

assumption than it should; readers might have been better served early on had Pruitt carefully and overtly linked the sub-sections of evidence to be presented. She defines “relationship” inductively and accumulatively, an acceptable practice, but one which may cause the reader to hesitate before apprehending the overall movement of the argument. Finally, the book’s prose style, generally clear and readable, sometimes overindulges the scholarly affectation of beginning sentences in the analytical voice and syntax of the critic and completing them with lines from *Paradise Lost*. Though this affectation can enrich, or even entertain, it can also work as a sort of interpretive sleight-of-hand which nudges readers to agree with unstated conclusions. On the other hand, Pruitt’s style is also good enough on occasion to be delightfully quotable, for example, her reference to Satan’s “one-noon stand” with Eve (87) and her suggestion that “if Milton’s Eve is the ‘author . . . of transgression,’ his Adam is its licenser and publisher” (154).

Reid Barbour. *John Selden: Measures of the Holy Commonwealth in Seventeenth Century England*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2003. 384 pp. \$70.00. Review by ROBERT C. EVANS, AUBURN UNIVERSITY MONTGOMERY.

This study, its jacket flap notes, “is the first text in over a century to examine the whole of Selden’s works and thought.” That fact alone would make the book significant, but even more important is the further claim that “Reid Barbour brings a new perspective to Selden studies by stressing Selden’s strong commitment to a ‘religious society,’ by taking a closer and more sustained look at his poetic interests, and by systematically examining his Latin publications (particularly those using Jewish sources).” Barbour, the flap continues, “posits that the overriding aim of Selden’s career was to bolster religious society in the face of its imminent demise. He argues that Selden’s scholarly career was committed to resolving an essentially religious question about how best to establish the holy commonwealth in both lawfulness and spiritual abundance.” In academic publishing, at least, there is still truth in

advertising: Barbour's lengthy book does all these things in extensive detail.

Barbour demonstrates a commanding familiarity with every aspect of Selden's writings and career; he seems to have read, and thought seriously about, everything Selden wrote and said, and his book is especially useful for the copious overview it provides of Selden's even more copious texts. Barbour places each of Selden's writings within contexts both immediate and broad, and he helpfully relates Selden to an enormous range of other writers, including Bacon, Jonson, Milton, and many others, both English and Continental, both of the Renaissance and of ages past. He explains the debates in which Selden participated, the historical events in which he was caught up, the reactions (sometimes admiring, sometimes negative) of contemporary readers, and the varied assessments and interpretations offered by Selden scholars from the time of Selden's death down to the present day. He is especially at pains to refute the common view that Selden was a secularist; he shows instead that Selden took religion extremely seriously and indeed spent a lifetime meditating on how to construct or recover a healthy home for the spiritual impulse in a well-ordered society.

Barbour knows his Selden so well that he can constantly shuttle back and forth between one text and another, showing how the concerns that seem to predominate in one phase of Selden's life are linked to similar concerns in other phases. In general, though, his book exhibits a loosely chronological structure, so that a reader has a sense of how Selden's thinking developed in response to the specific issues he faced in particular moments of his career. And, just as Barbour knows his Selden well, so he also shows an easy grasp of the work of other modern scholars. He cites them generously, and his occasional debates with them are always civil. His book, indeed, seems written primarily for an audience of readers who are already fairly familiar with the terrain he covers; this is definitely not a book aimed at undergraduates (unless they happen to be unusually well informed!). Anyone seriously interested in Selden, however, will find it indispensable.

The book is well indexed (the index includes topics as well as names) and, in typical Toronto fashion, is very handsomely produced. It should appeal to anyone with a genuine interest in the intellectual and religious history of seventeenth-century England and should, after a century or more of relative neglect, help give the author of *Table Talk* a central place at the table once more.

Juliet Cummins, ed. *Milton and the Ends of Time*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003. x + 254 pp. + 5 illus. \$55.00. Review by ELIZABETH SKERPAN-WHEELER, TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY.

In recent years, scholars of seventeenth-century England have revived interest in the idea that the Revolution of the Saints was exactly that: a movement fusing politics and the belief in the millennium, understood as the imminent, temporal reign of the saints with Christ. Orthodox Christianity traditionally followed St. Augustine in interpreting the millennium as the thousand-year “*spiritual* reign of Christ and his saints from the time of Christ’s resurrection until the rising of Antichrist” (2, emphasis added) mentioned in Revelation 20:4. In the early seventeenth century, however, the passage came to be taken literally. This vision, of course, had profound implications for political thought, expression, and action in the mid-century, in particular for the work of John Milton. “Milton and the Millennium” was the main theme of the Sixth International Milton Symposium, held in York in 1999. Expanded versions of several papers from that symposium, together with several others, are collected in *Milton and the Ends of Time*. Editor Juliet Cummins has assembled twelve essays, six addressing the millennium and six the related idea of apocalypse. Although the quality of the essays is uneven, nevertheless the anthology contains enough learned and stimulating contributions to make it important reading for any student of the period.

Two essays by senior scholars stand out among those in the section devoted to the millennium: Stella P. Revard’s “Milton and Millenarianism: From the Nativity Ode to *Paradise Regained*” and