

THE POETICAL WORKS OF JOHN MILTON

By John Milton

Transcriber's Notes:

This e-text contains all of Milton's poems in English and Italian. Poems in Latin have been omitted.

The original spelling, capitalisation and punctuation have been retained as far as possible. Characters not in the ANSI standard set have been replaced by their nearest equivalent. The AE & OE digraphs have been transcribed as two letters. Accented letters in the Italian poems have been replaced by the unaccented letter.

No italics have been retained.

Footnotes have been moved to the end of the poem to which they refer; in Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained they have been moved to the end of the book.

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[From Of Reformation in England, 1641.]

[From Reason of Church Government, 1641.]

[From Apology for Smectymnuus, 1642.]

[From Areopagitica, 1644.]

[From Tetrachordon, 1645.]

[From The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates, 1649.]

[From History of Britain, 1670.]

PARADISE LOST.

ON Paradise Lost.

THE VERSE.

BOOK I.

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PARADISE REGAIN'D.

The First Book.

The Second Book.

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SAMSON AGONISTES

Of that sort of Dramatic Poem which is call'd Tragedy.

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ON TIME

PREFACE by the Rev. H. C. Beeching, M. A.

This edition of Milton's Poetry is a reprint, as careful as Editor and Printers have been able to make it, from the earliest printed copies of the several poems. First the 1645 volume of the Minor Poems has been printed entire; then follow in order the poems added in the reissue of 1673; the Paradise Lost, from the edition of 1667; and the Paradise Regain'd and Samson Agonistes from the edition of 1671.

The most interesting portion of the book must be reckoned the first section of it, which reproduces for the first time the scarce small octavo of 1645. The only reprint of the Minor Poems in the old spelling, so far as I know, is the one edited by Mitford, but that followed the edition of 1673, which is comparatively uninteresting since it could not have had Milton's oversight as it passed through the press. We know that it was set up from a copy of the 1645 edition, because it reproduces some pointless eccentricities such as the varying form of the chorus to Psalm cxxxvi; but while it corrects the errata tabulated in that edition it commits many more blunders of its own. It is valuable, however, as the *editio princeps* of ten of the sonnets and it contains one important alteration in the Ode on the Nativity. This and all other alterations will be found noted where they occur. I have not thought it necessary to note mere differences of spelling between the two editions but a word may find place here upon their general character. Generally it may be said that, where the two editions differ, the later spelling is that now in use. Thus words like goddess, darkness, usually written in

the first edition with one final s, have two, while on the other hand words like vernall, youthfull, and monosyllables like hugg, farr, lose their double letter. Many monosyllables, e.g. som, cours, glimps, wher, vers, aw, els, don, ey, ly, so written in 1645, take on in 1673 an e mute, while words like harpe, windes, onely, lose it. By a reciprocal change ayr and cipress become air and cypress; and the vowels in daign, vail, neer, beleeve, sheild, boosom, eeven, battail, travailer, and many other words are similarly modernized. On the other hand there are a few cases where the 1645 edition exhibits the spelling which has succeeded in fixing itself, as travail (1673, travel) in the sense of labour; and rob'd, profane, human, flood and bloody, forest, triple, alas, huddling, are found where the 1673 edition has roab'd, prophane, humane, floud and bloody, forrest, tripple, alass and hudling. Indeed the spelling in this later edition is not untouched by seventeenth century inconsistency. It retains here and there forms like shameles, cateres, (where 1645 reads cateress), and occasionally reverts to the older-fashioned spelling of monosyllables without the mute e. In the Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, it reads—' And som flowers and some bays.' But undoubtedly the impression on the whole is of a much more modern text.

In the matter of small or capital letters I have followed the old copy, except in one or two places where a personification seemed not plainly enough marked to a modern reader without a capital. Thus in *Il Penseroso*, l. 49, I print Leasure, although both editions read leasure; and in the *Vacation Exercise*, l. 71, Times for times. Also where the employment or omission of a capital is plainly due to misprinting, as too frequently in the 1673 edition, I silently make the correction. Examples are, notes for Notes in *Sonnet xvii*. l. 13; Anointed for anointed in *Psalms ii*. l. 12.

In regard to punctuation I have followed the old printers except in obvious misprints, and followed them also, as far as possible, in their distribution of roman and italic type and in the grouping of words and lines in the various titles. To follow them exactly was

impossible, as the books are so very different in size.

At this point the candid reader may perhaps ask what advantage is gained by presenting these poems to modern readers in the dress of a bygone age. If the question were put to me I should probably evade it by pointing out that Mr. Frowde is issuing an edition based upon this, in which the spelling is frankly that of to-day. But if the question were pressed, I think a sufficient answer might be found. To begin with, I should point out that even Prof. Masson, who in his excellent edition argues the point and decides in favour of modern spelling, allows that there are peculiarities of Milton's spelling which are really significant, and ought therefore to be noted or preserved. But who is to determine exactly which words are spelt according to the poet's own instructions, and which according to the printer's whim? It is notorious that in *Paradise Lost* some words were spelt upon a deliberate system, and it may very well happen that in the volume of minor poems which the poet saw through the press in 1645, there were spellings no less systematic. Prof. Masson makes a great point of the fact that Milton's own spelling, exhibited in the autograph manuscript of some of the minor poems preserved in Trinity College, Cambridge, does not correspond with that of the printed copy. [Note: This manuscript, invaluable to all students of Milton, has lately been facsimiled under the superintendence of Dr. Aldis Wright, and published at the Cambridge University press]. This is certainly true, as the reader may see for himself by comparing the passage from the manuscript given in the appendix with the corresponding place in the text. Milton's own spelling revels in redundant e's, while the printer of the 1645 book is very sparing of them. But in cases where the spelling affects the metre, we find that the printed text and Milton's manuscript closely correspond; and it is upon its value in determining the metre, quite as much as its antiquarian interest, that I should base a justification of this reprint. Take, for instance, such a line as the eleventh of *Comus*, which Prof. Masson gives as:—

Amongst the enthroned gods on sainted seats.

A reader not learned in Miltonic rhythms will certainly read this

Amongst th' enthroned gods

But the 1645 edition reads:

Amongst the enthron'd gods

and so does Milton's manuscript. Again, in line 597, Prof. Masson reads:

*It shall be in eternal restless change
Self-fed and self-consumed. If this fail,
The pillared firmament is rottenness, &c.*

But the 1645 text and Milton's manuscript read self-consum'd; after which word there is to be understood a metrical pause to mark the violent transition of the thought.

Again in the second line of the Sonnet to a Nightingale Prof. Masson has:

Warblest at eve when all the woods are still

but the early edition, which probably follows Milton's spelling though in this case we have no manuscript to compare, reads 'Warbl'st.' So the original text of Samson, l. 670, has 'temper'st.'

The retention of the old system of punctuation may be less defensible, but I have retained it because it may now and then be of use in determining a point of syntax. The absence of a comma, for example, after the word *hearse* in the 58th line of the Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, printed by Prof. Masson thus:—

*And some flowers, and some bays
For thy hearse to strew thy ways,*

but in the 1645 edition:—

*And som Flowers, and som Bays,
For thy Hears to strew the ways,*

goes to prove that for here must be taken as 'fore.

Of the *Paradise Lost* there were two editions issued during Milton's lifetime, and while the first has been taken as our text, all the variants in the second, not being simple misprints, have been recorded in the notes. In one respect, however, in the distribution of the poem into twelve books instead of ten, it has seemed best, for the sake of practical convenience, to follow the second edition.

A word may be allowed here on the famous correction among the Errata prefixed to the first edition: 'Lib. 2. v. 414, for we read wee.' This correction shows not only that Milton had theories about spelling, but also that he found means, though his sight was gone, to ascertain whether his rules had been carried out by his printer; and in itself this fact justifies a facsimile reprint. What the principle in the use of the double vowel exactly was (and it is found to affect the other monosyllabic pronouns) it is not so easy to discover, though roughly it is clear the reduplication was intended to mark emphasis. For example, in the speech of the Divine Son after the battle in heaven (vi. 810-817) the pronouns which the voice would naturally emphasize are spelt with the double vowel:

*Stand onely and behold
 Gods indignation on these Godless pourd
 By mee; not you but mee they have despis'd,
 Yet envied; against mee is all thir rage,
 Because the Father, t'whom in Heav'n supream
 Kingdom and Power and Glorie appertains,
 Hath honourd me according to his will.
 Therefore to mee thir doom he hath assign'd.*

In the Son's speech offering himself as Redeemer (iii. 227-249) where the pronoun all through is markedly emphasized, it is printed mee the first four times, and afterwards me; but it is noticeable that these first four times the emphatic word does not stand in the stressed place of the verse, so that a careless reader might not emphasize it, unless his attention were specially led by some such sign:

*Behold mee then, mee for him, life for life
 I offer, on mee let thine anger fall;
 Account mee man.*

In the Hymn of Creation (v.160-209) where ye occurs fourteen times, the emphasis and the metric stress six times out of seven coincide, and the pronoun is spelt yee; where it is unemphatic, and in an unstressed place, it is spelt ye. Two lines are especially instructive:

Speak yee who best can tell, ye Sons of light (l. 160);

and

*Fountains and yee, that warble, as ye flow,
Melodious murmurs, warbling tune his praise (l.
195).*

In v. 694 it marks, as the voice by its emphasis would mark in reading, a change of subject:

*So spake the false Arch-Angel, and infus'd
Bad influence into th' unwarie brest
Of his Associate; hee (i. e. the associate)
together calls,
&c.*

An examination of other passages, where there is no antithesis, goes to show that the lengthened form of the pronoun is most frequent before a pause (as vii. 95); or at the end of a line (i. 245, 257); or when a foot is inverted (v. 133); or when as object it precedes its verb (v. 612; vii. 747), or as subject follows it (ix. 1109; x. 4). But as we might expect under circumstances where a purist could not correct his own proofs, there are not a few inconsistencies. There does not seem, for example, any special emphasis in the second wee of the following passage:

*Freely we serve.
Because wee freely love, as in our will
To love or not; in this we stand or fall (v. 538).*

On the other hand, in the passage (iii. 41) in which the poet speaks of his own blindness:

*Thus with the Year
Seasons return, but not to me returns
Day, &c.*

where, if anywhere, we should expect mee, we do not find it, though it occurs in the speech eight lines below. It should be added that this differentiation of the pronouns is not found in any printed poem of Milton's before *Paradise Lost*, nor is it found in the Cambridge autograph. In that manuscript the constant forms are me, wee, yee. There is one place where there is a difference in the spelling of she, and it is just possible that this may not be due to accident. In the first verse of the song in *Arcades*, the MS. reads:

This, this is shee;

and in the third verse:

This, this is she alone.

This use of the double vowel is found a few times in *Paradise Regain'd*: in ii. 259 and iv. 486, 497 where mee begins a line, and in iv. 638 where hee is specially emphatic in the concluding lines of the poem. In *Samson Agonistes* it is more frequent (e.g. lines 124, 178, 193, 220, 252, 290, 1125). Another word the spelling of which in *Paradise Lost* will be observed to vary is the pronoun their, which is spelt sometimes thir. The spelling in the Cambridge manuscript is uniformly thire, except once when it is thir; and where their once occurs in the writing of an amanuensis the e is struck through. That the difference is not merely a printer's device to accommodate his line may be seen by a comparison of lines 358 and 363 in the First Book, where the shorter word comes in the shorter line. It is probable that the lighter form of the word was intended to be used when it was quite unemphatic. Contrast, for example, in Book iii. 1.59: His own works and their works at once to view with line 113: Thir maker and thir making and thir Fate. But the use is not consistent, and the form thir is not found at all till the 349th line of the First Book. The distinction is kept up in the *Paradise Regain'd* and *Samson Agonistes*, but, if possible, with even less consistency. Such passages, however, as *Paradise Regain'd*, iii. 414-440; *Samson Agonistes*, 880-890, are certainly spelt upon a method, and it is noticeable that in the choruses the lighter form is universal.

Paradise Regain'd and *Samson Agonistes* were published in 1671, and no further edition was called for in the remaining three years of the poet's lifetime, so that in the case of these poems there are no new readings to record; and the texts were so carefully revised, that only one fault (*Paradise Regain'd*, ii. 309) was left for correction later. In these and the other poems I have corrected the misprints catalogued in the tables of Errata, and I have silently corrected any other unless it might be mistaken for a various reading, when I have called attention to it in a note. Thus I have not recorded such blunders as Lethian for Lesbian in the 1645 text of *Lycidas*, line 63; or hallow for hollow in *Paradise Lost*, vi. 484;

but I have noted content for concert, in *At a Solemn Musick*, line 6.

In conclusion I have to offer my sincere thanks to all who have collaborated with me in preparing this Edition; to the Delegates of the Oxford Press for allowing me to undertake it and decorate it with so many facsimiles; to the Controller of the Press for his unfailing courtesy; to the printers and printer's reader for their care and pains. Coming nearer home I cannot but acknowledge the help I have received in looking over proof-sheets from my sister, Mrs. P. A. Barnett, who has ungrudgingly put at the service of this book both time and eyesight. In taking leave of it, I may be permitted to say that it has cost more of both these inestimable treasures than I had anticipated. The last proof reaches me just a year after the first, and the progress of the work has not in the interval been interrupted. *In tenui labor et tenuis gloria*. Nevertheless I cannot be sorry it was undertaken.

H. C. B.

YATTENDON RECTORY, November 8, 1899.

Transcriber's note: Facsimile of Title page of 1645 edition follows:

*POEMS
OF
Mr John Milton,
BOTH
ENGLISH and LATIN
Compos'd at several times.*

Printed by his true copies.

*The SONGS were set in Musick by
Mr. HENRY LAWES Gentleman of
the KINGS Chappel, and one
of His MAIESTIES
Private Musick.*

*—Baccare frontem
Cingite, ne vace noceat mala lingua futuro,
Virgil, Eclog. 7.*

*Printed, and Publish'd according to
ORDER.*

*LONDON,
Printed by Ruth Raworth for Humphrey Moseley,
and are to be sold at the signe of the Princes
Arms in S. Pauls Church-yard. 1645.*

Transcriber's note: Facsimile of Title page of 1673 edition follows:

*POEMS, &c.
UPON
Several Occasions.*

*BY
Mr. John Milton:*

*Both ENGLISH and LATIN &c.
Composed at several times.*

*With a small tractate of
EDUCATION
To Mr. HARTLIB*

*LONDON.
Printed for Tho. Dring at the Blew Anchor
next Mitre Court over against Fetter
Lane in Fleet-street. 1673.*

THE STATIONER TO THE READER.

It is not any Private respect of gain, Gentle Reader, for the slightest Pamphlet is now adayes more vendible then the Works of learnedest men; but it is the love I have to our own Language that hath made me diligent to collect, and set forth such Peeces in Prose and Vers as may renew the wonted honour and esteem of our tongue: and it's the worth of these both English and Latin poems,

not the flourish of any prefixed encomions that can invite thee to buy them, though these are not without the highest Commendations and Applause of the learnedst Academicks, both domestic and forrein: And amongst those of our own Countrey, the unparalleled attestation of that renowned Provost of Eaton, Sir Henry Wootton: I know not thy palat how it relishes such dainties, nor how harmonious thy soul is; perhaps more trivial Airs may please thee better. But howsoever thy opinion is spent upon these, that encouragement I have already received from the most ingenious men in their clear and courteous entertainment of Mr. Wallers late choice Peeces, hath once more made me adventure into the World, presenting it with these ever-green, and not to be blasted Laurels. The Authors more peculiar excellency in these studies, was too well known to conceal his Papers, or to keep me from attempting to sollicit them from him. Let the event guide it self which way it will, I shall deserve of the age, by bringing into the Light as true a Birth, as the Muses have brought forth since our famous Spencer wrote; whose Poems in these English ones are as rarely imitated, as sweetly excell'd. Reader, if thou art Eagle-eied to censure their worth, I am not fearful to expose them to thy exactest perusal.

Thine to Command

HUMPH. MOSELEY.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

ON THE MORNING OF CHRISTS NATIVITY.

Compos'd 1629.

I

This is the Month, and this the happy morn

Wherin the Son of Heav'ns eternal King,
Of wedded Maid, and Virgin Mother born,
Our great redemption from above did bring;
For so the holy sages once did sing,
That he our deadly forfeit should release,
And with his Father work us a perpetual peace.

II

That glorious Form, that Light unsufferable,
And that far-beaming blaze of Majesty,
Wherewith he wont at Heav'ns high Council-Table,
10
To sit the midst of Trinal Unity,
He laid aside; and here with us to be,
Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksom House of mortal Clay.

III

Say Heav'nly Muse, shall not thy sacred vein
Afford a present to the Infant God?
Hast thou no vers, no hymn, or solemn strein,
To welcom him to this his new abode,
Now while the Heav'n by the Suns team untrod,
Hath took no print of the approaching light,
20
And all the spangled host keep watch in squadrons bright?

IV

See how from far upon the Eastern rode
The Star-led Wisards haste with odours sweet,
O run, prevent them with thy humble ode,
And lay it lowly at his blessed feet;
Have thou the honour first, thy Lord to greet,
And joyn thy voice unto the Angel Quire,
From out his secret Altar toucht with hallow'd fire.
The Hymn.

I

IT was the Winter wilde,
While the Heav'n-born-childe,
30
All meanly wrapt in the rude manger lies;
Nature in aw to him

Had doff't her gawdy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the Sun her lusty Paramour.

II

Only with speeches fair
She woo'd the gentle Air
To hide her guilty front with innocent Snow,
And on her naked shame,
40
Pollute with sinfull blame,
The Saintly Vail of Maiden white to throw,
Confounded, that her Makers eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

III

But he her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyd Peace,
She crown'd with Olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphear
His ready Harbinger,
With Turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing,
50
And waving wide her mirtle wand,
She strikes a universall Peace through Sea and Land.

IV

No War, or Battails sound
Was heard the World around,
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked Chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood,
The Trumpet spake not to the armed throng,
And Kings sate still with awfull eye,
As if they surely knew their sovran Lord was by.
60

V

But peacefull was the night
Wherin the Prince of light
His raign of peace upon the earth began:
The Windes with wonder whist,

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