John Milton. *De Doctrina Christiana.* Volume VIII of *The Complete Works of John Milton,* ed. John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012. xc +1263 pp. + 15 illus. $375.00. Review by JOHN MULRYAN, ST. BONAVENTURE UNIVERSITY.

This massive, hugely erudite facing-page translation of the *De Doctrina Christiana* is a welcome addition to the Oxford works of Milton, although Milton's authorship of this text is, to my mind, still an open question. The editors are clearly anxious to attribute the text to Milton, as the polemical tone of their introduction makes clear: "Once rid of any doubts about authorship, we can trace Milton on every page; opinionated, feisty, and relentless" (xix).

The editors of the *De Doctrina* present a complex structural system adopted from Ramus, which is (supposedly) the model for the structure of the *De Doctrina.* Ramus's own success as a logician and philosopher was spotted: he made no lasting contributions to logic, and some of his "discoveries" turned out to be errors. He was most successful in creating new structures for the systematic theologies flowing from Calvin's *Institute*s, but since the author of the *De Doctrina* was not a Calvinist (see below), this system is not very helpful. The *De Doctrina* qualifies as systematic theology (cf. p. xxiii) insofar as it is organized under a list of topics rather than simple close reading of the biblical text. Of course the twentieth-century term "systematic theology" never appears in the text; I suspect it is applied to the *De Doctrina* to elevate the theological credentials of the author.

The editors contend that the Latinity of the treatise is superior to other systematic theologies of the time, a "fact" which "proves" Milton wrote it. I do not find it so. The Latin, by and large, is neither polished nor sophisticated in its syntax and is almost totally devoid of rhetorical ornament. It is also extremely difficult to translate. Take the phrase "non absoluta decernendi ratio" (56), which the first translator, Charles Sumner, renders as "contingent decrees." John Carey, the second translator, verbosely retranslates the phrase as "making decrees in a non-absolute way" and our editors, most absurdly, as "non-absolute decreeing" (57).

As for the translation it is, by and large, a sound one, although the authors' passion for accessibility and readability sometimes overrides

their judgment, especially when they break up the stately periods of the Latin that are maintained in the Sumner translation.

The introduction is generously long, covering all phases of the manuscript, including the interesting reservation of half the page (by the scribe Jeremie Picard) for further annotations by the author (xxiv). Some seven scribes have been identified (by Maurice Kelley, the guru of *De Doctrina* studies) as having prepared the manuscript, most notably Daniel Skinner and the above-mentioned Jeremie Picard, the latter involved in a complete revision of the manuscript.

This is the third English translation of the *De Doctrina.* The first in 1825 was by the translator-editor Charles Sumner, who tried to imitate the stately rhythms of Milton's Latin prose. The main flaws in Sumner's translation-edition were that he substituted translations from the King James version of the Bible rather than translate the biblical passages directly, and he "modernized" the paragraphing of the Latin text. The biblical citations were corrected in John Carey's translation (1973, in the Yale Prose), but Carey (or the press) muddied the waters in his own way by failing to provide a Latin text to measure against his translation. The Hale-Cunnington translation is accompanied by a full transcription of the manuscript. As noted earlier, Hale-Cunnington, straining for an accessible translation, often suppress the rhythms of the prose, distance the translation from the idiom of the original, and indulge in their own rhetorical cleverness. This is a facing-page translation, with Latin on the left and English on the right.

The work, whoever wrote it, is interesting in its own right. The preface (which is in the hand of Daniel Skinner) is attributed to Milton, but in an important article in *Milton Quarterly*, Gordon Campbell, Thomas Corns, John K. Hale, David I. Holmes, and Fiona J. Tweedie declare that there is "compelling evidence" that Milton's name and initials were added to the *De Doctrina* in the nineteenth century ("The Provenance of *De Doctrina Christiana*," 31 [1997]: 92). Each section of the work is intrinsically interesting; whether the structure of the *De Doctrina* follows a Ramist path is anyone's guess.

There are thirty-three chapters in the first book, and seventeen in the second. Space does not permit a full analysis of every section, so I will concentrate on a few. In chapter one, "What Christian Doctrine is," the author engages in self-contradiction: "One must seek this doc-

trine, therefore, not from the schools of those who philosophize, nor from human laws, but solely from the sacred writings, with the holy spirit as guide" (19). However, in an earlier passage from the epistle, he admits to studying "the shorter Systems of theologians, and, following their practice, to distinguish appropriate topic headings" (5). Presumably Milton could not simply forget the theologians he had read when he approached the task of glossing the scriptures.

In chapter four, "On Predestination," the author parts from Calvin by limiting predestination to the Elect who are to be saved, but specifically rejecting Calvin's doctrine of reprobation, that some human beings are fated or predestined to be damned (71). In his chapter on the Son of God, the author denies that the Son is co-eternal with the Father: "God begot the Son by his decree, and likewise in time" (133). In the same chapter the author rejects the idea of the Trinity, as "grounded neither in scripture nor in reason" (149). Nor is the Holy Spirit co-equal with either the Father or the Son: he is "plainly lesser than both the father and the son, as being obedient and subservient in everything" ("On the Holy Spirit," 257). The other flagrant heresy found in the *De Doctrina* is the idea that the soul dies with the body: "I shall demonstrate that first the whole person, then every single part of him singly, is deprived of life. And this should especially be taken note of: that God threatened death to the whole person who sinned, without the exception of any part" (443). Also heretical but less flagrant is his defense of polygamy, on the basis that the twelve Hebrew tribes were drawn to it out of necessity and therefore cannot be said to have sinned (365). In Book Two in the chapter "On Good Works," the author fudges a bit by first stating that "The true worship of God is situated principally in zeal for good works" (905), but then we find that the source of good works is faith in God, not the individual's own merit: "Good works are those which we do when God's spirit is working within us, through true faith…." (907). Indeed, obeying the Ten Commandments is inferior to having faith in God: "therefore it is congruency with faith, not with the Decalogue, that must be deemed the form of good works" (ibid). Thus the author of the *De Doctrina* is consistent with St. Paul's focus on faith, not good works, but definitely heterodox in his mortalism (the soul dies with the body), anti-trinitarianism, and defense of polygamy.

In short, the *De Doctrina* is a learned and heterodox work, which may or may not have been authored by Milton. Since some of these views could result in one's being burned at the stake, one wonders why Milton would have given voice to them, during one of his darkest hours, "fall'n on evil days . . . In darkness, and with dangers compassed round" (*Paradise Lost* 7, 25, 27).

Stanley Fish. *Versions of Antihumanism: Milton and Others.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012. ix + 289 pp. $90.00. Review by ANGELICA DURAN, PURDUE UNIVERSITY.

Stanley Fish's *Versions of Antihumanism: Milton and Others* is a collection of nine previously-published essays, three new ones (four, counting the Introduction) on Milton (seven essays), and essays on other authors and topics in early modern literature. The essays cumulate to support the "intentional thesis," which avers that "the answer to the very old question, 'What is the meaning of a text?' is: A text means that its author or authors intend,' period" (1). His book-long answer, in which he discusses primary texts and contemporary literary and cultural criticism, provides welcome critical insights and in some cases opportunities for readers to investigate the critical moorings that they possess and that account for their disagreements with some of his arguments and statements.

Readers familiar with and convinced by Fish's critical arguments might determine it apt to read the whole of the volume in order. After all, Fish has repeatedly argued that precise reproduction is impossible, perhaps most memorably in *Is There a Text in This Class?* (1980). In response to Stephen Booth's claim that he does not intentionally interpret Shakespeare's sonnets but rather describes them in his award-winning *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (1977), which features 75 pages of facsimile copies of the original Quarto text of *Shake-speares Sonnets* (1609) and more than 400 pages of other textual apparatus, Fish avers that Booth's claim "is an impossible one since in order 'simply to present' the text, one must at the very least describe it ('I mean to describe them') and description can occur only within a stipulative understanding of what there is to be described, an understanding that