

- BURDEN, Dennis (1967) *The Logical Epic: A Study of the Argument of Paradise Lost* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul).
- BUSH, Douglas (1952) 'Virgil and Milton,' *Classical Journal* 47, 178–182.
- COOPER, Thomas (1565) *Thesavrvs lingvae Romanæ & Britannicæ: tam accurate congestus, ut nihil penè in eo desyderari possit, quod vel Latinè complectatur amplissimus Stephani Thesaurus, vel Anglicè, toties aucta Elliotae Bibliotheca; opera & industria Thomæ Cooperi Magdalenensis* (London).
- CRAKANTHORPE, Richard (1641) *Logicae Libri Quinque* (2nd ed.; London).
- DARBISHIRE, Helen (1941) 'The Printing of the First Edition of *Paradise Lost*,' *RES* o.s. 17, 415–427.
- DIEKHOFF, John S. (1963) *Milton's Paradise Lost: A Commentary on the Argument* (New York: Humanities P).
- ELYOT, Thomas (1538) *The Dictionary of Syr Thomas Elyot knyght* (London).
- FLORIO, John (1598) *A Worlde of wordes, or Most copious, and exact dictionarie in Italian and English* (London).
- FOWLER, Alastair, ed. (2007) *John Milton, Paradise Lost* (rev. 2nd ed.; Harlow: Longman).
- HERRICK, Marvin T. (1950) *Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century* (Urbana & Chicago: U of Illinois P).
- LOWNDES, William T. (1858–1866) *The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature*, ed. Henry G. Bohn, 3 vols. (London: Bell and Daldy).
- MOYLES, R.G. (1985) *The Text of Paradise Lost: A Study in Editorial Procedure* (Toronto: U of Toronto P).
- PERSHING, James H. (1942) 'The Different States of the First Edition of *Paradise Lost*,' *The Library* 22, 34–66.
- PFEIFFER, Rudolf (1976) *History of Classical Scholarship From 1300 to 1850* (Oxford: Clarendon P).
- PORTER, William M. (1993) *Reading the Classics and Paradise Lost* (London: U of Nebraska P).
- QUINTILIAN (2001) *The Orator's Education*, trans. Donald A. Russell, 5 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard UP).
- SPENCER, Thomas (1628) *The Art of Logick Delivered in the Precepts of Aristotle and Ramus* (London).
- STEIN, Arnold (1953) *Answerable Style: Essays on Paradise Lost* (Seattle: U of Washington P).
- THOMAS, Thomas (1587) *Dictionarium Linguae Latinae et Anglicanae* (Cambridge).

"IF WE PRAY HIM"

VARIETIES OF PRAYER IN MILTON'S *PARADISE LOST*

TIBOR FABINY

THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF PRAYER

The purpose of this paper is to study the prayers in Milton's *Paradise Lost* in their rich variety, to classify their genres, and to analyze them by pointing out their dramatic propriety in the poem. *Paradise Lost* is a narrative poem, and an epic narrative usually adopts and absorbs various types of literary discourse such as pastoral, drama, debate, ode, and hymn. *Paradise Lost*, moreover, is a Christian epic, a kind of Christian Midrash (a rewriting or recreation of the Bible).

For seventeenth-century Protestants, as Barbara Kiefer LEWALSKI has pointed out, the Bible was the ultimate source of literary genres as it provided a great storehouse of images, genres, plots, and patterns of biblical poetry: "Renaissance tradition also recognized the Bible as epic-like in its comprehension of all history, all subject matters, and many genres—law, history, prophecy, heroic poetry, psalm, allegory, proverb, hymn, sermon, epistle, tragicomedy, and more" (1999, 115). Among the great variety of genres (narrative, prophecy, apocalypse, epistle, hymn, laws), prayer is perhaps the most conspicuous and significant but the least discussed form.

What is prayer? We feel uneasy defining it just as St. AUGUSTINE was puzzled in giving a definition of time: "If no one ask of me, I know [what time is]; if I wish to explain to him who asks, I know not" (*NPNF*¹ 1:168 = *Confessions* 11.14.17). Rarely do we speak of prayer in academic circles as it is frequently seen as the most personal and intimate kind of human utterance. However, prayer is not exclusively a private discourse; we also encounter many forms of public prayers. These human utterances in the Bible are elevated and transformed into divine speech, and we read them as the Word of God. Prayer is not only a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" because praying can, and

Research for this paper was supported by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund, OTKA (Grant No. 101928).

"«If we pray him»: Varieties of Prayer in Milton's *Paradise Lost*", in: Gábor Ittész, Miklós Péti (eds.), *Milton Through the Centuries*, Budapest, Károli Gáspár University of the Reformed Church in Hungary – L'Harmattan Publishing, 2012, pp. 137–149.

also should be, taught. The disciples ask Christ to teach them to pray, and thus the Lord's Prayer has become a model of prayers, a prayer of prayers. Prayer has also been called the breathing of the soul, its rhythmic inhaling and exhaling. Prayers can be seen as various responses to various acts of God: an ideal, complex prayer contains the elements of adoration, thanksgiving, confession, and supplication.

The recent *Phenomenology of Prayer* contains some excellent discussions of Nietzsche, Heidegger, Derrida, Levinas, Edith Stein, and Jean-Luc Marion on this subject (BENSON & WIRZBA 2005b). Here we read that "prayer is a deep, quite possibly the deepest decentering of the self, deep enough to begin dismantling or [...] deconstructing that burning occupation with myself" (WESTPHAL 2005, 15). It has also been seen as *kenosis*, the emptying of the soul, "we empty ourselves and open ourselves to the other" (MENSCH 2005, 71). Another author says that "prayer has the capacity to situate our life properly and justly among the lives of others" (WIRZBA 2005, 89). Sincerity and honesty are also important in prayer: "we cannot pray honestly or truthfully if our lives reflect shoddy work, broken relationships, violent intent, or destroyed habitats" (92). St. Paul has urged the early Christians to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess 5:17). For the Benedictines, human work can also become prayer: *laborare est orare* (BENSON & WIRZBA 2005a, 2). Benjamin CROWE interprets Heidegger as saying that "the hermeneutics of prayer must in the end also be a *call to prayer*" (2005, 131) since "[p]rayer expresses the new orientation of a life that has been set free" (132). Further, Derrida, according to B. Kieth PUTT, "interprets prayer as essentially apostrophic, a 'turning [*strephein*] away [*apo*]' toward the other in order to address the other as other [...]. Prayer calls (*vocare*) to the other, calls the other to come in (*in-vocare*), to be present in some way, and calls forth (*pro-vocare*) the other to arouse or entice the other to respond" (2005, 143, brackets original). For Christians it is "the Spirit's 'praying' [that] provokes us to pray" (148). Jean-Luc Marion "describes the phenomenon of prayer as a loving exchange of gazes between the praying person and God" (GSCHWANDTNER 2005, 168). For him prayer is also a communal phenomenon because "[i]n prayer, people cease to be isolated individuals and participate in each other" (174).

Although prayer may be said to be a human response to divine revelation, we immediately have to add a corrective. Prayer is both a human and an angelic responsive voice to the great acts of God. It is especially evident in the case of praise and adoration, that is, the language of doxology, when creatures confess and acknowledge the Godness of God. The unanimous angelic affirmation of creation often appears as celestial music. That is, the hymnic aspect of communal prayer frequently constitutes music, a harmonious concord of sounds.

The other attribute of prayer is smell: it has to do with the original sacrificial nature of prayer. In the language of the Bible, prayer often appears as scent or a good smell to God. "Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense: and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice" (Ps 141:2). The author of the Book of Revelation speaks about the "golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of Saints" (Rev 5:8); and we also read that "another Angel came & stood at the altar, having a golden censer, and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all Saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne" (Rev 8:3).

Patrick D. MILLER, author of the most comprehensive book about biblical prayer, states that "theology is at least in part an outgrowth of prayer—*ut legem credendi statuat lex orandi* (so that the rule of worship should establish the rule of faith)" (1994, 1). He discusses various Old Testament examples of lamenting prayer, petitionary prayer as well as the doxology of thanksgiving prayer, penitential prayer and intercessory prayer, blessing, curse, and so on. Only in the last chapter is he concerned with "The Further Witness of the New Testament" suggesting that Christian prayer is ultimately of a Trinitarian character: "To God the father," "Through Christ," "In the Spirit" (314–321).

PRELAPSARIAN PRAYER: ANGELIC AND HUMAN

In *Paradise Lost*, the idea of prayer is first mentioned in the celestial dialogue between the Father and the Son in Book 3 when the Father promises that "Man shall not quite be lost" (173), provided he freely accepts God's grace: "once more I will renew / His lapsed powers" (175–176). God will find means to bring fallen humanity to repentance echoing Ezekiel 11:19: "I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh." God promises to be not only just but merciful as well. We should note that prayer is mentioned together with repentance and obedience. After the Fall disobedience resulted in the creatures' loss of communication with their Creator, in a way similar to Macbeth's astonishing recognition "I could not say, 'Amen'" (*Macbeth* 2.2.28). But the Father promises to restore this damaged faculty and lost capacity:

[F]or I will clear thir senses dark,
What may suffice, and soft'n stonie hearts
To pray, repent, and bring obedience due.
To Prayer, repentance, and obedience due,
Though but endevord with sincere intent,
Mine ear shall not be slow, mine eye not shut. (3.188–193)

Prayer, repentance, and obedience go together as signs of a regenerate, new life. It is also God's mercy that leads him promise, "And I will place within them as a guide / My Umpire Conscience" (3.194–195). This conscience is universal and thus meant for everybody and is distinguished from the Comforter who was sent only "to his own" (12.486; cf. FOWLER 2007, 179n).

Paradisaic angelic prayer (3.373–415) is music or "sacred Song" (369); it is played with "gold'n Harps" (365), and its "melodious part" reflects "concord [...] in Heav'n" (371). This is an echo of Revelation 19:6: ("the voice of a great multitude [is heard] saying: Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth") and 1 Timothy 1:17 ("vnto ye king eternal, immortall, inuisible"). Moreover, the angelic hymn also articulates the adoration of the Son, his "unexamp'l'd love" (410), willing to die for fallen humanity. In the second half of the hymn, the epic narrator joins the heavenly chorus, continuing in the first person singular, "thy Name / Shall be the copious matter of my Song / Henceforth, and never shall my Harp thy praise / Forget" (412–415; cf. FOWLER 2007, 191n).

In Book 7 Raphael tells Adam how the world was created. The seventh day of creation is praised by the angels: "With *Halleluiahs*: Thus was Sabbath kept" (634). Their doxological hymn after the creation (602–632) evokes the vocabulary, syntax, and imagery of the rhetorical questions of the Psalms and the prophets and the Book of Revelation, "Who can impair thee, mighty King, or bound / Thy Empire?" (608–609; cf. Ps 25:13 and Jer 50:44). The lines "Great are thy works, *Jehovah*, infinite / Thy power" (602–603) echo Revelation 15:3: "Great and marueilous are thy workes, Lord God Almightye." The "Glassie Sea" is also from Revelation 4:6. FOWLER notes that just as in the previous case, "[t]he angels' praise coincides with M[ilton]'s" (2007, 426n).

Prayer, as I have pointed out, is like breathing: it is a natural sign, attribute, and condition of life of creatures acknowledging their Creator. Prelapsarian prayer is therefore natural; it is entirely in tune with the rhythm of creation. In their narratively first prayer (4.724–735), Adam and Eve adore God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, the stars, the air, the Moon, in their shady lodge under the open sky. It is also important that Adam and Eve pray together: their worship is communal not individual; the harmony of the macrocosm reverberates the peace of the human microcosm. Their adoration is "pure" and "unanimous" (4.737, 736) and also in harmony with their both natural and "Myterious [...] connubial Love" (743), their prelapsarian sexual life.

Poetry, praise, and music are characteristic of the prelapsarian state. When Eve has recounted her disturbing dream to Adam, the couple, again in communal bond, will adore and praise unanimously the Creator God with a "sweet" song (5.153–208). This Franciscan-sounding ("brother sun and sister moon")

modulation of the prayer might be justly considered "quasi-liturgical." FOWLER comments,

The morning hymn closely imitates Ps. 148 and the 'Song of the Three Children,' added in *LXX* after Dan. 3:23 [...] and used in Christian worship as the Canticle *Benedicite, omnia opera*, set for Matins as an alternative to the *Te Deum* in *BCP* [...] Also echoing Ps. 19 ("The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork"), set for Monday at Prime, the dawn Office. (2007, 290n)

This morning prayer is in fact the longest prayer in *Paradise Lost*.

POSTLAPSARIAN HUMAN META-PRAYER

The word "pray" or "prayer" does not occur in Book 9. In the world of the act of disobedience, there is no prayer. When one either actively or passively yields to the voices of temptation, communication with the Creator is suspended. Right after the Fall the original harmonious, prelapsarian mutual love of Adam and Eve is replaced by egotistical carnal desire and lust. Milton finishes Book 9 by evoking their endless disharmony and quarrels, "Thus they in mutual accusation spent / The fruitless hours, but neither self-condemning, / And of thir vain contest appeer'd no end" (1187–1189). The Fall reverberates in Heaven and Hell. The Son, once again, offers the divine solution of combining the apparently incompatible principles of justice and mercy, "I shall temper so / Justice with Mercie, as may illustrate most / Them fully satisfied, and thee appease" (10.77–79). Satan arrives at Pandæmonium with his triumph of successfully ruining humankind but "instead of applause is entertained with a general hiss by all his audience, transform'd with himself also suddenly into Serpents," says Milton's Argument to Book 10 (lines 12–14). Sin and Death, Satan's ugly daughter and grandson are ready to claim Adam and Eve, but God's providence supplies instead the protoevangelium: the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the seed of the serpent (Gen 3:15).

The Adam and Eve of Book 10 conspicuously resemble the tragic heroes of Renaissance drama. Their sceptical questions, their philosophical soliloquies, their evocation of "this Cursed world" (984), "wretched life" (985) are echoes of the worlds of Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, and Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. It is especially Eve who arrives at a state of "vehement despair" (1007) when she suggests the horrible option of self-destruction, or suicide:

Why stand we longer shivering under feares,
That shew no end but Death, and have the power,
Of many ways to die the shortest choosing,
Destruction with destruction to destroy. (10.1003–1006)

They have arrived at the brink of their human existence where the seductive solution of the bare bodkin is tempting. However, Adam is more sober and recalls the prophecy about the woman's seed and says, "let us seek / Some safer resolution" (10.1028–1029). He recalls the the gesture of divine providence when they were given the coats of skin:

{L}east Cold
Or Heat should injure us, his timely care
Hath unbesought provided, and his hands
Cloath'd us unworthie, pitying while he judg'd[.] (10.1056–1059)

A major breakthrough is when the heuristic solution occurs to him and he thinks of God by evoking what to Milton's audience would have been recognizable as the rabbinical hermeneutical principle familiar also to Matthew and Paul in the New Testament¹ (*a minore ad maius*). He grasps the only remaining alternative—prayer.

How much more, if we pray him, will his ear
Be open, and his heart to pitie incline,
And teach us further by what means to shun
Th' inclement Seasons, Rain, Ice, Hail and Snow[.] (10.1060–1064)

It is significant that Milton does not provide the reader with a direct prayer put into the mouth of Adam and Eve but rather informs us about Adam's views of prayer. He provides us with a meta-prayer (10.1060–1096) and thus imprints on his reader's mind what prayer is about. Here Milton seems to imitate Jesus by teaching fallen human beings to pray. Prayer in Book 10 is asking for protection: "Beseeching him, so as we need not fear / To pass commodiously this life" (1082–1083). Adam and Eve should repair "to the place [...] where he judg'd us" (1086–1087), which is the mercy-seat. The acknowledgement of the place or point of infection is crucial for true penitence. The archetype of penitential

¹ Cf. Matt 7:11, Rom 1:11–12, 2 Cor 3:7–18.

prayer is David's Psalm 51 which is also echoed here in line 1091: "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise" (Ps 51:17). The contrition of the heart can take place only "Humbly" (10.1089) and in "humiliation meek" (1092). If one really disavows, disowns his sins, he removes them from himself. This is done in "tears."² Penitential prayer is the postlapsarian prayer par excellence.

REGENERATION BY INDIRECT PRAYER

Prayer is an act. After the Fall, it is an extremely painful and difficult act both physically and spiritually. Fallen Adam, together with Eve, is said to be "penitent" for the first time. It is significant that Book 10 ends with the image of their humble, unfeigned, confessing prayer that with their tears they were "Watering the ground, and with thir sighs the Air / Frequenting" (1102–1103), and Book 11 continues with the same image:

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 beg'd, with tears
Watering the ground, and with thir sighs the Air
Frequenting, sent from hearts contrite, in sign
Of sorrow unfeign'd, and humiliation meek. (10.1097–1104)

Adam and Eve humbled themselves: "in lowliest plight," they stood repentant. Milton mentions the idea of prevenient grace, divine grace coming from the mercy seat of Heaven and preceding human action. In Exodus 25:18 the mercy-seat is described as the solid gold covering the Ark of the Covenant, God's resting place. In the Septuagint we find the word *ἰλαστήριον* for "mercy-seat," and in Romans 3:25 this *ἰλαστήριον* is used to describe the crucified Christ. The King James Version has "propitiation"; the Revised Standard Version, "expiation"; and Tynedale's 1534 version, "seat of mercy": "Whom God hath made a seate of mercy thorow faith in his bloud to shewe the rightewesnes which before him is of valoure in that he forgeveth the synnes that are passed which God dyd suffer."

² Traditional Christian teaching emphasizes that the removed burden of sin should be placed on the cross of Christ, the place of curse, for whatever is placed there will be cursed as Christ became curse for us (2 Cor 5:18–23). However, this aspect of soteriology is not elaborated by Milton.

In St. Paul's language prevenient grace comes from the cross of Christ, the true mercy-seat. Once forgiveness is experienced, "the stony" from their hearts will be removed, and they will be new, regenerate persons. Milton says in *Christian Doctrine* 1.19, "In regenerate man repentance precedes faith [...] So that awareness of divine mercy which results in repentance should not be confused with faith, as it frequently is by theologians" (YP 6:469). It is the Holy Spirit, "the Spirit of prayer" (PL 11.6) that softens the human heart and communicates the voice of man to the Son and the Father. It is significant that prayer will reach Heaven as "incense" (18).

Thus they in lowliest plight repentant stood
 Praying, for from the Mercie-seat above
 Prevenient Grace descending had remov'd
 The stonie from thir hearts, & made new flesh
 Regenerate grow instead, that sighs now breath'd
 Unutterable, which the Spirit of prayer
 Inspir'd, and wing'd for Heav'n with speedier flight
 Then loudest Oratorie: yet thir port
 Not of mean suiters, nor important less
 Seem'd thir Petition, then when th' ancient Pair
 In Fables old, less ancient yet then these,
Deucalion and chaste *Pyrrha* to restore
 The Race of Mankind drown'd, before the Shrine
 Of *Themis* stood devout. To Heav'n thir prayers
 Flew up, nor missd the way, by envious windes
 Blow'n vagabond or frustrate: in they passd
 Dimensionless through Heav'nly dores; then clad
 With incense, where the Golden Altar fum'd,
 By thir great Intercessor, came in sight
 Before the Fathers Throne: Them the glad Son
 Presenting, thus to intercede began.

(11.1-21)

Again, in the rest of Book 11, we have only indirect images of prayer. Unlike their prelapsarian counterparts, postlapsarian prayers are not quoted, but certain images witness to the effect and power of prayer (141-158). The penitent, regenerate Adam teaches Eve about the effect of prayer. Prayer is like a "short sigh of human breath" (147) which is meant to "appease" "th' offended Deity" (149). Adam is reported to have kneeled and humbled his heart (150). Adam claims to have envisaged how God reacted: "Methought I saw him placable and mild" (151). He was given peace in his breast, and he remembered the promise of the prophecy concerning the future victory of the seed of the woman (154-155). The effect of prayer is that Adam has regained his

faith in the meaning of life: "the bitterness of death / Is past, and we shall live" (157-158).

THE SON'S INTERCESSORY PRAYER

See Father, what first fruits on Earth are sprung
 From thy implanted Grace in Man, these Sighs
 And Prayers, which in this Golden Censer, mixt
 With Incense, I thy Priest before thee bring,
 Fruits of more pleasing savour from thy seed
 Sow'n with contrition in his heart, then those
 Which his own hand manuring all the Trees
 Of Paradise could have produc't, ere fall'n
 From innocence. Now therefore bend thine eare
 To supplication, heare his sighs though mute;
 Unskilful with what words to pray, let mee
 Interpret for him, mee his Advocate
 And propitiation, all his works on mee
 Good or not good ingraft, my Merit those
 Shall perfet, and for these my Death shall pay.
 Accept me, and in mee from these receive
 The smell of peace toward Mankinde, let him live
 Before thee reconcil'd, at least his days
 Numberd, though sad, till Death, his doom (which I
 To mitigate thus plead, not to reverse)
 To better life shall yeeld him, where with mee
 All my redeemd may dwell in joy and bliss,
 Made one with me as I with thee am one.

(11.22-44)

In the Hebrew Bible the great figures who intercede for the others are Abraham, Moses, Samuel, Elijah, Elisha, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Amos, David, and Hezekiah. Intercession has a mediatorial function and it is a "daring act" (MILLER 1994, 268) as these "representative figures [...] dared to interpose themselves between the people and the Lord's decision to punish" (274). Moses, for example, offers himself "to make atonement" for the sins of the people. "A model of intercession that requires more than prayer, indeed the very offering of the self in behalf of others" (273, cf. Exod 32:31-32).

According to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ fulfils the type of the Old Testament high priest. It was a task of the high priest to intercede to God on behalf of his people. Leviticus 16 tells us the ceremony of the Great Atonement Day (Yom Kippur), the only day in the year when the high priest was allowed to

enter the Holy of Holies. The New Testament teaches that with the advent of Christ all Jewish ceremonies have been fulfilled and Christ himself becomes the high priest. "Christ is [...] entred [...] into heauen it selfe, now to appeare in the presence of God for vs" (Heb 9:24).

Adam and Eve are presented as redeemed, as if they were already after the redemptive death of Christ. The biblical image of "the first fruits" refers to God's recreation in Christ (1 Cor 15:20, 23). It is to suggest that Christ's death and resurrection had a retroactive force: St. Paul suggests that whoever is in Christ is part of the new creation. They are sprung from the "implanted grace" of God. For penitent Adam and Eve, the future joy of the Gospel is made present. With the prophecy of the Gospel (Gen 3:15) in their hearts and on their minds, they trust the promise of God and pray to Him. These prayers in a "Golden Censer, mixt / With Incense" (11.24–25) are presented by the Son the high priest to the Heavenly Father. We have seen in Psalm 51:17 that "a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Christ calls himself both the "advocate" and the "propitiation" echoing 1 John 2:1–2: "We haue an Aduocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: And he is the propitiation for our sinnes," and also the ἱλαστήριον (propitiation, expiation) of Romans 3:25.

The intercessory prayer is "supplication" (11.31), as Christ appeals to his "Merit" (35) which is his "Death" (36). Whether the works of men are "good" or "not good," once they are "ingrafted" in Christ, they will be "made perfect," that is, sanctified. This is the idea of "imputation" as St. Paul says in Romans 11:16, "if the first fruite bee holy, the lump is also holy: and if the root be holy, so are the branches." Whoever is grafted into Christ will be holy on account of his death, which is "payment" to God. In this intercessory prayer, Christ is now offering his own sacrifice: "Accept me" (37). He is offering "The smell of peace" (38). The keywords are "reconcil'd" (39), "redeemd" (43), and "Made one with [...] thee" (44). All expressions are English versions of the word καταλλαγῆ (2 Cor 5:18–21) which was rendered as "atonement," or "at-one-ment" by the sixteenth-century Bible translator William Tyndale.

MILTON'S INVOCATIONS AS PRAYERS

The invocation in an epic is usually asking inspiration from the muses. The idea is that true poetry exists only if one is touched by the divine Spirit. In classical Christian teaching, the third Person of the Trinity is the one who communicates between the Father and the Son, and human beings. Faith is brought into the

heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit; it is the task of the Spirit to make faith in God and Christ a real and a living faith. In Book 1.1–26, the Holy Spirit is addressed despite *Christian Doctrine* 1.6 (YP 6:294–295) "judging invocation of the Holy Spirit unbiblical" (FOWLER 2007, 95n).

Rarely is Milton's invocation to Book 1 discussed as a form of prayer, yet it is in fact a prayer as it is a version of the *Veni sancte Spiritus*: "Veni, lumen cordium. / . . . Lava quod est sordium, / . . . Rege quod est devium" (quoted by FOWLER 2007, 60n). Here, we can see Milton praying. Prayer demands humility and a contrite heart that acknowledges that the human heart is in itself dark without the illumination of the Spirit. William TYNDALE writes in his *Answer to Sir Thomas More*:

And again, as the air is dark of itself, and receiveth all her light of the sun; even so are all men's hearts of themselves dark with lies, and receive all their truth of God's word, in that they consent thereto. And, moreover, as the dark air giveth the sun no light, but contrariwise the light of the sun in respect of the air is of itself and lighteneth the air, and purgeth it from darkness: even so, the lying heart of man can give the word of God no truth; but, contrariwise, the truth of God's word is of herself, and lighteneth the hearts of believers, and maketh them true, and cleanseth them from lies, as thou readest, John xv: "Ye be clean by reason of the word." Which is to be understood, in that the word had purged their hearts from lies, from false opinions, and from thinking evil good, and therefore from consenting to sin. And (John xvii.) "Sanctify them, O Father, through thy truth: and thy word is truth." (1850, 24–25)

In this invocation Milton is in fact praying to the third Person of the Trinity. One may argue that this cannot be possible if Milton was indeed an Arian. However, a close reading of the invocation would suggest that Milton was of the Trinity's party without knowing, or wanting, it.

One of the explicitly autobiographical parts in *Paradise Lost* is the invocation to Holy Light at the beginning of Book 3. According to TESKEY,

Milton conjectures three things of light (1) that light is spontaneous growth, or "off-spring" of heaven (line 1); (2) that light was never created because it has existed forever with God (lines 2–6); and (3) light is mysterious in origin (lines 7–8). All three conflict with the Bible (Genesis 1: 1–3), where light is created by God after the heaven and the earth[.] (2005, 56n)

Teskey, however, does not mention that the light is the Son of God, the light of the world (John 8:12) and therefore light is both physical and divine. The metaphor that "God is light" (3.3) is also biblical: "God is light, and in him is no darknesse at all" (1 John 1:5). The idea of "th' Eternal Coeternal beam" (3.2) signifies, in FOWLER's view, "light the beam of the eternal, equally eternal," and

he somewhat skeptically quotes Sewall, who regards this passage as a "hesitation between Arian and Trinitarian formulations, the Word co-eternal and begotten in time" (2007, 166n).

When Milton gradually turns to a personal tone, he begins to use the verb "re-visit" (3.13), and he repeats it in lines 21–22: "thee I revisit safe, / And feel thy sovran vital Lamp." However, there is a touch of complaint that the revisitation is not reciprocal. Here Milton's most personal physical and spiritual pain is referred to: "Revisit'st not these eyes, that rowle in vain / To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn" (3.23–24). Despite being forsaken by God, despite the fact that God's face is hidden or veiled for him, he associates himself with "Blind Thamyras and blind Mæonides" (35), and the old prophets Tiresias and Phineus. Though he is "from the chearful wayes of men / Cut off" (46–47) with "wisdome at one entrance quite shut out" (50), he is nevertheless open for the inner light:

So much the rather thou Celestial light
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate, there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse[.] (3.51–54)

Only with divine aid can his inner light be regained so that he could proclaim "things invisible to mortal sight."

CONCLUSION: *PARADISE LOST* AS A FORM OF PRAYER

In the introduction we saw various aspects of prayer. I quoted the Benedictine motto *laborare est orare*. For the Christian person, every act and aspect in his or her life can be interpreted as prayer until the physical life of breathing, exhaling, and inhaling ceases to exist. For a Christian poet it is evident that his or her work of art is also an act of prayer. Milton was quite explicit about this in his invocations. The Christian poet aims at the verbal and artistic recreation of the reader in imitation of God's recreation or restoration of the sinner through the cross of Christ. Following Stanley Fish's now classic argument in *Surprized by Sin* (1997), one may claim that the reader is tempted in the course of the epic. However, Milton also believed in the reality of restoration as a new act of creation by God. He was of the fallen reader's party whether knowing it or not. The music, the smell, and the drama of the rich variety of prayers articulated in his epic were ultimately in the service of a doxological project.

WORKS CITED

- BENSON, Bruce E. & Norman WIRZBA (2005a) 'Introduction' in BENSON & WIRZBA (2005b) 1–9.
- BENSON, Bruce E. & Norman WIRZBA, eds. (2005b) *The Phenomenology of Prayer* (New York: Fordham UP).
- CROWE, Benjamin (2005) 'Heidegger and the Prospect of a Phenomenology of Prayer' in BENSON & WIRZBA (2005b) 119–133.
- FISH, Stanley E. (1997) *Surprized by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost: Second Edition with a New Preface* (Cambridge: Harvard UP).
- FOWLER, Alastair, ed. (2007) *John Milton, Paradise Lost* (rev. 2nd ed.; Harlow: Longman).
- GESCHWANDTNER, Christina M. (2005) 'Praise—Pure and Personal? Jean-Luc Marion's Phenomenologies of Prayer' in BENSON & WIRZBA (2005b) 168–181.
- LEWALSKI, Barbara K. (1999) 'The Genres of *Paradise Lost*' in CCM 113–129.
- MENSCH, James R. (2005) 'Prayer as Kenosis' in BENSON & WIRZBA (2005b) 63–72.
- MILLER, Patrick D. (1994) *They Cried to the Lord: The Form and Theology of Biblical Prayer* (Minneapolis: Fortress).
- PUTT, B. Keith (2005) "'Too deep for words": The Conspiracy of a Divine "Soliloquy"' in BENSON & WIRZBA (2005b) 142–153.
- TESKEY, Gordon, ed. (2005) *John Milton: Paradise Lost: Authoritative Text, Sources and Backgrounds, Criticism* (New York: Norton).
- TYNDALE, William (1850) *An Answer to Sir Thomas More's Dialogue*, ed. Henry Walter (Cambridge: Cambridge UP).
- WESTPHAL, Merold (2005) 'Prayer as the Posture of the Decentered Self' in BENSON & WIRZBA (2005b) 13–31.
- WIRZBA, Norman (2005) 'Attention and Responsibility: The Work of Prayer' in BENSON & WIRZBA (2005b) 88–100.