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To See Thy Face: Love and Leadership in a New Paradise

In *Paradise Lost*, John Milton writes of earth's toils from Heaven's view and establishes a clear formula: if love leads to faith, then faith leads to hope, so faith and hope are love. In 1 Corinthians 13, the Apostle Paul describes what love is and what love is not. Milton not only continues the Pauline theology in *Paradise Lost*, but also uses the same descriptive structure to define true love modeled by the Son and, in *Paradise Regained*, actualized by Jesus. In these works, Milton uses the prayers and testament of the Son to unveil what the new covenant is and the prayers and testaments of Adam and Eve to show what it is not. For Milton, love's quality hinges on to whom it is directed; love for God, agape, is the greatest form while an abundance of eros, romantic love, causes the former to decay. Without heartfelt agapic love, no actions of perfect love can exist because they must be intrinsically done for the glory of God. In both epics, Jesus' inherently divine leadership method under his new covenant is established through the form and content of his prayers to the Father and theorized by the Son's agape love in *Paradise Lost* during his prayerful acceptance of incarnation, his devotional plea to the Father to intervene for the sake of Adam and Eve's salvation, and his rebuke of Satan in *Paradise Regained*.

In *Paradise Lost*, Milton depicts the Son's natural piety for God as the model of perfect agape love. At his Father's behest, the Son accepts his role as the savior of man and begins a prayer of submission and thanksgiving: "Father, thy word is past, man shall find grace;/... Behold mee then: mee for him, life for life/ I offer: on mee let thine anger fall" (*Paradise Lost* 3:227-237). The Son knowingly accepts the pain he must undergo to die as a mortal being for the sake of mankind's salvation and humbly submits to his Father's will. In doing so, the Son begins

his role as the paradigm for love since his agape love for the father yields love for all of creation as well. In concordance, the Son promises his Father that “I shall rise Victorious, and subdue/ My vanquisher, spoil’d of his vaunted spoil” (*Paradise Lost* 3:250-251). As a product of his true love for his Father, the Son embodies absolute faith in God and trust in his plan as he makes this vow. Moreover, the Son excels in the virtue of hope as he anticipates the assured glory of salvation after his death. In the Son’s embrace of God’s will to become incarnate and suffer on earth for man’s redemption, he embodies the scriptural definition of love as something that “suffereth long: it is bountiful: love envieth not” (1 Corinthians 13: 4). Milton’s interpretation of love, intrinsic to the Son’s character, is that faith and hope in God the Father are both the foundation for true love and a product of true love. As the Son’s love leads him to suffer death, reap the salvation of man, and express faith and hope, he manifests true agape love for God in his prayers and testament.

In *Paradise Lost*, the Son is an inchoate manifestation of perfect love and the new covenant not to be completed until *Paradise Regained*. Satan, the antithesis of the Son, widens the scope of the Son’s love for the Father by antagonizing it with the aberrations of corrupt intentions, loss of faith, and later rebellion against Heaven. After God introduces his begotten Son to Heaven as his new vice regent, Satan sows the seeds of sedition to fellow angels with a petition, “if ye know yourselves/ Natives and sons of Heav’n possess before/ By none, and if not equal all, yet free,/ Equally free; for orders and degrees/ Jar not with liberty, but well consist” (*Paradise Lost* 5:790-793). Satan’s insistent harping on his seniority evinces his love for God as contingent on his position as a leader, rather than a servant, in Heaven. While Satan is dissatisfied with this change and seeks the pomp of higher office, the Son is more than amenable to his role and eager to embrace the responsibility as the redeemer of man when he pleases to the

Father, “Accept me, and in mee... let him live/Before thee reconcil'd” (*Paradise Lost* 11:37-39).

The Son supports and Satan thwarts the Apostle Paul’s instruction that love “rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6). Here, the Son does not revel in his greater position over the angels in the unequal ranks of Heaven, but rather he rejoices in the “truth” of God’s will for universal redemption. Furthermore, to make demands on the Father or seek any recompense from his will intrinsically corrupts the notion of true love. Satan’s presumption of position in Heaven and fury at his perceived demotion demonstrate his lack of love for God; The Son’s eagerness to accept incarnation and the will of God is a precept of the new covenant.

As the Son perfects his agape love, he also works to lay foundation for his new, distinctly divine, form of leadership as the new covenant on earth. Milton begins the emergence of the new covenant with a contrast of the Son and Satan. During a schismatic speech to the angels, Satan argues that dexterity measures worth and that ordeal-trying proof supersedes faith in an assault on the inherent value of God’s creation. When Abdiel protests this statement by saying “for soon expect to feel/ His Thunder on thy head, devouring fire” (*Paradise Lost* 5:892-893), he foils Satan and, more importantly, speaks in a syntax which is reminiscent of Milton’s 1624 poetic translation of Psalm 136: “But full soon they did devour/ The Tawny King with all his power” (*Psalm CXXXVI* 53-54). Abdiel, faithful to God’s word and hopeful in the Son’s new role in Heaven, still assesses the Son in relation to the Psalm’s archaic, Old Testament description of the Israelite overthrow of the Egyptian Pharaoh. It is significant that Milton chooses this story of God’s aid to his people and its unmistakable connection to the humanity of the Old Testament. It describes the Pharaoh’s skin color as “tawny,” which is not found in either the King James or Geneva Bibles. This reference to race, the hallmark of humanity, fallaciously assumes the Son

will use the ways of man in his new covenant. Brittany Johnson's research on the classical style of Milton's epics in "Poetic Beauty as an Aesthetic and a Tool in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*" has logical resonance with this same conclusion as she writes, "early epics ... aimed not only to provide dramatic inflections to the literature, but also to highlight the verbal and idiomatic intricacies of the work itself" (Johnson 1). The diction of *Paradise Lost* is most powerful when read aloud so that the similar sounds and their connotations become more clear. The Son's resolve to establish a new covenant on earth begins in Heaven after the rebellion and continues into *Paradise Regained*.

Jesus initiates his new form of expressing due praise and devotion in a divine way to God in *Paradise Regained*. Satan shows Jesus the armed forces of a powerful empire in "numbers numberless" (*Paradise Regained* 3:310). The abounding number of troops, however skillful they are in a state of hawkish leaders, fall flat to Jesus: "Much ostentation vain of fleshly arm,/ And fragile arms, much instrument of war/ Long in preparing, soon to nothing brought,/ Before mine eyes thou hast set... / Plausible to the world, to me worth naught" (*Paradise Regained* 3: 387-393). For Jesus, the only power such numbers have relies on their service to God the Father. In a more effective use of numbers, the angels prayerfully sing in "numbers without number" (*Paradise Lost* 3:346) in praise of God in Heaven at the announcement of the new covenant through the Son's incarnation. These quantities are an indication of the jubilation felt by those faithful to God and the zeal in which they praised this action, not earthly insecurities that lead to war. When Milton pairs these distinct differences in the use of numbers, he shows that the human ways of unquantifiable forces which overthrew an earthly King have no use in Jesus' new covenant wherein due devotion to God is expressed through immeasurable displays of agapic devotion to the Father and love for all creation.

When Milton's psalm translation takes another liberty, it is to establish that Jesus will come as the progenitor of a new order. In *Psalm CXXXVI*, Milton writes "His chosen people he did bless/ In the wasteful Wilderness" (*Psalm CXXXVI* 56-57). Another pairing of "waste" and "wild" occurs in Satan's argument with Jesus in *Paradise Regained*: "Therefore I watch'd thy footsteps from that hour,/ And follow'd thee still on to this waste wild,/ Where by all best conjectures I collect/ Thou art to be my fatal enemy" (*Paradise Regained* 4:522-524.) Here, Milton uses the same adjectives for the same lands at the moment Satan concedes the futility of his attempts to corrupt the Son of God to connect the Old and New testaments and show that Jesus is the redeemer of man who comes as the new covenant. In private prayer of contemplation, Jesus describes his realization of his God-given role: "victorious deeds/ Flam'd in my heart, heroic acts; one while/ To rescue Israel from the Roman yoke,/ Then to subdue and quell o're all the earth/ Brute violence and proud Tyrannic pow'r,/ Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd" (*Paradise Regained* 1:213-220). Jesus acknowledges the Old Testament means of victory taught to him by the Priests of the Temple. However, in the Temple, this realization turns into a reckoning of God's new plan within him: "Yet held it more humane, more heavenly, first/ By winning words to conquer willing hearts,/ And make persuasion do the work of fear" (*Paradise Regained* 1:221-223). Jesus' understanding of God's new will of salvation through faith marks a change in the leadership of Heaven pursuant to the Apostle Paul's instruction that love "doth no uncomely thing: it seeketh not her own thing: it is not provoked to anger: it thinketh no evil" (1 Corinthians 13:5). Jesus, the incarnation of God's resolve and love for his people's well-being, cannot be provoked and thinks only for the sake of man. Once again, Milton uses Jesus' prayer to reveal another tenet of the new covenant.

True love, perfected by the Son, is lost in the actions of Adam and Eve but destined to be found by Jesus. As sentient creations of God, Adam and Eve have the clear ability to express love, especially to one another. To Eve, Adam is “O Sole in whom my thoughts find all repose,/ My Glory, my Perfection” (*Paradise Lost* 5:28-29). To Adam, Eve is “O fairest of Creation . . . / Holy, divine, good, amiable, or sweet” (*Paradise Lost* 9:896-899). Their love is passionately expressed with variance, based in their hearts, and intimates the soul with the body; the same type of love within Milton inspires his thoughts to “Harmonious numbers” of praise and adoration (*Paradise Lost* 3:37). Though impromptu and passionate like Milton’s prayer, Adam and Eve’s love is concupiscent and for each other rather than divinely directed. This love, eros, is not intrinsically opposed to God the Father. Rather, eros is a gift to man given freely if primary love is agapic, placed in God. The Son later observes their flawed love and prayerfully petitions the Father: “Unskilful with words to pray, let mee/ Interpret for him” (*Paradise Lost* 11:32-33). The Son, knowing the power of divine connection through prayer, asks the Father if he can serve as an advocate, though incarnation guarantees his death, because his agapic love of God leads to love for all. However righteous their prayer is in appearance, Adam and Eve do not express passion in jubilant, varying numbers to God, but only to his creation. The Apostle Paul warns against Adam and Eve’s style of hollow prayer as he writes “Though I speak with the tongues of men and Angels, and have not love, I am as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal” (1 Corinthians 13:1). Adam and Eve’s love is resounding and loud, but is ultimately ineffective for its lack of agapic passion and leads to their fall; Eve fills God’s void in her heart with forbidden knowledge, saying “not following thee, I had remain’d/ In ignorance” (*Paradise Lost* 9:807-808), and Adam, “fondly overcome with Female charm” (*Paradise Lost* 9:999), directs his love due to God to Eve instead and joins in her sin. Their love for God forsaken, Adam and Eve walk

through Eden in sin because of the failures of their eros love. Milton uses the prayers of Adam and Eve to show what the covenant is not.

When Adam and Eve do worship the Father, it is in a rote, prompted manner void of the passion used by the Son:

they forth were come to open sight
 Of day-spring, and the Sun, who scarce up risen
 With wheels yet hov'ring o're the Ocean brim,
 Shot parallel to the earth his dewy ray,
 Discovering in wide Lantskip all the East
 Of Paradise and Edens happie Plains,
 Lowly they bow'd adoring, and began
 Thir Orisons, each Morning duly paid
 In various style (*Paradise Lost* 5: 138-146).

This prayer's rote form is similar to an antiphon heralding the incarnation of the Son used during the monastic Liturgy of the Hours: "O Day-spring, Brightness or the Light everlasting, and Sun of righteousness: Come and enlighten them that sit in darkness and the shadow or death" (Antiphons on the Magnificat). Both forms are procedurally expressed "duly" at the fixed movements of the sun, beseech God to guide the souls of those in prayer and illuminate the land which surrounds them. Furthermore, after God ordains the fate of incarnation on the Son, Satan travels along the same sun's rays which call Adam and Eve to prayer: "Satan with his Powers/ Far was advanc't on winged speed, an Host/ Innumerable as the Stars of Night,/ Or Stars of Morning" (*Paradise Lost* 5: 743-46). In conjunction, Milton likens the hour of Prime, the first prayer of the day after dawn in monastic communities, to Adam and Eve's morning prayer:

“praise him in thy Sphere/ While day arises, that sweet hour of Prime (*Paradise Lost* 5:169-170). The hypocrisy of Satan, which “neither Man nor Angel can discern” (*Paradise Lost* 3:682), seeps into the life of Adam and Eve and corrupts their prayers. In *Areopagitica*, Milton protests this form of monastic prayer as he writes “I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, unexercised and unbreathed” (728). Adam and Eve unknowingly participate in the degradation of their love for God and resulting lapse of faith and hope each time they attempt to love the Father in a compelled, procedural manner distinctly contrary in essence from the form made perfect by the Son in his prayers.

Though man fails in prayer and succumbs to Satan, the Son, who knows of the pain awaiting him in incarnated life, still accepts God’s request because his love for the Father lights a desire to see man redeemed and washed of sin. As Satan shows Jesus visions of pagan Rome to tempt him with the temporal powers of the emperor, the city’s aesthetic glories seem to be revealed through a “strange Parallax or Optic skill/ Of vision multiplied through air, or glass/ Of Telescope” (*Paradise Regained* 4:40-42). Milton’s allusions to the Apostle Paul’s writing that “for now we see through a glass darkly” (1 Corinthians 13:12) warns that man is distracted by opulence rather than concerned with truth. Paul, a near contemporary of Jesus and Roman citizen, saw the vanities and false teachings of pagan Rome and taught that, through love of God and care for creation, man can perceive divinity like Jesus does in rebuking Satan. It is only until then that God and man can “see face to face” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Milton further alludes to these teachings when the Son promises to his Father that he will defeat sin and, “then, with the multitude of my redeemed,/ Shall enter Heaven, long absent, and return,/ Father, to see thy face” (*Paradise Lost* 3:260-262). “To see thy face,” as Milton proposes, is to understand what Michael the Archangel prophesied: “add Faith,/ Add virtue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,/ By name

to come call'd Charity, the soul/ Of all the rest" (*Paradise Lost* 12: 583-585). Essentially, love is the foundation of all virtues in the Son's new covenant. This prophecy is not only the framework of the New Testament, but also an allusion to the Apostle Paul's writing that "and now abideth faith, hope and love, even these three: but the chiefest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13). According to Milton's interpretation, Michael the Archangel and the Apostle Paul both concur that the Son is the herald of love in the new covenant.

Prayer, the connection to divinity, shapes the paths of each character in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Adam and Eve, who view the world through a narrow scope, sacrifice the love given to them by God and made manifest in the Son for the myopic gains of their limited perceptions. Adam's greater eros love for Eve creates the self-interested desire to join his wife outside of paradise by any means, thus causing the fall of man. The Son, the begotten child of God with a direct divine connection, theorizes, through prayer, what his new covenant will be while the foils of man show what it will not be. Begun in *Paradise Lost* and completed in *Paradise Regained*, the Son's covenant of love is the law of leadership in a new paradise.

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