

ABSTRACT

Revealing Harmony, Wisdom, and Providential Justice through Political Order in

Milton's *Paradise Lost*

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Through *Paradise Lost* and *The Readie and Easie Way*, Milton portrays Eden and life after the fall in a way that has profound implications for the understanding of political order. My thesis involves a series of claims about political order before and after the fall that demonstrate the harmony of political and domestic life before the fall, the legitimacy of political dissent due to the nature of the fall, and the way that God works through time to prepare the elect for his heavenly kingdom. Milton portrays prelapsarian Eden as the original source of both the *oikos* (household) and the *polis* (what Milton would call "Commonwealth"), and Eden represents the *oikos* and the *polis* in such a way that does not imply inherent discord between the two. Adam and Eve's disobedience of God's commandment legitimizes political dissent because their faculties of right reason have been corrupted, and Adam and Eve can act unfaithfully toward each other. The final two chapters focus on Milton's political tract, *The Readie and Easie Way*, and book twelve of *Paradise Lost*. Through these, Milton reveals how typology, prophecy, and judgment function within God's providence for his elect, implying that the temporal unfolding of these three activities prepares the elect to fear God so that they can follow Christ as King.

APPROVED BY DIRECTOR OF HONORS THESIS

Dr. Phillip J. Donnelly, Great Texts of the Western Tradition

APPROVED BY THE HONORS PROGRAM

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REVEALING HARMONY, WISDOM, AND PROVIDENTIAL JUSTICE THROUGH
POLITICAL ORDER IN PARADISE LOST

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of

Baylor University

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Honors Program

By

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Waco, Texas

May 2014

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	iii
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER ONE: Dreaming of Harmony in Eden: <i>Oikos</i> as <i>Polis</i>	6
CHAPTER TWO: God’s Command and the Edenic Marriage Covenant	25
CHAPTER THREE: <i>The Readie and Easie Way</i> and God’s Revelation of Himself in English History	53
CHAPTER FOUR: <i>Paradise Lost</i> , <i>The Readie and Easie Way</i> , and “Filial” Fear	75
BIBLIOGRAPHY	97

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to express my gratitude to Dr. William Weaver and Dr. Jeffrey Fish for reading my thesis and offering corrections. I know that their time is valuable, and they were very gracious readers.

I also want to express my appreciation and respect for Dr. Phillip Donnelly for being my thesis director. Without his patience and guidance, this thesis would not have been possible, and I cannot thank him enough for all that he has taught me during my years at Baylor.

Last but not least, I want to thank my friends and family for supporting me throughout the thesis writing process. I could not have finished this thesis without their help and encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

Milton lived during a time in England when the debate regarding the nature of political order was especially volatile. He lived during the execution of Charles I in 1649 (for which he advocated), a bloody civil war from 1642-1651, and the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660. Milton opposed the monarchy of England, writing two editions of a tract in 1660 titled, *The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth*, arguing that England should establish a free Commonwealth instead of placing Charles II on the throne. The second edition of the *REW* was published only weeks before the Restoration. Milton then publishes *Paradise Lost* in 1667, seven years after the Restoration of the monarchy. In this context, as a failed revolutionary, Milton presents *Paradise Lost*, I suggest, partly in order to portray in Eden a certain kind of political order that he believes precedes all modern forms of order and provides the foundation for interpersonal harmony and political rule. Even though neither Milton nor his readers live in Eden, this Edenic state is not entirely lost after the fall but is tainted through the corruption of Adam and Eve's reason. Milton appreciates that one's imagination of human good and of the sources of human corruption affect one's political practices, and he seeks to influence politics indirectly through his depiction of Edenic harmony and corruption. On the other hand, Milton describes the world after the fall partly in order to demonstrate the way that God uses political order, even the tyranny of the English monarch, to prepare the elect for his heavenly kingdom, which is similar to Eden but ultimately transcends it. The first half of my thesis makes a series of claims regarding the

nature of political order in Milton's Eden, while the second half of my thesis identifies Milton's portrayal of God's providence for the elect in reference to postlapsarian government, biblical typology, prophecy, and judgment.

In Chapter One, I argue that Milton portrays Eden as the undivided location of both the *oikos* (household) and the *polis* (what Milton would call "Commonwealth"). Through associating Eden with the New Jerusalem in Revelation, Milton implies that Eden harmoniously embodies aspects of both home and Commonwealth in a similar way to how the New Jerusalem is both city for the elect and bridegroom of Christ. This view contrasts with Laura Knoppers' contention that Eden is a "uniquely hybrid space," which combines the domestic and political spheres in an unharmonious way, implying that Eve's expertise is at odds with Adam's status as head of the household. Knopper's claim implies that the civic virtue of citizens is fundamentally at odds with the ability of rulers to govern; under this view, governing bodies ought to be highly suspicious of the abilities of their citizens, because the expertise of the citizens, while it can benefit the state, opposes the ability of the governing body to impose order. As the union of *oikos* and the *polis*, however, Milton's Eden is a reality where Adam need not worry about the threat of Eve's expertise. In Milton's Eden, Adam and Eve take turns guiding each other toward virtuous action, governing each other in this way even in the midst of doing what are now considered household chores.

Chapter Two, on the other hand, discusses the nature of God's command and the Edenic marriage covenant. I contend that God's command is not a covenant, and that Adam's breach of God's command does not justify political dissent. Milton does imply that political dissent is justifiable, but he justifies such dissent through his portrayal of

Adam and Eve's marriage covenant instead of through God's command. Some dissent is possible within the boundaries of the Edenic marriage covenant, and complete dissention is justifiable after the fall, because Adam and Eve can act unfaithfully towards one another. As opposed to a Hobbesian covenant, in which the power of a covenant resides in the sovereignty's ability to enforce the covenant, Adam and Eve's marriage covenant is oriented towards toward their mutual good. They enter the covenant in order to complete each other and participate in "all rational delight" (*PL* 8.385). Therefore, when one party acts unfaithfully towards the other, the other can choose whether or not to dissolve the covenant depending upon whether they think that they can still achieve the same end goals within the violated covenant. In this way, the marriage covenant in particular has a rhetorical character; it exists within a persuasive framework. These claims contrast those of Victoria Kahn, who argues that God's first command to Adam is a form of contract, and that the right to political dissent in a fallen world derives from Adam's justifiable breach of God's command. As I argue, however, Kahn imputes to Milton a Hobbesian view of the state of nature that causes her to reach these conclusions. My claims about Adam and Eve's marriage covenant imply that covenants are not rooted in coercive power, but are rather centered upon the delight and unity that can be achieved through covenants.

Chapter Three takes a step back from *Paradise Lost* and analyses the biblical allusions of the second edition of *The Radies and Easie Way*. These allusions place the event of the Restoration in the context of the larger narrative of scripture, implying that God's revelation of himself instills the fear of the Lord that is needed in order for people to recognize Christ as King. I argue that Milton's overall persuasive purpose in the *REW*

is to frame the Restoration in such a way that attunes the reader to God's revelation of himself through England's history with the goal that such a revelation guide the reader through fear of God to choose Christ as King. Scholars usually focus on either Milton's prophetic voice or political agenda in the *REW*, and my claim offers a potential connection between these two aspects of the tract. My claims imply that Milton relies upon God to act through post Restoration history to complete his main rhetorical purpose, and that he writes the *REW* in order to participate in God's plan to reveal himself to the English people.

Finally, Chapter Four discusses a reference to the *REW* in Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*. Milton alludes to the *REW* while also making references to Exodus 13:17 and Numbers 14, and I contend that, through these allusions, he implies that typology, prophecy, and judgment are all functions of God's providence for his elect. As a consequence, extra-biblical prophecy, such as the *REW*, and judgment can be read figuratively through the lens of scripture in a way that reveals Christ retrospectively through time. Most scholarship discusses Milton's political agenda in this section of Book 12, but they do not analyze Milton's use of references to political order and civic and religious laws to achieve a higher persuasive purpose. Though Milton sees the Restoration of the monarchy as a moral failure of the English, and though he does not devalue the importance of earthly political order, he implies that God uses postlapsarian order to reveal himself in an indirect way that instils "filial" fear instead of "servile" fear. For Milton, all postlapsarian political order is a result of mankind's moral deficiency. While most forms of political order use coercive power to instil fear in their subjects in order to keep them in line, the kind of fear inherent to divine love works indirectly,

inviting the elect to participate in a process of knowing God rightly and having proper awe towards him. Such “filial” fear prepares the elect to follow Christ as King and to enter God’s heavenly kingdom as children rather than slaves.

Through Milton’s portrayal of Eden, he implies that humans can exist harmoniously with each other without some form of tyrannical rule to keep them in line. This ability is impaired after the fall, but it still exists, implying that the good of mankind resides in their capacity to live in harmony with one another apart from coercive power. In addition, Christ renews this ability to live virtuously in harmony with one another for the sake of “all rational delight,” and he enables mankind to do so through his covenant of grace, which resembles the marriage covenant. Through the *Readie and Easie Way* and Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, Milton implies that God uses postlapsarian political order to reveal himself, instilling a “filial” fear in his elect. Such fear prepares the elect to accept Christ as King, which is necessary for mankind to understand its proper place and treat one another rightly. In this way, Milton describes the original paradise, its political ideals, and the way that God uses postlapsarian political order to prepare the elect for a paradise that is similar to Eden, although ultimately superior. Milton’s claims transcend arguments for a specific kind political order in order to point mankind towards a reality greater than any form of earthly political order can establish.

CHAPTER ONE

Dreaming of Harmony in Eden: *Oikos* as *Polis*

In Book 8 of *Paradise Lost*, Adam tells Raphael about his memories that immediately follow his own creation. I contend that Adam's central persuasive purpose in this episode is to show Raphael his wisdom regarding daily affairs. He describes his earliest memory since his creation in such a way that reveals his understanding of Eden partly as a gift from God which he receives without asking. As a result of Adam's depiction of Eden, the poem implies that Eden is the undivided reality from which postlapsarian notions of domestic and political life proceed, and that this reality is possible because laborious work is unnecessary in Eden. Adam's knowledge of the character of Eden enables him to interact properly with Eve while they are in Eden. Without Adam's knowledge, the nature of Eden would be irrelevant for political order. Laura Knoppers has argued that Milton presents a vision of Eden as a "uniquely hybrid space," which is both home and commonwealth. Although I agree with many of Knopper's claims about Eve and her capacity for civic virtue, I contend that the specific way that Knoppers describes Eden as a "hybrid space" inadvertently implies that Eden inherently causes tension between Adam and Eve in a way that does not actually exist. By offering a corrective to her argument, I ultimately strengthen her claim that Eden is Milton's "alternative domestic site" to the Caroline royal family.¹ Milton, through portraying Eden as an undivided reality, offers a vision of harmony between domestic

¹ Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity from Henrietta Maria to Milton's Eve* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 146.

and political life, in which domestic and political virtues complement each other, and in which political subjects do not threaten their leaders through their expertise. Eden has characteristics that are similar to both the *oikos* (household) and the *polis* (Commonwealth), but it is not reducible to either the *oikos* or the *polis*. Adam and Eve function as a family unit, working together to tend the garden and completing tasks that are necessary daily actions in the postlapsarian world. Yet Adam and Eve partake in free discourse with one another while they tend the garden, and they encourage one another towards virtue, actions typically associated with the *polis*.

At the start of Book 8 of *Paradise Lost*, Adam and Raphael open the book by discussing celestial motions, from which conversation Adam comes to understand the value of practical wisdom. Adam inquires about celestial motions, and Raphael admonishes Adam not to be improperly interested in such matters. Raphael says that he does not blame Adam for his inquiry, but that Adam should not seek what God has concealed regarding celestial bodies, since “From man or angel the great architect/ Did wisely to conceal and not divulge/ His secrets to be scanned by them who ought/ Rather admire” (*PL* 8.72-5). In addition, Raphael affirms the excellence of earthly affairs, and undercuts the notion that considering celestial matters is greater than considering earthly matters:

Consider first that great
Or bright infers not excellence: the earth,
Though, in comparison of heaven, so small,
Nor glistering, may of solid good contain
More plenty than the sun that barren shines,
Whose virtue on itself works no effect
But in the fruitful earth...
Yet not to earth are those bright luminaries
Officious but to thee, earth's habitant. (*PL* 8.90-9)

The purpose of the heavens is to “speak/ The maker’s high magnificence... That man may know he dwells not in his own” (*PL* 9.100-3). Since the heavens are beyond human comprehension, the excellence that Adam can take part in resides in his portion of the world, which God has given to him, and this excellence is not diminished in comparison with celestial bodies merely because they are larger or brighter. God has given Adam “this Paradise/ And [his] fair Eve,” and Adam can have a clear perception of Eden and Eve because of his close proximity to them, and because God has not shrouded them in heavenly mystery.

Responding to Raphael, Adam speaks to show that he understood what Raphael had told him. Showing his understanding of his own tendencies to ponder celestial matters and showing his appreciation for Raphael’s admonition, Adam notes:

But apt the mind or fancy is to rove
Unchecked, and of her roving is not end
Till warned or by experience taught she learn
That not to know at large of things remote
From use, obscure and subtle, but to know
That which before us lies in daily life
Is the prime wisdom. (*PL* 8.188-94)

In light of this speech, Adam’s subsequent description of his earthly memories serves to show how his own earthly experiences rightly use his imagination without imagining things beyond what men should consider, such as celestial motions. Adam’s explicit purpose of his speech about his creation is to “detain” Raphael longer and to get a reply from Raphael, but he reveals an implicit purpose for his speech when he says, “to know/ That which before us lies in daily life/ Is the prime wisdom,” which he says in agreement with Raphael’s teaching (*PL* 8.192-4). Adam describes his memories to Raphael in order to show that he knows about the daily life that is before him, showing the extent of his

wisdom regarding how to live. Adams description of his memories places emphasis on his dialogues with God and his revelations from God, whom Adam presents as the source of authority for his understanding of daily affairs.

Although this chapter is limited to Adam's memory of his first dream, in Adam's speech about his memories, he consistently portrays a four step process in which he begins with a sensible experience and arrives, with the help of God's guidance, at wisdom of earthly affairs. First, Adam progresses from a sensible experience to a desire for something beyond what is presently sensible. Second, God reveals a dream to Adam that shows Adam the object of his desire. Third, God brings Adam to the tangible reality which he showed him through the dream. And finally, fourth, Adam arrives at wisdom regarding an aspect of his earthly affairs through his reflection on those first three steps.

As soon as Adam awakes after he is created, he gazes upon the earth and sky, running through the land that is around him and seeing the animals that dwell in it. Through this sensible experience, Adam comes to question the origin of his own existence. Adam is also able to name the things that he sees, implying that he understands their basic character well enough to distinguish them from other objects.

The first words that Adam tells Raphael that he speaks are:

'Thou Sun,' said I, 'faire Light,
And thou enlightened Earth, so fresh and gay,
Ye Hills and Dales, ye Rivers, Woods, and Plaines,
And ye that live and move, fair Creatures, tell,
Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
Not of myself; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power preeminent;
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier then I know. (*PL* 8.273-282)

Adam's description of the sun and the earth reveals the primary way that Adam comes to comprehend that he has a "great Maker," since he describes the sun as "faire Light," and the earth as "thou enlightened Earth" (*PL* 8.273-4). Adam perceives that he sees the earth only because the sun shines upon it. The earth does not produce its own light, but it reflects the sun's light, and its plant and animals live only because of the sun's light. In this same way, Adam wonders who his creator is that sustains the earth through life giving force and metaphorically illuminates all of existence in this way. Milton is obviously responding here to a long established analogy between the sun and God that has its roots in Plato's *Republic* and also has a long reception history in Christian theology.² In the *Republic*, the sun is the sensible image of the form of the good, so it is fitting that Adam asks the sun about God's existence, since God is the primary source of goodness, especially with regards to the creation of the world in which God pronounces that his creation is good. The sensible perception of the sun cannot satisfy Adam, but it guides him by analogy to the one who does satisfy his existence, even when Adam cannot see Him. Through Adam's description of the sun and the earth, Adam shows how, based on his perception of sensible objects, he articulates desire for unseen reality.

Adam's subsequent dream shows how God answers Adam's questions about unseen reality by first providing an image of such reality through divine revelation. As a response to Adam's question, God reveals himself through Adam's "fancy", or imagination, showing Adam the image of an object before Adam is able to tangibly perceive it. The term "fancy" in the 1600's could have referred to the scholastic

² Gospel of John 1, 8:12; Bonaventure, *Reduction of the Arts to Theology*, trans. Zachary Hayes (N.Y: Franciscan Institute, St. Bonaventure University, 1996); Dante Alighieri, *Divine Comedy*, trans. Mark Musa (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), especially *Paradiso* 33.67-84.

psychological term “fantasy,” which indicates the faculty by which “mental apprehension of an object of perception” is performed,” and it could have been used as a synonym for “imagination”, although it also contained a variety of other meanings.³ Milton appears to use the scholastic psychological definition of “fancy” as a faculty for mental apprehension. God empowers Adam’s imagination and guides it to see intelligible truths that can be understood only through recognizing a similitude between sensible reality and intelligible truths. Since God leads Adam to see the image before reality, Adam’s speech also implies that God-inspired visions can be truthful without having a direct experience of the specific tangible reality that the visions portray.

Some important contextual elements in Adam’s first dream are: that it is a dream that occurs after Adam falls asleep; that the revelation occurs before God reveals himself; that and as Adam falls asleep he thinks that he is being unmade. Adam falls asleep because of his exhaustion which is due to his previous explorations and his current prolonged thought: “Pensive I sat me down; there gentle sleep/ First found me, and with soft oppression seized / My drowsed sense” (*PL* 286-8). Adam is describing a time before he had seen God, so this vision is not a reflection on the previous ways that Adam had interacted with God, since there were no such occurrences. Adam perceives death as untroubled sleep, since he says, “I thought/ I then was passing to my former state/ Insensible, and forthwith to dissolve” (*PL* 8.289-91). Milton implies two things through Adam’s description of falling asleep: that divine revelation feels like being unmade, and that Adam’s life up to this point is as good as prelapsarian human life can be without

³ "fantasy | phantasy, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014. Web. 5 April 2014.

divine revelation. With respect to the second point, Adam lives out a life of reason, reaching the furthest conclusions to which analogies can take him, understanding that the sun is analogous to God. When Adam falls asleep, however, God reveals himself and Adam's proper home through divine revelation. Up to this point, Adam has understood enough to articulate a desire to know the maker of all he sees, but that is all he can discover before he falls asleep in a manner that arguably prefigures the way that death provides a limit on postlapsarian understanding. When sleep begins, revelation provides Adam with a different kind of analogy to God that cannot be discovered through the physical world alone.

After his dream, Adam's arrival in Eden shows how God guides Adam to the sensible reality portrayed in his dream, emphasizing God's continued action in revelation and in giving Eden to Adam. Adam awakes to find that he has been transported to Eden: "whereat I waked and found/ Before mine eyes all real as the dream/ Had lively shadowed" (*PL* 8.309-11). While Adam does not explicitly say that God acted to create the reality that his imagination perceived, the presence of God in the dream and after the dream, combined with Adam's later description of his second dream in which God is the primary creative power, imply that God has made the very reality he dreamed. Both seeing the dream and arriving at the sensible reality shadowed by the dream are God's prerogative—Adam merely participates through his imagination—and God uses the dream to communicate the image of an unforeseen truth to Adam, which then becomes a sensible reality. God's revelation of Eden is also entirely God's prerogative in the sense that God reveals Eden to Adam after Adam seeks to know God. Adam's desire was only

to know God, and he does not make any mention of being dissatisfied with where he is before the dream in which God reveals Eden.

Through describing his dream, Adam shows Raphael that he understands Eden as a “mansion,” which has political undertones in this specific passage of *Paradise Lost*. “Mansion” is the term that God uses in the dream to describe the entirety of Eden, and it implies that Eden is a dwelling place that does not distinguish between the *oikos* and the *polis*, and it evokes eschatological connections to the New Jerusalem. *Oikos* is the Greek word for household, and, as Aristotle describes, “the association formed according to nature for the satisfaction of the purposes of every day is a household.”⁴ Households generally consist of families and slaves (at least in ancient times), the purpose of the household is to provide for the everyday necessities of life, and Aristotle describes the household as a unit of the state. *Polis*, on the other hand, is the Greek word for Commonwealth, which is a form of government where people rule each other in turn for the purpose of fostering nobility in the free citizens of the commonwealth, which is a noble action. ⁵ As Arendt, a 20th century political philosopher, says, “the political way of life escaped” being called a necessary action “due to the Greek understanding of *polis* life, which to them denoted a very special and freely chosen form of political organization and by no means just any form of action necessary to keep men together in an orderly fashion.”⁶ In *Paradise Lost*, Eden has characteristics that are similar to both

⁴ Aristotle, *The Politics of Aristotle*, trans. Peter Simpson (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 1252b9-15.

⁵ Ibid. 1325a17-1235b30

⁶ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), 13.

the *oikos* and the *polis*, but it is not reducible to either the *oikos* or the *polis*. Adam and Eve function as a family unit, and they work together to tend the garden. In these ways, Eden functions as an *oikos*, or a place where necessary daily actions occur between family members. Eden differs from an *oikos*, however, in that there is not “need” in the usual sense of the word, since they have everything that they need in abundance, and labor is also not taxing like it is in the prelapsarian world. Adam and Eve freely choose to do their work, which contrasts what usually occurs within the *oikos*. Adam and Eve partake in free discourse with one another and encourage one another towards virtue, actions typically done within the *polis*. In contrast to the general notion of *polis*, however, Adam and Eve participate in such actions while they tend the garden. In addition to the comparison between these terms and the nature of the garden, Milton also reveals that Eden is such a reality through Adam’s description of his dream, in which God tells Adam that his “mansion” wants him (*PL* 8.296). This term, as used in the 17th century, denotes “A place in which a person, etc., lives or lodges; a place of abode, a dwelling place,” and it has eschatological connections which relate it to the apocalyptic vision of the New Jerusalem.⁷ Since God uses the term “mansion” to describe the entirety of Eden before Adam has any notion of a city or house, the term precedes man’s conception of the terms of *oikos* and *polis*. Like the New Jerusalem, Eden does not contain any inherent division within itself, although it contains elements that are contradictory to each other in a postlapsarian and pre-apocalyptic world.

Regarding the Garden’s eschatological connections, the gospel of John says that Jesus told his disciples at the Last Supper that “In my Father's house are many mansions:

⁷ "mansion, n." OED Online. September 2013. Oxford University Press. 11 November 2013 <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/113651?rskey=JUYiXf&result=1&isAdvan>

if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you” (John 14:2 KJV). Similarly, Eden has eschatological associations with the New Jerusalem described in Revelation 21 and the first part of 22, since Revelation presents the New Jerusalem as a New Eden. The New Jerusalem has the Tree of Life as Eden does, God’s presence is in the New Jerusalem in a similar way to how God walks through the Garden of Eden, and the New Jerusalem comes down from heaven “prepared as a bride adorned for her husband” (Revelation 21:2 KJV), which is similar to God’s creation of Eve for Adam, to name a few similarities. By using the term “mansion” to describe Eden through the words of God in Adam’s dream, Milton evokes these eschatological associations of the New Jerusalem and Eden through such allusions to John 14.

One term for the New Jerusalem is “the holy city,” or τὴν πόλιν τὴν ἁγίαν, which does use the term polis to describe the New Jerusalem, but the way in which God lives in the city and marries the city reveals that the term polis is not adequate to describe all of the ways that the city functions. The New Jerusalem functions as house, city, and bride of God. It appears that the Eden of *Paradise Lost*, through God’s description of it as “mansion,” maintains similar manifold functions. When referring to Eden, it appears that the terms city or house would both be applicable, since Eden is the reality that precedes both of those terms, as the New Jerusalem is a place that transcends those categories. Another important characteristic of Eden as “mansion” is that man does not create it. God leads Adam to Eden “smooth sliding without step” in a similar way to how Jesus says that he goes to prepare a place for his followers and how God creates the New Jerusalem (*PL* 8.302). “Mansion,” like the New Jerusalem, appears to evoke an interpersonal reality that is a divine gift from God, which cannot be reduced to *oikos* or

polis. It precedes both of these conceptions and it describes the entire garden, as the New Jerusalem transcends the *oikos* and *polis*, and contains the entire Church.

Adam portrays his practical wisdom through his description of his memories, and he reveals how he grounds his insights in God's authority. Through his first dream, Adam shows that he understands that Eden is this sort of interpersonal reality described earlier. He knows that is a gift from God that exists apart from any effort from Adam, and that exists in such a way that domestic and political actions exist harmoniously with each other due to the lack of need in Eden. To Adam, Eden is an unsought-for gift that God bestows upon him in addition to God's self-revelation to Adam after Adam seeks for God. Eden is also a confirmation from God, since it functions to affirm Adam's thought before his dream that he is "happier than [he] know[s]," because of the goodness of God's character (*PL* 8.282). Furthermore, while Adam would not understand Eden in relation to any conception of a New Jerusalem, he is able to name objects and animals without assistance, and he speaks to Raphael and God without having to be taught what words mean, so he would be able to understand what God means by the term "mansion." Milton uses the term through the mouth of God to draw the reader to consider Eden's connection with the New Jerusalem and understand qualities of Eden by comparison, but Adam does not need to draw this connection since he has an inherent understanding of words. Adam's use of the term "mansion" shows his understanding of the term, since he uses it instead of a term such as "house" or "city." Adam shows his practical wisdom through his understanding of the nature of Eden as a "mansion" that encompasses both household and political functions in a harmonious way.

This view of Eden as a “mansion” differs from Laura Knoppers’ claims regarding Milton’s portrayal of Eden. Knoppers claims that Milton creates a domestically and politically “hybrid space” in prelapsarian Eden. By using the term “hybrid,” Knoppers implies that the domestic and political spheres of Eden are not one and the same, but merely two combined ideas that are inherently opposed to each other in certain aspects. Regarding Milton’s portrayal of Adam and Eve’s marriage and politics, she says:

Rather than use domestic language to represent rulers of state, Milton infuses middle-class domestic practices with political meaning. Milton’s Adam, and especially his Eve, develop and exercise virtues of temperance, choice, and rationality that pertain not only to the household but to civil society. The distinctive domestic activities of the poem – from prayer and praise, to discourse, gardening, food preparation, and entertainment of guests – evince Adam and Eve acting for the public good as citizens of Eden and future citizens of heaven... Yet the hybrid space of Milton’s Eden, at once both public and private, is unstable and Eve’s expertise, the very qualities that evince her domestic and civic virtue, unsettle the marital hierarchy, and enhance her own self-will and Adam’s anxiety.⁸

For Knoppers, because she claims that Eden is a “hybrid” space—a place where civic virtues overlap domestic virtues and Adam and Eve can participate in either domestic or public practice (but not both at the same time)—Eve’s expertise and civic virtue are in tension with her marriage with Adam. Also, when Knoppers uses such terms as “private,” “public,” “domestic,” and “political,” she is using the terms of political theorist Jürgen Habermas, and in her descriptions of *Paradise Lost* the terms “private” and “domestic” become virtually synonymous. The same thing is true for the terms “public” and “political.”

In support of her claim that, in *Paradise Lost*, Eden represents both the domestic and the public spheres, Knoppers analyzes Milton’s household, which his wife, Elizabeth,

⁸ Knoppers. *Politicizing Domesticity*, 141.

ran. Using an inventory of Elizabeth's possessions before her death, Knoppers shows that Elizabeth "appears to have mastered a wide range of household skills with cookery: daily practices that reveal not only industry, skill, temperance, and frugality, but rational choice and freedom."⁹ Elizabeth outlived her husband, and Knoppers details Elizabeth's possessions at the time of her death to help illustrate what the household of Elizabeth would have been like, and what kind of woman Milton would have had in his mind as an example while writing *Paradise Lost*.

Knoppers especially details Elizabeth's kitchenware, which she claims shows Elizabeth's expertise. Elizabeth had over twenty-five "pewter plates and dishes, hanging irons and spits, white ware, earth ware, a chafing dish," and many pots and pans.¹⁰ Knoppers lists a variety of meals that Elizabeth could have made with her various pots and pans, which show the skill that Elizabeth must have had, since her cooking was well acclaimed by her guests. Knoppers also thinks Elizabeth's expertise had the potential to threaten "the explicit doctrine of female subordination and submissiveness within the home," and such a view coincides with her claim that Eden is a "hybrid" space, because it implies that a woman's expertise naturally upsets the marriage hierarchy.

Knoppers and the other scholars, namely Kuzner and Norbrook, who claim that Eden is a "hybrid" space use the terms of Jürgen Habermas, a political philosopher, to describe what they see as an overlay of the political and the public on the private and domestic.¹¹ The common theme among all of these scholars is that the overlay of the

⁹ Knoppers. *Politicizing Domesticity*, 145.

¹⁰ Ibid. 144

political and domestic spheres in Eden seems to destabilize Eden and thus contribute to the fall. This claim concerning the destabilization of Eden appears to be the crux of their argument that these spheres are hybrid, since the term “hybrid” contains inbred division, implying that two things are combined that are inherently separate ideas. The term that Knoppers uses to describe the effects of this division is “tension.”¹² This latter term, on the one hand, very aptly describes the way in which Adam and Eve discuss whether or not to work together or individually at the end of Book 9. Indeed, there is a form of tension between them, since they are trying to work out a problem and neither concedes to the other’s claims. On the other hand, the way that Knoppers uses this term implies an unsolvable and necessary difference. She claims that Milton’s line “‘No fear lest Dinner coole’ registers the tension in an incomplete and inconsistent mapping of civic virtues on to a gendered domestic space, tension that will spill over into the separation scene and, eventually, the fall.”¹³ Here, “tension” names a posited irreconcilable gender difference inherent in Milton’s Eden, which leads to the fall. In contrast to this view, I suggest that Milton’s Eden appears to precede modern notions of domestic and political spheres of activity through God’s description of Eden in Book 8 of *Paradise Lost*, and this quality of Eden allows for there to be tension between Adam and Eve in a way that does not lead to the fall. In *Paradise Lost*, reason is a capacity for “peaceful difference,” and the tension in the poem portrayed in prelapsarian Eden is the sort that can be experienced without

¹¹ David Norbrook, *Writing the English Republic: Poetry, Rhetoric, and Politics, 1627-1660* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 489; James Kuzner, “Habermas Goes to Hell: Pleasure, Public Reason, and the Republicanism of *Paradise Lost*.” *Criticism* 51, no. 1 (2009): 120.

¹² Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity*, 152.

¹³ *Ibid.* 152

compelling moral corruption.¹⁴ Although there is tension between Adam and Eve in the separation scene, Adam addresses the tension by consenting to Eve's desire to work separately. The narrative implies that Eve is sufficient in herself to resist Satan, although she does not choose to do so (*PL* 9.335-352). The tension between Adam and Eve, while it leads to Eve's departure from Adam, is not caused by an improper layering of domestic and political spheres, but rather by Adam and Eve's status as free individuals who are capable of disagreeing about the best way to tend the garden.¹⁵

While Knoppers states that Eden is a hybrid space, she assumes that there is a fundamental difference between the domestic and political spheres, meaning that Eve is either in one or the other. Knoppers does not say that Adam and Eve's marriage is both domestic and political. Instead, she perceives their marriage as a contrast to the political dynamics also contained in Eden. While Eve has civic virtues, Knoppers sees her as either using those virtues in the domestic sphere or going outside the domestic sphere to use them in the public or political sphere.

The reason for Knoppers' division between the public and private spheres is that she claims that Adam appears to make this distinction. In his praise of Eve, Adam says, "nothing lovelier can be found/ In woman than to study household good and good works in her husband to promote" (*PL* 9.232-4). Knoppers claims that Adam's praise simultaneously consigns Eve to a "more restricted sphere than has previously been the

¹⁴ Phillip J. Donnelly, *Milton's Scriptural Reasoning: Narrative and Protestant Toleration*. (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3, 151. "[Milton] imagines a paradise in which there is freedom to disagree without a loss of innocence or good will."

¹⁵ Knoppers, *Politicizing Domesticity*, 151.

case.”¹⁶ To Knoppers, Adam appears to be using the praise to instruct Eve. The following words that the narrator uses are particularly important as well. Commenting on the discussion, the narrator says, “So spake domestic Adam in his care/ and Matrimonial Love” (*PL* 9.318-9). Knoppers contrasts “domestic Adam” with Eve, who is trying to leave the domestic sphere. For her, Adam’s attempts to get Eve to stay with him, along with the description of the narrator show that Adam creates a distinction between the public and private spheres, and this distinction creates tension in the marriage hierarchy.

Knopper’s arguments concerning Adam’s distinct separation of the private and public spheres seem to have some difficulties, however. In Adam’s praise of Eve where he says that “nothing lovelier can be found/ In woman than to study household good and good works in her husband to promote,” he is praising Eve for thought regarding how they might best complete their work in Eden as a whole (*PL* 9.232-4). Knoppers argues that, since Adam instructs Eve concerning food in the following lines after his praise, Adam’s whole comment appears to neglect Eve’s expertise in the kitchen and creates tension. After Adam’s line of praise, he says:

Yet not so strictly hath our Lord imposed
Labor, as to debar us when we need
Refreshment, whether food, or talk between,
Food of the mind, or this sweet intercourse
Of looks and smiles, for smiles from Reason flow,
To brute denied, and are of Love the food. (*PL* 9.235-240)

Yet in this passage about food, Adam does not lecture Eve about food in a way that insults or ignores her expertise. He discusses the consumption of food and the analogy of the “sweet intercourse/ Of looks and smiles” to food. Eve’s Expertise regards food preparation and not food consumption, so Adam’s instruction would not indicate to her

¹⁶ Ibid. 153

that he ignores or belittles her expertise. While Adam's words may remind Eve that he did not praise her for the meal that she prepares for him and Raphael previously, Adam's words suffice as praise, and there is no need to consider them as an instruction, because Eve is already doing the things that Adam praises her for.

Similarly, the narrator's description of Adam as "domestic" does not necessarily support the conclusions that Knoppers makes. While domestic can describe something pertaining to house alone, the word was also used in Milton's time to describe something "Of or pertaining to one's own country or nation; not foreign, internal, inland, 'home.'" In 1665, a translation of T. Manley by Hugo Grotius in *De Rebus Belgicis* says "that the contentions growing among Priests should be decided by Domestique Judges, and not at Rome," using the term "domestic" in this fashion.¹⁷ So, the use of "domestic" as an adjective for Adam in this passage need not imply that he is confining Eve from any sort of political involvement. Instead, the apparent reason that the narrator describes Adam as "domestic" is to emphasize his protective care for Eve against the foreign threat that is in the garden, which the reader knows is Satan. "Domestic" is a term that is flexible enough to encompass a range of meanings, and its usage does not necessarily mean that the narrator is implying that Adam creates a distinction between political and domestic spheres in this passage.

My claim that Milton's portrayal of Eden as an undivided reality that precedes both the *oikos* and the *polis* in which there is no inherent tension agrees with Knoppers' contention that Eve's virtues extend to both household and civil society. However, if we move beyond the characterization of Eden as "hybrid" space, we can discern how Eve's

¹⁷ "domestic, adj. and n." OED Online. June 2013. Oxford University Press. 4 September 2013 <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/56663?redirectedFrom=domestic>>.

expertise and virtue can exist in a manner that does not destabilize her marriage with Adam. Knoppers observes that “scholars have often separated public and private, political and domestic, in Milton’s poem, or argued that the poem does not separate them as fully as it should,” and her solution to this problem is her argument that Eden is a “hybrid” space. Milton, however, through his portrayal of Eden as a “mansion,” depicts a reality that goes a step beyond viewing Eden as a “hybrid” space. His Eden is one that precedes both home and commonwealth and which contains characteristics of both *oikos* and *polis*. This quality of Milton’s Eden reveals why some scholars have had an issue with the amount of separation between domestic and political matters in the poem, and it also reveals why some portrayals of Eden that do not have this quality imply that Adam and Eve’s marriage is inherently unstable. Because Adam’s “mansion” contains no inherent division, any attempt to separate out the political and domestic actions of the garden inserts postlapsarian division into Milton’s Eden will imply artificial discord. Adam understands the nature of Eden, so he is able to act properly within it and avoid such discord.

Milton’s portrayal of Eden as an interpersonal reality that precedes both the *oikos* and the *polis* agrees with Knopper’s claims regarding Elizabeth’s expertise and Eve’s civic virtue. Since Milton portrays Eden as a place where political and domestic actions complement each other, Elizabeth’s expertise and Eve’s civic virtue contribute to their domestic virtue, making each of them more of a wife for these qualities instead of creating irreconcilable tension in their marriages. Adam and Eve’s marriage functions as a microcosm for government, evincing the republican ideal of liberty. While they do not represent ideal postlapsarian government, since such government must account for the

fall, they exhibit virtues that postlapsarian government should permit and foster within its citizens. In Eden, Adam and Eve do not work out of a necessity to survive, and they show that in the absence of needs, human flourishing consists in exhorting each other to noble deeds and performing noble deed, implying that postlapsarian government should try to overcome necessity for laborious work in order to pursue noble deeds. Under any form of tyrannical government, the expertise of citizens could be a source of contention between the people and the rulers, because the monarch relies upon the submission of the people in order to maintain political control. In Eden, however, such expertise does not create tension, because Adam and Eve exhort each other in turn to good deeds

Milton's portrayal of Eden as a "mansion" also goes a step beyond the notion of Eden as a "hybrid" space, since Milton's portrayal of Eden does not contain any inherent division or tension that leads to The Fall. Adam understands God's creation of Eden as an affirmation that he is "happier" than he knows because of God's character. If Eden contained inbred division, God's gift to Adam would also be a curse and mean that God's nature causes Adam unhappiness. Eden, as an interpersonal reality that precedes both the *oikos* and the *polis*, is only a blessing and an affirmation to Adam of God's goodness, and its qualities do not lead to the fall. Since it appears that Milton intended for Eden to be a united whole, any attempt to impute fundamental division between political and domestic actions in Eden will destabilize Eden and imply that tension exists where Milton does imply such conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

God's Command and the Edenic Marriage Covenant

After Adam tells Raphael about his first dream, he describes his encounter with God, in which God appears to Adam from among the trees of Eden. In this theophany, God gives Adam the only command that Adam must live by in the garden, he converses with Adam regarding whether or not Adam needs a companion, and he also creates Eve out of Adam's rib. Victoria Kahn has argued that God's first command to Adam in *Paradise Lost* is a form of contract, and that the nature of God's command, combined with Adam's ability to break God's command, serves to justify political dissent. I suggest, however, that Kahn imputes to Milton a Hobbesian view of covenant and state of nature that guides her to these conclusions. Such conclusions imply that the fall was justifiable from a human perspective, and that God's command is a form of threat. On the other hand, when interpreting *Paradise Lost* through Milton's view of the state of nature, Adam appears to understand God's command as a form of "divine voluntary right" (in a manner similar to Grotius) that is as a divine prerogative of God to dictate that an action is unjust apart from the existence of a covenant. Milton implies that political dissent is justifiable, but he makes this implication through the nature of Adam and Eve's marriage covenant instead of through God's command. Adam and Eve both enter their marriage covenant after having conversations that reveal to Adam and Eve their need for each other in order to be complete. These conversations persuade them to enter into the marriage covenant for the purpose of completing each other and obtaining

“all rational delight” through their marriage (*PL* 8.385). By situating the marriage covenant within such a rhetorical framework, Milton implies that prelapsarian contracts come about through each party’s agreement to fulfill the obligations of the covenant in order to achieve certain goals. Since these covenants are formed for specific *telē*, when one party acts unfaithfully towards another in a way that demonstrates that these *telē* will not be achieved, that party enables the other party to justly dissolve the violated covenant. Due to the nature of covenants and reason in Eden, Milton shows that there are two levels of political dissent: the first is inherent in Adam and Eve’s capacity to reason in the form of “peaceful difference”¹ before the fall; and the second occurs due to the fall, in which the corruption of Eve’s capacity to reason properly causes her to violate her marriage covenant with Adam and allows for the potential for them to divorce justly.

After telling Raphael how his first dream ends and how he sees Eden and God with his own eyes outside of his dream, Adam describes the command that God gave him. Through this description, Adam implies that God’s command is not a threat, and, as we shall see, this implies that God’s command is not a covenant in the way that Kahn claims. While God’s command may appear to be a threat at first glance, instead, it suffices as a warning that establishes a cause and effect relationship between Adam’s disobedience and the proceeding consequences:

But of the Tree whose operation brings
Knowledge of good and ill, which I have set
The Pledge of thy Obedience and thy Faith,
Amid the Garden by the Tree of Life,
Remember what I warn thee, shun to taste,

¹ Phillip J. Donnelly, *Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning: Narrative and Protestant Toleration* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3, 151. “[Milton] imagines a paradise in which there is freedom to disagree without a loss of innocence or good will.”

And shun the bitter consequence: for know,
The day thou eat'st thereof, my sole command
Transgressed, inevitably thou shalt dye;
From that day mortal, and this happy State
Shalt loose, expelled from hence into a World
Of woe and sorrow. (*PL* 8.324-32)

While God's speech imparts fear into Adam, God does not tell Adam that he himself will bring about Adam's death. Instead, Adam understands the consequence of death as a natural result of his transgression that will not involve any retributive action on God's part. The word "inevitably" signifies that disobedience directly causes this consequence. There are two aspects to God's speech in this passage: setting a pledge of obedience and faith, and warning Adam about the consequences of eating the fruit. The first one implies action on God's part that is separate from the typical natural order of the garden, and this action will be discussed in more detail with respect to Grotius' concept of "divine voluntary right."² The second, however, only warns Adam of the natural consequence that will take place if he eats the fruit and breaks God's command. If it were a threat, God would say that he would kill Adam. Instead, he says that "inevitably thou shalt dye" (*PL* 8.328). God's warning is similar to the warning of a parent who tells a child not to touch a hot stove. The burn that a disobedient child incurs will be the same severity regardless of whether the parent threatened the child or not, but such a warning is not a threat. God appears to warn like the parent warns in this analogy, since he does not say that he will actively try to kill Adam if Adam transgresses his commandment. This distinction is important, because otherwise one could say that God threatened to kill Adam, which would provide precedent for authority figures, especially political

² Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace, Including the Law of Nature and of Nations*, trans. A. C. Campbell (New York, London: M. W. Dunne, 1901), 1.15.

authorities, to threaten their subjects with death. Capital punishment is typically regarded as the most powerful weapon of a government, and Adam's experience would seem to justify using the threat of capital punishment to enforce political authority if his obedience was due to a coercive threat from God. If the initial command of God were a threat, Adam would understand submission as a product of coercion, and not obedience and faith in God.

Book 11 of *Paradise Lost* also implies that God does not exact revenge on Adam, since the effects of the forbidden fruit causes Adam's corruption. The Father tells the Son that

longer in that Paradise to dwell,
The law I gave to nature him forbids:
Those pure immortal elements that know
No gross, no unharmonious mixture foul,
Eject him tainted now, and purge him off
As a distemper gross, to air as gross,
And mortal food, as may dispose him best
For dissolution wrought by Sin, that first
Distempered all things, and of incorrupt
Corrupted. (*PL* 11.48-57)

The garden itself seems to reject Adam after the fall without any act of retribution from God. John Rogers argues that this passage implies that God's command is a function of natural law, since "The law I gave to nature him forbids."³ This claim, however, confuses "a law that God has given to nature," which is sort of law described in this passage, with "natural law," which is the ability of uncorrupted human reason to act justly regarding issues that can be known apart from divine revelation. God's command does not operate

³ John Rogers, *The Matter of Revolution: Science, Poetry and Politics in the Age of Milton* (Ithaca; London: Cornell University Press, 1996), 148. Rogers claims that, through *PL* 11.48-57, "[Milton] justifies what might otherwise appear to be a callous lack of mercy by an appeal to an even higher principle of irrevocable natural law."

as a function of “natural law,” since Adam knows the command only because God tells it to him. This passage from Book 11, while it may involve a law that God gives to nature, implies that God’s command is neither a threat nor a function of “natural law.”

Kahn first appears to concur with the conclusion that God’s commandment is not a threat. Yet, the details of her argument assume otherwise as revealed by her claim that God’s command is a covenant with Adam, and that breaking such a command justifies future political dissent. She argues that

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton presents an anti-Hobbesian account of the contracting subject, one in which an analysis of the heavenly contract serves, as Hobbes feared, to authorize the breach of the political contract... In contrast to Hobbes, however, whose narrative of the state of nature was designed to justify consent to an irrevocable political contract, Milton’s narrative serves not only to make sense of the fall but also to justify dissent.⁴

She connects Milton’s view of covenant and political dissent with his portrayal of the state of nature, but, as we shall see, she still imputes a Hobbesian view of covenant and state of nature on Milton, although she claims to do otherwise.

In defense of her claim that God’s command is a covenant, Kahn argues that there is no explicit covenantal language in Eden because, in *De Doctrina Christiana*, “Milton tells us there was no theological covenant of works or of grace in prelapsarian Eden.”⁵

She cites chapter 10 of *De Doctrina Christiana*, which says,

There are such people as designate this “the covenant of works” [foedus operum], although it does not seem—from any passage of scripture at any rate—to be either a covenant or of works. No works are in fact commanded of Adam, [and] only one thing is

⁴ Victoria Kahn, *Wayward Contracts: The Crisis of Political Obligation in England, 1640-1674* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 2004), 197.

⁵ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 196.

banned. But one thing at least had to be either banned or enjoined, and in particular what was of a type neither good nor bad in itself, so that man's obedience might thereby be established. For since by his own disposition man behaved well, and was by nature good and holy, then surely neither was it necessary for anyone to be constrained by any bond of a covenant to [do] what he would be doing voluntarily, nor would any of his good works have shown obedience since, without any command, he was brought to them entirely by a natural inclination. Any command at all, moreover, whether God's or a magistrate's, even with prize and penalty proffered, should not automatically be called a covenant, but rather a declaration of authority.⁶

She further cites this passage to explain why "there was no civil government, no realm of the specifically political, and thus no contract of political obligation" in Milton's Eden.⁷

Revealingly, however, in the same paragraph Kahn goes on to contend that "more than any other seventeenth-century text, *Paradise Lost* reads as a sustained meditation on the intersection of the theological covenant, marriage contract, and political contract."⁸ These statements seem to cohere with *Paradise Lost* in light of the quoted passage of *De Doctrina Christiana*, but the way that she characterizes these covenantal analogies as depicted in prelapsarian Eden involves several difficulties. *Paradise Lost* does deal with the intersection of the theological covenant, the marriage contract, and political contract, but it does so without implying that coercion is necessary for covenants. Milton does not use covenantal language in order to emphasize that people enter into covenants within persuasive conversations with others and with God, and that these agreements exist apart from any sort of legal language.

⁶ John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington, eds., *The Complete Works of John Milton*, Vol. 8 (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 359.

⁷ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 196.

⁸ *Ibid.* 196

After stating that there is no theological covenant of works in Eden, Kahn claims that God's commandment in *Paradise Lost* not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil sets up a covenant or contract between Adam and God. Kahn uses the terms contract and covenant synonymously, calling God's command a contract in some instances and a covenant in others. She does not state what sort of covenant God's command is, although it is not a covenant of works, but she leaves the specific character of the covenant ambiguous. She claims that God's command is a form of covenant, because Adam and Eve are able to break the command from God: "This divinely instituted possibility of transgression makes the relationship to God not simply a matter of primary natural law but of what Grotius, Selden, and others called secondary natural law, the realm of contracts and covenants."⁹ She also cites Rosenblatt regarding Milton's connection to Selden and Milton's view that God's command in Eden was "an unwritten embryonic Mosaic law."¹⁰

On the whole, however, Kahn seems to impute a Hobbesian form of contract to Milton here, since her claim that God's command is a covenant due to the nature of secondary natural law does not line up with Grotius or Selden's views. Primary natural law is also called the "Law of Nations" by Selden and Grotius, and for them this natural law signifies universal moral truth that binds all nations equally and can be found out through reason or through nature. Selden and Grotius were both contemporaries of Milton, and Milton would have read some of Selden and Grotius' works that pertain to

⁹ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 196-7.

¹⁰ Ibid. 343 citing Jason Rosenblatt, "Milton's Chief Rabbi." *Milton Studies*, no. 24 (1988): 62.

the issues of natural law and God's initial command.¹¹ Selden defines "Law" as "the rule, measure, and pointing out of things lawful or unlawful," and discussing the "Law of Nations" Selden says,

That which relate's to the generalitie of mankinde, or all Nations, is either Natural or Divine. That is, either manifested by the light of nature or the use of right reason...Both which may properly bee termed the universal Law of Nations, or the Common Law of mankind.¹²

Regarding secondary natural law, or the "Secondarie Law of Nations," Selden claims that it "take's its rise, not from any command imposed upon several Nations in common, but through the intervention either of som Compact, or Custom."¹³ So, secondary natural law comes from agreements between nations that do not have authority over one another. Selden distinguishes such law from a command from the Pope, in which people would obey a higher religious authority.¹⁴ Under Selden's distinctions, God's command would not be a matter of secondary natural law, since it comes from a higher religious authority and is not an agreement among equals who do not have authority over each other.

Grotius also distinguishes God's command from natural law, defining it as a "divine voluntary right:"

The very meaning of the words divine voluntary right, shows that it springs from the divine will, by which it is distinguished from natural law, which, it has already been observed, is called divine also. This law admits...that God does not will a thing, because it is just, but that it is just,

¹¹ Barbara Kiefer Lewalski, *The Life of John Milton: A Critical Biography*. (Blackwell Critical Biographies. Oxford ; Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 2000); Rosenblatt, "Milton's Cheif Rabbi," 43-72.

¹² John Selden, *Of the Dominion, Or, Ownership of the Sea*, trans. Marchamont Nedham (New York: Arno Press, 1972), 12-13.

¹³ Ibid. 15

¹⁴ Ibid. 15

or binding, because God wills it. Now this law was given either to mankind in general, or to one particular people. We find three periods, at which it was given by God to the human race, the first of which was immediately after the creation of man, the second upon the restoration of mankind after the flood, and the third upon that more glorious restoration through Jesus Christ. These three laws undoubtedly bind all men, as soon as they come to a sufficient knowledge of them.¹⁵

For Grotius, a main characteristic that separates “divine voluntary right” from natural law is the way in which it is discovered. God must reveal “Divine voluntary right” whereas people discover natural law through reason and through observing the world. “Divine voluntary right” also can change whether an action is just or not absolutely upon receiving the command, whereas contracts and covenants between people of equal authority only change the justice of an action conditionally within the terms of the contract. Grotius explicitly states that God’s initial command was a “divine voluntary right,” so he must not view God’s initial command as a function of secondary natural law. In light of both Selden and Grotius’ views, Kahn does not appear to arrive at the conclusion that God’s command is a covenant based on either of their conceptions of secondary natural law. Milton’s description of God’s command through the words of Adam appears to line up with Grotius’ description of “divine voluntary right.” This description enables God’s command to imply action on God’s part without making God’s command a coercive threat. In *Paradise Lost*, God’s command makes eating of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil unjust, setting the tree as “the pledge of thy obedience and thy faith” (*PL* 8.325). After God sets up this “pledge,” Adam’s act of injustice results in his death without any further retribution by God. Since God’s command makes eating from the tree unjust solely due to God’s command, obeying such

¹⁵ Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, 1.15.

a command does not depend upon Adam's reason, but his trust towards God, as Adam states. Through voluntarily setting the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil as a pledge, God's will establishes the conditional context for human action to be just or unjust.

Instead of relying upon Grotius or Selden, it seems that Kahn relies on Hobbes for the connection between a covenant and God's command in *Paradise Lost*, and I will attempt to draw out the possible connection that she sees between Hobbes' notion of covenant and God's command. If one analyzes *Paradise Lost* through the lens of a Hobbesian notion of natural law, one can see how such a reading would result in the same conclusions that Kahn reaches regarding God's command. For Hobbes, a "Law Of Nature (Lex Naturalis), is a Precept, or general Rule, found out by Reason, by which a man is forbidden to do, that, which is destructive of his life, or taketh away the means of preserving the same."¹⁶ Taking such a view of *Paradise Lost*, one might say that Adam and Eve act through reason, which in a sense forbids them to do anything contrary to reason, as Eve articulates when she tells Satan that, apart from God's command, "the rest, we live/ Law to ourselves; our reason is our law" (*PL* 9.653-4). God's command also appears to be a form of Hobbsean contract, since it seems to follow many of the characteristics of Hobbes' second natural law:

That a man be willing, when others are so too, as fare-forth, as for Peace, and defense of himself he shall think it necessary, to lay down this right to all things; and be contented with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself.¹⁷

¹⁶ Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 91.

¹⁷ *Ibid.* 92

This second natural law, for Hobbes, provides the foundation for contracts, since men want to obtain the benefit of “Peace” by giving up some of their rights. By “right,” Hobbes means mere ability, since “Right, consisteth in liberty to do, or to forbear.”¹⁸ In order to obtain “Peace,” men transfer their rights and enter contracts, since “By Transferring” Hobbes means “when [a man] intendeth the benefit thereof to some certain person, or persons”, and “The mutuall transferring of Right, is that which men call Contract.”¹⁹ Viewed from Hobbesian notion of contract, the command of God to Adam and Eve in *Paradise Lost* appears to function as a form of contract, or mutual transference of right between two individuals, since Adam and Eve have freedom from death as long as they keep God’s commandment, and God receives obedience from them. For Hobbes, since “right” is the mere ability to do something, any constraint or obligation for another’s benefit constitutes giving up a right.²⁰ So, from a Hobbesian perspective, God gives up his right to kill Adam and Eve in exchange for their obedience, and Adam and Eve give up their right to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil in exchange for safety from death. Kahn appears to be using such a view of contract in order to conclude that God’s command in *Paradise Lost* is a contract.

In addition, Kahn claims that Milton himself creates ambiguity with respect to contract in prelapsarian Eden. She cites a section of the *De Doctrina Christiana* that refers to God’s command as a covenant, and she cites some of Adam’s postlapsarian complaints to God. The passage in *De Doctrina Christiana* says: “For as to Adam, the

¹⁸ Ibid. 93

¹⁹ Ibid. 93-4

²⁰ Ibid. 91

common parent and head of all, just as in the matter of the covenant or in his receiving [God's] commands, so also in his rebellion, he stood or fell on behalf of the entire human race."²¹ In one of Adam's statements that contains contractual speech, he says in book ten of *Paradise Lost* that

As my will
Concurred not to my being, it were but right
And equal to reduce me to my dust
Desirous to resign and render back
All I received, unable to perform
Thy terms too hard by which I was to hold
The good I sought not. To the loss of that,
Sufficient penaltie, why hast thou added
The sense of endless woes? Inexplicable
Thy Justice seems; yet to say truth, too late,
I thus contest; then should have been refus'd
Those terms whatever, when they were propos'd:
Thou didst accept them; wilt thou enjoy the good,
Then cavil the conditions? (*PL* 10.746-59)

Kahn uses these passages to claim that Milton himself implies that God's command regarding the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil is a form of covenant. In her argument, she departs from the claims of Shawcross, whom she cites earlier, who discusses the same passage from *De Doctrina Christiana*. He argues that the covenant cited there is the covenant of grace that God makes with Adam at the end of book 10 and the beginning of book 11 of *Paradise Lost*.²² The Latin text for the passage is "Adamus enim communis omnium parens et caput sicut in foedere, sive mandata accipiendo, ita

²¹ Milton, *The Complete Works*, 8:415.

²² John Shawcross, "Milton and Covenant: The Christian View of Old Testament Theology" In *Milton and Scriptural Tradition* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1984), 172.

etiam in defectione pro universa gente humana stetit aut lapsus est;”²³ and Shawcross argues that a good literal translations should be “indeed, Adam, the universal parent and head of all, just as in the covenant, or in receiving commands, so likewise in his defection stood or fell for the whole human race.”²⁴ Against a reading that implies that the covenant and the commandments in the passage are one and the same thing, Shawcross states that “accipiendo...is a gerund in the ablative case and means ‘in receiving’” and “the phrase is parallel with *in foedere*, and the two parts are separated by *sive*, “or,” thus removing them from apposition.”²⁵ He also explains that Adam’s speech in *Paradise Lost* occurs after the fall, and that it “reflects a human wallowing in blame-placing and ego-aggrandizement, indicate a lack of understanding of prohibition and a kind of equation with covenant, an equation that has persisted in the minds of commentators on the Bible and on Milton.”²⁶ Shawcross points out that “the prohibition has not involved and does not involve ‘terms’ (only reward or punishment), was not ‘propos’d’ to him, but imposed (as he himself has just argued, his will did not concur to his being), and has not therefore brought in any question of acceptance or nonacceptance.”²⁷ In the end, Shawcross concludes that “a covenant between God and man did not exist until the Fall”²⁸

²³ Milton, *The Complete Works*, 8:414.

²⁴ Shawcross, “Milton and Covenant,” 171-2.

²⁵ Ibid. 171

²⁶ Ibid. 170

²⁷ Ibid. 170

²⁸ Ibid. 172

Although Kahn seems to rely on Shawcross at certain points, in this case she departs from his account, although by citing him she implies that her comments are in line with his arguments. Shawcross' claims are quite convincing, however, and Kahn's departure does not appear to originate from the previously-cited sections of *Paradise Lost* or *De Doctrina Christiana*. Instead, I argue that Kahn's construal of these results from relying on a Hobbesian view of covenant without understanding how faith functions in Milton's view of covenant and the contracting subject. She states that Milton has an "anti-Hobbesian account of the contracting subject," but she does not redefine covenant according to Milton's alternative psychology of the contracting subject.²⁹ Without an understanding of Milton's view of the relationship between faith and covenant, she understands covenant only in terms of calculative reason and passion, which causes her, in practice and despite her claims to the contrary, to impute a form of Hobbesian covenant to Milton.

Faith appears to mean either "trust," or "trustworthiness" to Milton, and the latter definition is more important to his view of covenant. Discussing the stability of covenants, Milton says, "every perpetual covenant, almost every compact, is indeed indissoluble at its institution, yet is immediately broken up by bad faith of either party."³⁰ The faithfulness of those who are covenanting with each other is what holds a covenant together.

For Hobbes, on the other hand, the faithfulness of an individual is completely irrelevant to covenants. The only kind of faith that matters with respect to a covenant is

²⁹ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 197.

³⁰ Milton, *The Complete Works*, 8:393-4.

trust, and this kind of faith is not even necessary for a covenant, since a covenant can exist without faith in someone: “It appears also that the oath adds nothing to the obligation. For a covenant, if lawful, binds in the sight of God, without the oath, as much as with it; if unlawful, bindeth not at all, though it be confirmed with an oath.”³¹ A covenant exists only if there is sufficient power to enforce the covenant. A man may enter into a covenant with another man because he trusts the man will keep his covenant, but he could likewise enter into a covenant knowing that the other man will try to break the covenant; if the first man can supply the force necessary to make the other person keep the covenant, the covenant still exist. Hobbes only cares about a feigned sort of trustworthiness, which is the guarantee that a covenanter can coerce the other party to keep a covenant. The greatest statement made by Hobbes regarding covenants is that “covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all.”³² For Hobbes, capital punishment is the ultimate form of coercion, and this coercive force is what makes covenants binding. Capital punishment is so coercive, because “WHEN man reasoneth, he does nothing else but conceive a sum total, from addition of parcels; or conceive a remainder, from subtraction of one sum from another,” and avoiding death is the greatest motivator for Hobbes.³³

Through examining Hobbes’ depiction of the state of nature and some of Kahn’s statements regarding Adam’s fall, we will see how Kahn’s claims about *Paradise Lost* reveal her use of a Hobbesian state of nature, or a similar bias, in her interpretation of

³¹ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 100.

³² Ibid. 177

³³ Ibid. 31

Paradise Lost. From the beginning of the *Leviathan*, Hobbes reveals his atomist philosophical principles, in which matter and movement are the basic components of all substance and action. For Hobbes, all things can be described in terms of matter and motion; he even describes sense perception in these terms: “Sense in all cases, is nothing els but original fancy, caused (as I have said) by the pressure, that is, by the motion, of externall things upon our Eyes, Eares, and other organs thereunto ordained.”³⁴ From this view of sense perception, Hobbes describes the imagination, memory, and passions. “Desire” and “Aversion” form the basis for all passions, and Hobbes describes them as motions. He claims that “Endeavor” is the “beginnings of Motion, within the body of Man, before they appear in walking, speaking, striking, and other visible actions.” “Endeavour” is also the basis for “Desire” and “Aversion:”

Endeavour, when it is toward something which causes it, is called Appetite, or Desire; the later, being the general name; and the other, oftentimes restrained to signifie the Desire of Food, namely *Hunger* and *Thirst*. And when the Endeavour is fromward something, it is generally called Aversion.³⁵

So, for Hobbes, emotions amount to movements, and “Reason” is the faculty of the mind that is able to analyze these movements, since “Reason... is nothing but *Reckoning* (that is, Adding and Subtracting) of the Consequences of general names agreed upon, for the marking and signifying of our thoughts.”³⁶ “Reason,” through the use of words, makes decisions and evaluates the movements signified by “Desires” and “Aversions.”

³⁴ Ibid. 14

³⁵ Ibid. 38

³⁶ Ibid. 32

Hobbes also has a very cynical view of how God created humans, since he believes that humans, due to “Competition,” “Diffidence,” and “Glory,” are naturally in a state of “Warre” if “men live without a common Power to keep them all in awe.” “Warre,” as defined by Hobbes, is the lack of assurance that people will not be disposed to fight under their present condition, and in a state of “Warre” life is “solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short.”³⁷ Therefore, in a Hobbesian state of nature, contracts are necessary for “Peace,” which is the absence of “Warre,” since they transfer rights to a sovereignty who can then enforce “Peace” by the use of capital punishment. Also, the main concern for humans is how to coerce other humans to uphold their contracts, by which they have given up their “Rights” to kill and do injustice to each other.

Paradise Lost, on the other hand, portrays a state of nature in which humans are naturally at peace with one another before the fall, and reason is “a capacity for peaceful participation in a reality whose goodness is a gift.”³⁸ So, before the fall, God has no cause to covenant with mankind to establish peace. Kahn expresses Adam’s capacity to reason in a Hobbesian sense, as opposed to a Miltonian sense, saying that *Paradise Lost*

helps us to see that our passions are also reasons—and not just tests, obstacles, or the lowest common denominator of humanity...It’s as though Milton were saying through Adam: if there were no God, human nature would be a good defense of the fall. Such a formulation helps us keep in mind and in tension—as Milton did—the competing claims of God and man.³⁹

Kahn essentially claims that the fall is justifiable because Adam’s passions are sufficient reasons for the fall, which is true only if we attribute to Adam a view of reason as mere

³⁷ Ibid. 88-9

³⁸ Donnelly, *Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning*, vii.

³⁹ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 221.

calculation. For her, the fall legitimates breach of contract, since it seems to her that the Adam could not have done otherwise than obey reason, which she claims caused Adam to eat the fruit. To her, Adam's decision to eat the fruit appears to contradict the authority of God in such a way that directly contrasts Hobbes' claim that human reason will make people obey contracts when some higher power enforces the contracts with sufficient force. For Milton, however, these situations are not comparable. God is not analogous to a political sovereignty in this way, and his command is not a covenant. Hobbes also departs from the view of Natural Law that Milton holds, which shows his differing view of reason.⁴⁰ Through her claims, Kahn reveals that she interprets *Paradise Lost* through a Hobbesian state of nature. This interpretive lens appears to be the reason she imposes a Hobbesian version of covenant on God's command, and why she argues that Adam's breach of God's command "serves, as Hobbes feared, to authorize the breach of the political contract."⁴¹

In contrast to Kahn's view, I contend that Milton's portrayal of Adam and Eve's marriage covenant serves to justify the breach of a political contract after the fall. Although Adam and Eve do not enter into a covenant by using contractual language, I argue that, through Eve's description of her first encounter with Adam, and through Adam's description of his second dream, Milton implies that they enter into a marriage covenant. In addition, this marriage covenant does not depend on coercion or oaths. Instead, it is Adam and Eve's unstated agreement to complete one another that enables their finite nature, through collateral love, to participate in "all rational delight."

⁴⁰ R. S. White, *Natural Law in English Renaissance Literature* (Cambridge [England]; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 243-5.

⁴¹ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 197.

Revealingly, Adam and Eve both describe their first interactions with each other and their desire for unity with one another after they have had an encounter with God in which God reveals to them, either explicitly or through dialectic, that they will find joy through their marriage with each other.

In Book 4, Eve tells Adam about her memory of their first encounter. Through Eve's speech, Milton implies that Eve enters into the marriage covenant through her unspoken agreement to follow Adam, which results due to her understanding of her union with Adam as her greatest joy. Before Eve's speech, Adam warns Eve of God's commandment, but he tells her that they should "not think hard/ one easy prohibition, who enjoy/ Free leave so large to all things else and choice/ Unlimited of manifold delights" (*PL* 4.432-5). Next, he says, "let us ever praise him and extol/ His bounty, following our delightful task/ To prune these growing plants and tend these flowers,/ Which, were it toilsome, yet with thee were sweet" (*PL* 4.436-9). Eve then tells Adam of her first encounter with him and how she comes to "see/ How beauty is excelled by manly grace/ And wisdom, which alone is truly fair" (*PL* 4.489-91). After describing how she "pined with vain desire" at her own image in the lake (even though she does not know it is her own image), Eve says that a voice warns her,

What thou seest,
What there thou seest fair Creature is thy self,
With thee it came and goes: but follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming, and thy soft embraces, he
Whose image thou art, him thou shalt enjoy
Inseparably thine. (*PL* 4.461-73)

Even though God is invisible, she describes how she follows God until she sees Adam. At first she turns away from Adam because she does not think that he is as beautiful as the image in the lake, but Adam calls out to her,

Return faire *Eve*,
Whom fly'st thou? whom thou fly'st, of him thou art,
His flesh, his bone; to give thee being I lent
Out of my side to thee, nearest my heart
Substantial life, to have thee by my side
Henceforth an individual solace dear;
Part of my soul I seek thee, and thee claim
My other half. (*PL* 4.481-8)

After Adam's persuasive appeal to Eve to return, she says,

with that thy gentle hand
Seized mine, I yielded, and from that time see
How beauty is excelled by manly grace
And wisdom, which alone is truly fair." (*PL* 4.488-91)

In Eve's memory, Adam claims her as his other half, and he says that "of him thou art, His flesh, his bone" as evidence for his claim that she is his other half. In this context, when Adam seizes Eve's hand, she understand the truth of Adam's claim that she is his other half, since the touch of their flesh provides physical evidence for her. When Adam convinces her of his claim through his grasping of her hand, she says that she comes to understand how "manly grace and wisdom," which are things of rational beauty, excel merely physical beauty. Eve's narration demonstrates that she only agrees to follow Adam after both God and Adam convince her that she will experience joy through her union with him in which they participate in rational beauty instead of merely physical beauty or pleasure. She also understands that her union with Adam is possible because of his gift of himself to form her, and that she enters into the marriage as a comfort to Adam, who is not complete without her.

Kahn describes Eve's recollection of her first encounter with Adam in a different light. Regarding this passage, she says that

This narrative has been read as an emblematic though unwitting account of the sexual contract that is the precondition of the political contract between men. I want to suggest, in contrast, that this drama of duress is deliberate on Milton's part and that it is part of his self-conscious exploration of the relation of coercion and consent, passion and subjection, in contractual obligation. In Eve's case, self-love does not lead to contract without the supplement of a coercive power.⁴²

For Kahn, Eve does not describe her entrance into a marriage contract with Adam, but only her entrance into the sexual contract, and the moment that Adam seizes Eve's hand represents the coercion that is needed in order for Eve to understand true likeness and submit to Adam. Kahn does not interpret Adam's action within the rhetorical framework of Adam's argument, however, since his grabbing of Eve's hand brings her to understand likeness because it provides evidence for his claim that they are one flesh. Eve is not able to stop Adam's gesture, but her reason for yielding to Adam is not reducible to coercion. Instead, Eve enters into the covenant through Adam's persuasion of her to do so, in which he convinces her that she will obtain joy through her union with Adam.

Implicitly, Milton portrays the moment that Eve agrees to enter into the marriage covenant through her account of it in order to show that their marriage covenant depends upon the memory of Eve to recall the reasons for which she enters the marriage. Contractual language does not appear in Eden, because reason and memory mediate this covenant, as opposed to an oath or external coercion. The union of Adam and Eve serves as the sign of their marriage covenant, but the covenant depends upon Adam and Eve's memory to remember the purposes for which they are united. In contrast to Hobbes, who

⁴² Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 209.

locates the power of covenants in the means of enforcing covenants, because “covenants, without the sword, are but words and of no strength to secure a man at all,” Milton implies that the end of covenants, which in this case is rational delight, is as important to covenants as their means.⁴³ As we shall see in Adam’s speech, humans know that they find their greatest joy in such rational delight if they know themselves rightly. Thus, the human desire to have such rational delight causes them to enter into covenants, and without such an end humans have no persuasive reason to keep the covenant. Such ends pertain to human goods that are greater than mere freedom from death or pain, and these goods cannot be obtained through compulsion.

Adam’s understanding of marriage as *telē* oriented is similar to Eve’s understanding, as he shows through his speech to Raphael in which he describes a conversation he has with God about his own insufficiency, and in which he speaks of God’s creation of Eve out of his own side, which he sees through a dream. In his conversation with God, Adam tells God that he seeks “fellowship...fit to participate/ All rational delight, wherein the brute/ Cannot be human consort” (*PL* 8.384-6). Also, in response to God’s question about whether or not Adam thinks that God is sufficient by himself, Adam says that he is different from God because he is not infinite. Man, on the other hand, needs others “to help/ Or solace his defects,” since “unity defective...requires Collateral love and dearest amity” (*PL* 8.418-20, 425-6). God finds Adam “knowing not of beasts alone,/ Which thou hast rightly named, but of thyself, Expressing well the spirit within thee free,/ My image, not imparted to the brute” (*PL* 9.438-41). Since God knows all along that it is not good for Adam to be alone, this conversation between Adam and

⁴³ Hobbes, *Leviathan*, 177.

God is like a divinely planned drama in which Adam participates. God only pretends to be surprised by Adam's request for someone "fit to participate/ All rational delight (*PL* 8.385-6).

Partly in order to illustrate the nature of Adam and Eve's marriage covenant, Milton writes Adam's speech in such a way to typologically connect Eve's creation with the Church's creation. In this parallel, the new covenant brought about by Christ's death is similar to the marriage covenant between Adam and Eve. As J. M. Evans claims, Milton is working with a rich Christian tradition that elaborates on the typological Pauline parallel of Adam and Eve, on the one hand, and Christ and the Church on the other.⁴⁴ In this parallel, "Adam's sleep is a symbol of the death of Christ, and by the wound in the side of Christ was typified the Church, the true mother of all living."⁴⁵ In *Paradise Lost*, before Adam's description of his first dream, he says that he thought he was being unmade when he fell asleep, showing the connection between sleep and death that the typology describes. Likewise, Adam's second dream describes his rib being taken out "with cordial spirits warm,/ And life-blood streaming fresh," which is evocative of the spear wound in the Son's side and the blood that flowed out of it (*PL* 9.466-7). Through this typological connection to Christ, Milton implies that this first marriage covenant between Adam and Eve is like the new covenant that Christ institutes at his death. Both of these covenants are formed by a mutual agreement between the two parties for the sake of rational delight between both parties. The main difference between these two covenants is that the Son's covenant with believers does not provide comfort

⁴⁴ J. Martin Evans, *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1968), 101.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 101 quoting Tertulian

for him since he is infinite and does not need consolation. The covenant between Adam and Eve arises due to their insufficiency as separate individuals, an insufficiency which the Son does not have.

Kahn recognizes that Milton associates the marriage covenant with the covenant of grace, but she does so only in relation to *De Doctrina Christiana*. With respect to *Paradise Lost*, on the other hand, she claims that, since “there was no work Adam and Eve were required to do,” and since “Adam and Eve were not yet fallen...there was no civil government, no realm of the specifically political, and thus no contract of political obligation. Thus the language of covenant and contract is missing from the scenes of prelapsarian life.”⁴⁶ Through Adam’s typological connection with the Son, and through Milton’s portrayal of Eve and Adam’s union, however, their marriage covenant is clearly implied. Also, as discussed in the previous chapter, Eden is an undivided reality which contains aspects of both *oikos* (home) and *polis* (commonwealth), so Eden does not have a “realm of the specifically political.” Which civil government is not necessary, Adam and Eve admonish each other in virtue and take part in actions that are characteristic of the *polis*.

Since the Edenic covenant is based on desire, one may think that such covenants have no lasting power, but this view does not take into account the role of right reason in Eden. God guides both Adam and Eve to understand that their greatest joy will come about through their union. God guides Eve from her reflection to Adam, and God tells Adam that he judges correctly when Adam tells him that he needs an equal in order to have “all rational delight” (*PL* 8.385). Through reason, Adam and Eve both understand

⁴⁶ Kahn, *Wayward Contracts*, 196.

that they find their greatest joy in their marriage, and they know that God has confirmed this fact. Thus, since “reason is [their] law,” they will not break this covenant as long as they have right reason (*PL* 9.654).

This sort of covenant, although perpetual as long as Adam and Eve remain unfallen,⁴⁷ allows for some disagreement between Adam and Eve, as shown by their separation scene in Book 9. Here, Eve wants to separate from Adam in order to accomplish more work, but Adam wants her to stay so that together they will be more prepared against the temptations of Satan. When Eve proposes that they separate for their labors, Adam says that, in addition to the fact that he wants Eve to be by his side while they work so that they may converse, “other doubt possesses me lest harm/ Befall thee severed from me, for thou know’st/ What hath been warned us (*PL* 9.251-3). After further discourse, Eve ends her argument by claiming that “frail is our happiness” if she is not capable of withstanding Satan by herself (*PL* 9.340). Adam then tells Eve to “go; for thy stay, not free, absents thee more...On what thou hast of virtue, summon all,/ For God toward thee hath done his part; do thine” (*PL* 9.372). Through this statement, Adam acknowledges that Eve is sufficient to withstand Satan on her own, and he gives her permission to leave, which she takes. While this disagreement and Eve’s final decision to work separately from Adam do not help Eve to resist Satan, it does not break apart Adam and Eve’s marriage and such action does not involve sin. Both Adam and Eve think that

⁴⁷ Milton, *The Complete Works*, 8:395. “And so for human beings perfect by nature—before there was sin, in fact—God instituted marriage in paradise as indissoluble, [but] for human beings who had fallen [from grace], by a law of nature [and] by a law of Moses—without Christ objecting—he allowed its being necessarily dissoluble, lest the innocent party be exposed to the guilty one’s perpetual acts of cruelty.”

they will come back together at the end of their work and continue to live in harmony, and the narrator calls Eve “sinless” later on in Book 9 (*PL* 9.659).

After Eve falls, however, the harmony between Adam and Eve changes, since Adam cannot live with Eve while he is unfallen. Due to the nature of the marriage covenant, as described earlier, which is an agreement between two people to complete each other and to participate in “all rational delight,” the marriage covenant no longer binds Adam. He cannot participate in “all natural delight” with Eve who has fallen reason, and she acts unfaithfully by trying to convince him also to eat the fruit. At this point, however, Adam still has other options besides abandoning his marriage with Eve. As Dennis Danielson claims, Adam could have offered himself as a sacrifice to atone for Eve’s sin, since he is still unfallen and would be a perfect sacrifice: “For as Christ was the second Adam, so Adam might have been a first Christ... The loving offer of self-sacrifice of the first Adam in Book 3 backgrounds the non-self-sacrifice of the first Adam in Book 9.”⁴⁸ Before his fall, Adam could have acted according to the covenant and alleviated Eve’s defects in a profound way, choosing to die on her behalf. This possibility demonstrates that, even though Adam was not bound to the marriage covenant, he still could have worked within the marriage covenant to accomplish the *telē* for which he first entered covenant. Christ died for all, even though everyone acts unfaithfully towards him, and he did so “for the joy that was set before him” (Hebrews 12:2 KJV). This typological connection of Adam with Christ emphasizes an important characteristic of Milton’s view of covenant. Although Adam does not feel obligated to

⁴⁸ Dennis Danielson, “Through the Telescope of Typology: What Adam Should Have Done.” *Milton Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (October 1989): 123-4.

stay with Eve after her fall, as shown by his discussion about God creating a second Eve, he could have continued to fulfill the covenant to bring about his and Eve's joy. After the fall, however, both Adam and Eve need the Son to come in order to atone for their sin, since neither of them would be an adequate sacrifice. In this way, Adam's fall brings disharmony into the marriage covenant, and, without Christ, he and Eve cannot participate in "all rational delight." They can still continue their marriage with one another and partially complete each other, but in order to be completely whole after the fall they need to enter into the covenant of grace with Christ.

Hence, the nature of the fall justifies political dissent, because Eve's actions allow for the potential dissolution of the Edenic marriage covenant, and Adam can no longer participate in "all rational delight" with her apart from dying for her, which is not inherently part of the covenant. After the fall, since people are not ruled by right reason, they can betray each other and act unfaithfully towards each other, causing what once seemed to be a good agreement to become potentially disastrous. Through the nature of the Edenic marriage covenant, Milton implies that covenants are not binding when one party breaks the covenant by acting unfaithfully towards another, because such action can make the *telē* of the covenant impossible to achieve.

Political obligation, therefore, does not depend upon coercion and oaths, and passions are not a justification for disobeying God's command, as Kahn implies. Instead, covenants depend upon right reason, memory, and ordering of desire for the good of the other. Because Adam could have died to atone for Eve's sin, Adam's passion is not a justification for his fall, and Adam does not justify political dissent through the nature of his fall in the way that Kahn describes. Instead, the nature of the marriage covenant

justifies dissention on two levels, the first being inherent in Adam and Eve's capacity to reason in the form of "peaceful difference" before the fall and the second occurring due to the fall, because Adam and Eve can now act unfaithfully towards each other. While Kahn argues that God's command is a covenant, it functions as a form of "divine voluntary right," so Adam does not break a covenant with God through his fall. Kahn imputes a Hobbesian view of the state of nature on Milton, causing her to imply that Adam's fall was justifiable because of his passions. While these passions can act in a coercive way after the fall, even then they do not justify disobedience to God, and God brings his people back to him through fear that is not coercive, as we shall see in the following two chapters. The following chapter transitions away from *Paradise Lost* to discuss *The Readie and Easie Way*, one of Milton's political tracts, in order to examine the role of political order in the postlapsarian world.

CHAPTER THREE

The Readie and Easie Way and God's Revelation of Himself in English History

The second edition of Milton's *Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth* is an enigmatic text in a variety of ways. Milton publishes *The Readie and Easie Way* on the eve of the Restoration of the monarchy in England, and he optimistically argues for the establishment of a free commonwealth while also prophesying against the nation should it reinstate the monarchy. This contrast between tone and persuasive purpose has led the majority of scholarship on *The Readie and Easie Way* to focus on either the specific political agenda for which Milton advocates or the prophetic voice that he uses to foreshadow the coming of the Restoration and pronounce judgment upon the people who support it. Both of these ways of approaching the text, however, do not consider how Milton could have construed the optimistic argumentation for a free commonwealth and his foreboding prophetic voice as deeply connected aspects of a single argument. When discussing Milton's biblical allusions, most scholars focus on Milton's reference to Jeremiah, where he cries with the prophet, "O earth, earth, earth!" Laura Knoppers argues that *The Readie and Easie Way* functions as a "Jeremiad," denouncing the people of England while also prophesying future redemption by God. Similarly, Reuben Sanchez argues that "the English author identifies himself with the Old Testament spokesperson as the lone prophet to whom no one listens...Milton also infers a parallel between his own historical moment and that in

which the Old Testament prophet lived.”¹ While these analyses provide some insight to the text, Milton alludes to the prophet Jeremiah only once, and Knoppers and Sanchez’s arguments do not explain the overall effect of Milton’s biblical allusions. In *The Readie and Easie Way*, Milton uses allusions to either Old Testament or New Testament events that precede the crucifixion of Christ. The two exceptions to this description are the references to Simon the magician and to Saul, who is later named Paul. Revealingly, these allusions pertain only to these characters prior to any sort of conversion experience. The overall purpose of Milton’s biblical allusions, I argue, is to place the event of the Restoration in the context of the larger narrative of scripture in order to show how God’s revelation of himself instills the fear of the Lord that is needed in order for people to follow Christ as King and practice true liberty. In addition, Milton guides the reader through a self-discerning analysis of one’s own assumptions and affections by using biblical allusions whose biblical contexts implicitly shift the assumptions of Milton’s explicit rhetorical appeals. Their shift, in turn, reveals to the readers the ways in which they may not properly view Christ as King. Finally, I argue that Milton’s overall persuasive purpose in the *Readie and Easie Way* is to frame the Restoration in such a way that attunes the reader to God’s revelation of himself through England’s history with the goal that such a revelation will guide the reader through a fear of God to recognition that Christ is the only true King.

Before analyzing Milton’s use of biblical allegory, one must address the question regarding whether or not Milton thought that the English could still establish a free

¹ Reuben Sanchez, “From Polemic to Prophecy: Milton’s Uses of Jeremiah In *The Reason of Church Government* and *The Readie and Easie Way*,” *Milton Studies* 30 (1993): 27.

commonwealth given the current political situation, or whether Milton's text ought to be analyzed as though he expects that the Restoration of the monarchy will occur. Published scholarship is divided on this issue, and the division usually occurs with regards to whether one thinks that Milton uses his prophetic voice rhetorically to support his argument that England should establish a free commonwealth, or whether he argues that a free commonwealth is possible in order to hold the nation accountable for failing to establish it. My argument clarifies and supports the latter view by considering Milton's wide ranging use of biblical allusions. Through his references to biblical events, Milton reveals that, though the way is indeed "readie," the hearts of the English people are not ready to support or live in such a commonwealth. Also, the interplay between Milton's explicit and implicit arguments in the text, as well as his use of biblical allusion to draw the argument into the larger biblical narrative happen much in the same way that Phillip Donnelly has shown *Areopagitica* functions.² While the implicit subject matter of *Areopagitica* is how to form a good reader, the implicit purpose of the *Readie and Easie Way*, by contrast, is to make citizens "readie" to choose Christ as King.

The Readie and Easie Way has four main sections in its overall argument. The first section includes a variety of arguments that set the stage for Milton's plan for establishing a free commonwealth. This section includes Milton's statement of explicit purpose, his justification for the actions of the Good Old Cause, his account of how reinstating the monarchy will bring ridicule and moral degeneracy to English society, and his argument that people live in liberty under a commonwealth and in servility under a

² Phillip J. Donnelly, "Historical Appearance in *Areopagitica*," *Milton and Questions of History: Essays by Canadians Past and Present* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 327–53.

king. In the second section, Milton presents his proposal for how England might establish a free commonwealth, and he argues that a perpetual “Grand Council” might best govern England. The third section of the *REW*³ contains all of Milton’s predictions regarding the evils that will befall England if they choose to restore the monarchy. He includes general predictions about the inconveniences that will stem from reestablishing the monarchy as well as predictions regarding the decline of religious and civic freedoms. The final section is a denunciation of those who do not listen and an expression of future hope.

In the second section, Milton makes explicit other goals besides his specific political program. He writes about his political program partly so that the people of England will not be able to claim that they restored the monarchy because there were no other options: “to conclude, it can have no considerable objection made against it, that it is not practicable: least it be said hereafter, that we gave up our libertie for want of a readie way or distinct form propos’d of a free Commonwealth.”⁴ For this reason, Knoppers and Sanchez argue that Milton writes this section partly in order to hold the nation of England accountable for its future decisions. Also, as Walter Berns argues, Milton’s political program is subservient to his larger goal of promoting virtue and liberty. Milton advocates for a free commonwealth because it “honors the pursuit of knowledge and educates its citizens in such a way that they are equipped to pursue

³ Abbreviation for *The Readie and Easie Way*

⁴ John Milton, “The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, Second Edition,” *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, ed. Robert Ayers, Vol. 7 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 446. Hereafter, *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* will be abbreviated *YP* as the Yale prose edition, followed by the volume and page numbers.

knowledge and, thereby, to exercise the freedom that Christ gave them.”⁵ Milton’s argument for his political program establishes the contingency of England’s choice whether or not to reinstate the monarchy, and it seeks to establish a government that will best promote liberty.

In the third section, Milton makes a series of predictions regarding the ways that he thinks the king will act to the detriment of the people. In the explicit rhetorical context, these predictions attempt to show the reader the evils of reestablishing the monarch by using historical and biblical precedents to predict specific ways that the king will do harm to the English people. They support Milton’s claim that England should establish a free commonwealth, since they show that the opposite choice—bringing back the monarchy—is highly disadvantageous. In the fourth section of the *REW*, Milton continues to warn England of the evils of turning back to kingship in a similar way to how the Israelites wanted to return to Egypt. He also prophesies against England, using the words of Jeremiah, although he expresses hope that God will save a few people to live lives of liberty. The *REW* ends on a somber note. While Milton says that the way to a free commonwealth lies ready for the taking, the optimistic tone is mostly drowned out by continued predictions of impending doom if the monarchy is reestablished.

In the context of this argument structure (stated above) Milton offers a series of biblical allusions. Towards the beginning of the first section of *Readie and Easie Way*, Milton situates his text inside a larger biblical narrative through his description of his present situation as a possible “Shroving-time,” which places the *REW* in the biblical narrative through its reference to the church calendar (*YP* 7:408). Shrovetide is the three

⁵ Walter Berns, “John Milton 1608-1674,” *History of Political Philosophy*, eds. Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey (The University of Chicago Press, 1987), 454.

days preceding Ash Wednesday, and it is typically associated with the frivolity and freedom in which people indulge on the days prior to Lent, which is a season of fasting and trial. Before referring to Shrovetide, Milton describes the occasion for the work, which is the coming parliamentary elections, and the explicit purpose for which he is writing, which is to provide a “readie and easie way to establish a free Commonwealth” to those who will soon be in power, so that they will have such an option to consider when deliberating what sort of government England should establish. Milton’s reference to Shrovetide comes during his proceeding remarks regarding why a tyrant, if one is established, might not be offended by Milton’s tract: “If their absolute determination be to enthrall us, before so long a Lent of Servitude, they may permit us a little Shroving-time first, wherin to speak freely, and take our leaves of Liberty” (*YP* 7:408). Through this statement, Milton places his tract in the current political situation in the larger biblical narrative in the event that the monarchy is reestablished, making the present time into Shrovetide and the time after the Restoration of the monarchy into a kind of Lent. If a commonwealth is established, however, Milton implies that England could avoid being placed at that point of the biblical framework. In light of the possibility that England could restore the monarchy, it makes sense that Milton would use this allusion in the immediate political context, because this time could be the last time that he is permitted to publish anything that advances “liberty” as the ability to practice virtue apart from compulsion. Shrovetide in 17th century England functioned much like Fat Tuesday does in the present day and was generally considered to be a time of frivolity and freedom before Lent. Judging by the close association between tyranny and pre-publication censorship that Milton portrays in *Areopagitica*, he expects that he will not be able to

publish works advancing the cause of liberty under the restored monarchy. In his explicit argument, Milton appears to trivialize his own work by referring to it as an act of Shrovetide, which is a prudent political move, given the impending Restoration of the monarchy.

Milton's use of the term, "Shroving-time," also has further implications for his present political context. The word's "first element is undoubtedly related to shrive v. and refers to the custom of being shriven in preparation for Lent."⁶ The word "shrive," of which "being shriven" is the passive voice, means "to perform the office of a confessor," which involves hearing one's confession, imposing penitence, and giving absolution.⁷ This meaning of shrive was prevalent in Milton's time, and in 1633 J. Ford in *'Tis Pitty shee's Whore* says, "Giue me leaue To shriue her; lest shee should dye vn-absolu'd."⁸ Instead of using the regular name Shrovetide, Milton emphasizes the etymological association of the word with confession by saying "Shroving-time," which more prominently states that the current time is meant to be a time of confession. The *REW* is the only place where "Shroving-time" specifically comes up in the OED or in Milton's works, while "Shrovetide" has quite a number of occurrences in the OED.⁹ In this way,

⁶ "Shrove-tide, n." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014. Web. 13 April 2014.

⁷ "shrive, v." *OED Online*. Oxford University Press, March 2014. Web. 13 April 2014.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ "Shrove-tide, n." *OED Online*; William Ingram and Kathleen M. Swaim, eds., *A Concordance to Milton's English Poetry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); and Laurence Sterne and Harold H. Kollmeier, eds., *A Concordance to the English Prose of John Milton* (Binghamton, N.Y: Medieval & Renaissance Texts & Studies, 1985), 1129. Out

the specific turn of phrase involved in “Shroving-time” allows Milton to invite his readers to reflect on the purpose of this time—which is confession. After the Restoration, the layered meaning of the term becomes self-reflective and self-incriminating for the reader, because it causes his readers to think about whether or not they used the time appropriately to make their hearts right before God, or if they engaged in frivolity and allowed the Restoration of the monarchy to occur. Milton sets up this meaning conditionally upon whether or not the Restoration of the monarchy actually happens, since he attributes this political period to Shrovetide only on the condition that the English bring back the monarchy.

In addition to the political implications of his mention of “Shroving-time,” his use of the term foreshadows Easter, which is the feast day for which Lent and Shrovetide are preparations. In this way, Milton’s reference to the term with regard for the present political situation implies that the Restoration will be a Lenten season of trial which culminates in God’s revelation of himself. In the case of Easter, revelation is in the form of the risen Christ to his disciples. In the case of English history, this implies that the Restoration of the monarchy will be a time of preparation for Christ’s revelation of himself.

In the second paragraph of the *REW*, Milton alludes to Job, whose life is also inseparably connected with God’s revelation of himself, which comes at the end of *Job*. Explicitly, Milton’s reference to Job appears in his argument regarding why overthrowing the monarchy was just in the first place, saying that the English people “made not thir covnant concerning [the king] with no difference between a king and a god, or promisd

of all of his English works, “Shroving-time” in the *REW* is Milton’s only use of this word. He never uses the term “Shrovetide” in his English works.

him as *Job* did to the Almighty, *to trust in him, though he slay us*” (YP 7:411). He distinguishes between devotion to God and devotion to the king, saying that devotion to the king is conditional upon the king’s proper governance of England, while devotion to God is unconditional. Rhetorically, Milton is implying that the English people risk treating a mere mortal king in the way that *Job* speaks only of God when they choose to trust the monarchy even after they know how the monarchy has abused the people. Milton implies that trusting such an abusive monarchy is idolatrous. In addition, both *Job*’s situation and the argument that he makes at the time in which he utters “Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him” bear implications for the current political situation of England and draw England’s political history into the larger biblical narrative. Throughout the book, *Job* is usually responding to his friends’ accusations that he must have done something wrong to invoke God’s wrath, which they think is the reason that God allowed *Job*’s family and possessions to be destroyed. *Job*’s response at this point is to such an accusation. He is responding to *Zophar*, whose speech ends, “the eyes of the wicked shall fail, and they shall not escape, and their hope shall be as the giving up of the ghost” (*Job* 11:20). *Job* counters this argument, claiming that he has as much understanding as *Zophar* does, and that *Zophar* should not speak wickedly on behalf of God. In the middle of *Job*’s response, he says,

Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him. Hear diligently my speech, and my declaration with your ears. Behold now, I have ordered my cause; I know that I shall be justified. (*Job* 13:15-18)

Job was a pious man who suffered affliction, although those around him questioned his piety because of his affliction. After the Restoration of the monarchy, the same question

will arise regarding whether the people who supported the commonwealth were pious. Milton's allusion to Job implies that, like Job, the suffering of the Republicans after the Restoration will reveal that their faith is genuine and that they are not hypocrites, since they will show that they do not support the Commonwealth out of mere personal convenience. In Job, Satan claims that Job will curse God if God takes away everything that Job has, but Job's suffering and refusal to curse God reveal his sincere piety. In this way, Milton's allusion implies that the suffering of Republicans after the restoration will reveal their piety, though God appear to "slay" them, which might be construed as a form of judgment by the royalists.

In addition, the book of Job is also significant because of its implications for wisdom and restoration. While Job claims that he would take up his case with God in court, when God reveals himself to Job, he says nothing other than words of repentance and that he cannot speak against God. Job does not need to justify himself to his accusers, because God himself defends Job. The theophany also ends in Job's restoration, and God gives Job more than he ever had before. The immediate context of the passage to which Milton's alludes, contains references both to Job's desire to present his case before God and to Job's restoration. He says, "I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation" (Job 13:15-16). In *Job*, God's appearance brings Job to wisdom by showing Job the erring ways of his own presumptions that he can bring his case against God as in a court of law, and it also results in his redemption. Both of these aspects are similar to Milton's Shrovetide reference, which anticipates Jesus' resurrection, brings wisdom through the holy spirit, and causes the resurrection of

others—even those who persecute him. Both instances also involve a time of suffering which eventually culminates in God’s revelation of himself.¹⁰

The next biblical allusion in the *REW* is a reference to Judas Iscariot, Simon Magus, and Saul. Milton refers to these three characters in the midst of his justification for the acts of people who supported establishing a free commonwealth after the deposition of the king:

The best affected also and best principl’d of the people, stood not numbring or computing on which side were most voices in Parliament, but on which side appeerd to them most reason, most safetie, when the house divided upon main matters: what was well motiond and advis’d, they examind not whether fear of perswasion carried it in the vote; neither did they measure votes and counsels by the intensions of them that voted...since in the church, who had not rather follow Iscariot or Simon the magician, though to covetous ends, preaching, then Saul, though in the uprightness of his heart persecuting the gospel? (*YP* 7:414-5)

Through this statement, Milton establishes that reason should overcome fear, rule by the majority, and the intensions of others in making decisions regarding political and ecclesial matters. This statement appears to justify some of the actions of Parliament or other leaders who may have acted against the will of the majority. In addition, Milton further, justifies decisions made by the wise and just minority:

yet they were not to learn that a greater number might be corrupt within the walls of a Parliament as well as of a citie...nor easily permit, that the odds of voices in thir greatest council shall more endanger them by corrupt or credulous votes, then the odds of enemies by open assaults. (*YP* 7:415)

While arguing earlier that one should side with people of corrupt intensions if they support the better political plan, Milton says here that there are enough people with

¹⁰ Milton writes *Paradise Regained* in 1665 as an engagement of Job, further establishing the connection between Job’s suffering, Jesus’s suffering, and Jesus’s resurrection. Donnelly details some of these connections in pages 193-5 of *Milton’s Scriptural Reasoning*.

corrupt intensions in the government that majority rule is still not the best option. Milton then claims that the king was the source of both outside pressure and inside corruption, since he was the source of civic control over the church and he did not remove corrupt bishops.

Milton's mention of Judas, Simon, and Saul is a reference to Milton's two companion tracts, which are *Considerations Touching the Likeliest Means to Remove Hirelings Out of the Church* and *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes*. The former discusses how to remove simony and church corruption by financial means, while the latter argues that civil powers should not encroach upon church practices. In the explicit argument of the *REW*, Milton appears to claim that it is better to live under a corrupt regime that makes correct political decisions than to live under a tyrannical regime that imposes restrictions upon religion, since he says that "in the church, who had not rather follow Iscariot or Simon the magician, though to covetous ends, preaching, then Saul, though in the uprightness of his heart persecuting the gospel?" (*YP* 7:414-5). However, through his allusion to his tracts, and through his statement "that the odds of voices in thir greatest council, shall more endanger them by corrupt or credulous votes, then the odds of enemies by open assaults," Milton reveals that inner corruption is more destructive than external oppression (*YP* 7:415). In the beginning of *Hirelings*, Milton says,

force on the one side restraining, and hire on the other side corrupting the teachers thereof. The latter of these is by much more dangerous: for under force, though no thank to the forcers, true religion oft-times best thrives and flourishes: but the corruption of teachers, most commonly the effect of hire, is the very band of truth in them who are so corrupted. (*YP* 7:277)

Even though the individual policies and decisions of corrupt men may be a wiser course of action than the policies of a mistaken righteous man, having corrupt men in government and church, like Simon, is far more dangerous for the government and the church than someone who is mistaken about correct action but lives according to their convictions, like Saul.

While Milton does not describe an explicit way to fix corruption or alleviate oppression, he does imply a possible remedy by means of repentance and faith. In his description of Judas, Simon, and Saul, he portrays Saul's actions as the worst of the three. Yet Saul is also the one person of the three who has a famous conversion experience in which he encounters the risen Jesus on the road to Damascus. Through attributing the worse action to Saul, Milton implies that through an encounter with God even people with the most grievous deeds and presuppositions concerning God can be changed through God's revelation of himself.

At the end of the second paragraph of *The Readie and Easie Way*, Milton makes two biblical allusions: one to Jesus' story of a builder who was unable to finish a building that he worked on, and another to the tower of Babel. Milton situates his reference to the tower of Babel inside his allusion to Jesus' story of a foolish builder, and through the interplay of these allusions, the text serves to reveal the intensions of the reader, and it also reveals Milton's view of England's attempt to establish a free commonwealth.

Regarding Jesus' story of a builder, Milton writes,

And what will they at best say of us and of the whole English name, but scoffingly as of that foolish builder, mentiond by our Savior, who began to build a tower, and was not able to finish it. Where is this goodly tower of a Commonwealth, which the English boasted they would build to overshadow kings, and be another Rome in the west? (*YP* 7:422-3)

Milton's explicit persuasive purpose surrounding this allusion is that he is appealing to his readers' pride for England. He argues that they should establish a free commonwealth for the sake of England's fame and to justify England in the eyes of the other nations. Through the biblical text surrounding Jesus' story of the foolish builder, Milton seems to imply that the English failed because they lacked the courage to endure the suffering required or to plan their efforts well enough:

And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after me, cannot be my disciple. For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he hath laid the foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him, Saying, This man began to build, and was not able to finish... So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple. (Luke 14:27-33)

Preceding the account of the foolish builder, Jesus has just exhorted his disciples to bear their own crosses. Similarly, the conclusion of the story of the builder is that whoever does not give up everything he has for Jesus' sake cannot be his disciple. These surrounding passages, as an extension to the allusion, seem to imply that a lack of willingness to suffer for the Good Old Cause was the downfall of the previous attempts to establish a commonwealth. This implication would seem to be Milton's primary persuasive purpose in this passage; however, he also shifts the assumptions present in such a view through his subsequent reference to the Tower of Babel in order to redefine proper pride and glory.

Milton subtly incorporates his reference to the Tower of Babel within his explicit argument. After the above quote regarding the "goodly tower" of the Commonwealth, Milton says,

The foundation indeed they laid gallantly; but fell into a wors confusion not of tongues, but of factions, then those at the tower of Babel; and have

left no memorial of thir work behind them remaining, but in the common laughter of Europ. (*YP* 7:423)

The reference to the tower of Babel by comparing it to the Good Old Cause seems to support Milton's explicit persuasive appeal to the pride of England, but Babel's place in biblical narrative reveals otherwise. Milton shifts the prevailing assumptions of his audience so that, through the reference to Babel, they understand that a certain kind of pride in England is idolatrous. While Milton seems to use the Tower of Babel only as a helpful description for the degree to which factions arose within England, the reference to the Tower of Babel invokes the pride and misplaced ambition associated with those building the tower. In the biblical narrative, the haughty hearts of the people building the Tower of Babel is the main reason for their strife with God, and God confounds their speech so that the people cannot reach the goal for which their pride seeks: "And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth" (Genesis 11:4). Part of the peoples' reason for building the Tower of Babel is to "make us a name," which modifies Milton's explicit appeal to his audience's pride of England and provides a gloss to Jesus' story of the foolish builder. Using the story of Babel, Milton reveals to his reader that having a certain kind of pride in England is at odds with the sovereignty of God.

In addition to the revelatory character of this passage, this section of the tract also subtly implies that the *REW* way is meant to serve as a memorial much in the same way that the Bible memorializes Babel. Milton says that the English "have left no memorial of thir work behind them remaining, but in the common laughter of Europ" (*YP* 7:423). Explicitly, the idea of a memorial follows the idea of building, and Milton implies that

the confusion of the Good Old Cause is so great that the English do not even leave behind a physical memorial of their work, which at least those who built the tower of Babel had. Milton also changes the notion of a memorial when he talks about how the laughter of Europe is the only memorial left of England's attempt to establish a commonwealth, which relates back to Jesus' story of the foolish builder who comes to shame because he does not finish his work. In addition to these notions of a memorial, there is another way that something can be memorialized, and this is the way that the Bible has memorialized the tower of Babel. Although Babel is a building of which we have no current physical remembrance, the Bible preserves the story as a lesson about the evils of pride and empire that oppose God. The *REW* seems to be such a written memorial that tests the intensions of the reader's heart in somewhat the same way that biblical narrative does. Laura Knoppers recognizes that Milton intends for the *REW* to be a certain kind of memorial and a heuristic tool for interpreting the Restoration of the monarchy. She claims that the *REW* provides "a myth by which [the English] can interpret the impending doom."¹¹ While her description is limited to the *REW*'s function in denouncing the people of England, however, the way that the *REW* functions is much closer to the function of the story of Babel, and it provides a way for the English to interpret and *learn* from the Restoration of the monarchy. Knoppers' idea of the *REW* as a myth is static, and ends whenever people come to some form of realization that they are to blame for contributing to the Restoration of the monarchy. As a memorial, however, the *REW* aims to provoke

¹¹ Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Milton's The Readie and Easie Way and the English Jeremiad," *Politics, Poetics, and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 213.

recurring reflection on the ways in which earthly kingdoms oppose the will of God, as we shall see below.

Near the end of the *REW*, Milton quotes the prophet Jeremiah, saying “O earth, earth, earth!” and this biblical allusion in the *REW* is the most discussed allusion among the scholarship of the *REW* (*YP* 7:462). Two commentators in particular, Laura Knoppers and Reuben Sanchez, discuss the implications of this passage extensively. Their scholarship provides many useful insights to the *REW*, but their attention to the allusion to Jeremiah seems to keep them from seeing how this allusion functions as part of a series of biblical allusions in the *REW*. Both critics claim that Milton writes the *REW* to denounce the English people in a prophetic tone and that he also hopes in God for a future redemption, but they do not describe how the prophetic speech may lead to redemption. The closest that they come to describing the function of prophetic speech is when they say that its goal is to lead the reader to repentance, although they do not say how such speech can lead to repentance or restoration. As shown through Milton’s earlier uses of biblical allusions, Milton shifts the assumptions of his explicit argument with his biblical allusions in a way that reveals the unbiblical assumptions of the reader, provided that the reader agrees with the explicit argument. In addition, neither Knoppers nor Sanchez comments on the close connection between Milton’s allusion to Jeremiah and his subsequent description of living stones. They merely describe the former as a denunciation of the English people and the latter as an expression of hope. Milton connects these passages by making a reference to stones in both of them:

Thus much I should perhaps have said though I were 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 it self, what her perverse inhabitants are deaf to...But I trust I shall have spoken persuasion to

abundance of sensible and ingenuous men; to som perhaps whom God may raise of these *stones* to become children of reviving libertie. (*YP* 7:462-3 my emphasis)

While Milton first appears to be saying that he would speak his words though he had no human audience, he reveals that his use of the reference to stones is metaphorical, since he hopes that God will raise some of the “stones” from the metaphorical failed Babel that is the Good Old Cause. Milton sees himself as a participant in God’s redemptive plan since he believes that he is speaking to the very “stones,” or hard-hearted people, whom God will revive.

Knoppers takes Milton very literally in this passage, claiming that, since Milton would cry out even if only speaking to the earth, “we see the inadequacy of simply asking what Milton hopes to accomplish.”¹² She argues that Milton is calling the earth as witness against the English people. She also attributes Milton’s allusion to Jeremiah 6:19, which calls down judgment upon the Israelites: “Hear, O earth; behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.” Through this passage, she concludes that “Milton recalls the covenant curse,” implying that England is rejecting its covenant with God if it chooses to restore the monarchy instead of establishing a free commonwealth. Sanchez recognizes that Knoppers claim that Milton alludes to Jeremiah 6:19 is misplaced, and he correctly attributes the allusion to Jeremiah 22:29, but he does not reinterpret the passage in light of this section of Jeremiah, and he also takes Milton’s description of stones literally. The allusion to Jeremiah 22:29, provides a much more pertinent context for the current political situation, especially since its surrounding narrative invokes Coniah,

¹² Ibid. 222

whom Milton originally cited in the first edition of the *Readie and Easie Way*, and since it creates a clear contrast between human monarchy and Christ as King:

Is this man Coniah a despised broken idol? is he a vessel wherein is no pleasure? wherefore are they cast out, he and his seed, and are cast into a land which they know not? O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord. Thus saith the Lord, Write ye this man childless, a man that shall not prosper in his days: for no man of his seed shall prosper, sitting upon the throne of David, and ruling any more in Judah. (Jeremiah 22:28-30)

In context, this reference to Jeremiah carries the same prophetic judgment against the king that the first edition of the *REW* did, which said, “I were 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 verie soil it self what God hath determine of Coniah and his seed for ever” (*YP* 7:388). Whereas Milton avoids explicitly connecting Charles II to Coniah in the second edition of the *REW*, this passage still denounces Charles quite vehemently by association, implying that he is an idol and prophesying doom upon him and his posterity. Also, in Jeremiah, Coniah is an especially unfit king, because he sits upon the throne of David. The reference to David’s throne in verse 30 foreshadows Christ, who comes to sit and reign upon the throne of David forever. By referring to this section of Jeremiah in the *REW*, Milton implies that the English people treat Charles instead of Christ as God.

Through these biblical allusions, Milton anticipates God’s revelation of himself, and such revelation is ultimately concerned with the kingship of Christ. Shrovetide anticipates Easter and Jesus’ resurrection appearances; the reference to Job anticipates a theophany that will end Job’s presuppositions concerning God; the reference to Saul anticipates Paul’s conversion on the road to Damascus; and the reference to Jeremiah foreshadows Christ coming to take his place on the throne of David.

While only the first and fourth sections of the *REW* have been discussed so far, the second and third sections of the *REW* are integral to Milton's overall rhetorical goal in the *REW*—to frame England's subsequent history in such a way that the reader can see God's revelation of Himself in the history of England even after the Restoration of the monarchy. The first and fourth sections of the *REW* provide most of the biblical context through which such history can be interpreted while also establishing the justice of the Good Old Cause. The second section of the *REW* describes how a free commonwealth could have been established, which memorializes the fact the Restoration of the monarchy would be a contingent event and could have been otherwise. Milton shows that the hearts of the people of England were all that stopped them from establishing a free commonwealth. The third section with its predictions would have reminded the 17th century reader of the *REW* about God's judgment upon England as history unfolded after the Restoration of the monarchy. As Annabel Patterson claims, "it is not the reach backwards to the Old Testament that most darkens the *Readie and Easie Way*: in our hindsight, and if we know our Restoration political history, it is the accuracy of its premonitions of the future."¹³ Patterson discusses three specific actions of Charles II that Milton accurately predicted: that Charles would reinstate the House of Lords, that Charles would call parliament into session at his will and for his own purposes, and that Charles would hand pick advisors who would not care about the liberty of the people.¹⁴ Indeed, all three of these civic predictions came true. After the restoration, Charles II

¹³ Annabel Patterson, "Milton as Political Prophet: The *Readie and Easie Way*," *Milton and Questions of History: Essays by Canadians Past and Present* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 264.

¹⁴ *Ibid.* 259 regarding the House of Lords, 255-257 regarding the Parliament, and 260-261 regarding picking advisors.

restored the House of Lords as one of his first acts, and he manipulated the parliament to his own ends, using large sums of money for unnecessary wars and personal affairs.¹⁵ While Charles at first appeared to accept counsel from a large cabinet, since he “tactfully appointed a fairly large Privy Council, which included former parliamentarians and Cromwellians...real decisions were taken in a much smaller group.”¹⁶ The people of England saw Milton’s predictions unfold firsthand.

While Patterson humorously wonders how Milton “avoided writing a new tract, entitled *I Told You So*,” I argue that Milton relied on his predictions to come true in order for the *REW* to have the rhetorical effect that he sought. Milton hints at such a goal when he says, “I trust I shall have spoken perswasion to abundance of sensible and ingenuous men; to som perhaps whom God may raise of these stones to become children of reviving libertie” (*YP* 7:463). The first clause pertains to those who notice the fulfillment of Milton’s prophesies, and the second pertains to those who come to repentance. Milton sees himself as a participant in God’s plan of redemption, since associates the “perswasion” that he speaks with God’s redemptive plan. Milton writes the *REW* doing what he thinks is God’s bidding, and he relies upon God to revive the hard-hearted “stones” in the same way that he relies upon God to fulfill the predictions that he has made in the *REW*. While the primary action is God’s, Milton sees himself as a participant, since the *REW* frames England’s history in such a way that reveals God’s order and justice acting through the time period following Restoration of the monarchy. Through Milton’s references to biblical history, the *REW* provides a way for his readers

¹⁵ Ibid. 257-8

¹⁶ Ibid. 261

to interpret England's history. If one thinks that it would be too gutsy for Milton to rely on history to bring about the full rhetorical appeal of the *REW*, one should remember that Milton is advocating for a free commonwealth on the eve of the Restoration of the monarchy. His writing reveals that he thinks that the Restoration of the monarchy is at hand, yet he vehemently denounces such monarchy. While scholars mostly argue either that Milton uses his prophetic voice to promote his political policies, or vice versa (Knoppers even claims that he simultaneously does both and that the goals complement each other)¹⁷, they do not show how these claims are deeply connected, leaving tension between these various persuasive ends. Milton appears to connect his prophetic and political claims through a higher persuasive purpose that looks to England's history for completion. His argument goes beyond the bounds of the *Readie and Easie Way*. Milton's ultimate persuasive purpose is to open the eyes of his readers to God's revelation of himself within history, which in turn incites the fear of the Lord that one needs in order to recognize Christ as King. Milton provides the proper framing, but the main persuasive power remains in God's hands to complete within England's history following the Restoration of the monarchy. Since Milton's rhetorical purpose lies beyond the argument of the *REW*, the tract may seem conflicted in certain places. Yet time reveals the coherency of Milton's argument as it reveals his persuasive purpose.

¹⁷ Laura Lunger Knoppers, "Late Political Prose," *A Companion to Milton* (Oxford, UK; Malden, Mass: Blackwell Publishers, 2001), 309.

CHAPTER FOUR

Paradise Lost, *The Readie and Easie Way*, and “Filial” Fear

In Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, Milton includes a curious reference to the *Readie and Easie Way* in Michael’s description of the Israelites’ journey to the Promised Land. Michael tells Adam that the Israelites’ path through the desert was “not the readiest way,” which is quite an understatement, since their not-so-ready route involves forty years of wandering through the desert.¹ Various scholars discuss this passage of *Paradise Lost* with respect to Milton’s argument for a free commonwealth, because the desert is where God establishes a senate of seventy elders to rule Israel, and Milton uses this senate to support his argument for a republican form of government in the *Readie and Easie Way*.² None of the previous scholarship, however, discusses the profound character of this passage of *Paradise Lost* in light of the function of the *REW* as a prophetic work that proclaims judgment upon the people of post Restoration England. In light of the way in which Milton pairs allusions to the *REW* with references to Exodus 13:17 and Numbers 14, I contend that Milton’s reference to the *REW* in this section of *Paradise Lost* implies that typology, prophecy, and judgment are all functions of God’s providence for his elect. As a consequence, the poem implies that extra-biblical prophecy and judgment can be

¹ *PL* 12.216

² John Milton, “The Readie and Easie Way to Establish a Free Commonwealth, Second Edition.” In *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, edited by Robert Ayers, 7:407–63 (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1980), 436. Hereafter, *The Complete Prose Works of John Milton* will be abbreviated *YP* as the Yale prose edition, followed by the volume and page numbers.

read figuratively through the lens of Scripture in a way that reveals Christ through time. Such revelations prepare the elect to fear God properly, which they need to do in order to comprehend divine love and enter God's heavenly kingdom as children rather than slaves.

In Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, Michael describes future salvation history to Adam, and in his description of this history he tells Adam about the Israelites' journey through the desert. While Michael enables Adam to see future history through his vision in Book 11, Michael must only verbally tell Adam about the salvation history of Book 12, since he perceives "Thy mortal sight to fail: objects divine/ Must needs impair and weary human sense" (*PL* 12.9-10). Michael describes to Adam what will happen in the future as a form of divine revelation, although for the reader these events are biblical history. Michael first relates the story of Nimrod and the Tower of Babel, which ends in the confusion and ridicule of all those who worked on the tower. After the story of Babel, Michael describes Abraham, who is the man of faith from whom God's chosen nation will come. Next, Michael describes the Israelites' captivity in Egypt, the plagues that God uses to convince the Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, and the ensuing escape of the Israelites from the tyrannical Pharaoh.

In the context of this history, Milton makes a reference to *The Radian and Easy Way*: "The race elect/ Safe toward Canaan from the shore advance/ Through the wild desert, not the readiest way" (*PL* 12.214-6). This reference to the *REW* occurs while Michael talks to Adam about a people who are sprung from the man of faith and have recently been released from bondage by God's power, and the framing of Israel's situation in the narrative provides an interpretive key for understanding Milton's

reference, as we shall see. The Israelites are distinct from those who built the tower of Babel, because those who built the tower of Babel were not God's chosen people and God left them in a state of confusion. Understood typologically, the Israelites foreshadow Christians who have come to faith in Christ, as Paul describes in Galatians 3:29 when he says, "And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise," and Milton emphasizes this connection, since Michael calls them "the race elect."

Similarly, the Israelites' time in Egypt and their subsequent escape provide a context for their actions in the desert and for Milton's reference to the *REW*. Throughout Michael's description of the Israelites' captivity and exodus, he emphasizes the awe-inspiring power of God that delivers them. The first instance of such power is when God humbles the Pharaoh's heart in order to convince him to let the Israelites go:

But first the lawless tyrant, who denies
To know their God, or message to regard,
Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire;
To blood unshed the rivers must be turned...
Thunder mixt with hail,
Hail mixt with fire must rend the Egyptian sky
And wheel on the earth, devouring where it rolls...
Darkness must overshadow all his bounds,
Palpable darkness, and blot out three days;
Last with one midnight stroke all the first-born
Of Egypt must lie dead. (*PL* 12.173-190)

Michael describes the ten plagues to Adam, depicting the effects of God's power in a fearful and somewhat gruesome way. The fear of God even compels Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, as Michael implies when he tells Adam that the "lawless tyrant... Must be compelled by signs and judgments dire" (*PL* 12.173-5). After God briefly humbles Pharaoh, the Israelites depart from Egypt and escape from Pharaoh through the Red Sea.

Michael again emphasizes the power of God when the Israelites cross the Red Sea, although this time Moses' rod mediates God's power:

Pursuing whom he late dismissed, the sea
Swallows him with his host, but them lets pass
As on dry land between two crystal walls,
Awed by the rod of Moses so to stand
Divided, till his rescued gain their shore:
Such *wondrous power* God to his saint will lend...
God looking forth will trouble all his host
And craze their chariot wheels: when by command
Moses once more his *potent rod* extends
Over the sea; the sea his rod obeys;
On their embattled ranks the waves return,
And *overwhelm their war*: the race elect
Safe towards Canaan from the shore advance. (*PL* 12.195-215 my emphasis)

Michael emphasizes God's power to save his people in this section of the text pertaining to parting the Red Sea. The crossing of the Red Sea typologically foreshadows baptism, representing God's redemptive power to cleanse his people from their sins. 1 Corinthians 10:1-2 explicitly makes this typological connection: "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Michael describes the fearful and saving power of God to Adam through his portrayal of the Israelites' escape from Egypt, and Adam hears about the Israelites' time in the desert in the context of this revealed power.

Then, describing the action of the Israelites whom God has newly freed from Egypt, Michael says,

The race elect
Safe toward Canaan from the shore advance
Through the wild desert, *not the readiest way*
Lest, entering on the Canaanite alarmed,
War terrify them inexpert, and fear

Return them back to Egypt, choosing rather
Inglorious life with servitude, for life
To noble and ignoble is more sweet
Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on. (*PL* 12.214-22 my
emphasis)

This portion of the text, as Carey and Fowler note, is explicitly a reference to Exodus 13:17, which says, “And it came to pass, when Pharaoh had let the people go, that God led them not through the way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near; for God said, Lest peradventure the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt.”³ In addition to this direct reference, the passage also echoes much of Numbers 14, as Rosenblatt points out, which describes the Israelites’ refusal to enter the Promised Land. In the biblical text of Numbers 14:4, responding to the thought of entering the Promised Land, the people say to one another, “Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt,” since they perceive that the Canaanites will utterly destroy them. After the people say these things, Caleb and Joshua—the only two good spies—tell the people, “Only rebel not ye against the LORD, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defense is departed from them, and the LORD is with us: fear them not.”⁴ By using the term “Canaan” instead of “the land of the Philistines,” which the Exodus passage uses, and by including the role of fear, which the Exodus passage excludes, Milton alludes to Numbers 14 through the mouth of Michael. This passage also alludes to the *REW* through Michael’s statement, “not the readiest way,” although this statement compares the Israelites with the English people, who did not take the readiest way and reinstated the monarchy instead of establishing a commonwealth. As we shall

³ John Carey and Alastair Fowler, eds., *The Poems of John Milton*, (Harlow: Longmans, 1968), 1038.

⁴ Numbers 14:9 KJV

see, the reference to the *REW* in this passage further draws the connection between Exodus 13 and Numbers 14.

Rosenblatt, commenting on these lines, notes that Milton does not explicitly give the moral cause for the Israelites' forty year sentence in the wilderness. Following the lead of Warburton, Rosenblatt claims that, since Michael's purpose for revealing salvation history to Adam is to comfort him, Michael does not tell Adam about the "murmurers" of Numbers 14 in order not to distress Adam.⁵ Yet, while Michael is trying to comfort Adam, he does not appear to soften issues of morality. Michael describes God's ten plagues against Pharaoh in a way that could be distressing to Adam, and later on in Book 12 he speaks of terrible church corruptions. Milton does not explicitly describe the moral failure of the Israelites in this passage because Exodus 13:7 does not describe such a moral failure. In this way, Milton is following the lead of the biblical text, which emphasizes God's providence rather than the Israelites' moral failures. Instead of avoiding the issue of moral rebuke entirely, Michael describes the situation of the Israelites in such a way that Adam can infer the moral deficiency of the Israelites. In light of God's revelation of his conquering and saving power through the preceding narrative, the Israelites should trust and fear God enough that the Canaanite nations should not terrify them so much that they turn back to Egypt. Implicitly, fearing the nations of Canaan more than fearing the Lord is the moral deficiency of the Israelites, and Adam would be able to infer this failure. Although the Israelites fail to fear God properly, Michael seems to be teaching Adam that God will continue to prepare the Israelites for the Promised Land even in the midst of their failure to fear God. In

⁵ Jason Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in Paradise Lost*, (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1994), 222.

addition, through this narrative, Milton implies that coercive fear cannot compel the Israelites to accept God as King. While God uses fear to compel Pharaoh to let the Israelites go, this fear only humbles Pharaoh temporarily. Likewise, God's displays of power do not prepare the Israelites to enter Canaan.

For anyone who has read the *REW*, Milton's reference to the tract at this particular point in Michael's summary of biblical history may not appear surprising, since the beginning and the end of the *REW* allude to Numbers 14, which discusses the Israelites' failure to enter the Promised Land. At the beginning of the tract, Milton compares the time before the Restoration of the monarchy to Shrovetide, the few days preceding Lent, and the time after the Restoration to Lent. As a forty day period of trial and testing, Lent is analogous to the forty years that the Israelites spend in the desert that prepares the Israelites to enter Canaan. Rosenblatt makes a similar connection by associating the forty years of judgment in the wilderness to Jesus' forty days in the desert.⁶ The forty years that the Israelites spend in the desert typologically prefigures the forty days that Christ spends in the wilderness, and the church calendar season of Lent symbolizes both of these events. Through this connection, both the forty years in the wilderness and the time following the Restoration of the monarchy represent times of trial and purification that anticipate the resurrection of Christ. The season of Lent precedes Easter and is connected to Christ's resurrection in this way, and the forty years in the wilderness precedes the entrance of the Israelites into the Promised Land. Joshua, whose name is Hebrew for Jesus, leads the Israelites into Canaan, typologically

⁶ Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in Paradise Lost*, 222.

foreshadowing the resurrection, since the resurrection gives the elect an eschatological hope in a heavenly kingdom.

In addition, the *REW* alludes to the Israelites' desire to return to Egypt after it prophesies against those who would restore the monarchy at the end of the tract:

Thus much I should perhaps have said though I were sure I should have spoken only to trees and to stones; and had none to cry to, but with the Prophet, O earth, earth, earth! to tell the very soil it self, what her perverse inhabitants are deaf to... But I trust I shall have spoken abundance of sensible and ingenuous men; to som perhaps whom God may raise of these stones to become children of reviving libertie; and may reclaim, thought *they seem now chusing them to be a captain back from Egypt*, to bethink themselves a little and consider whither they are rushing. (*YP* 7:462-3 my emphasis)

This passage in the *REW* directly alludes to Numbers 14:4, which also describes the Israelites considering whether to choose a different captain to take them back to Egypt or not. In Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, Milton alludes to this passage of the *REW*, since Michael says that the Israelites wander through the desert “Lest... War terrify them inexpert, and fear/ Return them back to Egypt.”⁷ While Numbers 14 is the direct biblical reference of the *REW*, both the *REW* and Book 12 contain the phrase “back to Egypt,” connecting these passages through their similar construction. Through this allusion to the end of the *REW*, Milton reminds the reader of his predictions in the *REW* through which he prophesies to the people of England the evils of restoring the monarchy.

Through the interplay of Exodus 13:17, Numbers 14, Book 12 of *Paradise Lost*, and the *REW*, Milton reveals to the reader that providence, typology, judgment, and prophecy all work through contingent events, and that God's providence uses typology, judgment, and prophecy to prepare his people to understand divine love. With respect to

⁷ *PL* 12.217-220

providence, Exodus 13:17 and lines 12.214-222 demonstrate God's providence by claiming that God takes the Israelites through the desert in order to keep the Israelites from returning back to Egypt as a result of their fear. Meanwhile, through allusions to the *REW* and Numbers 14 in Book 12, Milton reveals the contingency of the Israelites' journey through the wilderness. Although the Restoration of the monarchy and Israel's decision not to enter Canaan are both past events, they maintain that England and Israel could have chosen otherwise. Milton writes the *REW* before the Restoration, explicitly arguing that establishing a free commonwealth is still possible, and Numbers 14 records God's judgment against the people of Israel for not choosing correctly. Milton, Caleb, and Joshua, as people who advocated for the "ready way," in their respective historical situations testify that it was possible for others to do likewise. Phillip Donnelly has argued that God's providence, for Milton, works through contingent events, although he does not deal directly with providence and its relationship to judgment and prophecy. Speaking about typology, he writes,

Milton's narrative invention imitates the intertextuality of biblical typology in order to imply a similarly integrated sense of what is faithful, free, and fitting. In this way biblical typology combines concrete particularity with an understanding of reality as neither merely determined nor random but ordered freely in a way that is poetically appropriate. In effect, because for Milton the cosmos, like a poem, is not determined by sheer necessity, it could be different in particular details and still be ordered toward a good that is neither merely compelled nor arbitrary.⁸

As we shall see, judgment and prophecy in addition to typology are part of God's providence, and judgment and prophecy work within the contingencies of the cosmos.

⁸ Phillip J. Donnelly, *Milton's Scriptural Reasoning: Narrative and Protestant Toleration* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 171.

As subsidiaries to providence, they work within the contingencies of the cosmic structure that Donnelly describes.

While Milton's reference to the *REW* at this point in Book 12 may first appear to be mere political commentary, this reference obtains broader significance when one considers Michael's account of Israel's senate and the fact that this reference to the *REW* occurs within Michael's revelation of salvation history. Michael's speech reveals how judgment, prophecy, and typology are part of God's redemptive purpose for his elect, ultimately demonstrating that divine love uses indirect methods to guide the elect to fear the Lord properly. The first revealing characteristic of Michael's description of Israel's time in the desert is that the Israelites receive a commonwealth and ordained laws as a result of their journey through the desert:

The race elect
Safe toward Canaan from the shore advance
Through the wild desert, not the readiest way...
This also shall they gain by their delay
In the wide wilderness, there they shall found
Their government, and their great senate choose
Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained. (*PL* 12.214-16, 223-6)

In the *REW*, Milton argues for a perpetual senate, and he cites the Sanhedrin of the Jews as an example of a previous commonwealth system of government. In this passage, Milton reveals that such senates still do not achieve perfection and are God's provision for his peoples' unreadiness to take "the readiest way." This passage establishes the Israelites' need for the Son in order to fear God properly, and the rest of salvation history unfolds in the context of this need.

Some scholars take this passage as merely a recapitulation of Milton's republican ideals, and their interpretations do not account for Milton's implied claim that even a

commonwealth with ordained laws is a result of man's inadequacy. Commenting on this passage, Cedric Brown states,

The system of government endorsed by the Lord is a mode of republicanism, in the form of the Sanhedrin, or council of seventy drawn from the twelve tribes. It is a federal kind of republicanism, the central council respecting tribal representation... This would seem to be a significant moment announcing a political model. In itself the reference would not have been surprising to readers who had lived through the middle years of the seventeenth century, especially to those who were attuned to anti-monarchical discourses... this phase of history is not going to be passed without mentioning a divinely approved model of government which will be in place for future generations.⁹

Brown does not take into account, however, that the Israelites receive their senate because of their moral failure to fear God properly. While a senate is part of God's providence for the Israelites, it is only God's specific way in which he deals with their lack of readiness to enter the Promised Land. Milton does not imply that God intends for all other nations to adopt a commonwealth form of government. Michael says that the Israelites "found/ Their government, and their great senate choose/ Through the twelve tribes, to rule by laws ordained" (*PL* 12.224-6). Their laws are ordained, but their government is not, meaning that God does not directly give them their government. Jeffrey Shoulson also thinks that Milton advocates for a specific kind of political action in this part of Book 12, while he makes a unique claim that Milton argues for resistance to "aggressive political agency:"

"Not the readiest way" in the poem comes to mean an Hebraic form of political organization positioned in the "wide Wilderness" between the paganism of Egyptian servitude and the paganism of Canaanite militarism... While it is true that these Laws function explicitly as "types/ And shadows, of that destin'd Seed to bruise / The Serpent, by what means he shall achieve / Mankind's deliverance" (232-35), what they

⁹ Cedric Brown, "Great Senates and Godly Education," *Milton and Republicanism* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 47-8.

typify is a resistance to an aggressive political agency... The Hebraic choice to follow “not the readiest way” is the choice a Restoration Milton himself seeks to follow, neither fully abdicating his political and historical responsibilities nor asserting an aggressive pagan agency.¹⁰

In addition to misusing typology as a category, Shoulson also does not interpret “not the readiest way” within the context of Numbers 14. In this context, Milton resembles Caleb who wants to take the readiest way. Although Shoulson claims that Milton chooses to follow “not the readiest way,” he does not. In this section of Book 12, Milton reveals that human government, even government like that of the Sanhedrim, is ultimately a consequence of man’s deficiency and not of man’s ingenuity or virtue. Milton does not advocate for a specific form of political government or political action in this section of *Paradise Lost*. Instead, as we shall see, he implies that the purpose of earthly political order is to reveal the limitations of such order and to prepare the elect for God’s heavenly kingdom.

In reference to the political order of the Israelites, Milton implies that God prepares the Israelites to enter into the Promised Land through types that prefigure the Son. Michael tells Adam that, after the Israelites wander through the wilderness and choose their senate, God himself will

Ordain them laws, part such as appertain
To civil justice, part religious rites
Of sacrifice, informing them by types
And shadows of that destined seed to bruise
The serpent, by what means he shall achieve
Mankind’s deliverance. (*PL* 12.230-5)

¹⁰ Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism & Christianity* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 232-3.

Michael's description of typology gives a purpose that extends beyond political order to the laws that the people are to obey, because he says that they prepare the Israelites for the Son, who will "bruise/ The serpent." As Donnelly describes, for Milton,

types are crucial preparation in order for the Truth of the Messiah to be intelligible. The conceptual dynamics of typology are thus not unidirectional; the arrival of the Incarnation of divine love is intelligible only in the context of the history of Israel that Milton summarizes...types persist as the incorrigibly particular and embodied instances of divine revelation that are not simply discardable like allegorical "husks," but are necessary preparation for the human apprehension of divine love.¹¹

The laws that the Israelites receive are "necessary preparation" and cannot be discarded, but they are also only "shadows," and "given/ With purpose to resign them in full time/ Up to a better covenant (*PL* 12.300-2).

In addition to establishing the role of biblical types for Christ, Milton implies that extra-biblical laws can be interpreted through the lens of Scripture in a way that reveals Christ. The *REW* often discusses civic and religious laws, claiming that the Commonwealth would bring civic and religious liberty, and prophesying the monarchy would bring tyrannical laws. Milton says that "Charls returning, but will most certainly bring back" the "Episcopacie" and suppress the Presbyterians (*YP* 7:457-8). Also, he says that Monarchs will only make laws that are good for the people in so much as they are good for the king, since Charles "will have all the benches of judicature annexd to the throne, as a gift of royal grace that we have justice don us" (*YP* 7:460). Milton also has many other references to civic and religious laws and liberties in the *REW* that imply that the English will have more liberty under a Commonwealth than under a monarchy. The *REW* discusses religious and civil laws, and Book 12 of *Paradise Lost* talks about God's

¹¹ Donnelly, *Milton's Scriptural Reasoning*, 174.

ordained laws which the Israelites receive for not following the readiest way shortly after a reference to the *REW*, implying that God may use England's laws in a similar way to Israel's ordained laws. As Michael describes, these ordains laws "can discover sin but not remove," and will "resign [the Israelites] in full time/ Up to a better covenant (*PL* 12.290). Milton implies that both ordained laws and England's laws reveal in time that worldly laws are unable to make citizens virtuous and that a "better covenant" with Christ is needed for virtue. Describing typology, Stanley Fish says that it "is a way of reading the Old Testament so that its events are seen as prefigurations or 'shadows' of events in the New, and especially of events in the life of Christ."¹² Extra-biblical laws are not types in this particular sense, but they can serve to reveal Christ in another sense. Quoting Augustine, Fish says that "in a classic formulation of figurative or typological reading, 'to the healthy and pure internal eye He is everywhere' and therefore 'what is read should be subjected to diligent scrutiny until an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity is produced."¹³ Milton implies that extra-biblical laws and political order can be interpreted in a similar way by scrutinizing these laws until "an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity is produced." By examining extra-biblical laws and political order, one can discover in time the inadequacy of such laws and order for instilling virtue and see that Christ alone can make men virtuous.

Through the reference to the *REW* in Book 12 Milton implies that both England and Israel receive their laws as a result of God's judgment of them and that God works

¹² Stanley Fish, "Transmuting the Lump," *Doing What Comes Naturally: Change, Rhetoric, and the Practice of Theory in Literary and Legal Studies*, 247–93 (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1989), 276.

¹³ *Ibid.* 276 quoting Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D. W. Robertson (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1958), 13, 93.

through their judgment for their redemption. In Book 12, Milton imply that the Israelites receive their civil and religious laws as well as their senate as a result of their moral failure, and in the *REW* he explicitly says that the policies of the king will be a result of God's judgment upon England. In addition, he implies that God's judgment of England will be more severe than his judgment of Israel. Michael's description of Israel's time in the wilderness is implicitly a result of God's judgment due to its connection with Number's 14, where such judgment is explicit. On the other hand, *REW* compares the people of England to the Israelites who clamored for a king, who "had thir longing; but with this testimonie of God's wrath; *ye shall cry out in that day because of your king whom ye shall have chosen, and the Lord will not hear you in that day*" (*YP* 7:450).

When Israel and England receive their laws, the former from God and the latter from the reinstated king, these laws are a result of God's judgment of the people. Milton implies, however, that God's judgment of England will be more severe through Michael's statement that "for life/ To noble and ignoble is more sweet/ Untrained in arms, where rashness leads not on" (*PL* 12.220-2). In light of this statement, the way for the Israelites is "ready" but not "easy." The Israelites really are untrained in arms, so their way is not "easy" and life would be more sweet for them untrained in arm, although this reasoning does not excuse them from properly fearing God. Since they are untrained in arms, they would have to rely solely on God to deliver the Canaanites to them, or they would have to train for battle. The British, on the other hand, had just fought a bloody civil war and were not untrained in arms at the time that Milton writes the *REW*. In this sense, the way was both "ready and easy" for the English, since they were already seasoned in battle, and they had already fought their war. The English do not even have war to fear, only the

uncertainties of establishing a kind of political system that they are not used to. The English are more blameworthy than the Israelites, because they have less to fear, and they still choose to reinstate the monarchy. Yet, even though England is more culpable than the Israelites, Milton implies that God will use his judgment upon both the English and the Israelites to prepare them to recognize Christ as King. The law that God gives the Israelites is

imperfect, and but given
With purpose to resign them in full time
Up to a better covenant...
From imposition of strict laws to free
Acceptance of large grace, from servile fear
To filial, works of law to works of faith. (*PL* 12.300-6)

The laws of England might be more imperfect than the laws of the Israelites, but Milton implies that God uses such imperfect laws. Both the laws of the Israelites and the laws of the England that come from the king are due to God's judgment, and Milton implies that both sets of laws are part of God's salvation history for his elect. Milton establishes that the English people are at fault for their decision to reinstate the monarchy, even more at fault than the Israelites, but he implies that God uses his judgments to correct his elect in addition to exacting justice.

Milton appears to be using Hebrews 11 and 12 as his subtext for this section of Book 12, which also discuss faith, God's heavenly kingdom, and God's judgment as a form of "chastening." Michael explicitly talks about Abraham as a man of faith, and Hebrews 11 talks about Abraham, saying that "by faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went

out, not knowing whither he went.”¹⁴ All the people of faith that Hebrews 11 describes “desire a better country, that is, an heavenly” one, implying that all earthly political order is imperfect, which is what Milton implies by having the Israelites receive their political government as a consequence of their unreadiness. Then, Hebrews 12 explicitly says that God uses judgment in the way that Milton implies that God uses judgment. Hebrews 12:5-6 says, “My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” God’s providence appears to work through judgment to chastise the Israelites and the English in the way that Hebrews describes.

With respect to judgment, prophecy functions in a pivotal way in order to make judgment a form of discipline instead of merely retribution. Like typology, prophecy has a revelatory quality that can only be fully understood in hindsight. With typology, one can only understand all the types in their fullness after one knows that they all point to Christ. The types are shadows that prefigure Christ and reveal Christ in certain ways. One could not have predicted the precise details involved in the historical incarnation through the teaching offered by these types; however, after the incarnation and crucifixion, the revelation of the Son makes it clear in retrospect that these types point to him. Similarly, rather than predicting the future with a sort of mathematical or mechanistic calculation, prophecy provides a set of warnings that do not depict judgment in a way that the reader of these prophecies can know exactly what the punishment will be. Instead, these warnings provide clues so that the reader can recognize judgment after it occurs and ascertain that the judgment is from God. In this way, prophecy helps the

¹⁴ Hebrews 11:8 KJV

reader to understand the causes of judgment and to respond by correcting one's moral failure.¹⁵

The *REW* mediates the chastening of the English people, because it espouses the ideals that people should strive for, it denounces tyrannical tendencies of monarchical rule, and it frames both the ideals and tyrannical tendencies within subtly-constructed biblical narrative. The *REW* reveals to the 17th century English reader that England's decision to restore the monarchy results from the refusal of the English people to fear God properly. In hindsight, at the time that *Paradise Lost* is published, the warnings and predictions of the *REW* would serve as clues that the monarchy is a form of God's judgment of England, and it provides a way to interpret such judgment. Prophecy helps the reader to subject God's judgment "to diligent scrutiny until an interpretation contributing to the reign of charity is produced,"¹⁶ and it participates in God's providence in this manner.

Milton implies that God's providence uses typology, judgment and prophecy as indirect means to bring his elect to a proper "filial fear" of the Lord that is rooted in faith, rather than the avoidance of foreseen pain, which is the root of "servile fear" (*PL* 12.305-6). Before Michael's description of the Israelites' journey through the desert, his portrayal of God's display of power through the ten plagues shows the inadequacy of compulsive fear to produce true virtue. The kind of fear that God incites in the Pharaoh compels him to let the Israelites go, but Pharaoh's humility and submission to God is

¹⁵ Donnelly, *Milton's Scriptural Reasoning*, 187. Donnelly argues that the hermeneutics implied by the last two books of *Paradise Lost* in reference to typology function in a similar way that does allow for mere rehearsing of "glib formulaic answers to the most enduring human questions."

¹⁶ Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, 93.

short lived, and he chases after the Israelites after he lets them go. In the same way, the Israelites see God's explicit shows of power, but they are still unprepared to enter the Promised Land and must spend forty years in the desert. On the other hand, describing the Israelites' journey through the desert, Michael discusses the need for people to know God through mediation. The Israelites cannot handle God's direct presence, because "the voice of God/ To mortal ear is dreadful," and "they beseech/ That Moses might report to them his will,/ and terror cease; he grants what they besought,/ Instructed that to God is no access/ Without mediator" (*PL* 12. 236-40). Milton also implies that God mediates himself through typology, judgment, and prophecy because these are all retrospective and indirect ways through which God reveals himself that require faith in order to comprehend. Judgment may not seem to possess these traits, but it is retrospective and indirect in the sense that it occurs only after an action has happened and it uses unpredictable means. It does not force someone to act a certain way, because the ramifications of the action only become evident after the moral failure has already occurred. Typology, judgment, and prophecy mediate God by requiring the participation of the elect in order to come to a proper fear of God. In this way, as Michael says, the imperfect law guides the Israelites from "servile fear/ To filial" (*PL* 12.305-6). This fear results out of one's reflective recognition of God's action through typology, judgment, and prophecy. This fear is proper to faith, because it requires the elect to understand the character of the unseen God and interpret his work throughout history, even though no one can see him work. Hebrews 11:1 says, "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." The "filial" fear that God desires and which reveals the peaceful nature of divine love requires the elect to believe in God's unseen power

because of the ways that they can see the effects of his power in time and interpret such effects through faith.

As I argue in my previous chapter, Milton writes the *REW* to participate in God's revelation of himself through time, and Book 12 of *Paradise Lost* implies that such an indirect method of revealing God is necessary for bringing people to a proper "filial" fear of God. If Milton would have used more explicit means to bring people to fear God, he would be acting in a way similarly to how God acts towards the Pharaoh, which results in the release of the Israelites, but it does not bring Pharaoh to act virtuously. Even worse, if Milton would have used more explicit rhetorical shows of power to accomplish his own political agenda apart from God's purpose, Milton would have risked instilling a servile fear similar to the fear that the monarch uses to keep the populace in line.

Through the reference to the *Readie and Easie Way* in Book 12, Milton implies that typology, prophecy, and judgment function as agents of God's providence, and they reveal God in an indirect manner necessary for instilling "filial" fear. The civil and religious laws of extra-biblical government also reveal the nature of divine love to the elect by showing the inadequacy of such laws for producing virtue and demonstrating the need for a greater covenant to achieve this purpose. While Milton implies that God judges England more than the Israelites, he also implies that this harsher judgment still works for the sanctification of the English elect.

In light of the nature of Paradise described in Chapters One and Two, such indirect means of producing fear are necessary for guiding the elect to live under political order and God's commands in a similar way to how Adam and Eve live under political order and God's command before the fall. "Filial" fear is the proper awe that children of

God should have towards him. This fear enables them to act appropriately toward God without being compelled to do so, an ability that Adam and Eve possessed before the fall. Although God will not recreate Eden, Milton looks forward to a New Jerusalem that is similar to Eden in many ways. In *Paradise Lost*, God's initial command to Adam and Eve is not a threat, and the "filial" fear that results from God's indirect revelations himself is necessary for the elect to obey commands apart from threat of violence or compulsion. Similarly, Adam and Eve freely choose to enter their marriage covenant in order to complete each other. Even though Adam and Eve are not complete without each other, this sense of incompleteness does not coerce them to enter into their marriage covenant. Instead, they choose to enter into the covenant for "all rational delight," the *telos* of the marriage covenant. As described in Chapter One, Eden transcends the postlapsarian distinction between home and Commonwealth, and Adam and Eve can tend to the garden while encouraging one another to perform noble deeds. Eden is able to be both the *oikos* and the *polis* in a harmonious way that does not engender strife because it is abundant in food and other necessities for life, and Adam and Eve choose to tend the garden instead of being forced to tend the garden for survival. In a similar fashion, "filial" fear enables the elect to choose noble deeds freely even in the presence of powers, such as the Canaanites, who oppose such deeds by threatening death. "Filial" fear empowers the elect to act freely amidst potentially coercive powers. Looking forward to the New Jerusalem, "filial" fear is necessary for participation in this reality which transcends even Eden. The New Jerusalem is home, Commonwealth between believers, kingdom under Christ, and bride to Christ. For Milton, participation in such a reality must involve free choice that properly responds to God's goodness and power. Through

Milton's portrayal of home, Commonwealth, heavenly commands apart from natural law, and the marriage covenant in Eden, he provides analogies for the nature of the heavenly kingdom to come, in which the elect will freely participate in God's goodness apart from coercion.

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