christian Doctrine*, so that there was time for the author to have changed them before completing the work. Besides, logical consistency, or the agreement and harmony of the doctrines advocated as the *Christian Doctrine* proceeds, — such doctrines as the entire sinfulness of man, the atonement of Christ, the new birth, and others, on which Milton holds the evangelical or orthodox view, — these, we say, would require a mind so logical as Milton's to admit in the end the supreme divinity of the Son of God. It would require him to admit it as a coördinate doctrine, and necessary to the atonement and new birth.

But the weight of this conjecture will be better understood when it comes to be seen, as we trust it will be, that all of Milton's great works, beginning from 1641 and reaching down to 1674, the year of his death, contain admissions, and contain opinions, positively contradictory to those of the *Christian Doctrine*.

The other opinion, — that the *Christian Doctrine* is one of Milton's latest works, is equally without foundation. Dr. Sumner is, we believe, mainly responsible for this too. In *Preliminary Observations*, he says :

“It is mentioned by the biographers of Milton (*Toland's Life of John Milton*, p. 148: 12mo., London, 1699; *Newton's Life of Milton*, vol. I., p. 40, 68: 8vo., London, 1757; *Symmons's Life of Milton*, appended to his edition of the *Prose Works*, vol. VII., p. 500: London, 1806), that about the time when he was thus released from public business (meaning his release from the Secretaryship of Foreign languages in 1655), he entered upon the composition of three great works, more congenial to his taste than

the employments in which he had been recently engaged, and fitted to occupy his mind under the blindness with which he had been afflicted for nearly three years. The works commenced under the circumstances were *Paradise Lost*, a Latin *Thesaurus*, intended as an improvement on that by Robert Stephens, and a *Body of Divinity*, compiled from the Holy Scriptures; 'all which,' according to Wood (*Fasti Oxonienses*, Part I., 1635, col. 486, edit. 1817), 'notwithstanding the several troubles that befel him in his fortunes, he finished after His Majesty's Restoration'" [1660]. Milton's *Prose Works*, H. G. Bohn's Ed., vol. IV., p. 6.

Dr. Sumner here gives Toland, Newton, and Symmons, as authorities for the time of beginning this "Body of Divinity," and Wood for its finishing. But if the first three authors to whom he refers, carefully specifying the edition, volume, and page, be examined, they will not be found to mention any such thing. They, indeed, mention the *Body of Divinity*, but of the time of its beginning and completion they say not a word.

The passage in Toland to which Dr. Sumner probably refers, for it is the only one in which Toland speaks of Milton's *System of Divinity*, is found on page 136, instead of 148, as Dr. S. says. Toland has given the order and time in which Milton's several *Prose works* appeared. He has just given some account of the "Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, etc.," which he says was "the last thing Milton wrote that was publisht before his death." After this Toland mentions, in one short sentence only, the "*Thesaurus Linguae Latinæ*," as "never publisht," and adds, "He wrote likewise a *System of Divinity*, but whether intended for public view, or collected merely for his own use, I cannot determine. It was in the hands of his friend Cyriac Skinner, and where at present is uncertain." (Toland's *Life of John Milton*, p. 132: 12mo., London, 1699 and 1761.)

Newton's account of Milton's *System of Divinity* is in the following words: "Besides these works (the works that Newton had been giving an account of), he wrote a *System of Divinity*, which Mr. Toland says was in the hands of Cyriac Skinner, but where at present is unknown." (New-

ton's *Life of John Milton*, appended to his *Edition of Paradise Lost*, vol. I, p. 54: 4to., London, 1749 and 1754.)¹

Symmons's statement concerning Milton's theological work, cited by Dr. Sumner, is in a note appended to the body of his *Life of Milton*. Symmons is speaking of Milton's last literary labors, and says: "With this work (a brief *History of Muscovy*), terminated his literary labors." He adds in a note at the foot of the page, "An answer to a libel on himself, and a system of Theology, called according to Wood, 'Idea Theologiæ,' are compositions of Milton's which have been lost. The last was at one time in the hands of Cyriac Skinner, but what became of it afterwards has not been traced." (*Symmons's Life of John Milton*, appended to his *edition of the Prose Works*, vol. VII, p. 500, Note: Lond. 1806.)

These are the only passages in which the several authors, in their *Lives of Milton*, speak or make any allusion to Milton's theological work. From these we cannot understand how Dr. Sumner can make the positive statement above quoted. There is neither here, nor anywhere in the biographies of these authors, that we can find, any shadow of authority for it. They say nothing of the time of the beginning or completion of *Christian Doctrine*, as Dr. Sumner asserts. They do not appear to have had any knowledge of this work, as we have already said, except what they received from others. In their references to it they, without doubt, had in mind what Wood, on the authority of Aubrey, had before said. Indeed, in their statements, seen above, Newton refers to Toland, and Symmons to Wood. We must, then, go back to Wood, and ascertain definitely what he says.

Wood's statement concerning the *Body of Divinity*, is much too general and loose to decide the time at which it was begun and completed, even if it can be credited, of which there is the greatest doubt. Wood refers to this work

¹ Dr. Sumner refers to an 8vo. edition of *Newton's life*, London, 1757. The author has not seen this edition. His quotation is from the 4to. of 1749 and 1754.

in connection with *Paradise Lost* and the *Latin Thesaurus*. His words are the following :

“ About the time he had finished these things [the *Second Defence*, and the *Answer to Alex. Moore*, published in 1654-5], he had more leisure and time at command, and being dispenced with by having a substitute allowed him, and sometimes Instructions sent home to him from attending his office of Secretary, he began that laborious work of amassing, out of all classic authors, both in prose and verse, a *Latin Thesaurus*; to the emendation of that done by Stephanus; also the composing of *Paradise Lost*; and of the framing a *Body of Divinity* out of the Bible. All which, notwithstanding the several troubles that befell him in his fortunes, he finished after his Majesty's Restoration” [1660].—*Fasti Oxon.* Part I. p. 265.

This is the only passage in which Wood speaks of the time of the beginning or completion of Milton's theological work. Note its indefiniteness. He places its beginning with two other works. The three were begun “*about*” such a time, 1654 or 5, for this is the period referred to, and finished “*after*” 1660. How long after, he does not inform us, if he knew.

It should be remembered that Wood professes to have received the facts he states concerning Milton from Aubrey, whether by word of mouth, or from the use of his “*Collections for the Life of Milton*,” he does not inform us; probably, however, from the *Collections*, for several of the biographers of Milton, as above shown, declare this. But there is nothing in the *Collections* to justify Wood in making so positive a statement, or indeed any statement at all, concerning the beginning and completion of the *Body of Divinity*. In the very places where Aubrey speaks of *Paradise Lost* and the *Thesaurus*, the other works which Wood, holding him forward as authority, couples with the *Body of Divinity*, Aubrey does not mention this *Body of Divinity*, nor indeed any theological work.

Aubrey's first reference to *Paradise Lost* and the *Dictionary*, is as follows :

“ After he [Milton] was blinde, he wrote the following books, viz.
Paradise Lost,
Paradise Regained,

Aubrey as authority on any point respecting Milton that requires accuracy and exactness, be heightened, if we scan more closely the Collections, in which this loose catalogue is found. These Collections are brief and fragmentary, without analysis and arrangement. Several of their statements are evidently hearsay remarks, introduced thus: "I have been told," "I heard." As a whole, Aubrey's "Collections for the Life of Milton" are destitute of that internal evidence of carefulness and accuracy necessary to give confidence to an author and his work. "Aubrey's memorandums," says Godwin, "appear to have been drawn up from memory only, with the addition perhaps of consulting some slight notes, which he might before have taken the precaution of committing to paper. It is clear that he did not even give himself the trouble of reading over, for this purpose, Milton's *Defensio Secunda*, in which the author has presented to the world so noble and interesting a sketch of the history of his early life."—*Godwin's Lives of Edward and John Philips*, p. 274. 4to. Lond. 1815.

If anything more be needed to invalidate the authority of Aubrey's catalogue, and weaken confidence in his statements concerning Milton, it may be found in the account he gives of *Paradise Lost*. Aubrey professes to have received his information concerning *Paradise Lost* from Edward Philips, Milton's nephew and pupil. Of this, the greatest of Milton's creations, Aubrey says:

"All the time of writing his *Paradise Lost*, his veine began at the Autumnall Equinoctiall, and ceased at the Vernall, or thereabouts (I believe about May), and this was 4 or 5 yeares of his doeing it. He began about 2 yeares before the K. came in, and finished about 3 yeares after the K's restauration."—*Id.* Appendix No. I. p. 344.

Philips, whom Aubrey here professes to follow, in his *Life of Milton*, says *Paradise Lost* was begun in 1655, three years earlier than Aubrey places its beginning, and finished in 1666, three years later than Aubrey's account makes it end, occupying ten or eleven years in its composition rather than five. (See Philips's *Life of Milton*, in Godwin's *Lives*, Appendix No. II., pp. 375 and 378.)

Philips could hardly be mistaken concerning the *Paradise Lost*. He had the best opportunity to know and remember both when and how long Milton was engaged upon it.

"I have particular occasion to remember," are his own words respecting *Paradise Lost*, "for whereas I had the perusal of it from the very beginning, for some years, as I went from time to time to visit him, in a parcel of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, which being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing." (Id. 376.)

Other similar mistakes might be pointed out in Aubrey's "Collections for the Life of Milton." These, however, are enough, and more than enough, to show that he cannot be relied upon to settle disputed questions respecting John Milton, and particularly that of the Christian Doctrine.

John Aubrey is, we know, an antiquarian of no little celebrity. He has without doubt made valuable additions to our knowledge in History and Biography. Anthony Wood is said to have received valuable assistance from him in compiling the *Athenæ Oxonienses*. Aubrey, however, has not gained the credit of entire reliableness with the best authorities. Some of the mines in which he wrought, do not, to this day, heighten our confidence in him as worthy of the highest trust. His only published work, according to Robert Chalmers, is a

"Collection of popular superstitions relative to dreams, portents, ghosts, witchcraft, etc., under the title of Miscellanies."

"Aubrey has been too harshly censured by Gifford," says Chalmers, "as a credulous fool; yet it must be admitted that his power of discriminating truth from falsehood was by no means remarkable." (*Cyclopedia of English Literature*, vol. I. p. 527: Boston, 1847.)

Hollis's estimation of Aubrey is lower than this of Chalmers.

"This silly tale," says Hollis, referring to the tale that Milton was whipped while a member of College at Cambridge, "is retailed by Warton from some manuscripts of Aubrey, the Antiquarian, in the Ashmolean Museum, whose anile credulity has disabled him from being a writer of any authority." (Hollis's *Memoirs*, vol. II. p. 542. Article John Milton.)

Wood himself calls Aubrey :

"*Credulous, roving, and magotie-headed, and sometimes little better than crazed.*" (Life of A. Wood, p. 577, Edit. Hearne, Th. Caii Vind., etc., vol. II., quoted from Todd's Life of Milton, p. 13.)

Thomas Campbell also says :

"Aubrey's authority is not very high." (Specimens of Brit. Poets: Art. John Milton.)¹

Negative Testimony of Philips, Johnson, and Symmons, concerning Wood's Statement about the Composition of Christian Doctrine.

These authors severally mention the works Milton began about the time Wood says he began "the framing a Body of Divinity," but the Body of Divinity is not one of them. The works these biographers now make their author enter upon are, History of England, Latin Dictionary, and Paradise Lost. Philips's words are :

"Being now quiet from state adversaries, and publick contests, he had leisure again for his own studies and private designs; which were his fore-said History of England, and a new Thesaurus Linguae Latinae, according to the manner of Stephanus, a work he had been long since collecting from his own reading, and still went on with it at times, even very near to his dying day. . . . But the height of his noble fancy and invention began now to be seriously and mainly employed in a subject worthy of such a muse, viz., a heroick poem, entitled Paradise Lost; the noblest, in the general esteem of learned and judicious persons, of any yet written by any either ancient or modern. This subject was first designed a Tragedy." (Philips's Life of Milton, in Godwin's Lives, p. 375.)

¹ The biographers, without exception, so far as the author has been able to find, maintain that Wood's information concerning Milton was received from Aubrey. Upon this Mr. Hunter remarks: "Wood's article on Milton is chiefly from information given him by Aubrey, but there are things which he did not derive from him; and this gives countenance to the statement of Mr. Loveday, that Wood received part of his information respecting Milton from — Joyner, a fellow of one of the Colleges at Oxford." (Hunter's Critical and Historical Tracts, No. III. Milton, p. 19, Lond. 1850.)

Who this Joyner is, or what information he gave to Wood, we have not been able to learn. Nor does it matter. Wood's statement concerning the Body of Divinity cannot be correct, as we shall show, whoever authorized him to make it.

Philips had just spoken of the "Answers to Alex. Moore," the works which Wood also mentions in the sentence before the one in which he makes his statement concerning the beginning of the Latin Thesaurus, and Paradise Lost. If Milton had now been engaged upon the Body of Divinity, Philips must have known it as well as Wood or Aubrey, for Philips frequently visited him at this time, as a kind of amanuensis. (See what he says above of his frequent visits, and correction of the manuscript of Paradise Lost.) He knew the other works on which his uncle was engaged. Knowing that he was engaged on the Body of Divinity also, he would have mentioned it in connection with those he does mention; for it must be remembered that Philips is now giving an account of Milton's employment at this period. Philips certainly had knowledge of this work. He had, at his uncle's dictation, written parts, perhaps the whole of it, in 1640, fifteen years before the Paradise Lost was begun, and fifty-four years before he wrote his Life of Milton.

Johnson refers to the three works above mentioned in these words:

"Being now forty-seven years old, and seeing himself disencumbered from external interruptions, he seems to have recollected his former purposes, and to have resumed three great works, which he had planned for his future employment: an epick poem, the history of his country, and a dictionary of the Latin tongue." (Johnson's Works, vol. VII. p. 89: Oxford, 1825.)

Symmons simply says:

"He was now engaged in the prosecution of three great works, a history of England, a Thesaurus of the Latin language, on the plan of that by Stephens, and an epic poem." (Symmons's Life of Milton, p. 397: 12mo., Lond., 1806.)

Philips, and Johnson, and Symmons were without doubt acquainted with Wood's account of Milton.¹ Johnson and

¹ Arch Deacon Blackburne in Hollis's Memoirs says, indeed, Philips "had not seen Wood's Account." But this is only an opinion, and the reasons he gives for it are not satisfactory. See Hollis's Memoirs, Vol. II. p. 519.

Wood's Account was published in 1691, and Philips's Life of Milton in 1694.

Symmons refer to it several times in the course of their narratives. But when they come to give an account of Milton's employment during the period Wood says he is engaged upon the Latin Dictionary, *Paradise Lost*, and the *Body of Divinity*, they omit to mention the *Body of Divinity*, and speak only of the other two. This omission then seems to be of purpose, and pretty sure testimony that they did not regard Wood's statement concerning the *Body of Divinity* as worthy of credit.

Authors that have followed Anthony Wood and Dr. Sumner.

The statement of Wood and Dr. Sumner concerning the Christian Doctrine, made without any reliable authority, has been allowed and followed, without question or doubt, so far as we can find, by nearly all writers upon Milton since Dr. Sumner's translation of the Christian Doctrine was published in 1825. First upon the list stands a name of no less celebrity than that of T. Babington Macaulay. In his article upon Milton in the *Edinburgh Review* of this year, Macaulay repeats essentially what Dr. Sumner says of the Christian Doctrine in the Preliminary Observations prefixed to his translation of the work. (See *Edinburgh Review*, 1825. Art. Milton.) Next is an anonymous but able writer in the *Quarterly Review* of this year:

"We can indeed," says this writer, "conceive of no moral spectacle more sublime than Milton, after the turbulence of the eventful times in which he had been engaged, retreating, as it were, to the serene and majestic sanctuary of his own intellect; girding up all his mental energies, and solemnly

Time enough surely intervened between the two for the latter to become acquainted with the work of the former. Nor can we easily suppose that one so well acquainted with the literature of that age as Philips was, would not be acquainted with Wood's work, and least of all the account Wood gives of Milton, — the most remarkable man of his age, and one to whom Philips was so related. Philips, it must be remembered, had in his "*Theatrum Poetarum*" of 1675, given a brief but just estimate of his uncle, "whose fame," he then said, "was sufficiently known to all the learned of Europe." Would Philips, then, when he came to write at length the life of Milton, fail to acquaint himself with so important a work as Wood's?

devoting and setting himself apart for the accomplishment of his three great meditated works, the complete History of his Country, his immortal Epic, and a Summary of Christian Theology." (Quarterly Review, vol. XXXII. p. 444.)

Further credit is given to the statement of Wood and Sumner by Dr. Channing, in his elegant Review of Milton in 1826 :

"We value Christian Doctrine," he says, "chiefly as showing us the mind of Milton on that subject, which, above all others, presses upon men of thought and sensibility. We want to know in what conclusions such a man rested after a life of extensive and profound research, of magnanimous efforts for freedom and his country, and of communion with the most gifted minds of his own and former times." (Channing's Works, vol. I. p. 4: Boston and New York, 1848.)

Dr. Channing is not satisfied to leave the subject here. On page 46 he returns to it again, and says :

"We are unable within our limits to give a sketch of Milton's strong reasoning against the supreme divinity of Jesus Christ. We must however pause a moment, to thank God that he has raised up this illustrious advocate of the long-observed doctrine of the Divine Unity. We can now bring forward the three greatest and noblest minds of modern times, and, we may add, of the Christian era, as witnesses to that great truth, of which, in an humbler and narrower sphere, we desire to be the defenders. Our Trinitarian adversaries are perpetually ringing in our ears the names of Fathers and Reformers. We take Milton, Locke, and Newton, and place them in our front, and want no others to oppose to the whole array of great names on the opposite side. Before these intellectual suns the stars of self-named Orthodoxy "hide their diminished heads." To these eminent men God communicated such unusual measures of light and mental energy, that their names spring up spontaneously, when we think or would speak of the greatness of our nature.

Their theological opinions were the fruits of patient, profound, reverent study of the scriptures. They came to this work with minds not narrowed by a technical, professional education, but accustomed to broad views, to the widest range of thought. They were shackled by no party connections. They were warped by no clerical ambition, and subdued by no clerical timidity. They came to this subject in the fulness of their strength, with free minds open to truth, and with unstained purity of life. They came to it in an age when the doctrine of the Trinity was instilled by education, and upheld by the authority of the church and by penal laws. And what did these great and good men, whose intellectual energy and love of truth had

made them the chief benefactors of the human mind, what, we ask, did they discover in the scriptures? — a triple divinity? three infinite agents? three infinite objects of worship? three persons, each of whom possesses his own distinct offices, and yet shares equally in the Godhead with the rest? No! Scripture joined with nature, and with that secret voice in the heart, which even idolatry could not always stifle, and taught them to bow reverently before the One Infinite Father, and to ascribe to him alone supreme, self-existent divinity." (pp. 46 and 47.)

To all of which apostrophic exultation over the youth Milton, we would only oppose the man Milton, and say: "Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy: when I fall, I shall arise."

A writer in the *Christian Monthly Spectator* also of this year waxes eloquent on the same subject:

"This great author," he says, "appears indeed sublimely interesting to us in closing his labors on earth in the pious attitude of an inquirer after truth at the oracles of God. We follow him joyfully from the tumultuous controversies in which he had been engaged during the Civil War and the Protectorate, into the still retirement of his private studies; to see him, with orbs quenched from the light of this world, employing the last days of his life in conning over the volume of eternal truth. We love to visit his 'chamber hung with rusty green' (*Richardson's Life*), and view him 'in his elbow chair' (*Richardson's Life*), illustrating, in his study of Christian Doctrine, the sincerity of the prayer which, with cheerful hymning, he raised to heaven over his blindness.

'So much the rather, Thou, Celestial Light,
Shine inward; and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate.'

"Yet notwithstanding all the interest with which we behold him closing the evening of his days in so pious employments as quaffing at the fountains of the Christian faith and hope, we lament that he should put down, as his last thoughts on religion, things so widely variant, as we apprehend several of his statements to be, from the testimony and the morality of scripture. These were clouds over his setting. Perhaps the mind that, with unbounded freedom, vented all its freedom in that age of storm, was led, insensibly, by its own ardent workings, into errors and prejudices. The sun perhaps that glowed with such blazing intensity, drew up these mists over its own declining orbs." (*Christian Spectator*, vol. VIII. p. 91.)

The writer goes on to conjecture further how Milton may

have been led to wander from the truth, but we need not follow him.

Wood and Sumner's statement is further repeated by a writer in the *North American Review* of this year (See Vol. XXII. p. 364). Todd also, in the third edition of his *Life of Milton*, issued this year (1826), adds his authority to give the statement of Wood and Sumner greater weight and wider celebrity. (See *Todd's Life*, pp. 293—346, third edit., Lond. 1826.) So too Mitford, in 1831, follows the same authority. (See *Mitford's Life of Milton*, Vol. I. pp. xcvi. and xcvi. Boston, 1845.) Sir Egerton Brydges, in his *Life of Milton* (1835), appended to what the publisher calls "the first complete and perfect edition of the poetical works of Milton," a truly excellent edition, follows in the footsteps of illustrious predecessors. (See *Brydges' Life of Milton*, p. lxxi. Boston, 1855.) So, too, a writer in the *North British Review*, of 1851. (See *North Brit. Rev.* Vol. XVI. p. 321.) Nor are Wood and Sumner contradicted, but silently followed, by perhaps the ablest of all of the editors of Milton's prose works, J. A. St. John. (See his *Preface to the Prose Works*, published by H. G. Bohn, Lond. 1848—1853.) After St. John is Thomas Keightley. In his "*Life, Opinions, and Writings of Milton*," in 1855, he has added some facts respecting the daughters of Milton, that we have not found in any earlier biographer. He, too, throws himself in to widen the wake of Wood and Sumner. (See *Keightley's Life*, etc., p. 11; also, 156—159. 8vo. London, 1855.) Last of all is Prof. David Masson, of University College, London. In his *Contribution to the eighth edition of the Encyclopedia Britannica* (1858), Prof. Masson gives a more succinct and circumstantial history of the Christian Doctrine than we have found elsewhere. He writes as follows: "In his mature life Milton, dissatisfied with such systems of theology as he had read, and deeming it to be every man's right and duty to draw his theology, for himself, from the scriptures alone, had begun to compile a system for his own use, carefully collecting texts and aiming at doing little more than grouping and elucidating them. He continued this work till he had fin-

ished it. Considering it of importance enough to be published, but knowing that it contained some matter which might be thought heterodox in England, he gave the manuscript, along with a transcript of his "State Letters," to Mr. Daniel Skinner of Trinity College, Cambridge (a relation of his friend Cyriac Skinner), who was going over to Holland, desiring him to arrange for their publication, with some Dutch printer. Elziver, in whose hands they were placed, having declined to have anything to do with them, they were given back to Skinner, who still remained abroad. Meanwhile the existence of these MSS. and the intention to publish them had become known to the English government, and letters were sent to Skinner from Barrow, the master of Trinity College, warning him of the risk he was running, and ordering him to return to his college on pain of expulsion. This was in 1676, two years after Milton's death, and Skinner seems to have returned, soon after, and to have delivered the MSS. to Sir Joseph Williamson, one of the secretaries of state. By him they were stowed away, with other papers in the press, when Mr. Lemon found them, a hundred and fifty years afterwards, still in the original wrapper." — *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. XV. p. 30, 31, art. *Milton*. 8th edit. Boston, 1858.

A little further on, Prof. Masson says: "A question as to Milton's theological belief, suggested to some keen critics by certain passages of his *Paradise Lost*, has been answered in favor of their conjecture, by a discovery of his treatise on Christian Doctrine. In one chapter of that work, he expresses views at variance with the orthodox notions of the Trinity." Quoting now the summary Dr. Sumner gives of these views, Prof. Masson adds: "In other words, Milton in his later life was an Arian, and there is a trace of at least incipient Arianism in the *Paradise Lost*."—*Id.* p. 34.

Though the account Prof. Masson gives, above, of the Christian Doctrine be so circumstantial and connected, does not the very manner of it show that he felt, while preparing it, the ground under him was not quite firm?

In giving the reason that led Milton to undertake such a

work, Prof. Masson evidently has in view what Milton himself, in the Dedication of his work, says respecting the same thing. Yet Prof. Masson's words, on one point—the time of beginning—convey a meaning very different from those Milton uses. "In his mature life," says Prof. M., "Milton, dissatisfied . . . had begun to compile," etc. "*In my youth*," says Milton, "I began to study and prepare for such a work." (See Dedication, p. 3.) Prof. Masson says, very indefinitely indeed: "He continued this work till he had finished it," leaving the impression that this was late in life. But Milton says: "After a diligent perseverance in this plan for *several years*" [the plan begun in his youth], "I trusted I had discovered, with regard to religion, what was matter of belief, and what only matter of opinion." And now he speaks of the work as completed; for he says: "It was also a great solace to me to have compiled, by God's assistance, a precious aid for my faith, or rather, to have laid up, for myself, a treasure which would be a provision for my future life."—*Id.* p. 4.

The reason Prof. Masson gives for Milton's wishing to have the work published abroad, is not very different from the one Dr. Sumner gives for Milton's intention of leaving the work to be published after his death, and has been sufficiently considered.

Prof. Masson gives no data by which we can determine the precise time when Milton put the work into the hands of Daniel Skinner, desiring him to arrange for its publication in Holland; yet he evidently supposes that it was during the last years of Milton's life. This would make the arrangement with Skinner synchronous with the publishing of *Paradise Lost* (1667), or the composition and publishing of *Paradise Regained* (1671), or still later perhaps, the composition and publishing of "*True Religion, Heresy*," etc. (1673.) As these three works are in direct opposition on the doctrines of the Son, and the Spirit, and the Trinity to Christian Doctrine, to suppose that Milton, at any time within this period, endeavored to publish his Christian Doctrine, makes him hold and seek to publish contradictory opposite opinions at the same time.

We could point out what appear to us other discrepancies, and even things apocryphal, in Prof. Masson's account of the Christian Doctrine, did space allow. Prof. M. attributes to Milton what is inconsistent with the Arianism which he makes him hold. Thus he says, in the earlier part of this same Article: "Let us make whatever we can of the fact [the fact that Milton wore his hair long, spoke reverently of the richly stained glass and pealing organ of a Gothic cathedral; things to which the Puritans objected], he did belong, with his whole heart and soul, to the English Puritan and republican movement of the seventeenth century. He honored what it honored, he hated what it hated; he showed its detestation and intolerant dread of popery. If he was not a Puritan, it was because he was a Puritan and something more; and that 'something more' being an expression for much that Milton's mind, rolling magnificently within itself, had thought out properly as belonging to Puritanism and as necessary to be worked up into it, in order to give it its full development."—*Id.* p. 28. In the same connection, too, Prof. Masson sets forward Milton as a leader among the Puritans, and more than any one else the embodiment of their spirit, as he says: "the true spirit of a cause is better represented in its leaders than in its inferior adherents." In his *Essays* too, in 1856, Prof. Masson uses equally strong and definite language: "Milton was then," he says of the period between Elizabeth and the Restoration, "the representative of all that then was deepest in English society."—*Essays Biographical and Critical*, chiefly on Eng. Poets. p. 47. Cambridge, 1856.

Prof. Masson's account of the Christian Doctrine does not convince us, that he has studied the subject with the carefulness that it demands, or made any advances beyond preceding biographers. His information on the subject seems to be that which they have supplied. He has only brought into close connection their conjectures and scattered statements, trenching closely, we are almost ready to say, upon fiction to supply the information they lacked. We can hardly regard as other than fictitious the arrangement Prof. M. says Milton made with Daniel Skinner to publish the work in Holland.

The only dissent from the opinion of Wood and Dr. Sumner, we have been able to find, is that of Mr. R. W. Griswold. In the brief biographical Introduction to his edition of Milton's Prose Works, he says :

"To this period, the period of the Restoration [1660] has been generally referred Milton's recently-discovered Treatise on Christian Doctrine; but that work, which he would never have given to the press himself, and which is, on every account, less worthy of praise than any of his other productions, was probably composed during the first years after his return from Italy,¹ and is the substance of familiar Lectures on Theology to his pupils. He had studied the nature of our Saviour before his mind attained the strength of its maturity; as some have looked upon the sun until his sight, for a while, was darkened. In the end he was right. In none of his great works is there a passage from which it can be inferred that he was an Arian; and in the very last of his writings, he declares that the doctrine of the Trinity is a plain doctrine in Scripture."

The reasons that led Mr. Griswold to the conclusion here given, he has not stated.

We have said the only dissent is that of Mr. Griswold. Todd gives a kind of half dissent. In the third edition of his *Life of Milton*, published in 1826, Todd agrees with Mr. Griswold in holding the early beginning of Christian Doctrine, but differs from him, and is in harmony with the biographers above named, concerning its close. "I must observe," he says of Christian Doctrine, that

"The treatise closes so abruptly as to support an opinion that it is an unfinished composition. And certainly the interlineations, corrections, and pasted slips of writing, in the manuscript, excite a belief that further revision was probably intended; revision, perhaps, which would have produced still more to commend and admire than at present, and less with which to differ or remonstrate. They leave the reader, also, in that suspense respecting the work, which Toland long since expressed, viz. 'Milton wrote a System of Divinity; but whether intended for publick view, or collected merely for his own use, I cannot determine.'"

"While these remarks have been passing through the press," continues Mr. Todd, "the authenticity indeed of the manuscript (the MS. of Christian Doct.), has been questioned. I must therefore retrace my steps, and

¹ Milton returned from the Continent about the middle of 1639, and was now thirty years of age.

proceed with redoubled care, in order to establish it. The present amplitude of the work is one of the arguments alleged against it. And it has been assumed that the compilation was not begun before the close of Milton's controversy with Salmasius in 1655; and that his numerous publications, from that period to the year of his death, render, therefore, the production also of a composition so large, and so elaborate, improbable. I repeat, what I firmly believe, that this treatise is the gradual accumulation of passages from theological writers, which he had first directed to be copied so early as in 1640 by his nephews, and from time to time to be continued; an employment which, during the more active scenes of his Secretaryship he had little leisure perhaps to pursue and regulate; but to which, when he was relieved in his official duties by a substitute, he appears to have turned his attention, and to have then commenced, as Anthony Wood terms it, 'the framing his Body of Divinity,'—that is, as I interpret the expression, the arrangement of numerous materials which he had collected, and a determination to gather more through the means of his several amanuenses, in order to show his opinions upon a subject, which, indeed, he had often changed, systematically; in a word, to embody his *Idea Theologiæ*, the name by which his work was known to Aubrey, and which would probably have been the title of it, as I have said, if himself had published it." (Todd's *Life*, prefixed to his Edition of Milton's Poetical Works, vol. I. p. 345 and 346. See also p. 311.)

Testimony of Edward Philips concerning Milton's "System of Divinity."

We have now, as we think, exhausted the authorities for the late composition of *Christian Doctrine*. The search has disclosed no authority for this position. It has rather shown us a total want of authority for it. The only biographer that says anything, or seems to know anything definite and reliable about the time of the composition of the *System of Divinity*, is Philips. He speaks definitely and truthfully of it in a passage already referred to, but which we shall quote here at length. Philips is giving an account of Milton's method of instructing his pupils,—noting the studies they pursued, the authors read, and the way their time was spent.

"The Sunday's work," he says, "was for the most part the reading each day a chapter of the Greek Testament, and hearing his learned exposition upon the same (and how this savored of atheism in him, I leave to the courteous backbiter to judge). The next work after this, was the writing from

his own dictation, some part, from time to time, of a tractate which he thought fit to collect from the ablest of divines who had written of that subject, Amesius, Wollebius, etc., viz., *A Perfect System of Divinity*, of which more hereafter." (*Philips's Life of Milton*, in *Godwin's Lives of Edward and John Philips*, p. 363 : 4to., Lond. 1815.)

This statement of Philips, so carefully made, — made too by one who had not his knowledge from hearsay or second-hand, but was himself so related to it that he could not be mistaken, for he wrote, on a particular day, at Milton's dictation, the very work, or parts of it, at least, of which he speaks, — this statement, we say, is conclusive testimony that Milton was engaged in the composition of his *System of Divinity*, or the work now called *Christian Doctrine*, for there is no doubt of the identity of these works, in 1640, when he was but thirty-two years of age, and before he had published or written any of his *Prose Works*.¹

¹ The information Philips here gives concerning the *System of Divinity* is repeated by the principal biographers of John Milton. Drs. Birch and Newton repeat almost the words of Philips. (See Birch's *Account of the Life and Writings of Mr. J. Milton*, p. 33, 4to. Lond. 1753. Also Newton's *Life of Milton*, p. 13, 4to. Lond. 1754.)

Johnson's words are the following: "One part of his method" [his method of instructing his pupils] "deserves general imitation. He was careful to instruct his scholars in religion. Every Sunday was spent upon theology; of which he dictated a short system, gathered from the writers that were then fashionable in the Dutch universities." (*Johnson's Works*, Vol. 7, p. 77, 8vo. Oxford and London, 1825.)

Symmons notices the Sundays' work thus: "While this various reading" [reading of subjects he had just noticed] "fully occupied six days of the week, the seventh had its appropriate and characteristic employment. On this day, the pupils, after reading to their master a chapter in the Greek Testament, and hearing his explanation of it, wrote, as he had dictated, on some subject of theology." (*Symmons's Life of Milton*, in Vol. 7 of the *Prose Works*, p. 161, 8vo. Lond. 1806.)

Todd repeats Philips's words above quoted. See *Todd's Life*, p. 312, 8vo. Lond. 1826.

Dr. Sumner, in the *Body of Christian Doctrine*, has the following note: "It was partly from the work quoted above [Milton had just quoted a passage from Ames on the Sabbath], "and partly from *The Abridgment of Christian Divinity* by Wollebius, that Milton, according to Philips, compiled for the use of his pupils, a *System of Divinity*, which they wrote on Sundays at his dictation." (*Prose Works of John Milton*, Vol. V. p. 66, note. Bohn's edition.)

Mitford quotes Johnson as above, with this addition: "Pearce has observed

Having now obtained all the light upon the time of the composition of *Christian Doctrine* that the biographers and critics give; having too been led by the positive and reliable testimony of Philips to a definite conclusion, viz., that *Christian Doctrine* was composed about 1640,— a conclusion that must stand unless there be something positive to overthrow it; let us consider how this conclusion, or statement of Philips rather, is affected by the internal evidence that can be brought to bear upon it. 1. By the appearance of the manuscript itself of *Christian Doctrine*. 2. By a comparison of *Christian Doctrine* with the works of Ames and Wollebius, the authors Philips says Milton "thought fit to collect from" in compiling the *System of Divinity* he [Philips] wrote in 1640. 3. By the evidence from the Dedication of *Christian Doctrine*, or Milton's own testimony as to the time when it was composed. 4. By a comparison of *Christian Doctrine* with the other works of Milton, the time of whose composition is known, particularly *Paradise Lost*, which Wood, and after him Dr. Sumner, says was undertaken and composed about the same time.

Evidence for the Early Composition of Christian Doctrine from the Manuscript.

The facts relating to the manuscript, as nearly as we can ascertain them from Dr. Sumner, Todd, and Mitford, are these: The manuscript is in Latin, and consists of 735 pages, closely written on small quarto letter-paper. The chirography is by different hands.

"The first part," says Dr. Sumner, "as far as the fifteenth chapter of the that Fagius was Milton's favorite annotator on the Bible." (Mitford's *Life of Milton*, p. 41.)

Thomas Keightley, the latest of the Miltonian biographers, says: "Every Sunday his pupils read a chapter of the New Testament in Greek, which he then expounded to them. A less useful part was their writing, from his dictation, a portion of a *System of Divinity* which he had compiled from the writings of Fagius and other theologians." (Keightley's *Life, and Opinions, and Writings of Milton*, p. 26.)

First Book" [comprising, according to Todd and Mitford, 196 pages of the Treatise], "is in a small and beautiful Italian hand, being evidently a corrected copy, prepared for the press, without interlineations of any kind. This portion of the volume, however, affords a proof that even the most careful transcription seldom fails to diminish the accuracy of a text; for although it is evident that extraordinary pains have been employed to secure its legibility and correctness, the mistakes which are found in this part of the manuscript, especially in the references to the quotations, are in the proportion of 14 to 1 as compared with those in the remaining three-fifths of the work. The character is evidently that of a female hand, and it is the opinion of Mr. Lemon, whose knowledge of the hand-writing of that time is so extensive that the greatest deference is due to his judgment, that Mary, the second daughter of Milton, was employed as amanuensis in this part of the volume." (Preliminary Observations, p. XIV. vol. IV. of the Prose Works, Bohn's Ed.)

Dr. Sumner goes on to corroborate Mr. Lemon's conjecture:

"Some of the mistakes above alluded to," he says, "are of a nature to induce a suspicion that the transcriber was merely a copyist, or at most imperfectly acquainted with the learned languages."

In short, they are just such as Milton's daughters, who wrote not from a knowledge of the language, but from the sound of the words when pronounced, would make. Dr. Sumner however adds at the close of this passage:

"This at least is certain, that the transcriber of this part of the manuscript was much employed in Milton's service; for the hand-writing is the same as appears in the fair copy of the Latin Letters, discovered, as has been mentioned, in the press which contained the present Treatise." (Id. p. XIV.)

Both Todd and Mitford assert the same thing concerning the identity of the hand-writing of the Latin or State Letters, and of the first 196 pages of Christian Doctrine. Later discoveries than Dr. Sumner and Mr. Lemon had access to when Dr. Sumner wrote as above, — "the character is evidently that of a female hand," — show that both he and Mr. Lemon were here in error. Todd and Mitford both assert, on Daniel Skinner's own testimony, that the hand-writing of the State Letters is his.

"The hand-writing of the 196 pages," says Todd, "is the same as that of the State Letters; which latter is attested by Daniel Skinner himself to be his, as it has recently been discovered in the State Paper Office." (Todd's *Life of Mil.* vol. I. p. 295. Also *Mitford's Life*, p. 97.)

All this agrees well with the fact before stated, that Mr. Daniel Skinner had the Treatise in his possession, and began a correspondence with Elzevir of Amsterdam in regard to publishing it. Nor is the conjecture of Todd unreasonable when he says, "From copying more of the Treatise Skinner perhaps desisted, when he found that Elzevir, to whom the whole of the manuscript was submitted, refused to print it." (Id. p. 296.) The evidence then is conclusive that Daniel Skinner was the copyist of the first 196 pages of *Christian Doctrine*.

Concerning the remainder of the manuscript, the biographers are at variance. Dr. Sumner, who had the best opportunity to find out the facts in the case, for he was the translator of the manuscript, says :

"The remainder of the manuscript is in an entirely different hand, being a strong, upright character, supposed by Mr. Lemon to be the hand-writing of Edward Philips, the nephew of Milton. This part of the volume is interspersed with numerous interlineations and corrections, and in several places with small slips of writing pasted in the margin. These corrections are in two distinct hand-writings, different from the body of the manuscript, but the greater part of them undoubtedly written by the same person who transcribed the first part of the volume. Hence it is probable that the latter part of the MS. is a copy transcribed by Philips, and finally revised and corrected by Mary and Deborah Milton, from the dictation of their father, as many of the alterations bear a strong resemblance to the reputed hand-writing of Deborah, the youngest daughter of Milton, in the manuscripts preserved in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge; who is stated by Wood (*Fasti Oxonienses*, Part I. 1635, Col. 483), to have been 'trained up by her father in Latin and Greek, and made by him his amanuensis.'" (Preliminary Observations in Bohn's Edition of *Milton's Prose Works*, vol. IV. p. XVI.)

Todd gives the following relation of this part of the manuscript. Having given some account of Daniel Skinner, who transcribed the first part, he says :

"For the remainder of the manuscript is in an entirely different hand,

being a strong, upright character, undoubtedly the same hand which transcribed the beautiful sonnet of Milton beginning,

‘Methought I saw my late espoused saint,’

which is now among the manuscripts of Milton in Trinity College, Cambridge; and this scribe is believed to be his daughter Deborah, whom Wood expressly calls his amanuensis. This part of the volume is interspersed with interlineations and corrections, and in some places with small slips of writing pasted in the margin. The corrections are in different hand-writing, the writer of which cannot now be ascertained.” (Todd’s *Life*, p. 299.)

Todd here agrees with Dr. Sumner, concerning the body of this part of the manuscript. Both say it is in a “strong, upright character.” He uses the same words too of the interlineations and corrections. Todd, however, is at variance with Dr. Sumner concerning the person that wrote this strong, upright character, also concerning the one that wrote the interlineations. Dr. Sumner and Mr. Lemon suppose the strong upright character “to be the hand-writing of Edward Philips.” Mr. Todd says this *strong, upright character* is “undoubtedly the same hand which transcribed the sonnet ‘Methought,’ etc., now among the manuscripts of Milton in Trinity College,” — Deborah Milton.

Dr. Sumner ascribes many of the interlineations to Deborah Milton, because they bear so strong a resemblance to her “reputed hand writing,” in the same manuscripts in Trinity College. But Todd says the writer of these corrections cannot now be ascertained.

Mitford’s account of the latter part of the manuscript of Christian Doctrine, agrees with Todd. Mitford says nothing of the character in which it is written. His words are :

“The remainder of the treatise is written in a female hand, the same which transcribed the sonnet,

‘Methought I saw my late espoused saint,’

now among the manuscripts at Cambridge, and this scribe is supposed to have been his daughter Mary or Deborah. This part of the volume is interspersed with interlineations and corrections, in a different and unknown hand.”—*Mitford’s Life*, p. 97.

Concerning these somewhat conflicting statements, the following seems to us to be the truth. Neither did Todd nor Mitford obtain their knowledge of the manuscript of Christian Doctrine from personal examination. They intend to follow Dr. Sumner. Todd, though he speaks, in one place, as though he might have seen the manuscript, refers to Dr. Sumner no less than five times, in the account he gives of it, and Mitford agrees with Todd. Todd only adds a fact that came to light after Dr. Sumner wrote, viz. that Daniel Skinner, instead of Mary Milton, was the copyist of the first 196 pages of the manuscript.

Todd differs from Dr. Sumner from inadvertence, perhaps from neglect to note precisely what Dr. Sumner says; or from failure to remember exactly when he came to write. The agreement and differences are such as are best accounted for in this, for Todd agrees with Dr. Sumner as to the main facts of the manuscript. He copies his words. He differs from him as to the person that wrote different parts. Todd ascribes to Deborah Milton what Dr. Sumner had ascribed to Edward Philips. In other words, Todd ascribes the hand-writing of the body of the latter part of the manuscript, in the "strong, upright character," to the same individual that Dr. Sumner had ascribed some part of the interlineations and corrections, and for the same reason,—because they so much resemble the reputed hand-writing of Deborah Milton in the manuscripts of Trinity College.

Dr. Sumner ascribes the interlineations and corrections to Mary and Deborah Milton. His own testimony, however, or the facts he gives, with what has since been proved, shows that Daniel Skinner was the writer of these also; for he says, "the greater part of them are undoubtedly written by the same person who transcribed the first part of the volume. This person has been shown to be Daniel Skinner.

Besides, he says this first part—the first 196 pages of the manuscript—is in "a small, beautiful Italian hand." But it appears, according to Keightley, "from the fac-similes of the signatures to the receipts published by Mr. Marsh (receipts of Anne and Mary Milton, for money paid them by

their step-mother), that Anne Milton could not write, and Mary very badly"¹ (*Keightley's Life, etc., of Milton*, Corrections to page 90). Nor do we think the probabilities are very great, that Deborah Milton's hand appears anywhere in the manuscript. Daniel Skinner sent the manuscript to Elzevir, at Amsterdam, to be printed in 1675, the year after Milton's death. He probably copied the first 196 pages of it at this time. Deborah Milton was not *now* at hand, nor had she been at hand for some time previous, to take any part in the preparation of the manuscript for the press. According to her own testimony, "she was several years in Ireland, both before and after her father's death." (See Hollis's Mem. Vol. I. p. 113.)

The result of a careful study of the whole subject of the manuscript is this: The treatise was, at first, written by Edward Philips, at Milton's dictation, and left in this form. Daniel Skinner, into whose hands the manuscript came, after Milton's death, transcribed, in 1675, the first 196 pages for the press at Amsterdam, leaving the remainder, according to Dr. Sumner, and Mr. Lemon's statement, in Philips's own hand. And this is the hand of the "Perfect System of Divinity" he wrote in 1640. In other words, the hand and the work are the identical hand and work of 1540.²

Evidence from Comparison of Christian Doctrine with the Works of William Ames and John Wollebius.

Ames and Wollebius are the authors, Philips declares, Milton "thought fit to collect from," in compiling the System

¹ This agrees with what Dr. Johnson relates, on the authority of Mrs. Foster, the grand-daughter of Milton, of "his refusal to have his daughters taught to write." (Johnson's Works, Vol. VII. p. 118.)

² It seems to us that this question of the MS. might be settled by a little careful examination and comparison of facts. From the testimony of several, above given, it appears that the hand-writing of Deborah Milton is still preserved in the MS. of Trinity College; also that of Mary in the "receipts." It is most probable, too, that somewhere might be found signatures and samples of the hand-writing of Edward Philips. We can hardly think that all the manuscripts of so voluminous and well-known a writer as Edward Philips have perished. Where is the Godwin that will settle this question?

of Divinity he wrote in 1640. The comparison of Christian Doctrine with the works of these authors shows at least that the "Medulla Theologica" of William Ames, and the "Compendium Theologiæ Christianæ" of John Wollebius have been consulted, and to a great extent followed, in Christian Doctrine. On this subject Dr. Sumner makes the following remark in a note which he appends to his translation of Christian Doctrine. Milton had just quoted a passage, ad literam, from Ames's Medulla. Dr. Sumner adds a note, to show who this Ames is, and continues :

"It was partly from the work quoted above, and partly from the Abridgment of Christian Divinitie by Wollebius, that Milton, according to Philips, compiled for the use of his pupils a System of Divinity, which they wrote on Sundays at his dictation. An English translation of Ames's treatise was published by order of the House of Commons, in 1642, under the title of *The Marrow of Sacred Divinity, drawne out of the Holy Scriptures and the Interpreters thereof, and brought into Method.* It is divided into two books, of which the first, entitled "On Faith in God," contains forty-one chapters; and the second, "On Observance toward God," twenty-two. It is quite evident that Milton has frequently availed himself of this volume, both in the distribution of his subject and arrangement of the chapters, which frequently coincide with that of Ames, and in the citation of particular passages and applications of Scripture; though their opinions differ materially on several important points. Milton quotes, in his Tetrachordon, the definition of marriage given by Ames, and passes a just censure on it. The treatise of Wollebius is also divided into two parts, "On the Knowledge" and "On the Worship of God;" the first comprised in thirty-six, and the second in fourteen chapters. The plan of the latter division is very similar to the corresponding portion of Milton's work; and not only the arguments, but even whole sentences, are sometimes almost identically the same."—*Milton's Prose Works*, Vol. V. pp. 66 and 67, Bohn's Edition.

Dr. Sumner without doubt compared the Latin editions of Ames and Wollebius with the original Latin of Christian Doctrine, and could therefore see the identity of which he speaks. The author can only compare the English of Dr. Sumner's translation of the Christian Doctrine with the Latin of Ames's Medulla and Wollebius's Compendium. This comparison, however, shows that Dr. Sumner has not stated the matter of similarity too strongly. Milton names the two divisions of his work after Wollebius:

“Of the Knowledge of God and the Worship of God.” He has the same number of chapters too, though they are a little differently arranged. There is a remarkable similarity between the definitions of Milton and Wollebius. Nor would it be at all difficult to cite many passages that are almost identical in the *Christian Doctrine* and the *Compendium Theologiæ Christianæ* of Wollebius. Taking now this similarity between the *Christian Doctrine* and Ames and Wollebius — the authors Philips says Milton “thought fit to collect from,” in the tractate he [Philips] wrote in 1640 — we are, without any other evidence, forced to the conclusion that the *Christian Doctrine*, discovered in 1823, is the System of Divinity of 1640.

Evidence from the Dedication of Christian Doctrine, or Milton's own Testimony concerning the Time of its Composition.

In the Dedication of *Christian Doctrine*, Milton gives the reasons that led him to undertake the composition of such a work; he also states the manner in which he compiled it. Having noticed the fact that many treatises on theology had been published in the last century, “conducted according to sounder principles, wherein the chief heads of Christian doctrine are set forth, sometimes briefly, sometimes in a more enlarged and methodical order,” he continues :

“I think myself obliged, therefore, to declare in the first instance why, if any works have already appeared as perfect as the nature of the subject will admit, I have not remained contented with them; or, if all my predecessors have treated it unsuccessfully, why their failure has not deterred me from attempting an undertaking of a similar sort.

“If I were to say that I had devoted myself to the study of the Christian religion because nothing else can so effectually rescue the lives and minds of men from these two detestable curses, slavery and superstition, I should seem to have acted rather from a regard to my highest earthly comforts, than from a religious motive.

“But since it is only to the individual faith of each that the Deity has opened the way of eternal salvation, and as He requires that he who would be saved should have a personal belief of his own, I resolved not to repose on the faith or judgement of others in matters relating to God; but

on the one hand, having taken the grounds of my faith from divine revelation alone; and, on the other, having neglected nothing which depended on my own industry, I thought fit to scrutinize and ascertain for myself the several points of my religious belief, by the most careful perusal and meditation of the Holy Scriptures themselves.

“If therefore I mention what has proved beneficial in my own practice, it is in the hope that others, who have a similar wish of improving themselves, may be thereby invited to pursue the same method.”

Notice here, and all along, he compiles this work for his own *improvement*—“to *establish his faith*,” and “*assist his memory*,”—objects that strongly incline us to believe in the early compilation of the work.

The time and manner in which he sought to assist his memory and establish his faith, he details as follows :

“I entered upon an assiduous course of study in my youth, beginning with the books of the Old and New Testament in their original languages, and going diligently through a few of the shorter systems of divines, in imitation of whom, I was in the habit of classing under certain heads whatever passages occurred for extraction, to be made use of hereafter as occasion might require.”

Christian Doctrine answers exactly this description, and seems to have been made up just as now stated. It consists almost wholly of passages of scripture. The author, or compiler rather, has added only comment and remark enough to bind them together for his purpose. (See Christian Doctrine, everywhere.) He calls our attention to this peculiarity of his work.

“Whereas,” he says, in the Dedication, p. 5, “the greater part of those who have written most largely on these subjects, have been wont to fill whole pages with explanations of their own opinions, thrusting into the margin the texts in support of their doctrine, with a summary reference to the chapter and verse, I have chosen, on the contrary, to fill my pages even to redundancy with quotations from scripture; that so as little space as possible may be left for my own words, even when they arise from the context of revelation itself.”

But to return to Milton’s manner, as above :

“At length I resorted,” he continues, “with increased confidence, to some of the more copious theological treatises, and to the examination of the

arguments advanced by the conflicting parties respecting certain disputed points of faith."

Pursuing this method, Milton found frequent errors ; and besides, the truth supported by false methods and false argumentation.

"According to my judgment, therefore," he continues, "neither my creed nor my hope of salvation could be safely trusted to such guides ; and yet it appeared highly requisite to possess some methodical tractate of Christian doctrine, or at least to attempt such a disquisition as might be useful in establishing my faith or assisting my memory. I deemed it, therefore, safest and most advisable to compile for myself, by my own labor and study, some original treatise which should be always at hand, derived solely from the word of God itself, and executed with all possible fidelity, seeing I could have no wish to practise any imposition on myself in such a matter.

"After a diligent perseverance in this plan for several years, I perceived that the strong holds of the reformed religion were sufficiently fortified, as far as it was in danger from the papists, but neglected in many other quarters ; neither competently strengthened with works of defence, nor adequately provided with champions. It was also evident to me, that, in religion as in other things, the offers of God were all directed, not to an indolent credulity, but to constant diligence, and to an unwearied search after truth ; and that more than I was aware of still remained, which required to be more rigidly examined by the rule of scripture, and reformed after a more accurate model. I so far satisfied myself in the prosecution of this plan as at length to trust that I had discovered, with regard to religion, what was matter of belief, and what was only matter of opinion. It was also a great solace to me to have compiled, by God's assistance, a precious aid for my faith, — or rather to have laid up for myself a treasure which would be a provision for my future life, and would remove from my mind all grounds for hesitation, as often as it behoved me to render an account of the principles of my belief."—*Prose Works of John Milton*, Vol. IV. pp. 2-4. Bohn's edition. Lond. 1858.

This, we think, settles the question of time, so far at least as to compel us to believe that the Christian Doctrine was compiled in the comparatively early life of its author. We see not how the Dedication could have been written until the work of which it speaks was completed. It speaks of it, all along, in the past tense, as something done. It gives the history of the work.

The Dedication positively states that the author, John Milton — for his initials are subscribed at the close — (see note,

at the close of the Dedication) began, in his youth, to collect passages of scripture and class them, "under certain heads," for such a work as *Christian Doctrine* is, and persevered "*several years*," until he had satisfied himself "that he had discovered, with regard to religion, what was matter of belief, and what only matter of opinion." And then he speaks of the work as done; for he says: "It was also a great solace to me *to have compiled*," etc.

We cannot, from this language, fix definitely the year Milton began his work, or ended it. The most specific phrases above quoted: "in my youth," and "*several years*," limit the time only partially. "In my youth" refers, without doubt, to the period of Milton's life that succeeded his childhood. It is well known that he was a diligent student from early boyhood. "From my twelfth year," he says, "I scarcely ever retired from my studies before midnight." Besides, Milton was designed, by his parents, for the church. This, in one so filial, would early turn his attention to the investigation of theological subjects. "In my youth," then, must be understood in its specific sense.

The phrase "*several years*," is also indefinite. But, while we cannot determine the precise number of years included in it, can we admit that it means forty or fifty — more than an ordinary life-time, as it must on the supposition of Todd, who is forced, from the testimony of the Dedication, and from that of Philips, to admit that *Christian Doctrine* was begun in Milton's youth, but maintains, against the same testimony, that it was not finished till near the close of its author's life, or rather not finished at all; (see Todd's opinion, before given;) — can, we say, this "*several years*" mean more than an ordinary life-time?

Besides, he compiled this original treatise "to establish his faith, and assist his memory;" so, too, that he "could *always* have it at hand," to remove from his mind all grounds for hesitation, "as often as it behoved him to render an account of his belief." Does this "*always*" include only the *few months*, or *years* at the *most*, that an old man may reasonably expect to live? Does it not rather point to the

many years that a young man, looking forward to a long life of active usefulness, expects; the years for which youth is the fitting time to lay up *treasures*, and make "*provision?*" Did Milton too, just as he was ready to fall into the grave, expect to be often questioned concerning the grounds of his faith, and so prepare Christian Doctrine that he might have at hand answers for his questions?

But there is more than positive declarations for the early composition and completion of Christian Doctrine. Near the close of the Dedication, Milton, though he commits himself, in much confidence, to his fellow men, seems to anticipate, and fear, that some will impute heresy to him in consequence of his dissent from "*received opinions,*" and that so odious a name fixed upon him would prejudice them and others against his opinions. To forestall this, he says :

"For my own part, I adhere to the Holy Scriptures alone.— I follow no other heresy or sect. I had not even read any of the works of heretics, so called, when the mistakes of those who are reckoned for orthodox, and their incautious handling of Scripture first taught me to agree with their opponents whenever these opponents agreed with Scripture."—*Id.* p. 8.

This, at least, is best interpreted by the supposition that his dissent from "*received opinions,*" or orthodoxy, was in early life. Late, he shows a minute acquaintance with the sentiments and works of the so-called heretics, and could not say he had not read any of their works. Besides, he did not dissent, or "*differ from the received opinions*" in 1641, but agreed with them. "*Reformation in England,*" and other works, written and published this year, positively affirm the supreme divinity of the Son of God, and the trinity of the Godhead, doctrines as positively denied in the Christian Doctrine. His dissent, then, must have been before this year.

Besides, the very confidence with which he commits himself and his work to his fellow men, betrays his youth and inexperience. "*I hope to meet with a candid reception from all parties,*" are his words. "*Concealment is not my object.*" "*I wish to submit my opinions to men of mature*

and manly understanding." He did not expect from "candid" and judicious readers a conduct unworthy of them.

"For the rest, brethren, cultivate truth with brotherly love. Judge of my present undertaking according to the admonishing of the Spirit of God, — and neither adopt my sentiments nor reject them, unless every doubt has been removed from your belief by the clear testimony of revelation."—*Id.* p. 9.

These are closing words. Is not this the confidence of the young, and ardent, and inexperienced Milton? After he had had trial of the candor of the judicious readers of his age — such trial as he did have; when he came to grapple with the great evils of the day, and reflect the burning rays of truth upon them; after he had experienced the detraction, and hate, and scorn, and abuse that fell upon him in consequence of his manly defence of the truth, could he express himself in the same affectionate confidence?

The testimony Milton himself gives, in the Dedication of his work, of its early completion, must stand, unless there be something from his own mouth to overthrow it. It must unless the witness be impeached, or made to contradict himself. For such contradictions we have searched in vain. There is, indeed, in the body of *Christian Doctrine*, one or two passages that have been understood to refer to *Tetrachordon*, and the works on *Divorce*, as works then written. (See *Prose Works*, Vol. IV. p. 248.)

The works on *Divorce* were published in 1644 and 1645 when Milton was thirty-six years of age. The evidence above given is, that *Christian Doctrine* was compiled before 1641. It is far easier to believe that the passage supposed to refer to *Tetrachordon*, is misunderstood, or that it was added by the transcriber, than to reject all the evidence now and hereafter to be brought forward, for the earlier composition of the work. It is quite evident that the transcriber, or some other person, has added the title the work now bears; nor is it any more improbable that the passage above referred to, if it must be understood as pointing to *Tetrachordon*, has been added. Indeed, it is just such a passage as a

transcriber would be most likely to add by way of reference. At any rate, Christian Doctrine, so far as the Persons of the Godhead are concerned, is in direct opposition to the works of 1641, and all after this period till the day of Milton's death. This fact will be more fully brought out in the next division of the subject. "Abundant examples there are," in the words of Todd, "throughout his printed works, of orthodoxy professed by Milton as to the eternal divinity of the Son of God, and the essential unity of the three divine persons in the Godhead" (*Todd's Life*, p. 313). Symmons and Johnson unqualifiedly vouch for Milton's orthodoxy, in his works known to them, as all his works were, except the Christian Doctrine.—*Symmons's Life*, p. 522.

[To be concluded.]

ARTICLE V.

PARTISANSHIP IN HISTORY.

BY PROF. E. D. SANBORN, DARTMOUTH COLLEGE.

At the present day no ancient record is taken on trust. Everything old is questioned. Authority, both in church and state, is less valued than formerly. Creeds are reformed, while faith declines; history is rewritten, while truth is obscured. The old record was doubtful; the new is fictitious. The romance of history is succeeded by the dreams of philosophy. For the poetic narratives of an early age, are substituted the sapless disquisitions of learned critics. Heroes, statesmen, and philosophers are presented in a new dress. Those whose characters were supposed to be unalterably determined, are arraigned anew at the bar of public opinion, and the verdict of former generations is set aside.