

Milton A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Louis L. Martz (Prentice-Hall Englewood Cliffs, N.J.)1966. "Milton and Bentley: The Pastoral of the Innocence of Man and Nature" by William Empson.

p. 19 Bentley's escapade has remained something of a scandal; if he was really incapable of understanding Milton, said Mrs. Woolf, how far can we credit these eminent classicists on their own ground.<sup>1</sup>

1. In 1732 Richard Bentley, an eminent scholar of the classics, issued an edition of Paradise Lost in which he undertook to "correct" Milton's text on the grounds that the blind poet was at the mercy of an "Amanuensis" and also of some "Friend or Acquaintance" who saw the book through the press. According to Bentley, the text of the poem contained "monstrous Faults" and even some spurious verses which this "suppos'd Friend" saw fit "to foist into the Book." In 1733 Zachary Pearce issued a much more sensible publication in which he presented "A Review of the Text of the Twelve Books of Milton's Paradise Lost: In which the Chief of Dr. Bentley's Emendations Are Consider'd; And several other Emendations and Observations are offer'd to the Public." [Ed.]

p. 20 As a rule, if Milton's sympathies were divided, he understood the conflict he was dramatising, and if the result is hard to explain it is easy to feel. But I shall take first, to win sympathy for the Doctor, some cases where I ~~think~~ think he is right, where there is a muddle whose effect is unsatisfying.

p. 25 People are now agreed in approving Milton's rhythms, and accepting his subdued puns without looking at them closely. I don't know what is the normal view about his vague or apparently disordered grammar, which Bentley thought indefensible; especially the use of and or or when the sense needs more detailed logical structure. Pearce defended it very little. The chief reason for it is that Milton aims both at a compact and weighty style, which requires short clauses, and a sustained style with the weight of momentum, which requires long clauses.

\*\* William Empson is Professor of English Literature at Sheffield University. His early book, Seven Types of Ambiguity (1930, 1947), is one of the germinal works in modern criticism. He is also the author of The Structure of Complex Words (1951) and Milton's God (1961);