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ARTICLE I.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE AND OPINIONS OF JOHN MILTON.

(Concluded from Vol. XVI., pp. 557—603.)

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Comparison of the "Christian Doctrine" with Milton's other Works.

CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE assumes the entire credibility of revelation, and the absolute authority of the word of God; also personal and individual responsibility in all matters of faith and practice. No one is known to hold these doctrines with a firmer grasp than John Milton. He relied upon reason and faith as fully competent, when enlightened by the word and the Spirit of God, to ascertain everything man needs to believe and practise, or know and do. Reason he makes submit to faith; and faith stand upon the word of God. In other words, Milton would have belief limited and practice determined by a manly exercise of the understanding and the reason upon the scriptures, as the "common rule and touchstone," or "the only sufficient and infallible guide."

"*The Christian Doctrine*," he says, in the opening of the treatise, "is that *Divine Revelation*, disclosed in various ages by *Christ* (though He was
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not known under that name in the beginning), concerning the nature and worship of the *Deity*, for the promotion of the glory of God and the salvation of mankind. . . . This doctrine, therefore, is to be obtained, not from the schools of the philosophers, nor from the laws of man, but from the holy scriptures alone, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit." (*Prose Works*, Vol. IV. pp. 10, 11. Bohn's Edit. Lond. 1853.) "The rule and canon of faith is Scripture alone." "Scripture is the sole judge of controversies." "Every man is to decide for himself, through its aid, under the guidance of the Spirit of God. The Scriptures, partly by reason of their own simplicity, and partly through the Divine illumination, are plain and perspicuous in all things necessary to salvation, and adapted to the instruction even of the most unlearned, through the medium of diligent and constant reading." "It is not, therefore, within the province of any visible church, much less of the civil magistrate, to impose their own interpretations on us as laws, or as binding on the conscience; in other words, as matters of implicit faith." (*Id.* pp. 440, 444, 445.)

Throughout all his works, Milton places the same reliance on the authority of the scriptures. He appeals to them for the settlement of the question. In the last work he published, he uses words stronger, if possible, than those already quoted.

"True religion," he says, "is the true worship and service of God, learned and believed from the word of God only. No man or angel can know how God would be worshipped and served, unless God reveal it. He hath revealed and taught it us in the Holy Scriptures by inspired ministers, and in the Gospel by His own Son and His apostles, with strictest command to reject all other traditions or additions whatsoever; according to that of St. Paul: 'Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be anathema, or accursed.' And Deut. 4 : 2, 'Ye shall not add to the word which I command you, neither shall you diminish aught from it.' Rev. 22 : 18, 19, "If any man shall add," etc. — *Id.* Vol. II. p. 509.

Milton, as Dr. Sumner well remarks, "has shown a partiality in all his works, even on subjects not immediately connected with religion, for supporting his argument by scripture."

Divisions of The Christian Doctrine.

Milton, after Wollebius, comprehends the Christian Doctrine under two divisions: *Faith, or the Knowledge of God,* and *Love, or the Worship of God.*

Faith here, as he says, "does not mean the habit of believing, but the things to be habitually believed." Love, also, signifies the whole "knot of Christian graces," or "practical religion, comprehending all the fruits of the Spirit flowing from, and founded upon, vital faith." Milton often, afterwards, uses the word in this sense. (See *Tetrachordon*, *Prose Works*, III. 323. *Treatise of Civil Power*, etc. ii. 534. *Parad. Lost*. xii. 583.)

Of God.

The first subject under the division is "*Of God.*" Like his great contemporaries, Cudworth and Locke, Milton denies that there can be any such thing as real atheism.

"Though there be not a few," he says, "who deny the existence of God, for, 'the fool hath said in his heart, there is no God' (Ps. 14 : 1), yet the Deity has imprinted upon the human mind so many unquestionable tokens of Himself, and so many traces of Him are apparent throughout the whole of nature, that no one in his senses can remain ignorant of the truth."—*Prose Works*, Vol. IV. p. 16.

Besides these tokens and traces of the Divine existence on the soul, and throughout creation, Milton holds that there are direct proofs *in* the soul, in

"that feeling, whether we term it conscience or right reason, which, in the worst of characters, is not altogether extinguished. Conscience, or right reason does, from time to time, convince every one, however unwilling, of the existence of God, the Lord and ruler of all things, to whom, sooner or later, each must give an account of his own actions, whether good or bad."—*Id.* p. 15.

While Milton holds, as a fact, that reason and conscience bear witness to the existence of God, he holds as firmly to the necessity of revelation to unfold to us the character of God, and teach us how we ought to think and feel towards Him. No one can have right thoughts of God," are his words, "with nature or reason alone for his guide, independent of the word or message of God."—*Id.* pp. 13—16.

Concerning this whole subject—the being and character of the one only God—Milton is not known to have held

anything different from the scripture doctrine as understood by the great body of the Christian church. He embraces, heartily, all that the scriptures teach on this fundamental doctrine.

Some, indeed, think he inclines too much to conceive of the Infinite Spirit under the forms of matter and the affections of human nature.

“When we speak of knowing God,” he says, “it must be understood with reference to the imperfect comprehension of man; for, to know God as He really is, far transcends the powers of man’s thoughts, much more of his perception.” . . . Our safest way is to form in our minds such a conception of God as shall correspond with his own delineation and presentation of Himself in the sacred writings. . . . We may be sure that sufficient care has been taken that the Holy Scriptures should contain nothing unsuitable to the character or dignity of God, and that God should say nothing of Himself which could derogate from His own majesty. It is better, therefore, to contemplate the Deity, and to conceive of Him, not with reference to human passions, that is, after the manner of men who are never weary of forming subtle imaginations respecting Him; but after the manner of Scripture, that is, in the way wherein God has offered Himself to our contemplation; nor should we think he would say, or direct anything to be written of Himself which is inconsistent with the opinion He wishes us to entertain of His character. Let us require no better authority than God himself for determining what is worthy or unworthy of Him. If ‘it repented Jehovah that He had made man’ (Gen. 6 : 6), and ‘because of their groanings’ (Judg. 3 : 18), let us believe it did repent Him, only taking care to remember, that what is called repentance, when applied to God, does not arise from inadvertency, as in man; for so He has Himself cautioned us, Numb. 23 : 19, ‘God is not a man, that He should lie; neither the son of man, that He should repent. . . . (See the whole passage.) If God be said to have made man in His own image, after His likeness (Gen. 1 : 26), and that, too, not only as to his soul, but also as to his outward form (unless the same words have different significations here and in ch. 5 : 3, ‘Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image);’ and if God habitually assign to Himself the members and form of man, why should we be afraid of attributing to Him what He attributes to Himself, so long as what is imperfection and weakness when viewed in reference to ourselves, be considered as most complete and excellent when imputed to God? . . . Let us be convinced that those have acquired the truest apprehension of the nature of God, who submit their understandings to His word; considering that He has accommodated His word to their understandings, and has shewn what He wishes their notions of the Deity should be.” . . .

“In arguing thus, we do not say that God is in fashion like unto man, in

all His parts and members ; but that, as far as we are concerned to know, He is of that form which He attributes to Himself in the sacred writings. — *Id.* pp. 16—20.

In all this, we do not discover any unpardonable heresy. And we are the less inclined to look for heresy here, when he adds, as he does immediately after: “ It is impossible to comprehend accurately, under any form or definition, the Divine nature.” Milton, as it seems to us, makes no more than duly prominent an important truth, viz. that the language of sacred affection which God uses to accommodate Himself to our senses, is to be understood “ not in a sense lowered and vague as compared with that which it bears in its ordinary acceptation, but in a sense of incalculably greater intensity and depth.”

Decrees of God.

GENERAL DECREES.

From the existence and attributes of God, Milton passes to the decrees of God. These he divides, with Wollebius, into general and special.

“ God’s General Decree,” he says, “ is that whereby God has decreed from all eternity, of His own most free will and wise and holy purpose, whatsoever He Himself willed, or was about to do.”—*Id.* p. 30.

Milton holds it absurd to separate decrees from the foreknowledge and counsel or wisdom of God. He makes foreknowledge and wisdom underlie decrees, and be logically before them, or before them in the order of nature, if not in the order of time. This he evidently rests on the postulate, that *a thing must be seen to be possible, before it can be determined that it shall be actual.* The Creator must see, too, that what is possible, will be best, if it become actual, before He will determine that it shall become actual.

“ Properly speaking,” he says, “ the Divine counsel can be said to depend on nothing but on the wisdom of God Himself, whereby He perfectly foreknew in his own mind, from the beginning, what would be the nature and

event of every future occurrence when its appointed season should arrive." — *Id.* p. 36.

"It is absurd to separate the decrees or will of the Deity from his eternal counsel and foreknowledge, or to give them priority of order. For the foreknowledge of God is nothing but the wisdom of God under another name, or that idea of everything which He had in His mind, to use the language of men, before He decreed anything." — *Id.* p. 80.

Milton also rejects absolute decrees in reference to things that appear to us contingent; such as the actions of free, responsible beings.

"God decreed nothing absolutely," he says, "which He left in the power of free agents." — *Id.* p. 31. "Those who contend that the liberty of actions is subject to an absolute decree, erroneously conclude the decree of God is the cause of His foreknowledge, and antecedent in order of time. If we must apply to God a phraseology borrowed from our own habits and understanding, to consider His decrees as consequent upon His foreknowledge seems more agreeable to reason as well as Scripture, and to the nature of the Deity Himself; who, as has just been proved, decreed everything according to His infinite wisdom by virtue of His foreknowledge."

"That the will of God is the first cause of all things, is not intended to be denied; but His prescience and wisdom must not be separated from His will, much less considered as subsequent to the latter in point of time. The will of God, in fine, is not less the universal first cause, because He has Himself decreed that some things should be left to our free will, than if each particular event had been decreed necessarily." — *Id.* p. 39.

In respect to the fulfilment of a decree, Milton makes the distinction much in vogue of late, between the necessity of its fulfilment and the certainty of the same.

"I allow," are his words, "that future events which God has foreseen, will happen certainly, but not necessarily, because prescience cannot be deceived; but they will not happen necessarily, because prescience can have no influence on the object of foreknowledge, inasmuch as it is only an intransitive action. What, therefore, is to happen according to contingency and the free will of man, is not the effect of God's prescience, but is produced by the free agency of its own natural causes, the future spontaneous inclination of which is perfectly known to God. Thus God foreknew that Adam would fall of his own free will; his fall was therefore certain, but not necessary; since it proceeded from his own free will, which is incompatible with necessity." — *Id.* p. 41.

"If it be asked how events, which are uncertain, inasmuch as they depend on the human will, can harmonize with the decrees of God, which are

immutably fixed? for, it is written, Pa. 33:11, 'The counsel of Jehovah standeth forever; Heb. 6:17, 'the immutability of His counsel,' it may be answered: First, that to God the issue of events is not uncertain, but fore-known with the utmost certainty, though they be not decreed necessarily.— Secondly, in all the passages referred to the Divine counsel, it is said to stand against all human power and counsel; but not against liberty of will in things which God Himself has placed at man's disposal, and had determined so to place from all eternity. For, otherwise, one of God's decrees would be in direct opposition to another."— *Id.* p. 36.

SPECIAL DECREES.

"Of God's special decrees," Milton says: "The first and most important is that which regards His Son, and from which He primarily derives His name of *Father*." Having quoted several passages of scripture, in which the names and relations of the Father and the Son are the principal ones, he concludes: "From all these it appears that the Son of God was begotten by the decree of the Father."— *Id.* 42. But more of this hereafter.

Of Predestination.

The principal *special decree* of God relating to man, Milton terms *predestination*. This word our author uses as equivalent to election. He maintains that this is the scripture use of the word, and that it does not include, but rather excludes, reprobation; that is, when God is said to have predestinated or elected any to eternal life, it must not be inferred that, in so doing, He predestinated to eternal death, or reprobated those whom He passed by and did not elect. See pp. 43, 44, and 45.

On the doctrine of predestination and election, Milton is obnoxious to the charge of making the cause or reason of the divine predestination of some to eternal life lie in the creature rather than in the Creator — in those that are predestinated, and not in Him who predestinates. This, to us, is no predestination at all, but simply a permission that they be saved who choose to be saved; a permission, too, granted

on foresight of what their conduct and condition would be. In other words, it is nothing more than a silent forebeholding, if the word be allowed, and acquiescence in what the creature of himself does.

Milton makes the root of election what the scriptures plainly make its fruit. He makes repentance and faith the antecedent conditions, when they are the subsequent results. This he does in his definition :

“Predestination,” he says, *“is that whereby God, in pity to mankind, though foreseeing that they would fall of their own accord, predestinated to eternal salvation, before the foundation of the world, those who should believe and continue in the faith; for a manifestation of the glory of his mercy, grace, and wisdom, according to His purpose in Christ.”* — *Id.* p. 43.

In other passages Milton expressly says: “the principle of predestination depends upon a condition;” this condition is “faith in Christ.” “No one believes because God foresees his belief;” but God foresees his belief, because he was about to believe.” — pp. 52, 53—57.

What act or agency there is in predestination, thus defined and limited, that in any way influences and secures the belief and continuance in faith of those that are finally saved, we are unable to see. Consequently, we are unable to see how it can be “for the manifestation of the glory of God’s mercy and grace.” We cannot see how these are manifested by simply permitting the creature to do as it is foreseen he will do. Mercy and grace imply something more than this simple looking on and refraining from action, and letting the sinner work out his own salvation. There is no mercy and grace manifested until something positive is done; some causative agency exerted more than justice demands, or misery can expect; some agency, too, that shall help secure salvation, and be fully competent to secure it.

If there be errors in Milton’s presentation of the subject of decrees, as there evidently is, they arise from failure to grasp the whole subject, and make the decree of the Infinite cover the whole ground, and predetermine even the free actions of all moral beings. The conception is both possible and required of a wisdom and power in the Creator, to form a de-

cree extensive enough, and of such a nature, that it shall cause to be everything that ever will be, from first to last, and leave not one single thing contingent, and yet so arrange the universe, or so arrange influences and causes, that moral beings will of themselves freely choose and do everything that is foreseen and predetermined or decreed concerning them. Or, in the words of inspired disciples, citing a particular case, viz. the murderous putting to death of the Son of God, and the connection of Herod, Pilate, the Gentiles, and the people of Israel therewith, "do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined, before, to be done." Acts 4: 28. Milton himself, several times in the discussion of decrees, seems to have come near grasping this great subject. See, especially, the passage beginning—"That the will of God is the first cause of all things." p. 39.

Of Predestination in "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," "Paradise Lost," etc.

The opinions on predestination, election, and reprobation, above given, are those that Milton holds in *The Christian Doctrine*. His other great works contain admissions and advocate opinions on these subjects directly at war with these in *The Christian Doctrine*.

"*The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*," published in 1644, certainly admits the truth, if it does not directly advocate, the doctrine of predestination as we understand it to be taught in the scriptures, and explained by Augustine, Calvin, and Edwards.

"The Jesuits, and that sect among us which is named of Arminius," he says, "are wont to charge us of making God the author of sin, in two degrees especially, not to speak of His permission: 1st, Because we hold that He hath decreed some to damnation, and consequently to sin, say they; next, Because those means, which are of saving knowledge to others, He makes, to them, an occasion of greater sin. Yet, considering the perfection wherein man was created, and might have stood, no degree necessitating his free will, but subsequent, though not in time, yet in order to causes, which were in his own power; they might, methinks, be persuaded to absolve both God and us."—*Prose Works*, Vol. III. p. 223. Bohn's Ed.

In addition to these plain words, Milton continues, through two pages, to show how needless and absurd it is for Jesuits and Arminians to bring these objections to the doctrine under consideration. Even the heathen knew better.

“Plato and Chrysippus, and their followers, the Academics and Stoics,” he says, “though they taught of virtue and vice to be, both, the gift of divine destiny, yet could they give reasons not invalid, to justify the counsels of God and fate from the insulsiety of mortal tongues: that man’s own free will, self-corrupted, is the adequate and sufficient cause of his disobedience besides fate; as Homer also wanted not to express, both in his *Iliad* and *Odyssee*. And Manilius the poet, although in his fourth book he tells of some “created both to sin and punishment;” yet without murmuring, and with an industrious cheerfulness, he acquits the Deity. They were not ignorant, in their heathen lore, that it is most godlike to punish those who, of His creatures became His enemies, with the greatest punishment; and they could attain, also, to think that the greatest, when God Himself throws a man furthest from Him; which then they held he did, when He blinded, hardened, and stirred up his offenders, to finish and pile up their desperate work, since they had undertaken it. To banish forever into a local hell, whether in the air or in the centre, or in that uttermost and bottomless gulf of chaos, deeper from holy bliss than the world’s diameter multiplied; they thought not a punishing so proper and proportionate for God to inflict, as to punish sin with sin. Thus were the common sort of Gentiles wont to think, without any wry thoughts cast upon divine governance. And therefore Cicero, not in his Tusculan or Campanian retirement among the learned wits of that age, but even in the Senate to a mixed auditory (though he were sparing otherwise to broach his philosophy among statistes and lawyers), yet as to this point, both in his Oration against Piso, and in that which is about the Answers of the Soothsayers against Clodius, he declares it publicly as no paradox to common ears, that God cannot punish man more, nor make him more miserable, than still by making him more sinful. Thus we see how, in this controversy, the justice of God stood upright even among the heathen disputers.” — *Id.* pp. 223—225.

Milton’s editors and biographers maintain that this is proof Milton now (1644) held the doctrine of predestination. In a note referring to the passage above given, J. A. St. John says:

“Milton appears to have afterwards altogether abjured the doctrine of predestination, which is so repugnant to common sense, and to all our most exalted ideas of the Divinity, that to hold it and believe, at the same time, in the goodness of God, is impossible. When Milton wrote as he does in the text, he was comparatively young, and was hurried into imperfect views by

his own vehement passions. He came, afterwards, to think more calmly and correctly; though, on many points, he always reasons more like an orator than a philosopher." — *Id.* p. 223.

Mr. Keightley also says of the same passage :

"He [Milton], at this time, held the Calvinistic doctrine of predestination, but in the sublapsarian form; for he thus writes." — *Keightley's Life etc. of Milton*, p. 157.

It must be remembered that both St. John and Keightley concur in the opinion of Dr. Sumner, that *The Christian Doctrine* was composed after "*The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*," and during Milton's declining years. In *The Christian Doctrine*, then, they find the abjuration and those more calm and correct thoughts St. John speaks of. Keightley, also, finds the same in *Paradise Lost* and in "*Of True Religion, Heresy*," etc., published in 1673, but with how much justice a slight examination will show.

Milton, in *Paradise Lost*, makes no unfrequent or doubtful mention of the doctrines of grace. Nearly every book has something characteristic and distinctive on this subject — the third, perhaps, more than any other. Here the fall and the recovery of man, with what led to the first, and is necessary to the last, is most positively and clearly laid down.

"The particular beauty of the speeches in the third book," are Addison's words, "consists in that shortness and perspicuity of style, in which the poet has couched the greatest mysteries of Christianity, and drawn together, in a regular scheme, the whole dispensation of Providence with respect to man. He has represented all the abstruse doctrines of predestination, free will, and grace, as also the great points of incarnation and redemption (which naturally grow up in a poem that treats of the fall of man), with great energy of expression, and in a clearer and stronger light than ever I met with them in any other writer." — *Spectator*, No. 315.

In this book Milton does, in the most unequivocal manner, assert the freedom of man, and his guilt for his sin and his fall. He had entire liberty and full strength to stand. No foreknowledge of God, nor decree, necessitated nor influenced, in any way, his sin or fall. Thus the Father discourses to the Son, in that passage in which He foretells the

success of Satan, who has now gone to tempt the newly-created and blessed pair.

“ Man will hearken to his glozing lies,
 And easily transgress the sole command,
 Sole pledge of his obedience : so will fall,
 He and his faithless progeny. Whose fault ?
 Whose but his own ? Ingrate, he had of me
 All he could have : I made him just and right,
 Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall.
 Such I created all the ethereal powers
 And spirits, both them who stood and them who fail'd :
 Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell.
 Not free, what proof could they have given sincere
 Of true allegiance, constant faith, or love ?
 When only, what they needs must do, appeared,
 Not what they would : what praise could they receive ?
 What pleasure I from such obedience paid ?
 When will and reason (reason also is choice)
 Useless and vain, of freedom both despoiled,
 Made passive both, had served necessity,
 Not me. They therefore, as to right belong'd,
 So were created, nor can justly accuse
 Their Maker, or their making, or their fate ;
 As if predestination over-rul'd
 Their will, disposed by absolute decree,
 Or high foreknowledge : they themselves decreed
 Their own revolt, not I ; if I foreknew,
 Foreknowledge had no influence on their fault,
 Which had no less proved certain unforeknown.
 So without least impulse or shadow of fate,
 Or aught by me immutably foreseen,
 They trespass, authors to themselves in all,
 Both what they judge and what they choose ; for so
 I form'd them free, and free they must remain,
 Till they enthrall themselves ; I else must change
 Their nature, and revoke the high decree
 Unchangeable, eternal, which ordain'd
 Their freedom : they themselves ordain'd their fall.
 The first sort by their own suggestion fell,
 Self-tempted, self-depraved : man falls deceived
 By the other first : man, therefore, shall find grace ;
 The other, none ; in mercy and justice both,
 Through heaven and earth, so shall my glory excel ;
 But mercy, first and last, shall brightest shine.”

Bk. III. l. 90—135.

For similar passages, see V. 235 and 520—540. VIII. 635. IX. 344—354. X. 9—12 and 43—48.

While Milton thus clears the Most High from all complicity with man's sin and loss, and makes man's *fault* turn wholly on the exercise of his own free, yet misdirected will, he does, on the other hand, no less definitely and plainly attribute his recovery and salvation to the election of God's grace; to which election God was not moved by anything that was about to be in man, or anything He foresaw in him, but by what was in Himself. The willing, or the repentance and faith in which the sinner turns to holiness and God, are not the causes or conditions of his election, but the fruits of it. Such is the doctrine of the following passage :

1

“ O Son, in whom my soul hath chief delight, . . .
 All hast thou spoken as my thoughts are, all
 As my eternal purpose hath decreed :
 Man shall not quite be lost, but saved who will ;
 Yet not of will in him, but grace in me
 Freely vouchsafed ; once more I will renew
 His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthrall'd
 By sin to foul exorbitant desires :
 Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
 On even ground against his mortal foe,
 By me upheld ; that he may know how frail
 His fallen condition is, and to me owe
 All his deliverance, and to none but me.
 Some I have chosen of peculiar grace,
 Elect above the rest ; so is my will :
 The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
 Their sinful state, and to appease betimes
 The incensed Deity, while offered grace
 Invites ; for I will clear their senses dark,
 What may suffice, and soften stony hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
 To prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
 Though but endeavored with sincere intent,
 Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut :
 And I will place within them as a guide
 My umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
 Light after light, well used, they shall attain ;
 And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
 This, my long sufferance and my day of grace,

They who neglect and scorn shall never taste ;
 But hard be harden'd, blind be blinded more,
 That they may stumble on and deeper fall ;
 And none but such from mercy I exclude." III. 168—202.

For passages in harmony with this, see also III. 227—233. 290—294. VII. 79 and 173. X. 817. XII. 405—410.

All these, and especially that quoted at length, are in harmony with *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, and in direct opposition to *Christian Doctrine*, which declares :

"There is no particular predestination or election, but only general ; or, in other words, the privilege belongs to all who heartily believe and continue in their belief." "Of what consequence is it to us, to know whether the prescience of God foresees who will, or will not, subsequently believe ? for no one believes because God has foreseen his belief ; but God foresees his belief, because he was about to believe."

That is, man believes of himself ; God, in no way, influences him thereto ; only, simply foresees what he will do. Again :

"Those who hold the doctrine that man believes because he is ordained to eternal life, not that he is ordained to eternal life because he will believe, cannot avoid attributing to God the character of a respecter of persons." — *Prose Works*, Vol. IV. p. 57.

Milton does indeed, in *Paradise Lost* as in *Christian Doctrine*, hold that man's freedom is not lost, or intrenched upon, in passing from death unto life ; salvation, in some sense, turns upon his willing or choice.

"Man shall not quite be lost, *but saved who will.*"

Yet, lest he should be understood to deny that man is moved to this willing, and hold that he moves himself, or is self-moved to it ; consequently his will, or he himself rather than anything outside of himself, is the primary and efficient cause of his willing, and his salvation, he adds :

"Yet not of will in him, but grace in me,
 Freely vouchsafed."

Milton goes even further, and defines more carefully the character of this grace, and the condition on which it is given. It is not given because man merits it, or seeks it, but because God wills it. It

“ Comes unprevented, unimplored, unsought;
Happy for man, so coming; he her aid
Can never seek, once dead in sins and lost.”

III. 230—233.

Those that receive it “ are chosen of peculiar grace,”

“ Elect above the rest.”

Is not this, in other but plain words, the doctrine of Christ in John 1 : 12, 13? “ As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” Also of Paul, Rom. 11 : 5—8? “ Even so then at this present time, also, there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no more of works; otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then it is no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. What then? Israel hath not obtained that which he^e seeketh for; but the election hath obtained it, and the rest were blinded.”

On the passage above quoted from *Paradise Lost*, Bk. III. l. 168—202, besides the remark of Addison, already given, there are two characteristic notes, remarkable from the fact that they agree as to the doctrine of the passage, though one is the concession of a friend, and the other of an enemy of this doctrine.

“ Our author,” says Newton, pointing to the line — ‘ Some I have chosen,’ “ did not hold the doctrine of rigid predestination: he was of the sentiments of the more moderate Calvinists; and thought that some, indeed, were elected of peculiar grace; the rest might be saved, complying with the terms and conditions of the Gospel.”

“ It is a great pity,” says Thyer, pointing to that part of the passage that begins — ‘ This, my long sufferance, and my day of grace,’ that our author should have thus debased the dignity of the Deity by putting in his mouth this horrid doctrine of a day of grace, after which it is not possible for a man

to repent; and there can be no sort of excuse for him, except the candid reader will make some allowance for the prejudices which he might possibly receive from the gloomy divinity of that enthusiastic age in which he lived." — *Quoted from Brydges.*

The evidence is full and positive that Milton did hold what are called Calvinistic doctrines. The only questions are — When? How long? There is but little evidence that he had any special affection for them in his youth, though he was educated in Puritan principles. His earliest tutor, Young, has been called a "rigid and zealous Puritan." Notwithstanding his early education —

"There are many traits in his early taste and early poems," says Sir E. Brydges, "which make us hesitate as to his boyish attachment to this sect." "There is evidence that, at this time," says Prof. Masson, "he had not given so much attention, on his own personal account, to matters of religious doctrine, as he afterwards bestowed." . . . His seriousness was rather a constitutional seriousness, ratified and nourished by rational reflection than the assumed temper of a sect." — *Essays on English Poets*, p. 88. Camb. 1856. "It does not seem to me," to quote again from Brydges, "that there are any traces of these Calvinistic prejudices at the time he visited Italy, unless his friendship to Charles Diodati be a sign of it, which I think (looking at the poetical address) is not." — *Brydges' Life of Milton*, p. 11. Bost. 1855.

There is the same progress and coming into the light, on these doctrines, as on that of the Son of God and the Spirit of God. If he denied them in youth and early manhood, he came to hold them and embrace them, in later years, as is seen in "The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce," in 1644, in *Paradise Lost*, and, as might be shown by an appeal to "True Religion, Heresy, etc.," in 1673, the year before his death.

Of the Son of God in The Christian Doctrine.

The next subject, in the order of Christian doctrine, is "*The Son of God.*" In entering upon the discussion of this fundamental doctrine, Milton gives warning beforehand, that he is about to maintain opinions obnoxious to the church generally. He also shows not a little anxiety to conciliate favor and get a fair hearing. He likewise shows much

manliness in facing the opprobrium which he knows he shall draw upon himself in advocating his views of the Son of God.

"I cannot enter," he says, "upon subjects of so much difficulty as the Son of God and the Holy Spirit, without again premising a few introductory remarks. If indeed I were a member of the church of Rome, which requires implicit obedience to its creed, on all points of faith, I should have acquiesced, from education or habit, in its simple decree and authority, even though it denies that the doctrine of the Trinity, as now received, is capable of being proved from any passage of Scripture. But since I enrol myself among the number of those who acknowledge the Word of God alone as the rule of faith, and freely advance what appears to me much more clearly deduced from the Holy Scriptures than the commonly received opinion, I see no reason why any one who belongs to the same Protestant or Reformed Church, and professes to acknowledge the same rule of faith as myself, should take offence at my freedom, particularly as I impose my authority on no one, but merely propose what I think more worthy of belief than the creed in general acceptance." — *Prose Works*, IV. 78.

Having thus premised, Milton devotes the largest and most elaborate chapter of Christian Doctrine to his views of the character and offices of the Son of God. Outright he rejects the supreme divinity of the Son, and maintains that He is a dependent, created being — created within the limits of time, not by any necessity, but by the will and decree of the Father. He is endued, by the Father, with the divine nature and substance, but distinct from the Father and inferior, yet one with Him in affection and will. He further maintains that the Son existed in the beginning, and was the first of the whole creation. By power delegated from the Father, He created the heavens, and the earth, and all things. With these views, Milton of course denies the eternal generation of the Son, His self-existence, coëquality, and coëssentiality with the Father. But we must not leave the subject with this synopsis. We must show the manner in which these opinions are supported.

In the chapter on decrees, Milton divides the efficiency of God into *internal* and *external*. Internal efficiency is independent of all extraneous agency. "Such," he says, "are His decrees." External efficiency shows itself in the execution of the divine decrees. It is that —

“Whereby He carries into effect, by external agency, whatever decrees He hath purposed within Himself. It may be comprised under the heads of *Generation, Creation, and the Government of the Universe.*”

“First, *Generation*, whereby God, in pursuance of His decree, has begotten His only Son, whence He chiefly derives His appellation of Father.”—*Id.* 30. 79.

Milton now, to establish what he has laid down, argues like a schoolman, for several pages. He argues to show that the Son was not eternally begotten, but begotten within the limits of time. He admits the truth of the holy scriptures :

“Whatever some of the moderns allege to the contrary, that the Son existed in the beginning, under the name of the Logos or Word, and was the first of the whole creation ; by whom, afterwards, all other things were made, both in heaven and earth.”

Having quoted John 1 : 1—3, “In the beginning,” etc. ; 17 : 5, “And now, O Father, glorify Me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was ;” and many other passages, in which not only existence before the world, but even the creation of the world, is ascribed to the Son, he says :

“All these passages prove the existence of the Son before the world was made, but they conclude nothing respecting His generation from all eternity.

Upon the 3d Psalm and those kindred passages that speak of the Son as begotten, we must give a specimen of Milton’s argumentation.

“It is evident,” he says, “upon a careful comparison and examination of all these passages, that however the generation of the Son may have taken place, it arose from no natural necessity, as is generally contended, but was no less owing to the decree and will of the Father than His priesthood or kingly power, or His resuscitation from the dead. Nor is it any objection to this, that He bears the title of Begotten, in whatever sense that expression is to be understood ; or of *God’s own Son*, Rom. 8 : 32. For He is called the own Son of God merely because He had no other Father besides God ; whence He Himself said, that God was His Father. (John 5 : 18.) For to Adam God stood less in the relation of Father than of Creator, having only formed him from the dust of the earth ; whereas He was properly the Father of the Son, made of His own substance. Yet it does not follow from

hence that the Son is coessential with the Father ; for then the title of Son would be least of all applicable to Him, since He who is properly the Son is not coeval with the Father, much less of the same numerical essence, otherwise the Father and the Son would be one person ; nor did the Father beget Him from any natural necessity, but of His own free will, a mode more agreeable to the paternal dignity. . . For questionless it was in God's power, consistently with the perfection of His own essence, not to have begotten the Son, inasmuch as generation does not pertain to the nature of the Deity, Who stands in no need of propagation ; but whatever does not pertain to His own essence or nature, He does not affect, like a natural agent, from any physical necessity. If the generation of the Son proceeded from a physical necessity, the Father impaired Himself by physically begetting a co-equal ; which God could no more do than He could deny Himself ; therefore the generation of the Son cannot have proceeded otherwise than from a decree, and of the Father's own free will. Thus the Son was begotten of the Father in consequence of His decree, and therefore within the limits of time ; for the decree itself must have been anterior to the execution of the decree." — *Id.* p. 82.

Again :

" When the Son is said to be the first born of every creature, and the beginning of the creation of God, nothing can be more evident than that God of His own will created, or generated, or produced the Son before all things, endued with the Divine nature, as in the fulness of time, He miraculously begat Him in His human nature, of the virgin Mary. The generation of the Divine nature is described by no one with more sublimity and copiousness than by the apostle to the Hebrews, 1 : 2, 3, Whom He hath appointed heir of all things ; by Whom, also, He made the worlds ; Who, being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, etc. It must be understood from this, that God imparted to the Son as much as He pleased of the Divine nature, nay of the Divine substance itself, care being taken not to confound the substance with the whole essence, which would imply that the Father had given to the Son what He retained, numerically, the same Himself ; which would be a contradiction of terms, instead of a mode of generation." — *Id.* p. 85.

Having reasoned in this style through many pages, Milton lays down the following propositions, to be proved from the scriptures :

" 1st. That the name, attributes, and works of God are attributed, in the Scriptures, only to one God, the Father, as well by the Son Himself as by his apostles. 2d. That whenever they are attributed to the Son, it is in such a manner that they are easily understood to be attributable, in their original, proper sense, to the Father alone ; and that the Son acknowledges

Himself to possess whatever share of Deity is assigned to Him, by virtue of the peculiar gift and kindness of the Father; as the apostles also testify. And, Lastly, that the Son Himself, and His apostles, acknowledge throughout the whole of their discourses and writings, that the Father is greater than the Son, in all things." — *Id.* p. 96.

Milton admits that the Son is God; but denies that He is supreme God, or equal with the Father.

"He ascribes to the Son as high a share of Divinity," says Dr. Sumner, "as was compatible with the denial of His self-existence and eternal generation. Had he avoided the calling Christ a creature, he might have been ranked with that class of semi-Arians who were denominated Hoemoiousians, among whom Dr. Samuel Clarke must be reckoned. On the whole, his chapter on the Son of God may be considered as more nearly coincident with the opinions of Whitby, in his *Last Thoughts*, than of any other modern divine. Both acknowledge Christ to be *Verus Deus*, though not *Summus Deus*; both admit His true dominion and His Godhead, though not original, independent, and underived; both assert His right to honor and worship, in virtue of the Father's gift; both deny His sameness of individual essence with the Father; and both maintain that He derives all His excellences and power from the Father, and consequently is inferior to the Father." — *Id.* p. xxix.

This is, as must be confessed, according to Dr. Channing, "strong reasoning against the supreme Divinity of Jesus Christ." To it, however, bishop Bull has made the only fitting reply. "The Unitarians," he says, "own Christ to be God, but a made God, such as is a mere creature, such as had no existence before his birth of the virgin. *O great God!*" — *Bull's Works*.

Milton closes the discussion of this subject by declaring "Such was the faith of the saints respecting the Son of God; such is the tenor of the celebrated confession of that faith; such is the doctrine which, alone, is taught in scripture, which is acceptable to God, and has the promise of eternal salvation. Finally, this is the faith proposed to us in the Apostle's Creed, the most ancient and universally received compendium of belief in the possession of the church." — *Id.* pp. 149, 150.

Of the Spirit of God.

The discussion of the character and offices of the Holy Spirit is much shorter and less elaborate than that of the Son of God. Milton's opinion on this point may be gathered from the following passage, found at the close of the chapter on the Holy Spirit.

"Lest, however, we should be altogether ignorant who or what the Holy Spirit is, although Scripture nowhere teaches us, in express terms, it may be collected from the passages quoted above, that the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as He is a minister of God, and therefore a creature, was created or produced of the substance of God, not by a natural necessity, but by the free will of the Agent, probably before the foundations of the world were laid, but later than the Son, and far inferior to Him." — *Id.* p. 169.

Christian Doctrine denies that prayer is to be offered to the Holy Spirit. Having quoted the apostolic benediction: "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ," etc. (2 Cor. 13:14), which is usually regarded as a prayer offered to the Spirit as well as to the Father and the Son, there follows:

"This, however, is not so much an invocation as a benediction; in which the Spirit is not addressed as a person, but sought as a gift, from Him who, alone, is there called God, namely the Father, from whom Christ himself directs us to seek the communication of the Spirit, Luke 11:13. If the Spirit were ever to be invoked personally, it would be then especially, when we pray for Him; yet we are commanded not to ask Him of Himself, but only of the Father. Why do we not call upon the Spirit Himself, if He be God, to give Himself to us? He who is sought from the Father, and given by Him, not by Himself, can neither be God, nor an object of invocation." — *Id.* p. 165.

Milton says nothing of the Trinity; nor could he, consistently. Having denied the proper Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, there is no ground for the Trinity. In the chapter on the existence and attributes of God, he maintains that there is "numerically one God and one Spirit in the common acceptance of numerical unity." His denial of the Trinity, while it is thus indirect, is positive and clear.

These are the opinions that Milton holds, of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, in Christian Doctrine.

That he held different opinions, and those directly contradictory to these, at other times in his life, is as plain as that his words are the true expressions of his thoughts and opinions. He held to both the supreme Divinity of the Son and the Spirit, and the reality of the Trinity.

Of the Son of God and the Spirit of God, in The Works of 1641 and following.

The Works of 1641 are Milton's theologico-controversial works. Here, if anywhere, we should expect he would be careful of his doctrinal admissions and statements. He was now thirty-three years of age. "Of Reformation in England" was the first of these works, and the first of Milton's prose works that he published. Here he maintains the Divinity of the Son by condemning the Arians, whose peculiarity it is, as is well known, to deny this doctrine. But he shall speak for himself. He had just said that willingness to die, or martyrdom, for a doctrine, did not, in all cases, prove one a true Christian, nor prove the doctrine true for which death was suffered. To use his own words :

"He is not, therefore, above all possibility of erring, because he burns for some points of truth. Witness the Arians and Pelagians, which were slain, by the heathen, for Christ's sake ; yet we take both these for no true friends of Christ." — *Prose Works*, vol. ii. p. 371.

And this, he says, as he shows in another place more distinctly, not because of their life, but because of their doctrine.

Other passages of this work are more marked in their condemnation of Arianism, and their assertion of the true doctrine of the Son of God, particularly that one in which Milton dwells at length upon the character of the early Christian Fathers, and notes their errors in faith and practice ; and especially among them those of the emperor Constantine —

"How he slew his nephew Commodus, a worthy man, his noble and eldest son Crispus, his wife Fausta, besides numbers of his friends : then his cruel exactions, *his unsoundness in religion*, favoring the Arians that had been con-

demned in a council, of which himself sat as it were president; his hard measure and banishment of the faithful and invincible Athanasius; his living unbaptized almost to his dying day: these blurs are too apparent in his life. But since he must needs be the load-star of reformation, as some men clatter, it will be good to see, further, his knowledge of religion, what it was; as by that we may likewise guess at the sincerity of his times in those that were not heretical, it being likely that he would converse with the famousest prelates (for so he had made them) that were to be found for learning.

“Of his Arianism we heard; and for the rest, a pretty scantling of his knowledge may be taken by his deferring to be baptized so many years; a thing not usual, and repugnant to the tenor of Scripture; Philip knowing nothing that should hinder the eunuch to be baptized after profession of his belief. Next, by the excessive devotion, that I may not say superstition, both of him and his mother Helena, to find out the cross on which Christ suffered, that had long lain under the rubbish of old ruins; — a thing which the disciples and kindred of our Saviour might, with more ease have done, if they had thought it a pious duty; — some of the nails whereof he put into his helmet, to bear off blows in battle; others he fastened among the studs of his bridle, to fulfil (as he thought, or his court bishops persuaded him) the prophecy of Zechariah: “And it shall be, that which is in the bridle shall be holy to the Lord.” Part of the cross, in which he thought such virtue to reside as would prove a kind of palladium, to save the city wherever it remained, he caused to be laid up in a pillar of porphyry by his statue. How he or his teachers could trifle thus, with half an eye open upon St. Paul’s principles, I know not how to imagine.”

Having gone on, at some length, adding to these errors of Constantine, the passage concludes:

“Thus flourished the church with Constantine’s wealth, and thereafter were the effects that followed: his son Constantius proved a *flat Arian*, and his nephew Julian an apostate, and then his race ended; the church that, before, by insensible degrees, welked and impaired, now, with large steps, went down hill decaying. . . . Thus you see, sir, what Constantine’s doings in the church brought forth, either in his own or in his son’s reign.” — *Id.* pp. 381—383.

Milton here puts down Constantine’s Arianism as one of his chief errors. Besides calling him unsound in religion, for this very thing, he ranks it with his ambition, his superstition, injustice, and cruelty. As if, too, to show his opinion of Athanasius, the well-known and illustrious defender of the doctrine of the Trinity against the Arians, he calls him the

"*faithful and invincible Athanasius,*" strongly approbating both the man and his doctrine.

If anything more be needed from this work, it is found near its close, in a prayer addressed, be it noted, to the Spirit and the Son, equally with the Father—one of the most lofty and sublime prayers ever heard from human lips; and one, too, avowing the doctrine of Trinity, in a way that every Trinitarian receives it, as a true expression of the scripture doctrine.

"Thou, therefore, that sittest in light and glory unapproachable, Parent of angels and men! Next Thee I implore, Omnipotent King, Redeemer of that lost remnant whose nature Thou didst assume, Ineffable and Everlasting Love! And Thou, the third subsistence of Divine Infinitude, illumining Spirit, the joy and solace of created things! One Tri-personal Godhead! Look upon this Thy poor and almost spent and expiring church."—*Id.* p. 417.

"Of Prelatical Episcopacy" is the next of Milton's works. It was published a little later than "Of Reformation in England," in the same year (1641). This work is equally positive in condemning Arianism; or rather, in avowing the equality of the Father and the Son as a scripture doctrine. Milton is aiming to show the equality of bishops and presbyters, in the apostolic church. He cites Tertullian, who, as it seems, had denied this equality.

"But," he says, "suppose Tertullian had made an imparity where none was originally; should he move us, that goes about to prove an imparity between God the Father and God the Son, as these words import in his book against Praxeas?—'The Father is the whole substance, but the Son a derivation and portion of the whole, as He himself professes: Because the Father is greater than me.' Believe him now, for a faithful relator of tradition, whom you see such an unfaithful expounder of the Scripture."—*Id.* p. 433.

In Christian Doctrine Milton maintains that imparity between the Father and the Son is taught in scripture; here, that it is denied, and their equality plainly taught; so plainly, that Tertullian shows himself incompetent to be a faithful relator of tradition even, because he does not see it. Contradiction cannot be more positive and complete.

"Animadversions upon Remonstrant's Defence" follows.

This also was published in 1641. In this work Milton avows his belief in the eternal generation of the Son; a doctrine pointedly denied in Christian Doctrine; for he thus prays to the Son: "O Thou, the *Ever-begotten Light* and perfect Image of the Father! intercede." This prayer proceeds, throughout, upon the supposition that its author held the Son to be not only *verus Deus*, but *summus Deus*. Besides the passage already quoted, it contains these declarations: "Thou art a God." "Thy nature is perfection."—*Prose Works*, Vol. III. pp. 71, 72. In the same work, too, the author strongly reprobates the Arians and Pelagians, as "infecting the people by their hymns and forms of prayer."—*Id.* p. 57.

There is one more work of this year—"The Reason of Church Government," etc. In this work, too, as in "Of Reformation in England," he who had maintained, in Christian Doctrine, that the Spirit is an "inferior creature," and "not an object of invocation," speaks most devoutly of prayer to the Eternal Spirit. Some works he was then meditating, he says, could "not be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapors of wine," . . . "but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge."—*Prose Works*, Vol. II. p. 481.

In a note on that passage, in Christian Doctrine, which expressly states that the Spirit can be neither God, nor an object of invocation, Dr. Sumner refers to the passage just cited from "The Reason of Church Government," to show that—

"On this subject (the doctrine of the Spirit) Milton is again at variance with himself." "It should be remembered, however," continues Dr. S., "that this treatise was written as early as 1642, when Milton was not more than thirty-four."¹—*Prose Works*, IV. 165.

To understand this note, it must be remembered that Dr. S. holds Christian Doctrine to have been later than "The Rea-

¹ "The Reason of Church Government," etc., was first published, as I have before stated, in 1641. See Hollis Catalogue, with original dates of the works therein contained. Hollis Memoirs, Vol. II. p. 583.

son of Church Government," and the change with Milton to have been from the holding of the Divinity of the Spirit, in "The Reason of Church Government," to the denial of the same in Christian Doctrine; whereas, the change was the other way.

From the passages now brought forward, and the whole of the works from which they are taken, there is no doubt that, at this period, Milton shrank from all denial of the essential and supreme Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and held the tri-unity of the Godhead. Indeed, the evidence is so full and positive, that not only Dr. Sumner, but the last editor of the prose works, J. A. St. John, says:

"It appears from this and other passages (passages already brought forward from 'Reformation in England'), that the author, in his younger years, was orthodox, as it is called; but he afterwards altered his sentiments, as it is plain from his tract on 'True Religion, Heresy, Schism,' etc., which was the last work he published."—*Prose Works*, II. 371.

To the doctrine of this tract we shall attend in the proper place.

"Eikonoclastes," of 1649, is in harmony with the works of 1641. Here Milton, according to scripture, represents the Holy Ghost as He who dictates and inspires prayer. Hypocrisy and irreverence in prayer are sins against Him as against God. He also classes Arianism with Pelagianism, and characterizes them as "infectious heresies."—*Prose Works*, I. 327, 433.

Of the Son and the Holy Spirit, in The Works of 1659.

The works of this year, to be noticed, are "A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes," "Likeliest Way to Remove Hirelings out of the Church," and "The Ready and Easy Way," etc. All of these works, especially in their frequent reference to the Holy Spirit, are in harmony with the works of 1641. See *Prose Works*, II. 133, 523, 524, and especially 537. Also, III. 5, 23, 25, 27, 36, 39.

In "The Ready and Easy Way," etc., Milton apostrophizes

the Deity, and prays in a way that certainly implies that he then held a plurality of coëqual persons in the Godhead.

“What I have spoken,” he says, “is the language of that which is not called amiss, ‘The Good Old Cause.’ . . . Thus much I should, perhaps, have said, though I was sure I should have spoken only to trees and stones; and had none to cry to, but with the prophet: O earth, earth, earth! to tell the very soil itself, what her perverse inhabitants are deaf to. Nay, though what I have spoke should happen (which Thou suffer not, who didst create mankind free! nor Thou, next, who didst redeem us from being servants of men!) to be the last words of our expiring liberty.” — *Id.* II. 138.

Dr. Sumner, though in the end he finds Milton denying the coëquality of the Father and the Son, quotes this passage to show that “so late even as the year 1660, he admitted their coëquality.” — *Prose Works*, IV. p. xxx. Keightley, also, refers to this passage, for the same purpose. *Keightley's Life of Milton*, p. 157, note. Several other passages of “The Ready and Easy Way,” etc., go even more strongly to support this opinion. See *Prose Works*, II., 103, 133, and especially 127.¹

In “The Likeliest Way,” etc. (1659), there is a passage which Drs. Sumner and Todd both understand as referring to Christian Doctrine. The passage seems to relate to a work then in existence. Milton is speaking of what is necessary to give a people the knowledge of Christianity. Having alluded to the preaching of the word, he goes on:

“To these I might add other helps, which we enjoy now, to make more easy the attainment of Christian religion by the meanest: the entire Scripture translated into English, with plenty of notes; and *somewhere or other, I trust, may be found some wholesome body of divinity*, as they call it, *without school-terms and metaphysical notions*, which have obscured rather than explained our religion, and made it seem difficult without cause.” — *Prose Works*, III. 26. See, also, Dr. Sumner and Todd's reference to this passage, IV. 441. — *Todd's Life*, p. 302.

¹ Dr. Sumner, Sir E. Brydges, St. John, and Mr. Keightley give 1660 as the date of “The Ready and Easy Way,” etc. St. John says it was “first published” in this year. Hollis Catalogue gives 1659. Dr. Johnson and Mr. Mitford agree with Hollis.

Of the Doctrine of the Son and the Holy Spirit, in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained.

Paradise Lost was begun, according to Philips, in 1655 ; completed and published, in 1666. In the very beginning of the great epic we have a passage that must have no little weight in helping us understand all that comes after it. Here, as is well known, Milton invokes that Eternal Spirit, whose aid fourteen years before, when meditating upon his immortal work, he had declared so necessary.

“ And chiefly Thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
 Before all temples the upright heart and pure,
 Instruct me, for Thou know'st. Thou, from the first,
 Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread,
 Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
 And mad'st it pregnant : what in me is dark
 Illumine ; what is low, raise and support ;
 That to the height of this great argument
 I may assert eternal Providence
 And justify the ways of God to man.”

Bk. I. l. 17—26.

It is not at all doubtful what Being and Person the poet addresses. Milton himself, as if guarding against all misunderstanding, definitely informs us. It is He who, at creation, “ moved upon the face of the waters.” Gen. 1 : 2. He also, who inspired Moses to write the Genesis of Creation, and tuned the harp of David to sing, and touched the lips of prophets to speak of a new creation, fairer than the first ; who prefers

“ Above all temples the upright heart and pure.”

Poets indeed are wont, at the beginning of their effusions, without much seriousness or meaning, to court the aid of the muse. But the Spirit of God that moved upon the face of the waters at creation, that inspired prophets and apostles, and sanctifies the heart, was not of the Nine. His is too sacred a name, and John Milton too devout and reverential a person, to use so hallowed a name in so irreverent a manner. It does violence to his whole character to suppose that

he would here so solemnly invoke the illumination of the Spirit for the mere purpose of ornament; and much more that he would ascribe to an "empty dream," as he calls the muse, in the beginning of the seventh book of *Paradise Lost*, attributes and acts that belong to God only.

Lest however there should be, after all, any doubt whose aid Milton invokes, even after he has designated the Holy Spirit by such significant words and attributes; or, lest it should be forgotten as his great work unfolds, and any should at length come to say, as some now do, he only conformed to ordinary poetic usage, and courted the presence of some fabled heathen divinity—in the beginning of the seventh book he specifies again, and denies any such imputation.

Milton does indeed, even here, begin :

"Descend from heaven, Urania ;"

but, in the lines following, he denies that the Divine Voice he had followed was thus rightly named.

"The meaning, not the name I call ; for Thou,
Nor of the muses Nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st ; but heavenly born,
Before the hills appear'd, or fountain flow'd,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse,
Wisdom thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father pleas'd,
With thy celestial song." — l. 1—12.

Can it be that John Milton, "magnum et venerabile nomen," here ascribes the really Divine attribute of eternity to a fabled heathen goddess, and represents her whom, a little further on, he calls an "empty dream," as a companion, fit and coëqual of the Almighty Father? Nay, nay; he hastens, as we have already said, to forbid such an unjust imputation.

"For Thou,
Nor of the muses Nine, nor on the top
Of old Olympus dwell'st, but heavenly-born,
Before the hills appeared, or fountain flow'd,
Thou with Eternal Wisdom didst converse."

The poet in this passage, had in mind, without doubt, the Divine description of Wisdom in Prov. 8: 22—32, where, as Newton says, “the phrase of Wisdom always ‘rejoicing before God,’ is ‘playing,’ according to the Vulgate Latin: *ludens coram eo omni tempore.*” And so Milton quotes it also in his *Tetrachordon*, written nearly a quarter of a century before: “I was, saith the Eternal Wisdom, daily his delight, playing always before Him.”—*Newton in Tbdd*, Vol. III. p. 6.

Milton felt, in his inmost soul, the awfulness of his subject, and the greatness of his work. He felt too, equally, the need of illumination and aid, as he was about to adventure so high a flight; and, with childlike confidence and meek humility, he bowed down before the Spirit of all grace, that Eternal Spirit of whom he had spoken before, when meditating this work, and whose aid he had then declared necessary, then, when there is no doubt that he held the essential Divinity of the Spirit, and His coequality with the Father and Son. Then, as now, he calls Him the “Illuminating Spirit.” This prayer, then, is incontrovertible evidence that now, as then—now, as well as a quarter of a century before, John Milton shrunk from all denial of the essential Divinity of the Holy Spirit, and held to an equality of persons in the Godhead. This prayer, note too, is in direct contradiction to Milton’s views of the Holy Spirit in Christian Doctrine.

Paradise Regained, published in 1671, is in harmony with *Paradise Lost*. In the beginning of this work, too, Milton invokes the Spirit, not now in any other than His own proper name and person, the Spirit that led Jesus into the wilderness.

“Against the spiritual foe, and brought’st Him thence,
By proof the undoubted Son of God”—

the same note, too, that was “wont to inspire his prompted song.” This prayer, more than the former, if possible, forbids us to suppose that Milton’s invocations of the Divine Spirit are merely “*exordia pro forma.*” In short, such are

the scripture allusions he makes, and the scripture history he adopts as the basis of both *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, and even the scripture phrases and attributes he ascribes to the One he invokes; for it is evident that, at the beginning of *Paradise Lost*, and at the opening of the seventh book, as well as here at the beginning of *Paradise Regained*, he refers to Moses, prophets, and evangelists, and applies to the Person whose aid he implores, the very phrases and agencies they attribute to the Spirit of God, agencies and attributes that can be possessed only by the Infinite Spirit—so evident is this, we say, that to suppose that the poet meant to address any other than the Holy Spirit, is to make the venerable and severe Milton a profane and contemptuous trifler, not only with the Spirit of God, but with the word of God, and even with the understanding of men. Such a supposition cannot be, for a moment, entertained. Milton's invocations are devout supplications to the "Third Subsistence of Divine Infinitude, the Illumining Spirit," for both illumination and strength to—

"Assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to man."

We have now, as we think, gained high vantage ground, from which to ascertain what Milton holds of the Son of God, in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. If, as we have shown, he holds the Holy Spirit to be truly divine, this is, to say the least, strong presumptive evidence that he holds the Son to be so too; for it is generally acknowledged that the person and character of the Spirit are less fully and clearly defined, even in the word of God, than those of the Son. Milton himself notices this fact. (See *Christian Doctrine*, Vol. IV. of *Prose Works*, pp. 151, 169.) If, then, he makes the Spirit of God truly divine, much more would he the Son of God.

Concerning the character Milton gives the Son of God, in *Paradise Lost*, space does not allow long discussion; nor does the subject need it. In numerous passages of the great epic, Milton ascribes to the Son of God the names and char-

acters of the Supreme Being, and clothes him with powers and prerogatives that none but Jehovah can possess. He calls Him "God," "Almighty," "Omnipotent," and "Jehovah," without any qualification. He ascribes to Him omniscience, omnipresence, existence from eternity, absolute, independent, or self existence. The passages in which these names and attributes of the one only God are ascribed to the Son of God, are so numerous that they hardly need be referred to. They are found throughout the seventh book, frequent in the third and eighth, and not unfrequent in other parts of the sublime epic. See bk. vii. l. 243, 261, 339, 589, 590, 602; bk. viii. l. 398, 405—108, 415.

Besides these names and attributes, Milton makes the Son Himself say to Adam :

"What think'st thou, then, of Me, and this My state?
Seem I to thee sufficiently possess'd
Of happiness, or not, *Who am alone*
From all eternity? for none I know
Second to Me, or like, equal much less."

Adam replies :

"Supreme of things!
Thou in Thyself art perfect, and in Thee
Is no deficiency found."
No need that Thou
Should'st propagate, *already infinite,*
And through all numbers absolute, though One."

Bk. viii. l. 403—421.

Numerous passages, also, as definitely and unequivocally ascribing supreme Divinity to the Son, are found in the third book. See l. 138—143, 168—173, 305—415.¹

That Milton follows, very closely, the word of God in speaking of the Son of God, adhering for the most part to the very phrases and figures of Inspiration, is so plain and patent that all his critics have remarked it; nor does it escape the observation of the ordinary reader. Like the word of God, he hesitates not to represent the Son or the Father as existing in finite forms, forms that strike the sense,

and acting in finite modes and agencies ; in deliberating, counselling, and decreeing ; as changing place in space and time ; as affected with sentiments and emotions such as we feel. Milton does this, seeming to be assured, all the time, that he does not degrade or lower the Godhead in thus applying to him words and images that Inspiration has sanctioned. He seems to feel, as he says, "that the holy scriptures contain nothing unsuitable to the Divine character and dignity ; and that God has not, in the guide He has given to His creatures, ascribed to Himself any attribute He would not willingly have them ascribe to Him." *Prose Works*, IV. p. 17.

While Milton, at one time, ascribes to the Son modes of being and action that are finite, or at least less than infinite, and at another the existence, the powers, and prerogatives that belong to Jehovah only, does he contradict himself, or make the character of the Son mixed, and make it impossible for us to ascertain what he holds Him to be? By no means. These passages are to be understood, and the character of the Son therein determined, not by restricting it to the lower, but by reference to the higher attributes in them. The infinite does not exclude the finite, but consists with it, while the finite does exclude the infinite. In other words, the Infinite Being can possess modes and act through agencies that are less than infinite — that are finite ; but no merely finite being can either possess really divine attributes, or exercise infinite prerogatives. These are, like God's nature, incommunicable. The Creator may act the creature, and, in the mystery of godliness, become the creature ; but the creature cannot become the Creator. Milton's ascription of finite powers and agencies to the Son of God, then, does not prove that he did not hold Him to be infinite, and no more than finite. His ascription of divine attributes and infinite prerogatives to Him, does prove that he held Him to be *something* more than finite — to be infinite — *verus Deus* and *summus Deus*.

Besides the characters given to the Son and the Spirit separately, in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, there

are passages that are best understood as adopting the unity of these Persons in the Godhead, or the Trinity. Such is that in the seventh book of *Paradise Lost*, where the poet represents —

“The King of Glory, in his powerful word
And Spirit, coming to create new worlds.” — L. 204–.

This seems another full endorsement of the tripersonal Godhead “Of Reformation in England,” in 1641. *Thus we have a continuous and unbroken testimony that Milton held the supreme Divinity of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and the reality of the Trinity, beginning in 1641 and then so full and positive as to admit of no doubt, and reaching down to 1671, but three years before Milton’s death.*

Of “The Letters of State.”

Additional strength, if it be needed, can be given to this chain of testimony from Milton’s Letters of State. These cover a period of ten years, from 1649 to 1659. They show, throughout, how strongly attached was their author to the “evangelic” or “orthodox faith,” for this latter is the phrase he most frequently uses in these Letters, especially when addressed to those that are known to be the exponents of this faith, or its practical advocates and defenders. In his Letters, for example, to “The States of the United Provinces,” in 1655, concerning the efforts of the duke of Savoy to persecute and destroy the Piedmontois, he says :

“We make no question but that you have already been informed of the Duke of Savoy’s Edict, set forth against his subjects inhabiting the valleys at the feet of the Alps, *ancient professors of the orthodox faith* ; by which edict they are commanded to abandon their native habitations, stripped of all their fortunes, unless, within twenty days, they embrace the Roman faith ; and with what cruelty the authority of this edict has raged against a needy and harmless people, many being slain by the soldiers ; the rest, plundered and driven from their houses, together with their wives and children, to combat cold and hunger among desert mountains and perpetual snow. These things with what commotion of mind you heard related, what a fellow-feeling of the calamities of brethren pierced your breasts, we readily conjectured from the depth of our own sorrow, which certainly is most heavy

and afflictive. For, being engaged together by the same tie of religion, no wonder we should be so deeply moved with the same afflictions upon the dreadful and undeserved sufferings of our brethren. Besides, that your conspicuous piety and charity towards the *orthodox*, wherever overborne and oppressed, has been frequently experienced in the most urging straits and calamities of the churches. For my own part, unless my thoughts deceive me, there is nothing wherein I should desire more willingly to be overcome, than in good will and charity toward *brethren* of the same religion, afflicted and wronged in their quiet enjoyments; as being one that would be accounted always ready to prefer the peace and safety of the churches before my particular interests."

After expressing the hope that what the States of the United Provinces had done, together with what Great Britain had done, would lead the duke of Savoy to "restore his subjects to their habitations and estates, and grant them their pristine freedom in the exercise of their religion," he continues :

"But if he still persist in the same obstinate resolutions of reducing to utmost extremity those people (*among whom our religion was either disseminated by the first doctors of the Gospel, and preserved from the defilement of superstition, or else restored to its pristine sincerity, long before other nations obtained that felicity*), and determines their utter extirpation and destruction; we are ready to take such other course and counsels with yourselves, in common with the rest of our conformed friends and confederates, as may be most necessary for the preservation of just and good men, upon the brink of inevitable ruin; and to make the duke himself sensible that we can no longer neglect the heavy oppressions and calamities of our orthodox brethren." — *Prose Works*, II. pp. 253, 254.

Also in Letters to the "Evangelic Cantons and Cities of Switzerland," on the same subject, after alluding to the "abundant proof of their singular love and affection for the orthodox faith," he says :

"Seeing then, by the most strict communion of religion, that you, together with ourselves, are all brethren alike, or rather one body with these unfortunate people, . . . we thought it convenient to write to your lordships concerning our brethren."

A little further on, he calls these inhabitants of these Alpine valleys, "professing our religion," "*most dearly beloved brethren in Christ.*"

Milton repeats these terms, so expressive of unity of faith and love, in Letters to "Lewis, king of France," "Frederic III., king of Denmark, Norway," etc., adding often other terms, such as "*purity of faith*," "*evangelic faith*," to show his estimation of the Piedmontois.

Though these Letters are written in the "name of the Parliament and of Oliver, Protector of the Commonwealth of England," yet the sentiments of John Milton are seen in them as plainly as are those of Daniel Webster in his Letter to the Austrian Ambassador, Chevalier Hulseman, or in any State Paper he ever dictated. Of these Letters, Symmons says :

"It may be observed that the character of their immediate author is too great to be altogether lost in that of the ministerial organ ; and that, in many of them Milton may be traced in distinct though not in discordant existence, from the power for whom he acts." — *Symmons's Life of Milton*, p. 271.

It is, in fact, because of the embodiment in the person, of the mind and will of the State, and his ability to express them, that he is chosen as its representative. What Lewis XIV. of France said : "*L'etat, c'est moi*," is true of every Secretary of State, and especially true when he is a Webster or a Milton. The mere fact, then, that John Milton was the chosen Secretary of the Presbyterian Parliament, and of Oliver Cromwell, is strong presumptive proof that he now held the orthodox faith. This, with the spirit of his Letters, leaves little doubt on this point.

Dilemma of Aubrey, Wood, and of all that hold with them concerning the Christian Doctrine.

The works now noticed, it must be remembered, cover a period of thirty years — from 1641 to 1671. They appeared not all at, or near, the beginning or close of this period, but successively throughout its whole length. Only a few years came between any two ; so that their testimony is continuous and unbroken. That Milton's views of the Son of God and the Spirit of God, and other doctrines of revealed re-

ligion that might be named, throughout the whole of this period, are directly contradictory to those he advocates in Christian Doctrine, is as plain as that his words are the true expression of his views. This, then, is the dilemma into which all fall who hold, with Aubrey and Wood, that Milton composed *Paradise Lost* and *Christian Doctrine* at or near the same time; or, in fact, that he composed *Christian Doctrine* at any time between 1641 and 1671; they make him both hold and advocate contradictory opinions concerning the Son and the Holy Spirit at the same time. Or if any hold that *Christian Doctrine* was later than *Paradise Regained* (1671), as some may, who say it was Milton's latest, or among his latest works, for they dare not be very definite on this point, then they maintain that the severely logical, profound, and mature Milton changed his opinions on these fundamental doctrines during the last two or three years of his life; that, just as this great and good man was stepping into the grave, he denied the Son of God, in whom he had, all along, so heartily trusted, and the Spirit of God, to whom he had so earnestly and reverently prayed.

A change in Milton's views of the Son and the Holy Spirit, and other kindred doctrines, is too evident to be disputed. When, setting all historical evidence aside, is it most likely this change took place? In his youth, or manhood and old age? after 1671, or before 1641? when his knowledge had grown, and his mind and strength matured, and he had had time to search into these transcendently great subjects, or when he first began to think and inquire concerning them?

"Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, etc."

That Milton did not waver, much less change and deny himself, on the fundamental doctrines of the Christian Religion, as his knowledge increased, and his mind enlarged and matured; that he continued to hold, as long as life lasted, the opinions respecting the Son of God and the Holy Spirit found in "*Of Reformation in England*," "*Prelatical*
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Episcopacy," "Animadversions," "Reasons of Church Government," "Treatise on Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes," "Ready and Easy Way," "State Letters," "Paradise Lost," and "Paradise Regained," we have not only these strong presumptive arguments, but more positive proof.

In 1673, the year before his decease, he published the treatise "Of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration." This, as all acknowledge, is the last work published by John Milton. He wrote it, during the last year of his life, for a specific purpose, viz. to define what is true religion, what is heresy and schism, and who are to be tolerated. Here then, if anywhere, we expect to find the real opinions and sentiments of John Milton. Here he defines :

"True religion is the true worship and service of God, learned and believed from the word of God only." "No man or angel can know how God should be worshipped and served, unless God reveal it; He hath revealed it and taught it us, in the Holy Scriptures, by inspired ministers, and in the Gospel by his Son and his Apostles."—Vol. II. p. 509.

In ascertaining the sense of scripture, and learning how it directs God to be worshipped, he advocates the use of :

"All diligence and sincerity of heart, by reading, by learning, by study, by prayer for the illumination of the Holy Spirit."—Id. p. 511.

Twice or thrice he thus speaks of the Holy Spirit, and advocates prayer to Him who, in Christian Doctrine, he maintains is nothing more than an inferior creature, and not worthy to be prayed to.

Again, in this treatise Milton classes Anabaptists, Arians, Arminians, and Socinians together as errorists, and schismatics ; but pleads for their toleration because they profess to prove their errors by the word of God. He maintains they should be confuted and confounded, not silenced. Their errors should be shown by an appeal to the word of God, whose authority they profess to reverence, rather than by denying them existence, and by persecution. (Id. p. 517,

518.) Or, to use his own words in "Areopagitica," "Their confuting is the best and surest suppressing."

Finally, in this treatise Milton declares of the Trinity in scripture; "it is a plain doctrine." This passage has, indeed, been called ambiguous, by no less an authority than Dr. Sumner, and quoted by him to prove exactly the opposite of what it does really prove. Dr. S. quotes it to prove that Milton, in this his last work, rejects the doctrine of the Trinity as unscriptural. (*Prose Works*, IV. p. xxxi.) Mitford, also, quotes a part of the passage, for the same purpose. (*Mitford's Life of Milton*, p. xcix.) We will, therefore, give the passage, in its connection, that each may judge for himself.

Milton, as we have already said, is pleading for toleration of all errorists who profess to take the word of God as the rule of faith and doctrine.

"It is a human frailty," he says, "to err, and no man is infallible here on earth. But so long as all these profess to set the word of God only before them, as the rule of faith and obedience; and use all diligence and sincerity of heart, by reading, by learning, by study, by prayer for illumination of the Holy Spirit, to understand the rule and obey it, they have done what man can do; God, assuredly, will pardon them, as He did the friends of Job — good and pious men, though much mistaken, as there it appears, on some points of doctrine. But some will say, With Christians it is otherwise, whom God hath promised, by his Spirit, to teach all things. True: all things absolutely necessary to salvation; but the hottest disputes among Protestants, calmly and charitably inquired into, will be found less than such: The Lutheran holds consubstantiation — an error indeed, but not mortal."

Notice that Milton here, and in several sentences following, gives his opinion of the doctrines of the sects he calls over, as he says of consubstantiation, the doctrine of the Lutherans: "an error indeed, but not mortal."

"The Calvinist," he continues, "is taxed with predestination, and to make God the author of sin; not with any dishonorable thought of God, but it may be over-zealously asserting His absolute power, *not without plea of Scripture*. The Anabaptist is accused of denying infants their right to baptism; again, they say, They deny nothing but what the Scripture denies them. The Arian and Socinian are charged to dispute against the Trinity. They affirm to believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to Scripture and the Apostolic Creed; as for terms of trinity, triniunity, coessentiality, tripersonality, and the like, they reject them as scholastic notions, not to

be found in Scripture, which, by a general Protestant maxim, is plain and perspicuous abundantly to explain its own meaning in the properest words belonging to so high a matter, and so necessary to be known; *a mystery indeed, in their sophistic subtleties, but in Scripture a plain doctrine.*"

What is it, now, that is a mystery in their sophistic subtleties, but in Scripture a plain doctrine? Plainly, not "scholastic notions," as Dr. Sumner asserts; but that to which these scholastic notions and terms relate, and try to describe—the Trinity. But this interpretation will be made plainer, if we read on.

"Their other opinions," he continues, "are of less moment. They dispute the satisfaction of Christ, or rather the word 'satisfaction,' as not Scriptural; but they acknowledge Him both God and their Saviour. The Arminian, lastly, is condemned for setting up free will against free grace; but that imputation he disclaims, in all his writings, and grounds himself largely upon Scripture only. It cannot be denied that the authors or late revivers of all these sects and opinions were learned, worthy, zealous, and religious men, as it appears by their lives written, and the same of their many eminent and learned followers, perfect and powerful in the Scriptures, holy and unblamable in their lives; and it cannot be imagined that God would desert such painful and zealous laborers in His church, and oftentimes great sufferers for their conscience, to damnable errors and a reprobate sense, who had so often implored the assistance of His Spirit; but rather, having made no man infallible, that He hath pardoned their errors, and accepts their pious endeavors, sincerely searching all things according to the rule of Scripture, with such guidance and direction as they can obtain of God by prayer. What Protestant, then, who himself maintains the same principles, and disavows all implicit faith, would persecute, and not rather charitably tolerate, such men as these, unless he mean to abjure the principles of his own religion? If it be asked, How far they should be tolerated? I answer: Doubtless equally, as being all Protestants; that is, on all occasions to give account of their faith, either by arguing, preaching in their several assemblies, public writing, and the freedom of printing."—Id. p. 511.

Further quotation or commentary is needless. Notwithstanding the assertion of Dr. Sumner, if the passage is taken in its connection and scope, there is no ambiguity. It admits of no other interpretation than that we have given. Milton does mean, in this his last work, to represent the Arian and Socinian as sects and errorists, and the doctrine which they deny as a plain scriptural doctrine. He pleads, indeed, for the toleration of Arians and Socinians, notwithstanding their

errors, for he would give error even a "fair field," nothing doubting that, in the end, truth will be victorious, though "all the winds of false doctrine be let loose upon her."

If any doubt yet remain concerning Milton's intention to represent Arians and Socinians as errorists, and to avow his faith in the peculiar doctrine they deny — the doctrine of the Trinity, it must be all taken away by another passage, near the close of this, his last treatise. The passage has already been cited; but truth and the importance of the subject under discussion, justify us in bringing it forward again. Having quoted 1 Thess. 5:21, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good," he inquires:

"How shall we prove all things, which includes all opinions, at least, founded on Scripture, unless we not only tolerate them, but patiently hear them, and seriously read them? If he who thinks himself in the truth professes to have learnt it, not by implicit faith, but by attentive study of the Scriptures and full persuasion of heart; with what equity can he refuse to hear or read him who demonstrates to have gained his knowledge by the same way? Is it a fair course, to assert truth by arrogating to himself the only freedom of speech, and stopping the mouths of others equally gifted? This is the direct way to bring in that papistical faith, which we all disclaim. They, i. e. those who refuse toleration, pretend it would unsettle the weaker sort; the same groundless fear is pretended by the Romish clergy. At least, then, let them have leave to write in Latin, which the common people understand not; that what they hold may be discussed among the learned only. We suffer the idolatrous books of papists without this fear, to be sold and read as common as our own; why not much rather of Anabaptists, Arians, Arminians, and Socinians? There is no learned man but will confess he hath much profited by reading controversies. . . . If then it be profitable for him to read, why should it not at least be tolerable and free for his adversary to write? In logic they teach that contraries laid together more evidently appear: it follows, then, that all controversy being permitted, falsehood will appear more false, and truth more true." — *Id.* p. 517.

The argument here, is plainly this: we suffer papists to write and publish. Now if we suffer those that hold the greatest error, the Papist, why not those that hold an error, indeed, but one less destructive, the Arian and Socinian? Besides, to place their falsehood or error beside the truth, will make their falsehood appear more false, and the truth more clear.

Thus the evidence is full and positive that Milton, in this his last work, abjures and condemns sects and doctrines that he advocates in Christian Doctrine, and died in what he so often, in his Letters of State, calls "the ancient," "the orthodox," the "evangelic faith," viz. that The Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit, are really Divine and co-equal persons, constituting "one Tri-Personal Godhead."

Thus it is that John Milton, "the man to whom God communicated such measures of light and mental energy, that his name springs up spontaneously, when we think or would speak of the greatness of our nature; thus he shows us "in what conclusions he rested on that subject, which above all others presses upon men of thought and sensibility," 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." "His theological opinions were the fruits of patient, profound, reverent study of the scriptures. He came to them with a 'mind not narrowed by a technical, professional education, but accustomed to broad views, to the widest range of thought.'" "He was shackled by no party connections. He was warped by no clerical ambition, and subdued by no clerical timidity." He came to his conclusions respecting the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, and the Trinity, "in the fulness of his strength, with free mind, open to truth, and with unstained purity of life." He came to them from the very force of conviction, and in direct opposition to what he once held and taught; conviction wrought by "patient, reverent, and profound study of the word of God." "And what did this great and good man, whose intellectual energy and love of truth has made him a chief benefactor of the human mind? what, we ask, did he discover in the Scriptures? A triple Divinity? No." But that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, are "*One Tri-Personal Godhead*," and that this doctrine of the "Trinity is, in Scripture, a plain doctrine."¹

¹ It is due the memory of the late Dr. Channing, to transcribe the remark with which he closes his exultation over the discovery he supposed had been