



12-1-1986

A Matter of Choice: Free Will in Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes

Avis Corrinne Dyrud

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A Matter of Choice: Free Will in
Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes

by

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Bachelor of Arts, Augsburg College, 1964

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the

University of North Dakota

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master of Arts

Grand Forks, North Dakota

December

1986

This Thesis submitted by Avis Corrinne Dyrud in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts from the University of North Dakota has been read by the Faculty Advisory Committee under whom the work has been done, and is hereby approved.

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This Thesis meets the standards for appearance and conforms to the style and format requirements of the Graduate School of the University of North Dakota, and is hereby approved.

A. William Johnson 12/12/66
Dean of the Graduate School

Table of Contents

Acknowledgmentsiv
Abstractv
Chapter 1. Introduction	1
Chapter 2. Review of the Literature	6
Chapter 3. Milton and Free Will26
Chapter 4. Dynamic Growth: The Exercise of Free Will in <u>Paradise Lost</u>38
Chapter 5. Growth in Divine Knowledge and Human Potential: The Son of God in <u>Paradise Regained</u>63
Chapter 6. The Restoration of the Will: Free Choice in <u>Samson Agonistes</u>	74
Chapter 7. Conclusion84
Works Cited87

Acknowledgments

I wish to express my gratitude to some of the many people who helped make this work a reality:

to my advisor, Dr. Bernard O'Kelly, for his precise editing of my writing as well as his gracious advice throughout the various stages of this work;

to Dr. Richard Hampsten and Dr. Edward Chute for their helpful suggestions on the various drafts of this thesis;

to my colleagues at Northland Community College, Thief River Falls, Minnesota, whose support and encouragement are much appreciated, and particularly to Dr. Tyrone Birkeland for his proofreading assistance;

to Renae Seibel, faculty secretary at Northland Community College, for her competent help in the computer printing of this paper;

to my children--Hope, Tarara, Nathan, Heidi, and Ingrid--for their patience and cooperation through my years of graduate work and the writing of this thesis;

and finally, to my husband, Phil, whose endless support and encouragement have made this whole endeavor worthwhile.

A. C. D.

ABSTRACT

Milton's use of the free will doctrine in his poetry reveals its importance in his theology. Free will is also an integral part of the meaning of the three biblical narratives--Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes--which are dealt with here, although different aspects of free will are central to each. The primary purpose of this study is to provide evidence of Milton's theological stance regarding free will in the three poems as well as in the relevant prose writings, particularly in Christian Doctrine, Milton's work of systematic theology.

A secondary purpose of this study is to trace the function of the will which, according to Milton, is free, yet "mutable." One aspect of the mutable nature of the will is that it reflects a process of growth, and in all three poems, there is dynamic growth in the exercise of free will. Adam and Eve's education in developing responsibility both before and after the Fall enables them to respond creatively to God's providential love, and therefore, to their own potential for renewal and growth through regeneration. In Paradise Regained, Christ's exercise of free will reveals his growth in knowledge about himself as both human and divine, the exemplar of how all men should face and handle trials and

temptations. Samson, too, exercises his freedom to choose; combined with his declaration of trust in God, Samson's decision to obey the "rousing motions" within him signals the beginning of the restoration of his free will.

In all three poems, Milton's concept of free will figures prominently, though in various stages, as part of a process of growth. The central characters in each poem encounter choices that must be made; in some instances, choices are made to control the free will, but in others, passions are allowed to usurp reason and free will. Throughout these poems and his Christian Doctrine, Milton shows how all created beings exercise freedom of choice and also how they must bear the responsibility for the choices they make.

Introduction

The purpose of this study is to provide evidence of Milton's theological stance regarding free will in Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, as well as in the relevant prose writings, particularly in Christian Doctrine, Milton's work of systematic theology. According to Arthur Barker, Milton's theology can "illuminate and sustain his poetry and his poetry illuminatingly applies and extends his theology because his theory of reuovation and his theory of poetry are, at the responsive and responsible heart of the matter, quite inseparable" (1964, p. 194). The intent here is not to use the prose works as a "gloss" on the poetry but rather to use the prose writings to illuminate the ideas with which Milton worked in his poetry.

The second aspect of this study's purpose is to trace the function of the will which, according to Milton, is free, yet "mutable." If we assume that the freedom of the will given to man at creation is a static entity, to be used only once, then Milton's reference to the postlapsarian free will as "lost" is an apt description. But if we take seriously Milton's extensive use of the term throughout Paradise Lost and Christian Doctrine, we sense that this concept is complex in its interpretation and figures centrally in Milton's portrayal of man.

This study is limited to an investigation of the concept of free will mainly in Paradise Lost and secondarily in Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes. The major work used to shed light on the poetry is Milton's Christian Doctrine, itself a primary source. In addition, recent literary criticism dealing with the free will concept is used. The approach here is somewhat historical because of the use of Christian Doctrine; otherwise, the study does not attempt to be either a historical tracing of the concept of free will or a search for sources of the belief or its tradition.

Free will is indeed part of Man's existence in both the prelapsarian and the postlapsarian world, and one aspect of its mutable nature is that it reflects a process of growth. From the first day of their lives, Adam and Eve have been faced with choices to be made, decisions within their sphere of influence as caretakers of the garden and as human beings dependent on mutual help and love from each other and from their Creator. They exercise their God-given free will without coercion or predestination, and they discover that there are indeed dangers in choosing, even in a state of perfection; yet there is dynamic growth in their process of choice. After the Fall, when all seems lost for them and their posterity, Adam and Eve come to an awareness that there are choices yet to be made and that they need to respond to God so that the process of regeneration can begin. Their education in developing responsibility enables them to respond creatively to God's providential love and, therefore, to their own potential for renewal and growth through regeneration.

As Paradise Lost ends, Adam and Eve "are thinking, feeling beings, endowed with free will and faced by crucial choices in a world which has value and meaning" (Blackburn 1971, p. 135); yet because they are fallen beings, they must leave Paradise. Looking toward the future, Adam refers to the coming of the Redeemer in his speech of confession:

Henceforth I learn that to obey is best,
 And love with fear the only God, to walk
 As in his presence, ever to observe
 His providence, and on him sole depend, . . .
 . . . that suffering for Truth's sake
 Is fortitude to highest victory,
 And to the faithful Death the Gate of Life;
 Taught this by his example whom I now
 Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest. (PL 12. 561-64, 569-73)

It is Adam's sense of future redemption for mankind that is part of his "paradise within" (12. 587) as he leaves the garden, but Eve's sense of anticipation relates directly to her position as "Mother Eve": "By mee the Promis'd Seed shall all restore" (12. 624-25). Both look to the

¹
 All references to Milton's poetry and Areopagitica are to John Milton: Complete Poems and Major Prose, ed. Merritt Y. Hughes (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957); poetry references are by book and line numbers. Other prose works cited are from the Complete Prose Works (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959 and 1973): Christian Doctrine (CD) and Tetrachordon (CPW).

future for the regaining of Paradise, although it is not to take place in their lifetimes.

In Paradise Regained, Milton does not refer specifically by name to free will, yet the epic centers on the making of choices. When Christ is confronted by Satan in a test of wills through a series of temptations in the wilderness, he is being tempted as a human being, not as a divine being; he is "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). Therefore, his exercise of free will is very much like that exercised by all mankind. Christ becomes the great exemplar of how we should face and handle trials and testings in this world, but, in addition, Christ's exercise of free will reveals his growth in knowledge about himself as both human and divine.

In Samson Agonistes, we see a man suffering under the weight of the consequences of wrong choices such as marriage to a Philistine woman and a betrayal of his secret strength. Unlike Adam, who has been sinless but has also experienced the result of sin, and Christ, who has remained sinless, Samson is given over to despair because of his wrongdoings. It seems as if Samson's free will is nonexistent and that he is simply waiting to die. Yet his visitors call forth reactions from him that present him with choices--to accept Manoah's offer of ransom to free him or to be reconciled to Dalila. However, it is in this exercise of choosing, combined with his declaration of trust in God, that Samson begins to feel "Some rousing motions" (SA 1382) that signal the beginning of the restoration of his free will so that good can come from a life tainted with wrong choice.

In all three poems, Milton's concept of free will figures prominently, though in various stages, as part of a process of growth. The central characters in each poem encounter choices that must be made; in some instances, choices are made to control the free will, but in others, passions are allowed to usurp reason and free will. Throughout these poems and the Christian Doctrine, Milton devotes much attention to the freedom of the will and to how man's responsibility for exercising that will is, for each created being, a matter of choice.

Review of the Literature

To step into the world of Milton criticism, particularly into the realm of Milton's theology, calls for a sense of direction in one's search because the danger exists of slipping into the trap the fallen angels fell into: of reasoning "high / Of Providence, Foreknowledge, Will, and Fate, / Fixed Fate, Free will, Foreknowledge absolute," and one might find "no end, in wand'ring mazes lost" (PL 2.558-561); the concept of free will is inextricably tied up with such ideas as reason, obedience, predestination, and knowledge. Perhaps because the free will doctrine is such a vital tenet in Milton's works, it is mentioned at least in passing in many pieces of literary criticism; however, this review of recent literature regarding the free will concept will refer chiefly to works from the last twenty years or so which focus primarily on the free will concept in Milton's writings.

Most recent criticism on free will falls into these sets of discussions: because man is created with a propensity to fall, his misuse of free will leads to a fall which is a predictable, predestined event; another view is that each person's free will is one aspect of his freedom as a growing human being who is created in God's image, and his exercise of free will need not lead to his fall because he is sufficient

to stand.

Fredson Bowers in "Adam, Eve, and the Fall in Paradise Lost" states the assumption commonly held by free will critics when he states that without the presence of the possibility of man's disobeying and thus falling, the freedom of the will could not have existed. However, in analyzing the use of free will in the separation scene in book 9, Bowers takes issue with Adam's reply to Eve at the end of Adam's speech relating free will to reason: "for thy stay, not free, absents thee more" (PL 9.372). Bowers calls Adam's reply "bad doctrine" and asserts that Adam in his role as protector has no right to relieve himself from his responsibility to Eve; furthermore, by making her a free agent, Adam fails in his duty to her and to God. Rather, Adam should have commanded Eve to stay by his side, a logical outcome of his syllogism relating obedience to constancy. Bowers goes on to explain that Adam should not have surrendered responsibility for her care since his hierarchical position gives him no right to release her. By not commanding her to stay, Adam makes not only a breach of the Chain of Being but also a breach of their love. Adam's unwillingness to give Eve the command to stay, a responsibility belonging to him, allows events to progress toward the Fall. Bowers maintains that it is passion that has affected Adam's reason and will because he is "fondly overcome with Female charm" (PL 9.999). Bowers concludes that in these two episodes--the separation and the Fall itself--Adam is more guilty than Eve because he fails in his task as protector, head, and guide. Bowers' placement of guilt chiefly on Adam suggests that Eve is not free to act alone in dealing with the

choices that she encounters.

In "Freedom and Necessity in Paradise Lost" (1977), J. B. Savage, like Bowers, refers to the "predicates, almost the clichés" of the poem: that the actions of intelligent beings (angels and men) are freely willed, not compelled or restrained, and these moral agents are free to have chosen differently, yet they are responsible for their choices and deserve whatever praise or blame their actions may merit. When Savage asks whether Adam and Eve, at the very moment of the eating of the fruit, could have chosen differently, he answers that they could not. Savage insists that Milton's view regarding free will became a belief that man's freedom is provisional, limited, and dependent; that is, man can be free only to the extent that his highest nature and his place within creation are revealed in his chosen actions. That is, for Adam, freedom exists within the scope of his true nature, as long as his actions are motivated by his "willing of the eternal law" (p. 292). Savage asserts that for Adam to "choose" evil means not to have chosen at all since such a choice is contrary to man's divinely created nature. By becoming absorbed in the things of the world which pull him away from the love of the Creator, such as his inordinate, irrational love for Eve, Adam becomes governed and determined by them and becomes caught up in a series of events he cannot possibly prevent. Therefore, Adam "falls because he is not free to do otherwise, and that were he truly free, he should not have fallen" (p. 295). Assuming these premises about Adam's freedom and the circumstances that actually deny his freedom, the Fall has become "a foregone conclusion" (p. 305); Savage says that we are not

"surprised by sin" because events leading to the Fall have made it completely predictable.

The view of the Fall as a predictable event, because man is really not free to choose otherwise than to fall, is a view contrary to the view expressed by Dennis Danielson in Milton's Good God: A Study in Literary Theodicy (1982). Danielson states that Milton's aim in his Free Will Defense is to assert unequivocally both God's omnipotence and his goodness; that is, "the claims that God is omnipotent and wholly good and that evil exists in the world need imply no contradiction" (p. 93). An objection from opponents of the Free Will Defense indicates a fundamental problem in the idea of an omnipotent God creating men with free will: if men's wills are truly free, it must follow that even God cannot control them and therefore, God is no longer omnipotent (p. 94). The absolute and conditional powers of God relate to man's will: the impossibility of God's controlling men's wills is conditional, resulting from a prior "free act of the Divine will" (p. 95). That is, controlling men's wills is contradictory to God's decision to make man a free being (p. 95). Another postulate of the Free Will Defense is that creaturely freedom will be seen to outweigh all the evil it has caused; the Free Will Defense states that, even given the fact that man has misused his freedom, "the resulting state of affairs is preferable to that which would obtain if there were no such thing as creaturely freedom" (p. 99). Also, in this Defense, a large part of the value of freedom pertains to man's relationship to the divine; man's creation in the image of God is of central importance in Christian theology.

The impossibility of God's intervention to overrule Adam's free will is no flaw in omnipotence but follows from a choice God himself made in keeping with the self-limiting character of such a choice. Danielson concludes that when Milton says in Paradise Lost he is attempting to assert providence and justify God's ways, Milton is centering his argument on the Free Will Defense as a model for the consistency of the claims that God is omnipotent and wholly good and that evil exists in this world.

Like Danielson, Stanley Fish in Surprised by Sin (1971) takes an approach different from Bowers' and Savage's. Referring to the main tenets of anti-Milton criticism--Adam and Eve are fated to fall; their disobedience is determined partly by circumstances, partly by their own natures; they were created with a propensity to fall--Fish says that these lead to the conclusion that God, not Adam and Eve, is guilty of the Fall. However, if man could not fall, he could not stand; that is, he would not be standing consciously and willfully. Fish says that free will is a meaningless concept unless the possibility of wrong choice exists, but it is God himself in Paradise Lost (3.112-128) who raises the very questions the anti-Milton critics use and, according to Fish, "gratuitously refutes them" (p. 210). Fish says that at this point, the reader has been introduced to the "evasions God disallows" such as, "I ordained their Fall, the shadow of Fate hangs over them, they were not 'sufficient to have stood'" (p. 211). To allow these evasions is to let them undermine our understanding of the situation as God and Milton have handled it. Fish asserts that Milton chose to risk all to bring the

reader to a self-awareness that man can indeed fall to the promptings of the enemy within. He goes on to say that it is tempting for the reader, because he knows Adam will soon fall, to obscure the uniqueness of the Fall as an action unrelated to its antecedent events; that is, the status of the Fall as a wholly free, unforced act must be preserved if the culpability of sinners is to be maintained and understood in the context of the poem's theology. It is through the reader's response when he is confronted with Adam and Eve's sin that he is surprised by his own sin, his own awareness that he, too, is free to choose whether to fall or stand and to bear the responsibility for that choice.

Arthur Barker goes on to emphasize what happens to man after the Fall. Barker, too, views man as freely choosing to fall yet accepting the responsibility for that decision. The lost opportunities for self-development and further self-fulfillment are part of the Fall's significance, Barker asserts; however, Adam's responses show a developing process of restorative response to the fact of divine creative purpose and the divine love and mercy which are central in the poem. In "Paradise Lost: The Relevance of Regeneration" (1969), Barker notes that Paradise Lost's organization is balanced between fallen degeneracy and the theme of sustaining, creative, and recreative power at work in and through man; books 1 and 2 focus on the Satanic recovery, books 3 and 4 show scenes in heaven and Paradise, books 5 and 6 deal with the war in heaven, books 7 and 8 relate the account of creation, book 9 focuses on the Fall and book 10 on the judgment placed on mankind, and books 11 and 12 give man preparation for this world (p. 67).

In an earlier work, "Structural and Doctrinal Pattern in Milton's Later Poems" (1964), Barker, like Fish, says that the Fall was far from inevitable; in fact, the prelapsarian scenes in Paradise Lost lead the reader through a process of regeneration since life both before and after the Fall is a process of developing response to God's ways:

Every prelapsarian incident in the poem involves for Adam and Eve (as for all its other creatures) a "calling," and every prelapsarian incident illustrates the possibility of a refusal. But what is significant about these incidents is not that they forbode the Fall but that they illustrate the kind of active response that is according to the norm of right. . . . It is purposeful growth toward completing that is implied . . . by every prelapsarian incident. (p. 189)

Diane Kelsey McColley, like Stanley Fish, focuses on the dynamic growth and change in life both before and after the Fall and sees Adam and Eve as growing, developing human beings who freely make choices and bear the responsibility for them. In "Free Will and Obedience in the Separation Scene of Paradise Lost" (1972), McColley rejects the notion that Adam is weak and Eve is vain, and that therefore they are originally flawed and their fall is inevitable. Rather, she says, the separation scene depicts potentially sufficient beings who in the process of growth face difficulties and learn the meaning of obedience to God's requests. Eve's obedience to Adam depends on her liberty, preserved here and then lost in the Fall, and the health of their mutual love depends on their trust in God and their responses to all of creation.

The separation scene reveals not only the weakness Satan exploits but also the virtues he perverts; these, however, will yet be restored to responsive beings through regeneration.

In "Eve's Dream" (1978), McColley states that there are three preparatory tests of virtue for Adam and Eve to confront before the Fall; these tests exercise the faculties of will, understanding, and imagination. Eve's attraction to her image in the pool, her dream induced by Satan, and Eve's choice of working apart from Adam for a morning are three episodes giving opportunities for obedience. Each of these difficulties requires skill and growth in understanding as well as liberty of the will to which the regenerate are to be restored. None of these prefigures the Fall or proves Eve's insufficiency to stand. McColley states that if Adam and Eve were immune to temptation through the senses and their imaginations, those faculties would not be free, and the exercise of reason and will would be lessened. McColley concludes that Adam and Eve before the Fall are learning to choose between good and evil without disobeying God, and they have grown in the process.

In her recent work, Milton's Eve (1985), McColley attempts to establish a regenerative reading of Eve's role to show that she is not only sufficient to stand and able to grow but also a pattern of active goodness. McColley says that if we view creation and regeneration as the poem's central process and the furtherance of this process in the reader as its primary purpose, we will see in Milton's representation of Eve and her original righteousness the foreshadowings of regenerative patterns (pp. 13-14). It is Milton's Renaissance humanism and

Reformation theology taken together that required an explanation of the Fall that takes both free will and human responsibility into account; this explanation includes the following articles of faith: God creates nothing that is not good; every rational creature has freedom to become either better or worse, and evil is not the opposite but the perversion of good; everything lost with Paradise is by "one greater Man" restored. McCollley says that Milton's portrayal of Eve, then, shows that the combination of her own inward virtues, Adam's counsel, and God's Word and providence make Eve "sufficient to stand" whether or not she does, in fact, stand.

Adam's sufficiency to stand is discussed by John C. Ulreich in "'Sufficient to have stood': Adam's Responsibility in Book IX" (1971); Ulreich says that disobedience leads to a loss of reason—a confusion which impairs the ability to choose. Obedience is choice, not just desire or will, but a conscious election of value; that is, the freedom to choose is a primary assumption in Milton's theodicy. Ulreich maintains that Adam falls because he fails to recognize his capacity for love; Adam does not realize that death is not the only outcome Eve's disobedience will have. Christ's offer to redeem man (book 3) has proceeded from his trust in God, and that trust is as available to Adam as to Christ. Faith, the internal knowledge of God, is something Adam has to relearn in books 11 and 12.

In another work, "A Paradise Within: The Fortunate Fall in Paradise Lost" (1971), Ulreich states that for Milton, the only thing that could make the culpa felix is for it to be our guilt, the

result of our own free choice. Ulreich's views also are in harmony with critics who assert that Adam and Eve are not flawed or predestined to fall; Ulreich says that Adam and Eve already have all that is necessary for moral choice: a knowledge of good and evil and the possibility of doing evil. What they lack is the experience of evil within themselves; far from being enlightening, the experience of evil is a limitation and a corruption of the will and a loss of right reason. Ulreich carefully makes the distinction between the Paradise without and the Paradise within because the promise of a far happier Paradise does not take into account all the suffering in the world unless the change is to be understood as an internal change. Ulreich concludes that not because of, but in spite of the Fall, man has it in his power to become happier than he was in Paradise.

Barbara Lewalski, too, sees Adam and Eve as growing beings as they exercise their free wills. In "Milton on Women--Yet Once More" (1974), Lewalski discusses how Milton's Eve participates fully in the entire range of prelapsarian activities. Lewalski concludes that what is profound in Milton's treatment of the first man and woman is his recognition of the capacity of each to make individual decisions defining his or her life and his recognition of the depth of their need for each other to give their lives meaning.

Thomas H. Blackburn discusses choices before the Fall in "'Uncloister'd Virtue': Adam and Eve in Milton's Paradise" (1971); he points out that what distinguishes the decision which is the Fall is not that it is the first time Adam and Eve have a choice to make, but rather

that it is the first time they allow passion to overcome reason in directing the will. Proof that their freedom of the will is a genuine freedom is that their passions do appear and that Adam and Eve recognize the difference between good and evil objects of passion in choices before the Fall. To insist that man begins to face moral questions only when he is fallen and thus lives an interesting life only then is to misunderstand the ideal of virtuous freedom. Milton sets forth this ideal in Areopagitica where he asserts that true moral choice does not necessitate the actual personal experience of evil; rather, he says that the ideal is "to know and yet abstain" (Hughes, 1957, p. 729). Both before and after the Fall, Adam and Eve are thinking, feeling beings, created with free will and faced by crucial choices in a world that has value and meaning.

Marilyn Farwell in "Eve, the Separation Scene, and the Renaissance Idea of Androgyny" (1982), echoes many of the ideas expressed by McColley, Ureich, Fish, and others, including the view that life in both prelapsarian and postlapsarian Eden is growing and changing as Adam and Eve function as human beings with freedom of choice. Farwell suggests that the separation scene is not at all a temptation "permeated with fatalism" (1982, p. 4) but rather, a temptation to growth. Milton presents us with an Eve who has moved from unthinking response to her own image to an ability to make independent judgments. The discussion Adam and Eve have before separating to work apart is a drama in which two growing individuals try to discover and work out the answer to their immediate problem, and that answer is far from simple. When Adam feels

that they are stronger together, he forgets that confronting and responding to temptations has been the way to knowledge for them in Eden. When Eve leaves, she leaves surrounded by danger, but "in Milton's Eden that is business as usual" (p. 16).

Louis L. Martz in Poet of Exile: A Study of Milton's Poetry (1980) opens his chapter, "The Power of Choice," with the statement that in Milton's universe the power of choice is necessary for man's perfection and happiness both before and after the Fall; the power of choice is an essential aspect of Milton's view of the dynamic and progressive expression of God's goodness. When Adam reasons with Eve in the separation scene, Adam does not suggest that they are confined to a narrow circuit but rather that they can go anywhere together; the idea that they are made to face temptations singly is a misconception of the nature of this world where nothing stands by itself but where everything lives best in the "linked universe of love" with respect and devotion for those above and care for those below (p. 133). Adam goes on to explain that the freedom of the will exercises its power of choice within a universe of mutual responsibility and interdependence: ". . . I should mind thee oft, and mind thou me" (9.358); Adam reminds Eve that they should be mindful of each other's best interests. In contrast to Bowers who maintains that Adam errs by not asserting his rightful authority over her, Martz says that Adam does not really give Eve permission to go; rather, he has given her permission to disobey his wishes. Before the Fall, man was "sufficient to have stood" and after the Fall man has "what may suffice." Redemptive grace will renew that power of choice through

the Son of God's sacrificial death for all mankind.

Diana Benet also holds to the belief that Adam and Eve are learning much about God and themselves even in prelapsarian Eden. In "Abdiel and the Son in the Separation Scene" (1983), Benet points out that Eve's understanding of trial and testing has come from hearing Raphael's account of Abdiel, who heroically withstood Satan's guiles and did not fall; Eve sees Abdiel's status in relation to Satan as corresponding to her own in relation to Adam because she concludes from Raphael's paradigm that she is not vulnerable to Satan's fraud, that she is not necessarily dependent on Adam's protection, and that it is good that she thinks for herself. Benet says that Eve's inference that she, too, has the capacity to triumph over Satan is correct, but "her assumption that Abdiel's success necessarily predicts and ensures her own is a great error" (p. 132). In their discussion in the separation scene, Eve suggests that because each of the angels chooses for himself, the same must be so for her and Adam; Benet says that even if Adam and Eve are together, each one must depend solely on his or her own strength and effort to resist Satan. Benet also asserts that Eve feels compelled to choose whether to stay with Adam or to work alone because Adam simply does not know which is the better alternative; Adam does not persuade Eve that she is safest with him because he is not sure of it himself. Benet states that there simply is no way to know beyond a doubt that one situation or another will guarantee spiritual safety; also, no one can confront trial for another.

M. Gutkin takes a position similar to Fish, McColley, Ulreich, Farwell, and others who see Adam and Eve's life in the Garden as evolving

and open-ended, a dynamic process of learning about themselves and God as they exercise their free will. Other critics, those who see life in the Garden as static, with events preceding the Fall making that fall an inevitable and a foregone conclusion, seem to share the underlying assumption that free will and obedience are opposed, that we cannot please ourselves and God at the same time, says Gutkin in "'Sufficient to Have Stood': the Mimesis of Free Will in Paradise Lost" (1984).

Although Paradise Lost postulates freedom as a prerequisite to obedience, it also offers, "unspoken, a compelling mimesis of their simultaneity in creation's universal march toward the Creator" (p. 12). Gutkin goes on to say that the dialectic of creation in Paradise Lost makes free will for man a process of increasing comprehension; because Adam's comprehension is limited, his accountability is limited accordingly; after he has fallen, he must again undertake the obligations of the law, as he understands them. In relation to Eve, he must now acknowledge the greater responsibility, and having understood this, Adam resumes his abdicated authority. When Adam naively rejoices at his felix culpa, he exceeds the bounds of his own proportion; while listening to Michael's assurance of God's plan for mankind as perfected in Christ, Adam reaches for a power he does not possess and presumes to take credit for the world's redemption. Adam has to learn that the completion of the divine process of which he is also a part, the fulfillment of the divine will, is yet to come.

Relating free will to Paradise Regained, Stanley Fish in "Things and Actions Indifferent: the Temptation of Plot in Paradise Regained"

refers to the kinds of choices man has, according to Milton; "these things," and in fact all things, are neither good nor bad of themselves but "may at different times be one or the other depending on whether their use in particular circumstances advances or subverts God's glory," says Fish (p. 168). Also, he says that the the indifference of things is found only in their existence apart from circumstances; but since our involvement with things is always circumstantial, they are never, at any one time, indifferent for us. Fish maintains that there is an inherent danger if we think that because things are neither good nor evil in themselves they are neither good nor evil in practice. This is the kind of error that Christ is invited to make in each one of Satan's temptations; Christ is always in the position of responding not to the obvious but to the hidden terms of a temptation, and he sees through each situation to the eternal choice (between God and idols) that the temptations really represent; therefore, in Paradise Regained, the Son refuses to place value in a thing indifferent, Fish concludes.

In "Paradise Regained and the Second Adam," Richard Jordan says that Milton's readers knew that as all men were involved in Adam, so all were involved in Christ, who faced temptation in the wilderness to give all mankind an example of how to meet temptation; but more importantly, he went through them so that man would never again have to confront Satan's temptations so directly. Christ in Paradise Regained is teaching us to use Scripture against temptation, but he is more than an example—he is using it for us. Christ is not regaining paradise for himself in this poem; he is regaining salvation for the reader.

Gary Hamilton in "Creating the Garden Anew: the Dynamics of Paradise Regained" (1971) states that the Christ of this epic is a man who refuses to do what Adam and Eve did, but who instead acts out Milton's vision of what Adam and Eve could have done. As Milton handles the two natures of Christ in Paradise Regained, he shows us Christ's claim to the title of Son of God in terms of his excellent performance on the human level. As a human Christ, he is in the process of raising himself up "under long obedience tri'd" (PL 7.159); "That which purifies us is trial. . . and trial is by what is contrary," Milton says in Areopagitica (Hughes, p. 738). Hamilton maintains that it is through the encounters with Satan that the human Christ is purified. Christ fully realizes the potential of his human nature in creating a "paradise within," and after excelling on the human level, he rises above humanity. By standing firm against temptation, Christ has raised himself up just as Adam and Eve could have done if they had stood firm.

In his essay, "Why is Paradise Regained So Cold?" (1980), Alan Fisher stresses that what Christ did in the final temptation was not to act as much as to endure. Christ's choice to stand is an endurance that becomes faith, and faith for man is the experience that links the person who has it with the apostles and Christ himself.

Faith is also shown in activity in this world, according to Wayne C. Anderson in his essay "Is Paradise Regained Really Cold?" (1983). Anderson states that Christ's refusal to act in Satan's terms is not resignation from the world but "a redefinition of what it means to act in the world" (p. 18). Milton sees himself as a leader of a remnant of true

believers carrying on a tradition to bring about change in the world, and this "revolution" comes every day in each man over a whole lifetime of effort rather than all at once for an entire nation (p. 19). Anderson says that Milton uses a rhetorical form in Paradise Regained to engage and transform the audience; he can do this only by pointing to the choices Christ has to make. Milton cannot persuade us to take one over the other, as no one can persuade anyone else to believe in Christ; this is the free choice of each individual, most likely grounded in good reasons but never an unavoidable outcome of such reasons. In Paradise Regained, Milton's effort is to make us "insiders" so that we can celebrate the special nature of Christ's victory and his return home, what Anderson calls a "splendid figure" describing the meaning of regeneration in the real world of human action (p. 22).

Thomas Langford in "The Nature of the Christ of Paradise Regained" (1982) says that Christ is placed precisely in the situation of Adam as far as his susceptibility to temptation is concerned, so that the sequel to Paradise Lost reflects the "perfect resolution to the Adamic dilemma" (p. 63). Christ's victory over Satan is not merely a divine escape from a human dilemma, but it is a human victory; in reversing the course of the first Adam, Christ does not counter humanity but he confirms it on the higher level it was originally intended to reach. Milton would have us believe that only by choosing to reject Satan's alternatives can man choose God over Satan, and thereby "ope up for himself, as Christ did, the divine resources of salvation" (p. 64). When Christ as man relies on divine wisdom and strength to face

temptation, it is only in the same way that all men may do so, by using Scripture, and then escape will come when man has done all he can to demonstrate his loyalty to God and his rejection of Satan. Langford says that at this point for Christ and for all mankind, when Satan has been resisted, God enters the picture and does not allow temptation to be more than one can bear; with the temptation he will also provide a way of escape.

In "Eve and Dalila: Renovation and the Hardening of the Heart" (1962), Mary Ann Radzinowicz says that the theme of moral regeneration is one of the major themes in Milton's poetry. Milton sees human existence as a perpetual series of daily choices and acts by a person who is free to decide. The liberty to act is not completely sacrificed by a false choice but is kept alive by the exercise of liberty. In his account of the Fall, Milton insists that the failure can be mended, that the pattern of mischoice can be broken through new choice. Man's experience is of transgression and loss, of renewal and regeneration. In Samson Agonistes, Dalila wills her own, not Samson's good, yet her behavior has helped to bring about his regeneration even while she has hardened her own heart. According to Radzinowicz, Dalila gives Samson the scope for rechoice through trial, but she limits the scope for her own rehabilitation to her chosen reality.

Margaret O'Brien in "A Broken Freedom: John Milton Revisited" (1982) says that the kind of freedom Milton explores in Samson shows how a man should respond when as death draws near he sees his life in ruins and himself with no further hope of fulfilling a noble destiny.

She compares Samson's plight with Job's, but unlike Job, Samson sees only too well why his desperate condition is his own fault; in both cases, God's final intervention lies beyond the scope of human comprehension. God's intervention takes possession of Samson's will and entire being, and Samson triumphs because God triumphs through him. O'Brien concludes that for Milton, true freedom was always a "broken thing" because sin breaks it by leading man to self-enthralment; in Samson Agonistes everything is broken until God acts with transforming power.

Laurie Morrow in "The 'Meet and Happy Conversation': Dalila's Role in Samson Agonistes" (1983) points out that Samson is aware that he was sufficient to have stood. Before he can be a champion of God, Samson has to conquer despair by recognizing that his complete admission of guilt, his plea for pardon, and his resignation to God's will have already made him receptive to God's forgiveness. However, for Dalila it is different: she condemns herself by her refusal to admit, accept, and atone for her own guilt. Unwittingly, Dalila enables Samson to open himself to God's grace; from their conversation, Samson becomes regenerated, prepared spiritually as well as physically to fight for God.

In Samson's Catharsis (1970), Sherman Hawkins says that in Samson a redemptive catharsis centers on the hero. Because the moral life turns on the control of passion by the reason, all of Samson's temptations take the form of debates; Samson's victory over temptation comes when he wins all his arguments. Hawkins asserts that Milton's tragedy is "a mimesis of the redemptive process at work in the life of the individual and the race and that it is an action not of men but of

man" (p. 227); Samson is one of the great heroes of faith, those who become examples for those who follow. Samson is considered by Hawkins to be an image of Christ: by his fall, Samson conforms to the image of the first Adam; by his humiliation and sacrificial death, he is transformed into the image of Christ, the Second Adam.

To conclude, a survey of recent literary criticism regarding Milton's use of free will falls roughly into two general lines of thought: free will is limited by man's natural inclination toward evil and his inability to choose the good; God-given free will gives the sufficiency to stand. The second approach toward the free will issue shows how it is possible for free will to be used for good by Adam and Eve in Paradise Lost, by Christ in Paradise Regained, and by Samson in Samson Agonistes. Although the misuse of free will leads to evil for Satan and Dalila, they, too, have used the same freedom of choice given to all created beings. In all three poems, Milton clearly shows how God's dealings with man relate to free choice and how restoration and renewal are possibilities for fallen man because he is allowed to exercise his free will and again choose the good.

Milton and Free Will

"We know our will is free, and there's an end on't," Dr. Johnson is quoted as saying, according to Boswell's Life of Johnson (qtd. in Savage 1977, p. 288). Milton, too, knew without hesitation that the will is free, and for him, the concept was central to his thinking; it is evident in the structure as well as the content of Paradise Lost and some of his other poetic works and is dealt with at length in Christian Doctrine, with some references to it in other prose works. Freedom of the will plays a major role in Milton's theology, as well as in the resulting theodicy, termed by critics the Free Will Defense—a defense of God's goodness and power in view of the existence of evil.

The first choice made regarding free will was God's, who at creation gave man a free but mutable will:

I form'd them free, and free they must remain
Till they enthrall themselves: I else must change
Their nature, and revoke the high Decree
Unchangeable, Eternal, which ordain'd
Their freedom (PL 3.124-28)

Free will is part of man's nature and, because it is mutable, it can be directed by the reason to make choices leading either to good or to evil

consequences.

When Raphael in book 5 delivers God's message to Adam regarding his obedience and his free estate, he gives reasons why God created man as a free agent: God made man perfect and good, but gave him a free will to use as he chooses, not out of force or necessity, but voluntarily, out of love and a desire to serve his Creator. Whether or not man freely loves God determines whether he falls or stands (5.539-40). In Christian Doctrine, Milton explains that God's knowledge that man will fall does not mean he decrees it: "there can be no absolute divine decree about the action of free agents. Moreover, divine foreknowledge can no more affect the action of free agents than can human foreknowledge, that is, not at all" (1973, p. 164). Because the fall of man is not necessitated by divine decree, salvation also is not necessitated because of God's divine justice, but it is freely given through his mercy and grace. Because of his nature, God cannot decree sin but only permit it.

Man's nature and his free will are also related to the image of God. That image Milton identifies with the creature's freedom as in Paradise Lost where Adam and Eve are described: ". . . for in their looks Divine / The image of thir glorious Maker shone, / Truth, Wisdom, Sanctitude severe and pure, / Severe, but in true filial freedom plac'd" (4.291-4). The term "filial" implies a genetic relationship between the characteristics of a parent and a child, here between Creator and creature. In book 3, when God bends down to look at what he has created, "He first beheld / Our two first Parents" (3.64-5) and their works—"Immortal fruits of joy and love" (3.67). The parallels

between what God has created and the activities and works of man draw attention to the value of creatures whose activity is not causally determined but who are centers of creative activity (Danielson 1982, p. 106). These lines about Adam and Eve's creation in God's image are followed by God's statement of the Free Will Defense in book 3, lines 98 to 113. Tertullian, too, sees the relationship between free will and the image of God as man's Godlike ability "'to exhibit goodness on his own by voluntary act'" (qtd. in Danielson 1982, p. 98). McColley says that the human reason, yet untarnished, is one manifestation of the image of God in unfallen Adam and Eve (1983, p. 166). It is in man's power to act and choose, to endure trials and testings, and to act creatively that the image of God is reflected.

Milton believes that men and angels have been endowed with free will and with reason through which they exercise the freedom of choice. In Christian Doctrine, Milton says that angels and men alike have free will so that they can either fall or not fall, and that all the evils which have happened as a result of the Fall could either have happened or not: "if you stand firm, you will stay; if you do not, you will be thrown out: if you do not eat it, you will live; if you do, you will die" (1973, p. 163). This is echoed in Paradise Lost: "Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell" (3.102).

Freedom is essential for any moral or rational creature in order to have any meaningful relationships; in Areopagitica, Milton suggests this is why God should have given free will to man in the first place: "when God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for reason is

but choosing; he had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions" (Hughes 1957, p. 733). Also, freedom must be more than theoretical; man must have morally significant choices to make. Freedom without genuine trial is not real freedom, so God created "passions within us and pleasures around us that are the ingredients of virtue" (Hughes 1957, p. 733). Milton thinks the need for a "trial of virtue" justifies God's actions in placing man in a situation where sin is much more than just a theoretical possibility (Hughes 1957, p. 733). That which purifies the Christian is trial or a constant rechoice, and the condition for trial is that there are alternatives present (Radzinowicz 1978, p. 167). The presence of evil is necessary for the good finally to triumph; although God commands us to be temperate, just, and continent, he "pours out before us, even to a profuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds that can wander beyond all limit and satiety" (Hughes 1957, p. 733).

Sin became a reality at the Fall of man, and through his sin, Adam deprived himself and his posterity of right reason and the liberty to do good and plunged them into sins of all kinds. As a result, the power of the perfect free will was lost (CD 1973, p. 187). Also in Christian Doctrine, Milton says that fallen man lost "that right reason which enabled man to discern the chief good"; "the deprivation of righteousness and liberty to do good" and the "slavish submission to sin and the devil" constitute "the death of the will" (1973, p. 243), that is, the death of the will's original freedom to choose. In Paradise Lost, Milton says that as a result of the Fall, man's "lapsed powers" were "forfeit and

enthralld by sin" (3.176-7). After the Fall, the freedom of the will is not entirely extinct, for example, in indifferent matters, whether natural or civil. But where good works are concerned, it is weak and of "little moment" (CD 1973, p. 396). As a vindication of God's justice—to "justify the ways of God to men" (PL 1.26)—it is fitting that some measure of free will should be given to man, whether the small measure left in him from his former state or "something restored to him as a result of the call of grace" (CD 1973, p. 397). Although man by his nature has little power in and of himself to change his status, he has enough power to respond to God's inner call and prompting.

Augustine and Lombard both say that the Fall corrupted man's free will; it still exists but has lost its liberty (Maurer 1981, p. 127). Even though the will is still free from necessity, it is not free from sin and misery; Aquinas said that "by sinning, man is said to have lost his liberum arbitrium not in the sense of natural freedom from coercion but in the sense of freedom from guilt and misery" (Maurer 1981, p. 127).

According to Milton, after the Fall all people choose to be in one category or the other—regenerate or unregenerate. Milton deals with the process of regeneration in Christian Doctrine:

Regeneration means that the old man is destroyed and that the inner man is regenerated by God through the Word and the Spirit so that his whole mind is restored to the image of God, as if he were a new creature. Moreover, the whole man, both soul and body, is sanctified to God's service and to good works.

.....
 His whole mind, that is, his intellect and will.

... But what can this renovation of the will mean except the restoration of the will to its former liberty?

(CD 1973, pp. 461-2)

But this renovation leading to the restored free will does not happen of itself. The basis for reconciliation with God comes from something within man which Milton says is a calling. In his chapter on renovation in Christian Doctrine, he states that man's renovation brings him to a state of grace: "God the Father . . . invites fallen men to a knowledge of the way to placate and worship his Godhead and, out of gratuitous kindness, invites believers to salvation so that those who do not believe are deprived of all excuse" (CD 1973, pp. 453-4). This invitation to men comes, Milton says, through a calling and

... everyone is called and called in Christ alone.

Because if Christ had not been given to the world God would not have called anyone at all. Since, moreover, the price of redemption which he has paid is sufficient for all mankind, it follows that everyone is called to share in that grace although everyone may not know how the grace is given.

(CD 1973, p. 455)

God's grace is seen to be infinite because he shows pity for man, whose fall was his own fault; he loved the world so much that he gave his only son for its salvation; and he grants us the power of acting freely

by giving us liberty of will through the renewing of the Spirit (CD 1973, p. 189). Milton views the all-encompassing scope of God's grace when he states: "If, then, God rejects none but the disobedient and the unbeliever, he undoubtedly bestows grace on all, if not equally upon each, at least sufficient to enable everyone to attain knowledge of the truth and salvation" (CD 1973, p. 192)). God's grace then leads to a faith that is not dead or static, but living and active—a faith that allows daily for choices made by man as a free agent.

The absolute primacy of grace is established in the Father's address in book 3 of Paradise Lost, but once that is done, Milton balances grace and free choice. Grace is "offer'd"; it "invites"; it can be "neglected" and thereby deprive man of mercy. Yet, if grace is "endeavor'd" with a sincere intent, it makes it possible for "persisting" man to safely reach the end—everlasting life.

This calling or "vocation," to use another term Milton employs here, is either general or special. "General vocation" is that calling which, as described earlier, comes to all men; "special vocation" means that God calls certain selected individuals more clearly than he calls others, and he calls them for particular tasks or assignments; such selected individuals include Abraham and the Israelites (CD 1973, p. 455). The change in man is an effect produced in him and it happens in answer to the call of God; the change occurring following a response to God's calling is that the "mind and will of the natural man are partially renewed and are divinely moved towards knowledge of God, and undergo a change for the better, at any rate for the time being" (CD 1973, p. 457).

This change comes from God and is called "light" and "the gift of will," according to Milton in Christian Doctrine (p. 457). It is man's responsibility to respond or not to this call, so his "remnant" of free will is sufficient to act on the calling; Milton refers to Philippians 2: 12-13: ". . . work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to will and act for his pleasure," and then he comments:

What can this mean but that God gives us the power to act freely, which we have not been able to do since the fall unless called and restored? We cannot be given the gift of will unless we are also given freedom of action, because that is what free will means (CD 1973, p. 457)

The two results of responding to God's calling are penitence and faith; the kind of faith which corresponds to penitence is a "submission to the divine call" (CD 1973, p. 459). Faith is an act of choice, not just of intellect but of man in all his faculties, of will and mind joined. According to Sewall, faith results in the knowledge of spiritual things which informs our moral judgments and persuades us of our own free will to perform good works (1967, p. 202). Yet free choice means that man must choose daily to exercise that faith.

Because renovation is just the initial stage in the process of regeneration for man, he can at any time and through his own choice decide not to accept God's offered grace through regeneration and thereby fall short of regeneration, which leads to salvation: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14). Milton also refers to

Hebrews 4:2: "For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it."

Faith in God, then, brings true liberty and is grounded in a knowledge of spiritual things; supernatural faculties are infused in the regenerate man by God, whereby in a whole new state of mind he can freely make his own judgments about what is the will of God (Sewell 1967, pp. 187-88). Also, in the regenerate man good works are done spontaneously and freely, but an unregenerate man has little sense of divine love or comprehension of spiritual things, so he experiences no such freedom (Sewell 1967, p. 188). In fact, Sewell goes on to say, even if the unregenerate man resists evil passions, obeys all the commandments, and loves his neighbor as himself, but does these without an understanding of their spiritual worth, they are done in vain (p. 188). Yet at any time, man may elect to respond to God's call and allow him to regenerate his mind and will to good works.

There is a course of events--a natural inevitability--resulting from man's repeated choices to reject offered grace; the first three of the four degrees of death are states of awareness such that the sinner may at any time be saved by repentance. Milton refers to the four degrees of death as "first, evils leading to death--guilt and shame; second, spiritual death--the obscuring of right reason and the enslavement of the will; third, the death of the body--the loss of life, though not the separation of body and soul; and fourth--eternal death, the punishment of the damned" (CD 1973, pp. 393-414).

In Tetrachordon, Milton also deals with the matter of the hardening of the heart—one of the last stages of choice, a conscious decision to consider no more alternatives or choices. Milton says that the hardening of the heart can range from infirmity and imperfection such as even the apostles experienced (not a total lack of belief) to a "stubborn resolution to do evil" (CPW 1959, p. 662). But even in this most extreme state, man is given the freedom to persist. When the hardness is mainly a weakness in a good man, only trial can soften it; but if the hardness has come at the end of a psychological process, it is the end result of choices (Radzinowicz 1978, pp. 166-7). God continues to offer grace:

The rest shall hear me call, and oft be warn'd
 Thir sinful state, and to appease betimes
 Th' incensed Deity while offer'd grace
 Invites; for I will clear thir senses dark.
 What may suffice, and soft'n stony hearts
 To pray, repent, and bring obedience due. (3.185-90)

Patrides concludes that this passage refers to the softening of a hardened heart or the creation of a contrite heart out of a hardened one as itself the work of God through his grace (1966, p. 212).

The first mention of grace in Paradise Lost is in connection with Satan after his fall from heaven. When he looks at the perfection of Eden, Satan begins to play with the idea of repentance so that by means of grace he might regain his previous position; he says: "I could repent and could obtain / By Act of Grace my former state" (4.93-4).

Yet, he is eventually firmly rooted in evil: "So farewell Hope, and with Hope farewell Fear, / Farewell remorse: all Good to me is lost; / Evil be thou my Good" (4.108-10). A simple prayer of repentance could save him, but pride prevents him from praying such a prayer; however, even Satan's rejection of God's grace is proof of prevenient grace because the "unbidden spirit of love" at work in the heart of even a hardened sinner such as Satan makes him realize that God's mercy and grace are always his, if he only requests them (Boswell 1967, p. 87). But Satan does not repent, so he falls, self-deceived.

The reason plays a large part in the stages of the free will--perfect, lapsed, restored; all men have the gift of reason implanted in them, but with the Fall, the reason loses its dominion over Adam, who is now conscious of disorder in his appetites (Sewell 1967, p. 150). Willey defines reason as the "godlike principle in man, the principle of moral control rather than intellectual enlightenment" (1953, p. 239). Roland Frye says that right reason is not just an abstract use of the mind but rather a "fully existential use of the intellect, devoted to temporal choice in terms of everlasting concerns" (1960, p. 48). For Milton, reason is a faculty which not only distinguishes between good and evil but also controls the will; in Paradise Lost, God says that "Reason also is choice" (3.108) and also in Areopagitica, Milton states that "reason is but choosing" (Hughes 1957, p. 733). The innate reason which Milton says is implanted in all men is the conscience: "And I will place within them as a guide / My Umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear, / Light after light well us'd they shall attain, / And to the

end persisting, safe arrive" (3.194-7). Right reason, of which man was deprived at the Fall, can be regained by willing men through faith in Christ's sacrifice. Man freely chose his own fall; he must also freely choose his own salvation.

To conclude, the concept of man as free agent, capable indeed of right as well as wrong choices, is central to much of Milton's theology and therefore finds its way into much of his writing, both prose and poetry. At any moment, man may make choices that can lead further into sin and eventually to the hardening of his heart, or he may make choices that lead to virtue and salvation. God's grace, extended to man on a daily basis, makes no demands upon man, yet is essential if man is to become everything God intends him to be.

Dynamic Growth: The Exercise of Free Will in Paradise Lost

In the opening lines of Paradise Lost, the main theme of the poem is introduced, the first disobedience of man and the resultant loss of Eden. However, as early as lines four and five, the possibility of restoration and renewal after that loss is presented:

Of man's first disobedience, and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree, whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world, and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, till one greater Man
Restore us, and regain the blissful seat,
Sing Heav'nly Muse (1.1-6)

This balancing of disobedience with restoration, loss with gain, man with "one greater Man," indicates that even after the Fall, life goes on and it is good. It is not a life of slavery and condemnation by God for Adam and Eve's single act of disobedience but rather a creative working together of God and man through a dynamic process of growth. And the primary instrument Adam and Eve use in this process was given them at creation: ". . . for so / I form'd them free, and free they must remain / Till they enthrall themselves'" (3.123-125). It is God who has created them with freedom of the will, freedom that remains intact until they

choose to enslave themselves and which even then can be renewed through repentance and the mediation of the Son. This is not a fall predestined by a God who wants to see his creation suffer; rather, it is a fall that results from a wrong choice of action, through the exercise of free will in one "'Sufficient to have stood, though free to fall'" (3.99), and it is a fall to which God responds by offering grace and mercy to the faller. Free will, given by the Creator to be used at the discretion of man, is the dynamic characteristic by which Adam and Eve function both before and after the Fall. In fact, it is the exercise of free will, governed by right reason, that enables Adam and Eve to become developing, creative human beings who are not predestined to fall, yet who bear the responsibility for their choices. The exercise of the freedom to choose for Adam and Eve before the Fall applies to all kinds of choices; Milton refers to such choices as regarding "things indifferent" and those "not indifferent" (CD 1973, p. 397). In prelapsarian Paradise, Adam and Eve make many choices, some of which are indifferent—the tending of the plants and trees in the garden and the naming of the animals. Choices "not indifferent" are those the end results of which affect Adam and Eve's relationship with each other and with God. In both kinds of choices, Adam and Eve become developing, growing human beings.

One of the first choices Adam makes is to love, to adore, and to obey God. The angel Raphael reminds Adam that both of them freely serve God: "Because we freely love, as in our will / To love or not; in this we stand or fall" (5.538-540). Adam's rational decision to love his Creator is the pivotal point in his full development; by choosing

obedience, he chooses to be everything he was created by God to be. But in book 9, at this pivotal point of obedience, Adam makes a wrong choice and causes his own fall.

Obedience is part of the creaturely freedom the angels also possess. The angels, too, have been given free will by their creator. In book 3, God says, "Such I created all th' Ethereal Powers / And Spirits, both them who stood and them who fall'd; / Freely they stood who stood, and fell who fell" (3. 100-102). In his Christian Doctrine, Milton states that the divine plan was that "angels and men alike should be endowed with free will, so that they could either fall or not fall" (1973, p. 163). Satan, though, chose to fall; when he asserted his independence from God, it was an assertion of his own desires--pride, envy, and ambition--to which his reason from then on must be enthralled unless he can find someone outside himself whose virtue compels reverence and love (Hunter 1980, p. 145). Such a possibility exists for Adam and Eve, but Satan's will is so directed that he will not allow it to happen to him:

. . . is there no place

Left for Repentance, none for Pardon left?
 None left but by submission; and that word
 Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
 Among the Spirits beneath, whom I seduc'd
 With other promises and other vaunts
 Than to submit, boasting I could subdue
 Th' Omnipotent. (4.79-86)

In Abdiel's admonition to Satan, he points out that it is not servitude to serve the worthier because that is the law of God and Nature, but rather it is real servitude Satan chooses when he enthralls himself (6.181). Satan's enthrallment includes his powers of intellect and reason: his mind is also the place of servitude (1.254).

By choosing neither to love nor to serve God, Satan freely caused his own fall and damnation. His willful nonconformity to the divine will called for divine justice to be done, and for his exclusion from God's grace, mercy, and redemption:

The first sort by thir own suggestion fell,
 Self-tempted, self-deprav'd: Man falls deceiv'd
 By th' other first: Man therefore shall find grace,
 The other none (3.129-32)

Because Satan is self-depraved, filled with pride and envy of the Son's glorification, he is excluded from grace, the necessary means for salvation. But because Man's fall is a result of Satan's deception, he shall find grace.

Shortly after Adam's creation and in addition to his decision to love and obey God, he chooses to ask God for a companion. Because God allows him to ask for a companion, Adam has the kind of freedom of opportunity for both self-discovery and exploration of the divine will that would never be allowed if God had granted him all knowledge and every desire from the beginning (Danielson 1982, p. 125). Adam realizes he needs a wife both for companionship and for procreation:

Neither her out-side form'd so fair, nor aught

In procreation common to all kinds . . .
 So much delights me, as those graceful acts,
 Those thousand decencies that daily flow
 From all her words and actions, mixt with Love

(8.596-7, 600-2)

Adam's request for a companion means that he will have a co-worker in his duties in the garden, someone with whom he can share his life as he does useful labor in Paradise. Work in the garden takes on meaning primarily because it fills a mutual need of Adam and Eve to support each other in daily life as they strive toward the goal of pleasing God (Hunter 1980, p. 185). It is the mutuality in their relationship that enables them to learn about themselves and their Creator.

Adam also makes a choice to use his right reason. When he and Raphael have talked at length about things present and things to come, such as whether or not there is life outside Adam's universe or whether it is the sun or the earth that rises in the morning, he realizes he has allowed his mind to wander "unchecked" when he should be concerned about "'That which before us lies in daily life'" (8.193). Adam then decides to share with Raphael something on his mind, his fresh memory of his own creation and the accompanying thoughts and feelings he experienced. In his account of how he came to be, Adam reveals he is learning and discovering much about his world; shortly after taking his first breath, Adam addresses the sun and asks about who created him because he senses it was by "'some great Maker'": "'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 than I know '" (8.280-283). Adam realizes he came on earth by some power other than himself and is curious to know all about his own creation, but he also wants to know how to return love and adoration to the one who made him.

There is much for Adam to learn. It is from Raphael, he admits, that he learns he has been created free in "both will and deed" (5.549). And it is to Raphael's statement about obedience that Adam shows amazement: "What meant that caution join'd, 'If ye be found / Obedient?'" (5. 513-514). Adam argues, how can they possibly be lacking in obedience to the one who made them and put them in a place where they lack nothing humans could desire? But Raphael warns him that God created men and angels perfect, "not immutable" (5.524), and that they will keep their state of happiness as long as they remain obedient to God.

In book 8, God recognizes that Adam has developed knowledge of himself, not just of the animals he was assigned to name. Adam has become a creative being who expresses a free spirit and good use of reason, proofs of the image of God in him (437-39). Yet he is human, susceptible to Satan's seduction, and he reminds Eve in book 9 that they need to be alert to the subtleties of the enemy about whom they have been warned.

The relationship between Adam and Eve is a complex one, based on the hierarchical structure of the husband as superior to the wife as described by Paul:

For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. . .

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it. . . . So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (Ephesians 5:23, 25, 28)

Milton sees Adam and Eve not as competitive human beings but as partners in a Christian marriage which is "a great mystery," according to Paul in Ephesians 5:32 (Hunter 1980, p. 195). This complex relationship is described by Hunter as possessing the kind of mutual love that holds together the realities of reason and the senses, the mind and the body:

Then his [Adam's] love of what she [Eve] does, because she does it: will be matched by her love of his superiority, not because it is superior but because it is his. (1980, p.195)

Adam's divinely appointed position is superior to hers, and Eve is willing to submit to him and therefore to God. Far from showing weakness on her part, Eve's submission to Adam--a submission which exists before the Fall and is not a result of it--shows one of Eve's spiritual virtues. Her submission to Adam means that he is responsible for Eve, her actions, and her physical well-being; when God gave Adam the prohibition against eating the fruit, he also gave Adam the responsibility of seeing to it that Eve obeyed the command, too.

Though submissive to Adam, Eve also possesses rational abilities and the potential for growth. Shortly after being created, Eve with "unexperienc't thought" (4.457) worships her own image in a lake, but hearing a voice offering to lead her to Adam, she turns from admiring her own reflection to seeking loftier things. She moves from inexperienced

thought to independent decisions based on experienced thought (Farwell 1982, p.15); she is learning about herself, her world, and her creator.

Eve has been growing in wisdom and knowledge. She has chosen, like Adam, to love God. In simple, unadorned worship, "Both turn'd, and under op'n sky ador'd / The God that made both Sky, Air, Earth, and Heav'n " (4.721-722). And she also loves Adam, being closer to him than to God in the hierarchy of creation; she chooses to obey Adam as Adam obeys God: ". . . what thou bidd'st / Unargu'd I obey; so God ordains. / God is thy law, thou mine . . ." (4.635-637). Yet this hierarchy breaks down when her obedience to God is challenged later by Satan.

Eve possesses many virtues and demonstrates them through exercising her free will; in his tribute to her, Adam says:

. . . when I approach
 Her loveliness, so absolute she seems
 And in herself complete, so well to know
 Her own, that what she wills to do or say,
 Seems wisest, virtuousest, discreetest, best;
 All higher knowledge in her presence falls
 Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her
 Loses discount'nanc't, and like folly shows;
 Authority and Reason on her wait,
 As one intended first, not after made
 Occasionally (8.546-56)

Adam truly loves her, but some may find in this passage more devotion to Eve than to God. In his words, Adam elevates her to a position of "one intended first, not after made / Occasionally," a level in the hierarchy of creation between him and God, rather than in submission to him. With "contracted brow" Raphael responds to Adam's words and reminds him of his rightful place in the divine order of things: "For what admir'st thou, what transports thee so, / An outside? fair no doubt, and worthy well / Thy cherishing, thy honoring, and thy love, / Not thy subjection . . ." (8.567-70). As long as Eve chooses willingly to honor and obey Adam and God through him, there is harmony in their relationship.

Another quality Eve possesses is a developing intellect. Because she is allowed to help name the plants and the flowers, she reveals her intelligence. When Adam and Raphael discourse at length about astronomy, Eve leaves, but this is no "image in which the deep-browed husband sits in his study while the feather-brained wife simpers among the hollyhocks"; Eve does not leave because her mind is too weak for the discussion or, necessarily, because of the contrasts of superior with inferior, but rather because of different biases of character (Hunter 1980, p. 193). As two distinctly different people, Adam and Eve have differing interests and qualities of character.

Although the Garden of Eden is referred to as "more a moral gymnasium than a place of relaxation" (Hunter 1980, p. 181), much of its activity can be described as an educational process for Adam and Eve. One aspect of that education is directed toward the "perpetual vigilance

of the human mind," the real protection for Adam and Eve in the garden in spite of its walls and angel squadrons (Hunter 1980, p. 181). In this sense, confronting and responding to danger and temptation are the way to knowledge in Eden both before and after the Fall.

One of the temptations Eve has to face comes in a dream when Satan whispers in her ear about the virtuous qualities of the forbidden fruit, and she dreams she eats of it. Her subconscious has seemingly been violated against her will, but Adam says that it cannot be violated against her will unless her conscious will has chosen to allow it:

Evil into the mind of God or Man
 May come and go, so unapprov'd, and leave
 No spot or blame behind: Which gives me hope
 That what in sleep thou didst abhor to dream,
 Waking thou never will consent to do. (5.117-121)

According to Stanley Fish, Eve remains untouched by her experience, yet this episode allows Adam and Eve to use their responsibilities; Eve asks for guidance from Adam, he responds to her need with his wisdom, and their hierarchical relationship, the basis of their happiness together, is strengthened (1971, p. 224). Adam dispels the anxiety caused by an intruder with his understanding and comforting response to Eve.

Fish says that an alternative interpretation of the dream episode is that it leads "'inexorably to the Fall'" and that the dream is a "'portal of temptation'" (1971, p. 225). But we need to believe Adam's words that evil may come and go in the human mind without causing sin, and if we believe Milton here, says Fish, our foreknowledge points us in a

different direction, not to the Fall as an inevitable outcome, but to what Barker says leads to the conclusion that "the Fall is, as to right action, a parodic obliquity and anomaly" (1971, p. 225). Fish insists that if the reader sees the dream as a cause or predictor of the Fall, he "compromises prelapsarian freedom" (1971, p. 225). And so Eve has exercised her free will by facing and overcoming a temptation before the Fall through Adam's help as he appeals to her reason.

In book 9, Eve sees her major task as tending the garden; she delights in nature and cares about each plant and flower. Her work, like Adam's, is analogous to the work of God in creation in that it shows an impulse to "make sense out of nonsense and cosmos out of chaos" (Hunter 1980, p. 184). However, her industriousness begins to be all-consuming because she feels the work is not being done efficiently. She sees the growth in the garden as getting out of control and feels she must do something about it. At this point, she has assumed a responsibility that is beyond what is expected of them. Adam reminds her that they are not expected to keep up the garden at the expense of eating, conversation, or the enjoyment of being together. He also reminds her that their chief goal is not to keep up the garden but to glorify God and enjoy him forever: "For not to irksome toil, but to delight / He made us, and delight to Reason join'd" (9.242-43). The real meaning of their work is in the mutual support they give each other and the direction of daily life toward pleasing God.

Until now, the growth in their relationship has been harmonious, like the growth they see around them in nature. But when Eve suggests

that they divide their labors so that the gardening will be done more efficiently, Adam senses that she is suggesting more than a physical separation from him. Adam sees no need to work separately since together they should certainly be able to keep the paths from growing wild until "younger hands" come along to help them in the future. Adam's concern over her suggestion grows because he is afraid some harm will come to her while away from him; after all, they have been warned many times to be aware of Satan who, envying their happiness, is looking for some way to take advantage of them. Although Adam takes a soft line with Eve, not from a position of authority, which many critics argue he should have done, she reminds him that she knows very well that they have an enemy at large who is seeking their ruin; after all, she says, both Adam and Raphael have said so. She feels it an aspersion on her dignity that Adam should doubt her faith in God and in him; she feels he implies that her "firm Faith and Love / Can by his [Satan's] fraud be shak'n or seduc't" (9.286-287). If Adam does not want her to work apart from him because of fear of Satan, Eve wonders how they can be happy in the garden while living in constant fear.

The emotional distance between Adam and Eve continues to widen as Eve suggests that real faith and love should certainly be able to withstand testing: "And what is Faith, Love, Virtue unassay'd / Alone, without exterior help sustain'd?" (9.335-36), an echo of Milton in Areopagitica:

He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and

yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true wayfaring Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and sees her adversary, but slinks out of the race (1957, p. 728)

This sounds very different from the Eve of book 4 who told Adam that she would obey him, "'unargued.'" At this point, Eve's reasoning is not in agreement with Adam, and each statement she makes further solidifies her decision to work apart from him. Before Eve leaves, Adam reminds her of the part reason and the will must play if they are to stand against temptation:

But God left free the Will, for what obeys
Reason, is free, and Reason he made right,
But bid her well beware, and still erect,
Lest by some fair appearing good surpris'd
She dictate false, and misinform the Will
To do what God expressly hath forbid. (9.351-56)

Adam, not commanding her to stay, reminds her that her obedience to God is of primary importance, and he lets her go: "Go, for thy stay, not free, absents thee more; / Go in thy native innocence, rely / On what thou hast of virtue, summon all, / For God towards thee hath done his part, do thine" (9.372-75).

After she has used her freedom of choice and Adam has reluctantly given her permission to leave his side, Eve has become more vulnerable to Satan's subtleties. It is not the physical distance from Adam that has made her choice a bad one but the psychological and spiritual distance

she has placed between herself and Adam and, ultimately, between herself and God, that mars their happiness. Because she has chosen to work apart from Adam against his better judgment and reason, both her reason and her will are involved, and both will soon be tested. "Reason also is choice" (3.108), and once the reason abides by the will's choice, it reaches beyond itself to knowledge which it now sees as being forbidden.

In book 9, while working alone, Eve gently tends the flowers and takes special pains to prop up those bent down by the elements. Ironically, the growth of nature that she delights in now mocks her own impaired growth in wisdom and knowledge. Eve is compared to the flowers because she, too, is an "unsupported flow'r" (432) apart from Adam and their relationship of mutual support. When Eve encounters the Serpent, the form taken by Satan, he leads her to the forbidden tree: "He leading swiftly rolled / In tangles, and made intricate seem straight, / To mischief swift" (9.631-633). Surprised to see that the wonderful tree described to her by the Serpent as the source of his reason, power of speech, and present shape is the tree expressly forbidden to Adam and Eve by God, Eve tells him that there is no need to come here since this is the very tree forbidden to them.

The command given to Adam and Eve is a test of their obedience to God; the test required Eve to distinguish between obeying the command *per se* and obeying the command not to eat the fruit (McCanles 1975, p. 133). In Christian Doctrine, Milton says that it was "necessary that one thing at least should be either forbidden or commanded, and above all something which was in itself neither good nor evil, so that man's

obedience might in this way be made evident" (1973, pp. 351-52). She reasons rightly here in her response to Satan; but, shortly after this, her reason is affected by the perception of her senses and has become clouded.

Satan makes many appeals to Eve, reinforced by all the persuasion and emotion he can muster; he appeals to her position--"'Queen of the universe'" (684); to the perfecting of the reason (knowledge of good and evil); to immortality--"'be as gods'" (710); and to physical hunger--"the hour of Noon drew on, and wak'd / An eager appetite . . ." (739-40). "And his words replete with guile / Into her heart too easy entrance won" (733-34). She has been persuaded to forget one true thing by being bombarded with many apparently true and important things; her knowledge of God as all-wise is suspended.

Eve has used her free will to make some choices in response to her senses--the desire to see, smell, and taste the fruit, but her reason is obscured by her appetite when she begins to want to be equal with God and to decide for herself what she wants to know about good and evil. Not realizing the Serpent's deception, Eve reasons that if he ate the fruit and lived, so can she. Her reason, now seeing the "fair appearing good," informs the will to reach for it. Eve accepts reason as the test of the command: "our Reason is our Law," she tells Satan (654), and when she does this, she is on the way to falling. The final act of reasoning is "to recognize the infinite transcendence of God in his ineffable will," but by making reason her law without qualification, Eve falls (McCanles 1975, p. 127). Still innocent, yet convinced that her choice is only for

that which is good,

. . .her rash hand in evil hour

Forth reaching to the Fruit, she pluck'd, she eat:

Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat

Sighing through all her Works gave signs of woe,

That all was lost. (9.780-734)

The nature which Eve has tended so lovingly by choice reacts to her action with sighs and signs of woe. Her will has taken over her reason here, and by her overt action she has shown her love and obedience to God to be less than her self-motivated desire. Hers is not so much a conscious decision to disobey God as a decision to choose the seemingly good thing. Eve chooses what she has been led to believe is a multiple good; she functions as a whole human being by choosing what seems good for body as well as mind. Yet her choice takes precedence over the good that she knows to be a superior good and is incompatible with what God has said is true.

As a result of the decision to eat from the forbidden tree, aspects of Eve's personality are affected. She knows that she will die as a punishment for her act, but reasons that it would be best if Adam dies with her; otherwise, he might marry someone else, "another Eve" (828). With this motive in mind, she approaches Adam, and instead of the openness and honesty they have experienced before, she lies to him by saying how much she missed him when they were apart. Her long persuasive speech is about the benefits of the fruit she has eaten, how she has now

become a goddess, superior to Adam, and how he should also choose to be like her. But Adam's reaction is amazement and horror, in stark contrast to the emotions he felt when making for Eve the garland of flowers he now holds in his hands:

Adam . . . amazed,
 Astonied stood and Blank, while horror chill
 Ran through his veins, and all his joints relax'd;
 From his slack hand the Garland wreath'd for Eve
 Down dropp'd, and all the faded Roses shed.

(9.888-893)

Adam has learned the feeling of disappointment in another person, and his first reaction is to think she has been tricked by some enemy-- "'And mee with thee hath ruin'd'" (906)--who has ruined the relationship between them. He still loves her but if she dies, there will be no more Eden for him. To lose her is to lose himself since they are "'One Flesh'" that "'cannot be sever'd'" (958-59). At this point, Adam's eyes are focused only on what is happening before him; he cannot imagine any abstract possibilities: "The idea of companionship with God has to wait in the wings while the reality of a human relationship, with its specific priorities, occupies the stage" (Hunter 1980, p. 198). Adam feels the "Link of Nature" (9.913) drawing him, the Chain of Being he feels helpless to unlink. Hunter says that we can condemn Adam by doctrine, which we are really required to do, but we cannot free ourselves from the link of nature any more than he can; however, to accept the truth that Adam was wrong is not to find him inhuman or unlike us (1980, p. 200).

But Adam errs in thinking that his choice at this moment is limited to Eve and death or God and a life without Eve; it does not occur to him to turn to God for help or to try to save Eve from death (Summers 1962, p. 175). And so, against his better knowledge, against the use of right reason, he chooses love for Eve over love and obedience to God, and he, too, eats the fruit.

After both Adam and Eve have fallen, they have a lust for each other, unlike their mutual love before the Fall. Eve becomes an object of Adam's appetite now--"so inflame my sense / With ardor to enjoy thee, fairer now / Than ever, bounty of this virtuous Tree'" (1031-1033); she is no longer seen by him as the partner and co-worker with whom he has shared his thoughts and feelings. After they have "wearied with their amorous play" (1045), they take a good look at each other and find that the innocence which earlier has "shadowed them from knowing evil" has gone and shame has taken over instead.

They are fully aware of what they have done and try to reason through what they are feeling. Because of his guilt and shame, Adam worries about how he will face God, so they make themselves coverings from the leaves of the fig tree to hide their outward appearance. Then they sit down and weep, and all sorts of new feelings begin to rise within them--mistrust, anger, confusion--because reason is no longer in control and their freedom to choose seems gone. They blame each other, not themselves, and in contrast to their fruitful discussions before the Fall, they now spend "fruitless hours" (1188) in mutual accusations. The Fall has seemingly put an end to opportunities for self-development and

creative growth.

Book 9 ends with Adam and Eve lost in a maze of hurt feelings and frustrations over their deeds. When God in book 10 confronts them with their act of disobedience, neither Adam nor Eve takes responsibility for what has happened. Adam blames Eve; he lies by saying that what Eve had done did not seem to be wrong, and therefore, he ate, too. Of course, Adam knew before he ate it that it was the forbidden fruit. Eve, too, refuses to accept the blame for her act, but she speaks the truth when she says that the Serpent beguiled her, so she ate.

Again alone and weighing the judgment on the three of them--Satan, Eve, and Adam--Adam and Eve consider their future. First, Adam realizes one consequence of his choice is the loss of immortality and he just wants to die. Then he feels guilt over the legacy of a sinful nature he now has to leave to his children, the infliction of suffering and death on all mankind. He is still angry with Eve, and when she approaches him with soft words, he addresses her as "serpent," as false and hateful as Satan himself. But when Adam finishes his speech and turns away from Eve, she is not put off. She takes the initiative and, through her tears, sincerely admits her love for him and tells of her desire to make things right again between them; it is Eve who leads the way in seeking restoration with God. She reasons rightly now when she openly admits both of them have sinned, Adam "'Against God only,'" she "'against God and thee'" (10.930-31). When Adam's heart is softened by her pleading and her genuine repentance, he relents and begins to recognize the change within himself. Only now does he begin to assume the responsibility for

what he has done:

. . . If Prayers

Could alter high Decrees, I to that place
 Would speed before thee, and be louder heard,
 That on my head all might be visited." (952-55)

It is here, in book 10, that Milton shows the beginnings of renewal of the perfect free will which was lost as a result of the Fall. God has said of fallen man:

. . . once more I will renew

His lapsed powers, though forfeit and enthrall'd
 By sin to foul exorbitant desires;
 Upheld by me, yet once more he shall stand
 On even ground against his mortal foe,
 By me upheld (3.175-180)

The effect of the fall on the free will means a loss of the perfect free will and reason: "'Since thy original lapse, true Liberty / Is lost, which always with right Reason dwells / Twinn'd . . .'" (12.83-85). That is, the perfect free will has been lost by the act of disobedience, and man is given over to darkness and despair. But the grace of God, offered to all who turn to him, "restores the balance of power, resurrects the reality of a choosing center, and permits the mind to hold itself away from destruction" (Rajan 1969, p. 139). In God's words: "Man shall not quite be lost, but sav'd who will, / Yet not of will in him, but grace in me / Freely voutsaf't". . . (3.173-75). This grace of God, offered to Adam and Eve and all humanity after the Fall, will be "Freely

voutsaf't" (3.175) to anyone who chooses to accept it. It will be man's decision to accept this grace or not since by his own will he cannot save himself. With the renewal of his "lapsed powers," postlapsarian man will again be able to stand on even ground against Satan, this time because his power of free choice will have been renewed by God, who has delivered him through the work of the Son as man's Redeemer. The result of standing on "even ground" will not necessarily be certain victory but rather protection against certain defeat by Satan (Rajan 1969, p. 139). Both the return to God and alienation from him lie within the scope of this renewed freedom of the will.

The restored free will also bears some traces of the divine image; in Christian Doctrine, Milton says, ". . . it cannot be denied that some traces of the divine image still remain in us, which are not wholly extinguished by this spiritual death " (1973, p.396). In book 11 of Paradise Lost, Adam refers to "' . . . man, / Retaining still Divine similitude / In part . . .'" (511-513). What man retains of the divine image is that creative, dynamic part of man's being that Adam and Eve experienced before the Fall, and that includes their freedom of choice to return love and obedience to God through mutual love and support of each other.

In book 3, God explains to the Son how he will restore mankind's depraved will: "' . . . I will clear thir senses dark, / What may suffice, and soft'n stony hearts / To pray, repent, and bring obedience due'" (188-190). However, even after God's prevenient grace has removed the stone of despair from men's hearts, the human capacity for change

still makes regeneration insecure; God says:

He sorrows now, repents, and prays contrite,
 My motions in him; longer than they move,
 His heart I know, how variable and vain
 Self-left. (9.90-93)

That is, the variability and vanity of man's heart will outlast the motions of repentance God has put within him (Hunter 1980, p. 140). When Michael is sent to drive them out of the garden, he is also sent to strengthen their virtuous impulses by showing them the long course of human history that permits those who conquer their variable hearts and wills to regain eventually through Christ's redemption "the blissful seat" promised at the beginning of the epic.

Also, God promises:

And I will place within them as a guide
 My Umpire Conscience, whom if they will hear,
 Light after light well us'd they shall attain,
 And to the end persisting, safe arrive.
 This my long sufferance and my day of grace
 They who neglect and scorn, shall never taste;
 But hard be hard'n'd, blind be blinded more,
 That they may stumble on, and deeper fall;
 And none but such from mercy I exclude. (3.194-202)

With a reason governed by the conscience and with a renewed freedom of the will, man has been given all he needs to persist to the end.

In book 10, Adam and Eve now share their burdens and do not blame

each other. Because they know that their punishment is certain death, Eve suggests that they kill themselves, but Adam convinces her that it would be better to get revenge on Satan through the fulfilment of God's pronouncement—that the seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head (10.1035-1036); that is, the death of Christ (the woman's seed) will defeat Satan and repentant man will at last bring forth "Fruits of more pleasing savor from thy seed / Sown with contrition in his heart. . . ." (11.26-27).

These words spoken by the Son to the Father as he intercedes for our first parents reflect his concern for fallen man. That same loving, sacrificial response was shown in the Son's acceptance of the Father's challenge to redeem man, a choice freely made. The Son's willing response is based on what the divine character really is and what the divine creative purposes for all willing creatures really are (Barker 1969, p. 69). This obedience of the Son is shown even more fully in Paradise Regained.

Then Adam shows he has discovered something about God's nature—that God pitied them even as he pronounced sentence on them. Adam tells Eve to remember that, after all, they expected to die instantly, and God moderated their sentences to pain in childbirth for Eve and difficulties in tilling the ground and earning daily bread for Adam. Therefore, God will have pity on them in the future "'And teach us further by what means to shun / Th' inclement Seasons'" (10.1062-63). Adam has also learned that God will instruct them and give them grace in this life, if they ask him. Throughout this conversation with Eve in book 10, Adam has been

using his creative reason to work the matter out and it leads toward repentance, the crucial point in the restoration process. Adam is prompted to propose that they fall reverent before God on the very ground where their fall has taken place and there humbly confess their faults to him, confident of his favor, grace, and mercy.

So spake our Father penitent, nor Eve
 Felt less remorse: they forthwith to the place
 Repairing where he judg'd them prostrate fell
 Before him reverent, and both confess'd
 Humbly thir faults, and pardon begg'd . . .

(10.1097-1101)

Adam and Eve's repentance has made it possible for free will to be restored to them through their repentance and their acceptance of God's grace.

Adam's growth and development continue in books 11 and 12, where Michael reveals much about the future, about Christ, the Seed of the Woman, and about human history until the end of time. This knowledge has opened his eyes about what will become of him and the rest of mankind (12.272-273). His education has enabled him to understand God's ways:

Henceforth I learn, that to obey is best
 And love with fear the only God, to walk
 As in his presence, ever to observe
 His providence, and on him sole depend . . .

Taught this by his example whom I now

Acknowledge my Redeemer ever blest. (12.561-64, 572-73)

Milton insists that true freedom lies in obedience. Satan knows that it is a false idea that freedom can be found in rebellion because he knows a "Hell within" (4.20); Adam, though, is promised a "Paradise within" (12.587) (Miriam 1980, pp. 283-84). What matters most is that the obedience God desires is freely chosen out of love for him.

Beside learning about God and his ways, Adam and Eve have also learned much about themselves. Although they realize they have lost much in Paradise, they have been restored. As they leave the garden, Eve asks Adam to lead; before this, she had allowed the Serpent to lead. With some lingering and wandering steps, they leave Paradise, but they take with them the "Paradise within," hearts made right with God, and renewed as growing, creative human beings.

Growth in Divine Knowledge and Human Potential:

The Son of God in Paradise Regained

The first four lines of Paradise Regained set the mood for this epic much as the first four lines of Paradise Lost do for the epic of "Man's First Disobedience." The word disobedience is common to both introductions and contrasts with "one greater Man," "firm obedience," and "Recover'd Paradise":

I who erewhile the happy Garden sung,
By one man's disobedience lost, now sing
Recover'd Paradise to all mankind,
By one man's firm obedience fully tried (PR 1.1-4)

This brief epic also focuses on choices made in the face of temptation and, in that sense, takes up where Paradise Lost ends— with Adam and Eve leaving the Garden to live in a fallen world filled with temptations to confront and choices to be made as part of their growth as regenerated human beings. Their lives outside Eden are one aspect of the consequence of their disobedience to God, and they are dependent on God for regeneration and renewal of their free wills.

In Paradise Regained, the choices to be made come to one who has not fallen but whose nature Milton shows is primarily human, rather than divine. Milton's Christ also possesses a free will, as do all divinely

created beings, but freedom of the will is not as important to Paradise Regained as it is in Paradise Lost; in fact, it is never mentioned directly in this epic. Instead, the focus is on God's will and on how Christ gains knowledge of that will through the events that occur and the choices that he makes as a human being.

For Milton to deal with the problem of free choice beyond what Paradise Lost involves, he had to select a biblical subject relevant to mankind's struggles with temptation and to give examples of how man should live in this world. He chose the temptations of Christ in the wilderness rather than the Passion and the Resurrection or the Second Coming, most likely because only the temptations in the wilderness answered symbolically and logically to the temptations in Eden (Miner 1974, p. 271). That is, Milton balances "one man's disobedience lost" with "one man's firm obedience," and "loss of Eden" with "Recover'd Paradise"; Milton also echoes Paul in Romans 5:19: "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one man shall many be made righteous." Because Paradise was lost by an act of the will, so an act of human will should regain it. And the primary means by which Paradise is regained is Christ's obedience as a man as he gradually comes to know the Father's will.

That Christ has a free will in Paradise Regained is a necessity if he is to face temptations as a human being. If the Son were shown as only divine, he could not fall to Satan's temptations because he would conquer Satan by his divine power. The revelation of the divine will must meet with a response freely chosen by Jesus' humanity or else his

human actions would be necessitated by his divine nature. But as man, Christ can exercise his human will and freely choose to conform to God's will and, thereby, restore what was "By one man's disobedience lost."

Barbara Lewalski asserts that "for the encounter between Christ and Satan to constitute a genuine dramatic action and a real conflict, Christ's character must be conceived in such a way that the tests or temptations are real: he must be able to fall, must be capable of growth, and must be genuinely (not just apparently) uncertain of himself" (1966, p. 135). It seems, however, that the only uncertainty Christ deals with in Paradise Regained is his less than complete understanding of the Father's will. In Christian Doctrine, Milton seems to say that the Son's divine knowledge is less than the Father's, as illustrated in Matthew 24:36, which indicates that only the Father, not the Son or the angels, knows the hour of coming judgment (1973, p. 227).

The Son as a man is central to God's redemptive plan. Since the redemption of man is not a necessity of divine justice, it is God's mercy that provides the possibility of redemption. But because divine justice must be satisfied first and man's sins must be atoned for before man is judged righteous in God's sight, the Son must partake fully in man's humanity, and by doing so, even to his sacrificial death for man, Christ enables man to be redeemed and thereby share in Christ's divinity. In Paradise Lost, the Son offers to redeem man "once dead in sins and lost; / Atonement for himself or offering meet, / Indebted and undone, hath none to bring" (3.233-35). Because of his sinful state, man cannot atone for himself.

In his human nature, Christ is confronted with the real problem of how to come to know and accept the will of God as well as how to accept the means to achieve the redemptive part of his mission through conforming to God's will. In Paradise Regained the real conflict comes between Jesus' human reason and will and the external temptations of Satan.

The temptations Satan puts before the Son are attempts to pervert Jesus' knowledge of and conformity to the divine will. Once Jesus knows the will of God, he, as human, must choose to follow it if he is to redeem man through his human nature.

The nature of his mission and the knowledge of his own identity do not alone resolve Jesus' crucial problem in Paradise Regained: to know how his human nature should interact with his divine nature in order to conquer Satan by his human nature alone. Jesus therefore allows the Spirit to lead him into the wilderness so that his human nature may come to know God's will. Aware of Adam's overthrow by Satan, Jesus is willing to do battle against Satan to regain the lost Paradise; the battle will not be fought by the power of God but by the obedience of one Man.

The thirty years of his life which have passed before Paradise Regained opens were years of growing "in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man" (Luke 2:52). Jesus' human intellect has come to a realization of his special mission:

When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing, all my mind was set

Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
 What might be public good; myself I thought
 Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
 All righteous things: therefore above my years
 The Law of God I read . . . (1.201-207)

His knowledge of his Father and of his nativity has come in his home from Mary, his mother, and also from the priests and scribes who taught him in the temple: "Concerning the Messiah, to our Scribes / Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake / I am" (1.261-63). A reaffirmation of his position came at his baptism when the Spirit descended on him like a dove and he heard his Father's voice which "pronounc'd me his, / Mee his beloved Son, in whom alone / He was well pleas'd" (1.284-86). Now he knows the time has come to leave the obscurity of his mother's home and "openly begin" the work he was sent to this earth to do. "And now by some strong motion I am led / Into this Wilderness, to what intent / I learn not yet; perhaps I need not know; / For what concerns my knowledge God reveals" (1.290-93). The Son does not yet have a clear understanding of his Father's will for him or even of why he is led into the wilderness, but he willingly obeys the "strong motion" that leads him.

The first temptation Satan places before Jesus is for him to turn stones into bread and thereby satisfy his human hunger. At this time, Jesus has been in the wilderness and has fasted for forty days, so the temptation is a genuine one. The real sin, of course, would be not the turning of stones into bread but the distrust of God's providence. Like the fruit Satan used to tempt Eve, food here has no significance in

itself. As Fish says, these things and "indeed all things are neither good nor bad in themselves but may at different times be one or the other depending on whether their use in particular circumstances advances or subverts God's glory" (1983, p. 168). Christ knows that his Father will indeed provide food for him; he has been taught that fact from childhood, so Christ's use of right reason and humble faith in God and his Word enable him to see that God can satisfy his hunger some other way than through food—"Mee hungering more to do my Father's will" (2.260). Stating that he will not eat at Satan's command, Jesus overcomes Satan's temptation.

When Jesus is next tempted with the desire for human power and glory, he recognizes Satan's real motive—to tempt him to distrust and presumption. One aspect of the temptation to worldly power is the temptation to human learning and wisdom: "Be famous then / By wisdom" (4.221-22). When Satan offers him all the wisdom of the world—natural knowledge—Christ knows something Satan simply cannot understand; Christ has come to introduce a power of grace, an inner light which the light of nature—wisdom and learning—can never give. This inner light does not mean a withdrawal from the world into some kind of inner kingdom but instead, a new dimension has been added to the kingdoms of this world. This inner light is supreme over worldly wisdom: "he who receives / Light from above, from the fountain of light, / No other doctrine needs, though granted true" (4.288-90). Throughout Paradise Regained, Christ has maintained that there is a kingdom not of this world, and it is such a kingdom which gives that Light which is needful for existence in this

world.

Another aspect of the temptation to human learning and wisdom is the value placed on learning, especially the learning of the Greeks. The problem this presented to Milton, himself a proponent of knowledge and learning, had to be reconciled with his life-long hierarchy of values where religious and ethical values were always supreme; MacKellar says that in Paradise Regained Christ did not charge that Greek philosophers taught evil doctrines but rather doctrines insufficient to meet man's deepest needs, because their natural wisdom fell short of the revealed wisdom which is found in the Bible, the highest source of truth for man's salvation (1975, p. 27). When Jesus responds to Satan's temptation of worldly wisdom, he says: "Who therefore seeks in these / True wisdom, finds her not, or by delusion / Far worse, her false resemblance only meets, / An empty cloud" (4.318-21).

After Christ is shown the kingdoms of the world, he rebuffs Satan at each display of worldly power until Satan boldly names his price: Jesus must fall down and serve him.

The Kingdoms of the world to thee I give;
 For giv'n to me, I give to whom I please,
 No trifle; yet with this reserve, not else,
 On this condition, if thou wilt fall down,
 And worship me as thy superior Lord. (4.163-67)

Jesus then shows his disdain of Satan, whose argument is nothing new--"I never lik'd thy talk, thy offers less" (4.171)--but says that he will "endure the time, till which expir'd, / Thou hast permission on me"

(4.174-75) because he knows God's command about worshipping anyone other than God. Jesus uses the Scripture, God's own Word, to refute Satan: "It is written / The first of all Commandments, Thou shalt worship / The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve" (4. 175-77). Jesus' preparations for trial have stood him in good stead in facing and conquering another of Satan's temptations.

The final temptation from Satan that Jesus faces is also a sin of presumption. Luke's placement of this temptation as last puts emphasis on the true identity of Jesus as divine as well as human, and once Satan finds out who Jesus is, he realizes that further temptations are futile. This time, the temptation is for Christ to use divine power to overcome a temptation to his humanity—to expose himself needlessly and unreasonably to danger to see whether or not God will deliver him. Satan's desire is that Christ shall be killed by falling from the pinnacle of the temple, but he tells Jesus that if he is the Son of God, God will send angels to keep him from falling. Again, Christ uses Scripture to defeat Satan: "Also it is written, / Tempt not the Lord thy God; he said and stood. / But Satan with amazement fell" (4.560-62). Because this temptation, in Satan's thinking, calls for divine intervention, he is amazed that Christ can both stand without falling and yet not call on God for aid. As Fisher explains, even the Son of God has to face a moment when he can do no more because endurance has limits (1980, p. 212).

Making the attempt to endure is what counts, and once the attempt is made, God does the rest; "the attempt is not truly made until one resolves to endure beyond one's known capacity and thus refuses to evade

one's certain failure" (Fisher 1980, p. 212). At this point, endurance becomes faith. The odd thing about faith is that once it is affirmed, as Jesus affirms it by showing his reliance upon Scripture, "its success seems as inevitable as its failure had seemed before" (Fisher 1980, p. 212). And Jesus stands.

Through Christ's clear statement of his divinity, "Tempt not the Lord thy God" (4.561), Satan realizes what he did not know when he fell from heaven: the Father and Son are one God. It is God who stands before Satan, yet it is not God's power that has conquered him but the grace, humility, and obedience of one true Man, the mediator between God and man. He is the new Adam, sinless and obedient to God's will, who regains Paradise for the lost race of men.

When Jesus does not act at all when placed on the pinnacle of his Father's house, he is fulfilling the prayer of the Psalmist: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins Then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression" (Psalm 19:13). Christ is "th' utmost of mere man" (4.535) who has learned obedience "by the things which he suffered and being made perfect became the author of eternal salvation . . ." (Hebrews 5:8-9) because he was "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15).

In the series of choices he makes in Paradise Regained, Christ shows the antithesis of the actions of man and angels when they fell: Jesus rejects power and glory, but the angels fell because of it; Jesus chooses temperateness, resisting the banquet and earthly comforts, yet Eve ate the fair-appearing fruit; Jesus' strength lies in his right

reason supported by humble and obedient trust in God, but Satan's misguided reason and selfish ambitions led to his downfall; Jesus does not presume to be like God even though divinity is rightly his, yet both men and angels had presumed to be "like gods"; Jesus rejects pride and remains humble, but the angels were proud; Jesus chooses obedience, yet men and angels refused to obey God's simple command; Jesus is untouched by sin, but the angels were full of despair and impenitence and fallen man must be regenerated to lessen the effects of sin on him; Jesus' obedience brings life, but man's disobedience brings death.

Christ's growth in knowledge has come through his responses to Satan. He is a human Christ in the process of raising himself up through his obedience in trials. In Areopagitica, Milton says that "it is trial that purifies us, and that trial comes by what is contrary" (Hughes 1957, p. 728). That is, Christ by facing trials is not merely a man who refuses to do what Adam and Eve did, but he also "acts out Milton's vision of what Adam and Eve could have become" (Hamilton 1971, p. 569). This process of growth fulfils the promise made at the beginning of Paradise Regained--that Paradise would be recovered for all mankind through "one man's firm obedience fully tried" (1.4).

At the end of Paradise Regained, we remember Adam, whose growth in knowledge of God has led him to declare that "to obey is best"(12.561) and that such obedience is based on the acknowledgment of his Redeemer. Adam has learned that the true believer must live his life in humble, faithful obedience to God and in patient endurance--"suffering for Truth's sake"(PL 12.569). Both obedience and endurance are demonstrated

by Christ, who has "aveng'd / Supplanted Adam, and by vanquishing / Temptation, hast regain'd lost Paradise" (PR 4.606-8).

"Supplanted Adam" also includes all mankind. As Jordan says, many of Milton's seventeenth century readers knew that all people were involved in Adam, and so all were involved in Christ, who went through temptations in the wilderness to give the example of how temptations should be met; but more importantly, Christ went through temptation so that mankind would not have to confront Satan's tempting power as directly as Christ did (1976, p. 271). Stanley Fish reminds us that there is a surprise in hearing that it is Adam, not the Father, who is avenged, and this reminds us that all this was done by Christ for our sake, "not as a matter of family honor," and that it is not Satan who is vanquished but "Temptation" (1983, p. 183). Man's life will continue to be fraught with temptation of all kinds, but it will have been moderated by Christ, whose example shows that obedience is possible for all people.

The Restoration of the Will: Free Choice in Samson Agonistes

In Paradise Lost, free will is seen operating in its perfect state and then as a fallen or depraved free will which is restored through Adam and Eve's repentance and confession of faith in God. Christ in Paradise Regained faces temptations in a battle of wills with Satan and becomes victorious through a series of choices presented to him; his will is a perfect yet mutable free will which emerges unscathed from trial. However, Samson is an unregenerate man, a "natural man," according to Milton who has just enough free will within him and a measure of grace sufficient for him to be saved; these are enough to begin the process of restoration and regeneration. Samson's story illustrates how man of his own free will can oppose God and cause his plans for that man to fail and how through a restored free will he can obtain the "Paradise within."

As Samson Agonistes begins, the blind Samson is suffering in mind and body and is incapable of harmonious reasoning (Radzinowicz 1978, p. 60). His whole being--emotions, thoughts, and physical body--is ill. The passions operate in precisely the manner of bodily poisons, which, if they find no outlet, rage destructively within. Samson is

filled with despair, self-pity, and fear, and there is no apparent prospect of relief, no "cooling herb" to purify his thoughts (Hanford 1966, p. 285). Samson feels the torment of his hamartia--the betrayal of the secret of his strength--in his "inmost mind" as well as in his "entrails, joints, and limbs" (SA 611, 614).

The self-diagnosis of his tragic state parallels Samson's spiritual darkness (Hanford 1966, p. 285). That is, as Samson explores and articulates his pain, he comes to a recognition of its source and essence in his sorrow for his sin, in the keen sense of disobedience to God, and his sense of God's desertion (Hawkins 1970, p. 223). Samson admits to Manoah, his father, that he has brought dishonor to God and "scandal / To Israel" (SA 453-54). His "chief affliction, shame and sorrow" have brought anguish to his soul "that suffers not / Mine eye to harbor sleep, or thoughts to rest" (SA 457-59). Samson's accurate diagnosis of his problem only intensifies his agony, racking him with grief and despair. His free will seems utterly lost.

Samson's diagnosis of his own condition amplifies the medical imagery Milton uses here. Samson does not enjoy all the necessities on which health depends. Sleep has deserted him; his diet consists of the "draff of servil food" (SA 574); his exercise is his drudgery at the mill; the air he breathes is the "Unwholsome draught" of "air imprison'd also, close and damp" (SA 8-9); and the passions of the mind trouble him most of all, "Exasperate, exulcerate, and raise / Dire inflammation" (SA 625-26). He sees his cure in terms of externals--the cooling herb or breath of vernal air that might lessen his inflammation, the opium of

death to give him final rest (Hawkins 1970, p.221). But he does not realize that these are not enough to alleviate his inner torment, which requires an inner change caused by the working of God's grace within him.

Hanford notes that Samson's intensity of pain lasts only as long as he remains inactive (1966, p.285). Immediately following the lyric elaboration of his inward grief (SA 606-51), Samson has a series of unexpected visitors. His attention is thus distracted from his own suffering to a series of events which confront him and which become the steps in Samson's renovation and regeneration.

Samson's first visitor, his father, Manoa, seeks to comfort Samson and cheer him with the prospect of ransom, but his visit produces a mood of such despair that Samson longs for death—"speedy death, / The close of all my miseries, and the balm" (SA 650-51). Samson knows that a simple physical release from imprisonment will not be real freedom.

A different passion is aroused within Samson when Dalila appears. She supposedly comes to make peace with Samson but succeeds in arousing his anger; she pretends to give him quiet and comfort but actually prepares him for action (Parker 1963, p.234). She appeals to sexual passion masked as compassion and asks for his pity: "But conjugal affection / Prevailing over fear and timorous doubt, / Hath led me on desirous to behold / Once more thy face, and know of thy estate" (SA 739-42). Samson's reaction to her presence and her words not only denies the pity she supposedly requests but also arouses anger within him: "Out, out, Hyaena; these are thy wonted arts, / . . . To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray" (SA 748-50). It is here, Frye suggests, that the

"inability of Milton's blind Samson to stare back is his greatest torment, and one which forces him to scream at Delila [sic], in one of the most terrible passages of all tragic drama, that he will tear her to pieces if she touches him" (107). Dalila's solution to Samson's dilemma is inadequate because she does not believe in Samson's God, nor did she help Samson keep his vow not to reveal the secret of his strength; rather, by trickery, Dalila brought him to disclose his secret.

In contrast to Eve, rehabilitation is only a possibility, not a reality, for Dalila. Samson's actions have brought him from some wrong choices--marrying a heathen woman and, in doing so, smiting the Philistines--to some right choices--loving Dalila (chosen from among his enemies) to save her, and responding affirmatively to God's promptings within him so that his final earthly act is for the good of his nation as well as his own soul. But Dalila's choices have brought her a hardened heart. When she appears before Samson, she seems to be contrite and penitent; she is on the verge of choice. When she defends her earlier choice by pointing out that her weakness was based on love, thereby also accusing Samson of wrongdoing, she repents her choice through self-justification, and she hardens her heart. To justify herself, she refuses to assume any responsibility for what has happened to Samson--his blindness and imprisonment by his enemies. Radzinowicz asserts that at this point, Dalila's process of hardening her heart is complete because she has left herself no alternatives; she has chosen not to be open to any more choice; instead, she leaves Samson, "seeking her own vain glory, proud of her victory, scornful of Samson" (Radzinowicz 1962,

p. 174). Yet, her behavior has worked for good for him; she has given Samson the scope to change in his choices because her opposition to him has become the trial through which his choices turn to good.

After Dalila leaves, Samson is confronted by Harapha who comes to humble an enemy, but leaves that enemy "eager for combat" (Parker 1963, p.234). To Harapha's accusation that Samson's strength came only through some magician's art, Samson replies, "I know no spells, use no forbidden Arts; / My trust is in the living God who gave me / At my Nativity this strength ..." (SA 1139-41). Although at the beginning of the drama Samson's hair is seen as something physical, he has come to have a more profound view of his gift: it is the sign of a special relationship with God, a sign of his calling to be used in God's service (Mueller 1964, p. 163). Samson's hair as a visible sign of his vow to God is really a thing "indifferent" like the fruit for Adam and Eve or the banquet spread for Christ by Satan. Samson's understanding of the real significance of his long hair makes his "indifferent" choice significant as does Eve's desire to eat the forbidden fruit and Christ's refusal of food offered him by Satan.

Then a Philistine Officer visits Samson and tries, as Harapha did, to excite Samson's fear, but Samson defies his threats because he now fears only God and the loss of his favor: Samson dreads the loss of "Favor renew'd" by "venturing to displease / God for the fear of Man" (SA 1357, 1373-74). It is more important for Samson now to obey God than to take the advice of others.

Through the working of God within him, Samson feels a calling or

prompting within; Milton says that "the mind and the will of the natural man are partially renewed and are divinely moved towards knowledge of God" and are "in answer to the call" of God within him (Christian Doctrine 1973, p. 457). The spark of free will in Samson is rekindled and brings Samson to an awareness of the inner changes in him and helps him to make right choices. Samson has the fear of God, the kind of fear which is the beginning of wisdom, and by it, Samson is delivered from the fear of men or anything they can do to him (Hawkins 1970, p. 223). His will to do the right is being regenerated through God's call within him and through the use of right reason.

Samson's confrontations with Manoa, Dalila, and Harapha are essentially a regenerative process for Samson which helps him to see his errors (wrong choices) and emerge from the darkness of servitude to the light of freedom. Samson's perception of the meaning of liberty is found in following the dictates of reason and divine prompting.

In defeating his visitors, friend and foe alike, Samson conquers himself. That is, Manoa, Dalila, and Harapha have become the antagonists of Samson agonistes, and by defying them, he stands alone, "None daring to appear Antagonist" (SA 1628). In a sense, the ultimate antagonist with whom Samson wrestles throughout the drama is one who never appears (Hawkins 1970, p. 225). As Samson's tempters grow more hostile, God's working within Samson becomes more evident until Samson articulates his growing inner feeling: "I begin to feel / Some rousing motions in me which dispose / To something extraordinary my thoughts" (SA 1381-82). Samson is now aware of God working within him,

and he makes a conscious choice to act: "This day will be remarkable in my life / By some great act, or of my days the last" (1388-89).

For the greater part of the drama, it seems as if God has abandoned Samson; it is with the "rousing motions" that he indicates his continued care for Samson and again accepts him into his service (Mueller 1964, p. 158). At this point in the drama, Samson refuses to attend the Dagon Festival at the Philistines' request, a decision of his free will. He refuses on the grounds of self-respect until he realizes from "motions" within that opportunity for action makes possible much greater scope for obedience than being "strait'n'd by a foe" (PL 9.323). Samson's struggle has finally become part of God's plan and design (Mueller 1964, p. 159). Samson's obedience to God in his right choice of action will prove valuable for his own regeneration as well as for his nation's deliverance from the Philistines.

The process of renovation and the renewal of his free will have brought Samson from a recognition of his guilt to a place of repentance and a willingness to act on God's behalf for the good of Israel. Samson has passed through pity (self-pity) and fear, and his mind has been purified of such feelings; they have been reduced to "just measure," and Samson is now ready for his final purification and regeneration. With a changed vision, Samson is brought into the Temple of Dagon to entertain the Philistines, and this leads to his last mighty act--the destruction of the Temple which causes the death of all the Philistines as well as himself. This true lustratio (purification), as Hawkins points out, is fitting in this Old Testament tragedy; through the blood of

his sacrificial death, Samson has been made clean (1970, pp. 226-27). He becomes a type of Christ through the shedding of his blood as through Christian regeneration; we become types of Christ through imitating Christ.

Because Samson is an Old Testament figure and achieves his triumph before the time of the Redeemer, the true place of Christ in Milton's system is shown; these Hebrews did have Christ in prophecy (Hanford 1966, p. 274). Milton's tragedy is a mimesis of the redemptive process also at work in the life of the individual and the race; Samson prefigures us—the poet, the reader, all who share the agon (struggle) that leads from paradise lost to paradise regained (Hawkins 1970, p. 227). This struggle is the process of freely making choices, whether right or wrong, and taking responsibility for them.

The human struggle, Radzinowicz says, is part of the purpose of human life, which is man's education or tempering. God's purpose as creator of human life is like the purpose of the tragic poet—he will bring good out of evil by "strengthening the minds and sweetening the imaginations" of human beings. That is, the end result of Samson's choices not only brings "peace," it brings "consolation" (Radzinowicz 1983, p. 277); for Samson, it is also brings his sacrificial death.

But, as Northrup Frye reminds us, Christianity sees the human struggle as an episode in the divine comedy, the larger scheme of redemption and resurrection (1968, p. 107). The sense of tragedy as a prelude to comedy seems almost inseparable from anything explicitly Christian. Frye gives the example of the final chorus of J. S. Bac s

St. Matthew's Passion,

which, he states, would not be attainable if both composer and audience did not know that there was more to the story than Bach's ending --the crucifixion of Christ (1968, p. 107). In the same manner, the ending of Samson Agonistes with the death of Samson would not lead to calm of mind, all passion spent" if Samson were not a prototype of the rising Christ, associated by Milton in the last speeches of Samson with the phoenix (Frye 1968, p. 107). He has become a "new creature" and a man "sanctified to God's service and to good works" (Christian Doctrine, p. 461).

In Samson Agonistes, Milton uses free choice as a process operating primarily through the main character of the drama. In a similar manner, Milton uses the form of Samson Agonistes to further illustrate that process. Milton shares the Renaissance belief that the passions must be controlled by reason; it is significant that all of Samson's temptations--even the lure of Dalila--take the form of debates. That Samson wins all his arguments shows his victory over temptation, yet Samson does not appear as a very reasonable person. He has many passions --grief, shame, resentment, scorn; for example, when he argues with Dalila, his reason is inspired by wrath. Yet, his burning resentment makes Samson invulnerable to Dalila's charms. Throughout the drama, Samson's reasonings and arguments justify resolutions reached by passionate instinct. Yet these passions are gradually reduced and tempered: self-pity becomes a true repentance; wrath becomes righteous indignation; and contentious pride becomes zeal for the God of Israel

(Hawkins 1970, pp. 223-24). Reason is again restored as Samson's free will is restored to its former liberty.

Conclusion

Milton's use of the free will doctrine in his poetry reveals its importance in his theology. Free will is also an integral part of the meaning of the three biblical narratives dealt with here, although different aspects of that free will are central to each.

Milton's use of free will in Paradise Lost is pervasive, serving as a controlling principle for both men and angels. In Paradise Regained, we see Christ's perfect free will, a status of free will similar to what Adam and Eve had before the Fall. Samson seemingly has no free will as Samson Agonistes begins, but soon his mutable free will begins to be revived as he makes choices leading to his regeneration. The use of free will in these three poems shows the will in all its possible stages: Adam and Eve's wills are first perfect, unmarred by sin, then depraved and lapsed, and finally regenerated through God's grace, but Satan's free will becomes captive to his depraved reason and he becomes unregenerate; Christ's will has always been perfect, untouched by sin and reaffirmed in its potential through the right human choices he makes when confronted by Satan's temptations. Samson's will is depraved, marred by the consequences of a series of wrong choices, but his repentance and obedience to the call of God within

make regeneration a reality for him through his renewed life and sacrificial death, but Dalila's free will is unregenerate and she hardens her heart against regeneration.

In all three poems, there is dynamic growth in the exercise of the free will. That is, Adam and Eve, Satan, Christ, and Samson and Dalila are all learning what it means to control or not to control their wills when choices abound. They are learning also the meaning for created beings of obedience and the extent to which their relationships with God depend on freely choosing to obey and trust him. Not to obey brings servitude and loss of freedom for Satan and Dalila, the dark side of the mutable free will.

For the reader, each poem presents possibilities for daily choice in the exercise of the free will. Milton sets up choices, alternatives with at least some attractiveness even for us as twentieth-century readers. As part of fallen mankind, we feel what Adam feels as he makes choices leading to either good or evil consequences. We look forward as Adam does to regeneration and the Second Adam, who shows us how daily trials can be confronted and overcome. When Samson grieves over his past mistakes, we, too, suffer with him, realizing that passions can easily overcome the reason and make wrong choices appear attractive. At his death, we experience the tragedy of a good man who dies at a time when, because he has been regenerated and is willing to act at God's prompting, he is finally ready to live.

The exercise of free will in each of these poems shows much activity involving the struggle and growth of human beings who are trying to live

in one world and are yet aware of the Kingdom that is not of this world. Paradise Lost ends with Adam and Eve's leaving Paradise for their new home in this world with "Providence their guide"; in Paradise Regained, Jesus leaves the wilderness after he has successfully stood up to Satan's temptations and returns "Home to his Mother's house"; and Samson is carried in death "Home to his Father's house." Man's struggles have been great in Paradise Lost, Paradise Regained, and Samson Agonistes, but all of them show a concern with inner peace after a long struggle, and each one ends by taking us home.

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