

THE SECOND BOOK.

How happy were it for this frail and, as it may be truly called, mortal life of man, since all earthly things which have the name of good and convenient in our daily use, are withal so cumbersome and full of trouble, if knowledge yet which is the best and lightsomest possession of the mind, were, as the common saying is, no burden, and that what is wanted of being a load to any part of the body, it did not with a heavy advantage overlay upon the spirit! For not to speak of that knowledge that rests in the contemplation of natural causes and dimensions,¹⁴⁷ which must needs be a lower wisdom, as the object is low, certain it is that he who hath obtained in more than the scantest measure to know anything distinctly of God and of his true worship, and what is infallibly good and happy in the state of man's life, what in itself evil and miserable, though vulgarly not so esteemed—he that hath obtained to know this, the only high valuable wisdom indeed, remembering also that God even to a strictness requires the improvement of these his entrusted gifts,¹⁴⁸ cannot but sustain a sorer burden of mind, and more pressing, than any supportable toil or weight which the body can labor under, how and in what manner he shall dispose and employ those sums of knowledge and illumination which God hath sent him into this world to trade with. And that which aggravates the burden more is that (having received amongst his allotted parcels certain precious truths of such an orient¹⁴⁹ luster as no diamond can equal, which nevertheless he has in charge to put off at any cheap rate, yea for

nothing to them that will) the great merchants of this world, fearing that this course would soon discover and disgrace the false glitter of their deceitful wares wherewith they abuse the people, like poor Indians with beads and glasses, practise by all means how they may suppress the venting of such rarities, and such a cheapness as would undo them, and turn their trash upon their hands. Therefore by gratifying the corrupt desires of men in fleshly doctrines, they stir them up to persecute with hatred and contempt all those that seek to bear themselves uprightly in this their spiritual factory:¹⁵⁰ which they foreseeing, though they cannot but testify of truth and the excellence of that heavenly traffic which they bring against what opposition or danger soever, yet needs must it sit heavily upon their spirits, that being, in God's prime intention and their own, selected heralds of peace and dispensers of treasure inestimable, without price, to them that have no pence, they find in the discharge of their commission that they are made the greatest variance and offense, a very sword and fire both in house and city over the whole earth. This is that which the sad prophet Jeremiah laments: "Woe is me, my mother, that thou hast borne me a man of strife and contention!"¹⁵¹ And although divine inspiration must certainly have been sweet to those ancient prophets, yet the irksomeness of that truth which they brought was so unpleasant to them that everywhere they call it a burden. Yea, that mysterious book of revelation¹⁵² which the great evangelist was bid to eat, as it had been some eye-brightening electuary of knowledge and foresight, though it were sweet in his mouth and in the learning, it was bitter in his belly, bitter

¹⁵⁰ *factory*: trading post, where Europeans bartered cheap wares with the native "Indians," either American or Asiatic.

¹⁵¹ Jer. xv, 10. Cf. Matt. x, 34: "I came not to bring peace, but a sword."

¹⁵² In Rev. x, 9, an angel commands John to take the mysterious book in his hand and "eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey." David Paraeus (See *SA* prefatory letter, n. 3), in his *Commentary on Revelation* (English version of 1644), interpreted this verse as teaching "the ministers of the word . . . earnestly to devour or eat up the doctrine of salvation divinely written and received from Christ, that is, diligently to read, understand, and meditate, & as it were to turne it into their verie moisture and blood."

¹⁴⁷ So Bacon in *The Advancement* (I, i, 3; p. 9) distinguished the knowledge of divine things from knowledge produced from "the contemplation of God's creatures and works," which, "having regard to God," can give "no perfect knowledge, but wonder, which is broken knowledge."

¹⁴⁸ Milton regards the parable of the talents entrusted to good and negligent servants (Matt. xxv, 14-30) in much the way that he does in *Sonn* VII: "How soon hath time . . ."

¹⁴⁹ *orient*, meaning lustrous, was applied to pearls because the best of them came from the East. Milton thought of Christ's comparison of the kingdom of heaven to a "pearl of great price," to buy which a merchant "sold all that he had" (Matt. xiii, 46).

This is Bacon's dimension

* Other he speaks who are known

to talents given

of kind of language of poetry

This is a persisting theme of by the their sacrifices are crown, not spiritual.

Very sympathetic impression of silenced and illuminated of their burden deny concludes have

winning on substance as showing as their blame-factors-like Anthony's like

* NOTE examples grouped: Jeremiah, St. John the Divine, Sophocles (Tiresias)

in the denouncing. Nor was this hid from the wise poet Sophocles,¹⁵³ who in that place of his tragedy where Tiresias is called to resolve king Œdipus in a matter which he knew would be grievous, brings him in bemoaning his lot, that he knew more than other men. For surely to every good and peaceable man it must in nature needs be a hateful thing to be the displeaser and molester of thousands; much better would it like him doubtless to be the messenger of gladness and contentment, which is his chief intended business to all mankind, but that they resist and oppose their own true happiness. But when God commands to take the trumpet and blow a dolorous or a jarring blast, it lies not in man's will what he shall say or what he shall conceal. If he shall think to be silent, as Jeremiah¹⁵⁴ did because of the reproach and derision he met with daily, and "All his familiar friends watched for his halting," to be revenged on him for speaking the truth, he would be forced to confess as he confessed: "His word was in my heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary with forbearing and could not stay." Which might teach these times not suddenly to condemn all things that are sharply spoken or vehemently written as proceeding out of stomach, virulence, and ill nature; but to consider rather that if the prelates have leave to say the worst that can be said and do the worst that can be done, while they strive to keep to themselves, to their great pleasure and commodity, those things which they ought to render up, no man can be justly offended with him that shall endeavor to impart and bestow, without any gain to himself, those sharp but saving words which would be a terror and a torment in him to keep back. For me, I have determined to lay up as the best treasure and solace of a good old age, if God vouchsafe it me, the honest liberty of free speech from my youth, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the church's good. For if I be, either by disposition or what other cause, too inquisitive

or suspicious of myself and mine own doings, who can help it? But this I foresee, that should the church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have given me ability the while to reason against that man that should be the author of so foul a deed, or should she, by blessing from above on the industry and courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days without the least furtherance or contribution of those few talents which God at that present had lent me, I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discourage and reproach. "Timorous and ungrateful, the church of God is now again at the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou bewailest. What matters it for thee, or thy bewailing? When time was, thou couldst not find a syllable of all that thou hadst read or studied, to utter in her behalf. Yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired thoughts, out of the sweat of other men. Thou hadst the diligence, the parts, the language of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified, but when the cause of God and his church was to be pleaded, for which purpose that tongue was given thee which thou hast, God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants, but thou wert dumb as a beast; from henceforward be that which thine own brutish silence hath made thee." Or else I should have heard on the other ear: "Slothful, and ever to be set light by, the church hath now overcome her late distresses after the unwearied labors of many her true servants that stood up in her defense; thou also wouldst take upon thee to share amongst them of their joy: but wherefore thou? Where canst thou show any word or deed of thine which might have hastened her peace? Whatever thou dost now talk or write, or look, is the alms of other men's active prudence and zeal. Dare not now to say or do anything better than thy former sloth and infancy,¹⁵⁵ or if thou darest, thou dost impudently to make a thrifty purchase of boldness to thyself out of the painful merits of other men; what before was thy sin is now thy duty, to be abject and worthless." These and suchlike lessons as these, I know would have been

¹⁵³ In Sophocles' *Oedipus the King*, 316-18 Tiresias unwillingly exposes Oedipus as the unwitting slayer of his father and the husband of his mother.

¹⁵⁴ In Jer. xx, 8-10, the prophet recalls that some doubters of his perseverance in delivering his message had become convinced that God's word was in his heart like a fire in his bones.

¹⁵⁵ *infancy*: speechlessness, the probable original Latin meaning of the word.

* N.B.
17 17 NOT
US THAT
STIR STRIKE L
17 13 CARD'S
WILL.

vehement
justified
of the body
in course

(General
terms lead
in to
thesis
argument
in force)

Powerful if you're tough

just

to me the bordelloes as by other suspicious glancings in his book, he would seem privily to point me out to his readers as one whose custom of life were not honest but licentious, I shall entreat to be borne with though I digress; and in a way not often trod acquaint ye with the sum of my thoughts in this matter, through the course of my years and studies: although I am not ignorant how hazardous it will be to do this under the nose of the envious, as it were in skirmish to change the compact order,²³ and instead of outward actions, to bring inmost thoughts into front. And I must tell ye, readers, that by this sort of men I have been already bitten at; yet shall they not for me know how slightly they are esteemed, unless they have so much learning as to read what in Greek ἀπειροκαλία²⁴ is, which, together with envy, is the common disease of those who censure books that are not for their reading. With me it fares now as with him whose outward garment hath been injured and ill-bedighted; for having no other shift, what help but to turn the inside outwards, especially if the lining be of the same, or, as it is sometimes, much better? So if my name and outward demeanor be not evident enough to defend me, I must make trial if the discovery of my inmost thoughts can: wherein of two purposes, both honest and both sincere, the one perhaps I shall not miss; although I fail to gain belief with others of being such as my perpetual thoughts shall here disclose me, I may yet not fail of success in persuading some to be such really themselves, as they cannot believe me to be more than what I feign.

I had my time, readers, as others have who have good learning bestowed upon them, to be sent to those places where, the opinion was, it might be soonest attained; and as the manner is, was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended.

Whereof some were grave orators and historians, whose matter methought I loved indeed, but as my age then was, so I understood them; others were the smooth elegiac

²³ compact order: i.e. of soldiers in close order in a square formation when the inner and outer ranks change positions.

²⁴ ἀπειροκαλία: bad taste such as produces bad conduct. Plato uses the word in the *Republic* (403c and 405b) of the propensities to undue physical intimacy and to litigiousness.

poets, whereof the schools are not scarce, whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous²⁵ writing, which in imitation I found most easy and most agreeable to nature's part in me, and for their matter, which what it is there be few who know not, I was so allured to read that no recreation came to me better welcome. For that it was then those years with me which are excused though they be least severe, I may be saved the labor to remember ye. Whence having observed them to account it the chief glory of their wit, in that they were ablest to judge, to praise, and by that could esteem themselves worthiest to love those high perfections which under one or other name they took to celebrate, I thought with myself by every instinct and presage of nature, which is not wont to be false, that what emboldened them to this task, might with such diligence as they used embolden me; and that what judgment, wit, or elegance was my share, would herein best appear, and best value itself, by how much more wisely, and with more love of virtue I should choose (let rude ears be absent)²⁶ the object of not unlike praises. For albeit these thoughts to some will seem virtuous and commendable, to others only pardonable, to a third sort perhaps idle; yet the mentioning of them now will end in serious.

Nor blame it, readers, in those years to propose to themselves such a reward as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred: whereof not to be sensible when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgment, and withal an ungentle and swainish breast. For by the firm settling of these persuasions I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient that, if I found those authors anywhere speaking unworthy things of themselves or unchaste of those names which before they had extolled, this effect it wrought with me, from that time forward their art I still applauded, but the men I deplored; and above them all, preferred the two famous renowners of

²⁵ numerous: rhythmic because metrical. Cf. Milton's allusion to "numbers" as "various-measur'd verse" in *PR* IV, 255-6.

²⁶ A reminiscence of classical warnings, like that of the seer in Virgil's *Aen.* VI, 258, to all profane persons to keep their distance from a sacred place.

to go over about
 to come over his
 to the well-soul
 readers.

authors comparison

He's talking
 about
 love
 poetry
 (smooth
 elegiac
 poets)

gence, unfaithful spy of Canaan?¹³ He gives in his evidence, that "there he hath traced me." Take him at his word, readers, but let him bring good sureties ere ye dismiss him, that while he pretended to dog others, he did not turn in for his own pleasure: for so much in effect he concludes against himself, not contented to be caught in every other gin,¹⁴ but he must be such a novice as to be still hampered in his own hemp. In the *Animadversions*, saith he, I find the mention of old cloaks, false beards, night-walkers, and salt lotion; therefore, the animadverter haunts playhouses and bordelloes; for if he did not, how could he speak of such gear? Now that he may know what it is to be a child and yet to meddle with edged tools, I turn his antistrophon¹⁵ upon his own head; the confuter knows that these things are the furniture of playhouses and bordelloes, therefore, by the same reason, *the confuter himself hath been traced in those places*. Was it such a dissolute speech, telling of some politicians who were wont to eavesdrop in disguises, to say they were often liable to a nightwalking cudgeller, or the emptying of a urinal? What if I had written as your friend the author of the aforesaid mime, *Mundus alter et idem*,¹⁶ to have been ravished like some young Cephalus¹⁷ or Hylas¹⁸ by a troop of camping housewives in Viraginea, and that he was there forced to swear himself an uxorious varlet; then after a long servitude to have come into Aphrodisia, that pleasant country that

¹³ The spies whom Moses sent into Canaan, "returned, . . . bringing up a slander upon the land" (Num. xiv, 36).

¹⁴ *gin*: a trap or snare for game.

¹⁵ *antistrophon*: the rhetorical figure of retort or turning of a quip or argument back upon an opponent.

¹⁶ In the paragraph preceding this extract Hall's *Mundus Alter et idem* (1605; English translation as *The Discovery of a New World*, 1608) is called "the idlest and paltriest mime that ever mounted upon the bank," and its imaginary voyage to a land of viragos (*Viraginea*), a land of romance (*Aphrodisia*), and a city of debauchery (*Desvergognia*) is disparagingly compared to More's *Utopia* and Bacon's *New Atlantis*.

¹⁷ *Cephalus*, according to the story retold by Ovid in *Met.* VII, 700-13, was snatched away from his wife, Procris, by the goddess of the dawn, Aurora.

¹⁸ One of the most familiar and least admirable features of the story of Hercules, according to Conti (VII, i), was his seizure of *Hylas* and his passion for the youth.

gave such a sweet smell to his nostrils among the shameless courtesans of Desvergognia? Surely he would have then concluded me as constant at the bordello as the galley-slave at his oar.

But since there is such necessity to the hearsay of a tire,¹⁹ a periwig, or a vizard,²⁰ that plays must have been seen, what difficulty was there in that, when in the colleges so many of the young divines, and those in next aptitude to divinity, have been seen so oft upon the stage, writhing and unboning their clergy limbs to all the antic and dishonest gestures of *Trinculos*,²¹ buffoons, and bawds, prostituting the shame of that ministry, which either they had or were nigh having, to the eyes of courtiers and court ladies, with their grooms and mademoiselles. There, while they acted and overacted, among other young scholars I was a spectator; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools; they made sport, and I laughed; they mispronounced, and I disliked; and, to make up the atticism, they were out, and I hissed. Judge now whether so many good textmen were not sufficient to instruct me of false beards and vizards, without more expositors; and how can this confuter take the face to object to me the seeing of that which his reverend prelates allow, and incite their young disciples to act? For if it be unlawful²² to sit and behold a mercenary comedian personating that which is least unseemly for a hireling to do, how much more blameful is it to endure the sight of as vile things acted by persons either entered, or presently to enter into the ministry, and how much more foul and ignominious for them to be the actors!

But because, as well by this upbraiding

¹⁹ *tire*: costume.

²⁰ *vizard*: mask.

²¹ One of the *Trinculos* in the background is Shakespeare's drunken sailor in *The Tempest* III, ii; but Milton probably thought of Thomas Tomkys' Trincalo in *Albumazar*, a rustic who confesses: "I am idle, choicely neate in my cloathes, valiant, and extreame witty: My meditations are loaded with metaphors, and songs and sonnets: Not a one shakes his tayle, but I sigh out a passion; thus doe I to my Mistris: But alas I kisse the dogge, and she kicks me" (Act II, i). The play was acted at Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1614, and published several times.

²² Milton was writing only a few months before the closing of the theaters by Parliament on Sept. 2, 1642.

fine colloquial
imitation
of speaking

or unwonted in justifying myself to those who know me not (for else it would be needless), let them consider that a short slander will oftentimes reach further than a long apology; and that he who will do justly to all men, must begin from knowing how, if it so happen, to be not unjust to himself. I must be thought, if this libeller (for now he shows himself to be so) can find belief, after an inordinate and riotous youth spent at "the University," to have been at length "vomited out thence."⁶ For which commodious lie, that he may be encouraged in the trade another time, I thank him; for it hath given me an apt occasion to acknowledge publicly with all grateful mind that more than ordinary favor and respect which I found above any of my equals⁷ at the hands of those courteous and learned men, the fellows of that college wherein I spent some years: who at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signified many ways how much better it would content them that I would stay; as by many letters full of kindness and loving respect, both before that time and long after, I was assured of their singular good affection towards me. Which being likewise propense to all such as were for their studious and civil life worthy of esteem, I could not wrong their judgments and upright intentions so much as to think I had that regard from them for other cause than that I might be still encouraged to proceed in the honest and laudable courses of which they apprehended I had given good proof. And to those ingenuous and friendly men who were ever the countenancers of virtuous and hopeful wits, I wish the best and happiest things that friends in absence wish one to another.

As for the common approbation or dislike of that place, as now it is, that I should esteem or disesteem myself or any other the more for that, too simple and too credulous is the confuter, if he think to obtain with me or any right discerner. Of small practice were that physician who could not judge by what both she or her sister⁸ hath of long time vomited, that the

worser stuff she strongly keeps in her stomach, but the better she is ever kecking at, and is queasy. She vomits now out of sickness, but ere it will be well with her, she must vomit by strong physic. In the meanwhile that "suburb sink,"⁹ as this rude scavenger calls it—and more than scurrilously taunts it with the "plague," having a worse plague in his middle entrail—that suburb wherein I dwell shall be in my account a more honorable place than his university. Which, as in the time of her better health and mine own younger judgment I never greatly admired, so now much less. But he follows me to the city, still usurping¹⁰ and forging beyond his book notice, which only he affirms to have had; "and where my morning haunts are, he wisses not." 'Tis wonder that, being so rare an alchemist of slander, he could not extract that as well as the university vomit and the suburb sink which his art could distil so cunningly; but because his limbec¹¹ fails him, to give him and envy the more vexation, I'll tell him. Those morning haunts are where they should be, at home; not sleeping or concocting¹² the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring, in winter often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labor or to devotion; in summer as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier, to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary, or memory have its full fraught: then, with useful and generous labors preserving the body's health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to the cause of religion, and our country's liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations, rather than to see the ruin of our protestation and the enforcement of a slavish life.

These are the morning practices: proceed now to the afternoon; "in playhouses," he says, "and the bordelloes." Your intelli-

⁹ The *Confutation* had accused Milton of haunting places of bad repute in the London suburbs.

¹⁰ *usurping*: presuming, going beyond the evidence.

¹¹ *limbec*: an alembic, an alchemist's device for distilling various chemicals.

¹² *concocting*: digesting. Cf. *Educ*, n. 88, and *PL V*, 437.

✓ N.B. - not just "suburb sink" but "plague" implied there -

Mr. Howe's sally habits

mens 5ms in compare sdu's

The fellows visited him 17. 4. 17. 1778

seems for common in university circles

A Selection from
AN APOLOGY AGAINST A PAMPHLET CALLED "A MODEST
CONFUTATION OF THE ANIMADVERSIONS UPON THE
REMONSTRANT AGAINST SMECTYMNUUS."¹ (1642)

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE—*An Apology* was published anonymously, probably in the late spring, in 1642, in reply to *A Modest Confutation of a Slanderous and Scurrilous Libell, Entitled, Animadversions etc.* In Milford C. Jochums' edition of *An Apology* (*Illinois Studies in Language and Literature*, XXV, Nos. 1-2, 1950), pp 3 and 113, the author is surmised to be Bishop Joseph Hall's son Edward, but Frederick L. Taft takes an impartial view of the claims of Edward *vs* those of Robert Hall, another son of the Bishop, in his edition of *An Apology* in *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. by Don M. Wolfe and others, Vol. I (New Haven, 1953), p. 863. Both the modern editions are liberally annotated. The present selections are based on the copy of the first edition in the Houghton Library at Harvard.

Thus having spent his first onset not in confuting but in a reasonless defaming of the book, the method of his malice hurries him² to attempt the like against the author;³ not by proofs and testimonies, but "having no certain notice of me," as he professes, "further than what he gathers from the *Animadversions*," blunders at me for the rest, and flings out stray crimes at a venture, which he could never, though he be a serpent, suck from anything that I have written, but from his own stuffed magazine and hoard of slanderous inventions, over and above that which he converted to venom in the drawing. To me, readers, it happens as a singular contentment, and let it be to good men no slight satisfaction, that the slanderer here confesses he has "no further notice of me than his own conjecture." Although it had been honest to have inquired before he uttered such infamous words, and I am credibly informed he did inquire; but finding small comfort from the intelligence which he received, whereon to ground the falsities which he had provided, thought it his likeliest course under a pretended ignorance to let drive

at random, lest he should lose his odd ends which from some penurious Book of Characters⁴ he had been culling out and would fain apply. Not caring to burden me with those vices whereof, among whom my conversation hath been, I have been ever least suspected; perhaps not without some subtlety to cast me into envy by bringing on me a necessity to enter into mine own praises. In which argument I know every wise man is more unwillingly drawn to speak than the most repining ear can be averse to hear.

Nevertheless, since I dare not wish to pass this life unpersecuted of slanderous tongues, for God hath told us that to be generally praised is woeful,⁵ I shall rely on his promise to free the innocent from causeless aspersions: whereof nothing sooner can assure me than if I shall feel him now assisting me in the just vindication of myself, which yet I could defer, it being more meet that to those other matters of public debatement in this book I should give attendance first, but that I fear it would but harm the truth for me to reason in her behalf, so long as I should suffer my honest estimation to lie unpurged from these insolent suspicions. And if I shall be large

¹ Masson first brought together the facts about the five Presbyterian ministers whose initials were combined into the signature which cryptically identified the authors of *An Answer to a Book entituled 'An Humble Remonstrance,'* (1641) in *The Life of John Milton* (London, 1871), Vol. II, pp. 219-22. Cf. *CG*, n. 83, and *Eikon*, Chap. xxvii, n. 18.

² *him*: the author of *Animadversions*.

³ *the author*: Milton.

⁴ *Book of Characters*: an allusion to Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608), the most successful of his early bids for literary fame. It was translated into French in 1610, and in 1691 was versified by Nahum Tate.

⁵ "Woe unto you, when all men shall speak well of you" (Luke vi, 26).

*of p. 694 for 'true poet - true person' assertion - 2 more abstract
mess. of what is called for again*

chised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelaty, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapors of wine, like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amorist, or the trencher fury of a riming parasite, nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters, but by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.¹⁷⁹ To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs, till which in some measure be compassed, at mine own peril and cost I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loth to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them. Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much beforehand, but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies to come into the dim reflection of hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk, and there be fain to club quotations with men whose learning and belief lies in marginal stuffings, who, when they have like good sumpters¹⁸⁰ laid ye down their horseload of citations and fathers at your door, with a rhapsody of who and who were bishops here or there, ve may take off their pack-

saddles, their day's work is done, and episcopacy, as they think, stoutly vindicated. Let any gentle apprehension that can distinguish learned pains from unlearned drudgery imagine what pleasure or profoundness can be in this, or what honor to deal against such adversaries. But were it the meanest underservice, if God by his secretary conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me if I should draw back, for me especially, now when all men offer their aid to help ease and lighten the difficult labors of the church, to whose service by the intentions of my parents and friends I was destined of a child, and in mine own resolutions: till coming to some maturity of years and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the church, that he who would take orders must subscribe slave and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would retch, he must either straight perjure or split his faith; I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing. Howsoever, thus church-outed¹⁸¹ by the prelates, hence may appear the right I have to meddle in these matters, as before the necessity and constraint appeared.

is this absolutely complete as the account of his version?

CHAPTER I.

That Prelaty opposeth the reason and end of the Gospel three ways, and first, in her outward form.

After this digression it would remain that I should single out some other reason which might undertake for prelaty to be a fit and lawful church government; but finding none of like validity with these that have already sped according to their fortune, I shall add one reason why it is not to be thought a church government at all, but a church tyranny, and is at hostile terms with the end and reason of Christ's evangelic ministry. Albeit I must confess to be half in doubt whether I should bring it forth or no, it being so contrary to the eye of the world, and the world so potent in most

¹⁷⁹ The allusion is to the vision of "the Lord sitting upon a throne . . . Above it stood the seraphim" in Isa. vi, 1-2, though Milton invokes the Muses whom Hesiod describes as the daughters of Memory and Zeus. Cf. PL I, 6, n. Milton's profession of faith in learning and virtue as the foundation of poetry in *Patrem*, 67-76, and *El VI*, 67-78, are worth comparison.
¹⁸⁰ *sumpters*: pack animals.

¹⁸¹ For a discussion of the justice of Milton's claim to have been "church-outed by the prelates," cf. William Haller, *The Rise of Puritanism*, Chap. viii.

True cause for true poet: see Milton's speech in the beginning of the book

on this
 scene
 first
 English

Accept to
 forest
 with
 of
 17. Jones

✓ Christian hero.¹⁶⁶ And as Tasso¹⁶⁷ gave to a prince of Italy his choice whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the Infidels, or Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemain against the Lombards; if to the instinct of nature and the emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and that there be nothing adverse in our climate¹⁶⁸ or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination, to present the like offer in our own ancient stories: or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides¹⁶⁹ reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary to a nation. The scripture also affords us a divine pastoral drama in the Song of Solomon,¹⁷⁰ consisting of two persons and a

Note
 manner of
 story
 Poveis
 Confusions
 Milton's
 opinion

¹⁶⁶ Cf. Milton's confession of his hope of writing a Christian epic on King Arthur in *Manso*, 80-84, and of his abandonment of such epic themes in *PL IX*, 25-41. Cf. also P. F. Jones, "Milton and the Epic Subject from British History," *PMLA*, XLII (1927), pp. 901-9, and M. M. Ross, *Milton's Royalism*, pp. 54-56, for a survey of the political motives which led Milton to prefer a Saxon hero like Alfred at this time to Arthur.

¹⁶⁷ When *Tasso* planned the *Jerusalem Delivered*, he was a pensioner of Cardinal Luigi d'Este at the court of his brother, Alfonso II, Duke of Ferrara. Beside Godfrey of Bouillon's conquest of the Holy Land, *Tasso* thought of two other Christian conquests as possible subjects: the reconquest of Italy from the Ostrogoths by Belisarius in 538-40 A.D., and *Charlemagne's* victory over the Lombards in 774.

¹⁶⁸ Milton's interest in the originally Aristotelian idea that the *climate* of northern Europe was unfavorable to the development of the highest intelligence may have been sharpened by its prominence in Jean Bodin's *Six Books of the Republic*, which he quotes in Chap. iii below. Cf. *Manso*, 28, and *PL IX*, 44-45, notes.

¹⁶⁹ Cf. Milton's justification of the ethical value of Greek tragedy in his preface to *SA*.

¹⁷⁰ This reference to the Song of Solomon is explained by the following passage from Paraeus' *Commentary on the Revelation*, which comes on p. 20 in Arnold's translation (1644), immediately before the remarks about the Apocalypse to which Milton next refers: "What Origen therefore wrote (in Prologo Cant. & Homil. I) touching the *Song of Songs*: that it seemed to him Solomon wrote a wedding song after the manner of a Drama: which, saith he, is a song of many Personages: . . . and he calleth that wedding Verse a Spirituall Interlude of foure Personages, which he saith the Lord revealed unto him in the same; viz. the Bridegroom and Bride: with the Bride her Virgins: with the Bridegroom his flock of Companions: The same thing I more truly may say touching the Revelation, that it seemes unto mee, the Lord Iesus revealed the same unto Iohn by his Angell, after the manner of a Drammaticall Representation."

double chorus, as Origen rightly judges. And the Apocalypse of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy,¹⁷¹ shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies: and this my opinion the grave authority of Pareus, commenting that book, is sufficient to confirm. Or if occasion shall lead to imitate those magnificent odes and hymns wherein Pindarus and Callimachus¹⁷² are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end faulty. But those frequent songs¹⁷³ throughout the law and prophets beyond all these, not in their divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable. These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God rarely bestowed, but yet to some (though most abuse) in every nation; and are of power beside the office of a pulpit, to inbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility, to allay the perturbations of the mind and set the affections in right tune, to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almightiness, and what he works and what

N.B.

harmony

¹⁷¹ Paraeus then goes on to call Revelation "a Propheticall Drama, show, or representation. For as in human Tragedies, diverse persons one after another come upon the Theater to represent things done, and so again depart: diverse Chores also or Companies of Musicians and Harpers distinguish the diversity of the *Acts*, and while the *Actors* hold up, do with musicall accord sweeten the wearinesse of the Spectators, and keepe them in attention: so verily the thing it selfe speaketh that in this Heavently Interlude, by diverse *shewes* and *apparitions* are represented diverse, or rather . . . the same things touching the Church, not past, but to come, and that their diverse *Acts* are renewed by diverse *Chores* or Companies, one while of 24 *Elders* and four *Beasts*, another while of *Angels*, sometimes of *Sealed ones in their foreheades*, and sometimes of *Harpers, &c.* with *new Songs*, and worthy *Hymmes*, not so much to lessen the wearisomenesse of the Spectators, as to infuse holy meditations into the mindes of the Readers, and to lift them up to Heavenly matters."

¹⁷² The reference is to the *Odes* of Pindar and the *Hymns* of the Alexandrian poet Callimachus (310?-235 B.C.), but the underlying thought rests on Plato's *Laws*, VII, 801-802, as Irene Samuel shows in *P. & M.*, pp. 53-61.

¹⁷³ For Renaissance parallels to this opinion of the Psalms see Milton's translation of Psalm cxiv and the notes there.

things which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums,¹⁵⁹ which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps—I began thus far to assent both to them and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that by labor and intent study (which I take to be my portion in this life) joined with the strong propensity of nature. I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possessed me, and these other; that if I were certain to write as men buy leases,¹⁶⁰ for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had than to God's glory, by the honor and instruction of my country. For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Ariosto¹⁶¹ followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end, that were a toilsome vanity, but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things among mine own citizens throughout this island in the mother dialect. That what the greatest and choicest wits of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over and above of being a Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad, though perhaps I could attain to that, but content with these British islands as my world; whose fortune hath hitherto been

¹⁵⁹ The poems by the Marquis of Manso, the Roman poet Giovanni Salzilli, and the Florentine, Antonio Francini, which Milton prefixed to the edition of his early poems in 1645, are examples of these *encomiums*.

¹⁶⁰ Such *leases* are defined by the *O.E.D.* as to "remain in force during the longest liver of three specified persons."

¹⁶¹ Ludovico Ariosto (1474-1533) was well known to have told Cardinal Bembo that he would "rather be one of the first Italian authors than barely a second among the Latins." In Giovanni Pigna's life of Ariosto, which was prefixed to many editions of the *Orlando Furioso*, he is described as deliberately disusing the skill in Latin verse which he had learned in youth and deciding for patriotic motives to write in Italian.

that if the Athenians, as some say,¹⁶² made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had her noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics.¹⁶³

Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home in the spacious circuits of her musing hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting; whether that epic form whereof the two poems of Homer and those other two of Virgil and Tasso are a diffuse, and the book of Job¹⁶⁴ a brief model: or whether the rules of Aristotle¹⁶⁵ herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed, which in them that know art and use judgment, is no transgression but an enriching of art: and lastly, what king or knight before the conquest might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a

¹⁶² Haug notes that the saying comes from Sallust's *Catiline* viii.

¹⁶³ Milton had already been examining the monastic chronicles on which he had to depend as sources for *Britain*, and for which he expressed contempt on many of its pages because they were mechanically compiled and naively credulous and prejudiced.

¹⁶⁴ Contemporary criticism accepted poems like the *Iliad*, the *Aeneid*, and the *Jerusalem Delivered* of Torquato Tasso as examples of the long epic which Aristotle defined in the *Poetics*, xxvi, and may have regarded the *book of Job* as an example of his shorter epic, but they can hardly have been blind to the dramatic elements in Job which Martin Luther recognized in his *Table Talk* (*Tischreden* IV, 405-6). Cf. Charles W. Jones on "Milton's 'Brief Epic,'" in *SP*, XLIV (1947), 216-18.

¹⁶⁵ Critical discussion of the *Orlando Furioso* and the *Jerusalem Delivered* had gone to extremes in condemning and justifying the irregularity of the former and the regularity of the latter in the light of Aristotle's epic principles. During his Italian journey Milton must have heard much discussion of epic theory, and C. S. Lewis is probably right in suggesting in *Preface*, p. 5, that he was familiar with a passage in Tasso's *Discourses on the Heroic Poem* which contrasts Aristotle's doctrine of strict epic unity with the taste for multiple elements in the loosely constructed plots of romances like Ariosto's *Orlando*. But Milton may have used the word "nature" as Galileo did in his *Considerations*, when in comparing the two poems he stressed Ariosto's realism from the point of view of a natural scientist interested in the pictorial power of poetry. The greater realism of Ariosto's kaleidoscopic plot in terms of its resemblance to actual experience had been defended by Alessandro Tassoni and several other Italians in the sixteen twenties.

Reliance on
inner light,
not just
on his
own
ways

moral and
instructive
end-

+

*

with
in the
of the

my matins duly and my evensong. But now by this little diligence, mark what a privilege I have gained; with good men and saints to claim my right of lamenting the tribulations of the church, if she should suffer, when others that have ventured nothing for her sake, have not the honor to be admitted mourners. But if she lift up her drooping head and prosper, among those that have something more than wished her welfare, I have my charter and freehold of rejoicing to me and my heirs. Concerning therefore this wayward subject against prelaty, the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men, as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only and a preventive fear lest the omitting of this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours; so lest it should be still imputed to me, as I have found it hath been, that some self-pleasing humor of vainglory hath incited me to contest with men of high estimation, now while green years are upon my head; from this needless surmial I shall hope to dissuade the intelligent and equal¹⁵⁶ auditor, if I can but say successfully that which in this exigent behoves me; although I would be heard only, if it might be, by the elegant and learned reader, to whom principally for a while I shall beg leave I may address myself. To him it will be no new thing though I tell him that if I hunted after praise by the ostentation of wit and learning, I should not write thus out of mine own season when I have neither yet completed to my mind the full circle of my private studies,¹⁵⁷ although I complain not of any insufficiency to the matter in hand; or were I ready to my wishes, it were a folly to commit anything elaborately composed to the careless and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times. Next, if I were wise only to mine own ends, I would certainly take such a subject as of itself might catch applause, whereas this

hath all the disadvantages on the contrary, and such a subject as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and time enough to pencil it over with all the curious touches of art, even to the perfection of a faultless picture; whenas in this argument the not deferring is of great moment to the good speeding, that if solidity have leisure to do her office, art cannot have much. Lastly, I should not choose this manner of writing, wherein knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account it, but of my left hand. And though I shall be foolish in saying more to this purpose, yet, since it will be such a folly as wisest men going about to commit have only confessed and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly, to have courteous pardon. For although a poet, soaring in the high region of his fancies with his garland and singing robes about him, might without apology speak more of himself than I mean to do, yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empyreal conceit,¹⁵⁸ to venture and divulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort, it may not be envy to me. I must say, therefore, that after I had from my first years by the ceaseless diligence and care of my father (whom God recompense) been exercised to the tongues and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools, it was found that whether aught was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly this latter, the style, by certain vital signs it had, was likely to live. But much latelier in the private academies of Italy, whither I was favored to resort—perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabout (for the manner is that everyone must give some proof of his wit and reading there) met with acceptance above what was looked for, and other

powerful domestic force

Typical Miltonic
 Dissolution.
 Note with care the
 limitation of audience (also
 their common-sense?)

The use of
 the left hand

Old view
 that persons
 be more
 acceptable in
 a poet!

Italy -
 what if
 more?
 to him

¹⁵⁶ equal: impartial, fair-minded.

¹⁵⁷ The course of systematic study of world history and culture which Milton pursued at Horton from 1632 to 1638, and for generous encouragement in which he thanked his father in *Patrem*, 67-92.

¹⁵⁸ empyreal conceit: heavenly imagination. Cf. Milton's draft of "Empyrean Air" in *PL VII*, 14, as he looks back on his song of heavenly events in *Book VI* and invokes his Muse afresh for epic inspiration.

trained in the precepts of Christian religion. This that I have hitherto related, hath been to show that though Christianity had been but slightly taught me, yet a certain reservedness of natural disposition, and moral discipline learnt out of the noblest philosophy, was enough to keep me in disdain of far less incontinences than this of the bordello. But having had the doctrine of holy scripture unfolding those chaste and high mysteries with timeliest care infused, that "the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body,"³⁴ thus also I argued to myself: that if unchastity in a woman, whom St. Paul terms the glory of man,³⁵ be such a scandal and dishonor, then certainly in a man, who is both the image and glory of God, it must, though commonly not so thought, be much more deflowering and dishonorable; in that he sins both against his own body, which is the perfecter sex,³⁶ and his own glory,

³⁴ "Now the body is not for fornication, but for the Lord; and the Lord is for the body" (I Cor. vi, 13).

³⁵ "... a man . . . is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man" (I Cor. xi, 7).

³⁶ So in the greatest and least anti-feminine of courtesy books, Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier* (Hoby's translation, Everyman Ed., p. 196), it

which is in the woman, and, that which is worst, against the image and glory of God, which is in himself. Nor did I slumber over that place expressing such high rewards of ever accompanying the Lamb with those celestial songs to others inapprehensible, but not to those who were not defiled with women,³⁷ which doubtless means fornication; for marriage must not be called a defilement.

Thus large I have purposely been, that if I have been justly taxed with this crime, it may come upon me, after all this my confession, with a tenfold shame.

could be seriously argued that "women are unperfect creatures, and consequently of lesse worthnesse than men, and not apt to conceive those virtues that they are." Milton agreed, yet he pled in *Tetr* (C.E. IV, 121) that "the law is to tender the dignity and human liberty of them that live under the law, whether it be the man's right above the woman, or the woman's just appeal against wrong and servitude."

³⁷ Milton is thinking especially of the hymn to the Lamb of God which is sung at the "marriage of the Lamb," in Rev. xix, by the redeemed, to which he refers in *Lyc*, 176-7, and again, much more significantly, in *Damon*, 215-9. For what he says here he has the authority of Calvin (*Institutes* IV, xii, 25; Norton's translation, p. 615): "The Apostle doth without exception boldly pronounce, that marriage is honourable among all men, but that for whoremongers, and adulterers abideth the judgment of God."

N.B.
vision of
heavenly
bliss
29 m.

Smsight's orphedox version

Beatrice and Laura,²⁷ who never write but honor of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts, without transgression. And long it was not after, when I was confirmed in this opinion that he who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem,²⁸ that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honorablest things—not presuming to sing high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy. These reasonings, together with a certain niceness of nature, an honest haughtiness and self-esteem either of what I was, or what I might be (which let envy call pride), and lastly that modesty whereof, though not in the title-page, yet here I may be excused to make some be-seeming profession; all these uniting the supply of their natural aid together, kept me still above those low descents of mind beneath which he must deject and plunge himself that can agree to saleable and unlawful prostitutions.

Next (for hear me out now, readers), that I may tell ye whether my younger feet wandered; I betook me among those lofty fables and romances,²⁹ which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood, or of his life if it so befell him, the honor and chastity of virgin or matron; from whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defense of which so many worthies, by such a dear adventure of themselves, had sworn. And if I found in the story afterward any of them, by word or deed, breaking that oath, I judged it the same fault of the poet as that which is attributed to Homer,³⁰ to

have written indecent things of the gods. Only this my mind gave me, that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath, ought to be born a knight, nor needed to expect the gilt spur, or the laying of a sword upon his shoulder to stir him up both by his counsel and his arm to secure and protect the weakness of any attempted chastity. So that even those books which to many others have been the fuel of wantonness and loose living, I cannot think how, unless by divine indulgence, proved to me so many incitements, as you have heard, to the love and steadfast observation of that virtue which abhors the society of bordelloes.

Thus, from the laureate fraternity of poets, riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces of philosophy, but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato³¹ and his equal,³² Xenophon: where, if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love (I mean that which is truly so, whose charming cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy—the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion which a certain sorceress, the abuser of love's name, carries about) and how the first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue—with such abstracted sublimities as these, it might be worth your listening, readers, as I may one day hope to have ye in a still time, when there shall be no chiding; not in these noises, the adversary, as you know, barking at the door, or searching for me at the bordelloes, where it may be he has lost himself, and raps up without pity the sage and rheumatic old prelatess with all her young Corinthian³³ laity, to inquire for such a one.

Last of all, not in time, but as perfection is last, that care was ever had of me, with my earliest capacity, not to be negligently

Homer for drawing morally unsatisfactory portraits of the gods and heroes (*Rep.*, 377e).

³¹ Cf. *CG*, n. 174.

³² Milton describes *Xenophon* (?430-?359 B.C.) as Plato's equal in the sense that he was contemporary with Plato. (Cf. note 5 above.) Doubtless he set a high value on *Xenophon's Memorabilia*, or recollections of Socrates' practical teachings presented specifically to refute the charge of corrupting youth, for which the Athenians condemned him to death.

³³ *Corinthians*, as a name for prostitutes, goes back to ancient times.

Write Petrarch's sonnets for the first time
True poet must be pure harmony, i.e., best things of
Acknowledged for pride

Arthurian legends join

of end of coming this the straight or index version