

**GIVING AND THANKSGIVING:
GRATITUDE AND *ADIAPHORA* IN *A MASK AND PARADISE*
*REGAINED***

A Thesis

by

JULIE NICOLE NEWBERRY

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

August 2011

Major Subject: English

Giving and Thanksgiving: Gratitude and *Adiaphora* in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Giving and Thanksgiving: Gratitude and *Adiaphora* in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*.

(August 2011)

Julie Nicole Newberry, B.A., Biola University

Chair of Advisory Committee: Dr. Nandra Perry

John Milton begins his *Second Defence of the English People* by stressing the universal importance of gratitude: “In the whole life and estate of man the first duty is to be grateful to God.” Peter Medine has shown the prominence of gratitude in *Paradise Lost*, but scholars have not fully appreciated the role of this virtue elsewhere in Milton’s writing. This thesis is an attempt to redress that oversight with reference to *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*, while also answering a question that Medine raises but does not satisfactorily resolve: Why gratitude? Both texts have been read as responses to the early modern debate about the doctrine of things indifferent, or *adiaphora*, and I argue that this context helps explain Milton’s interest in gratitude. The first section of this thesis accordingly reviews the historical and theological context of the *adiaphora* controversy, while the second examines Milton’s more direct treatment of things indifferent and gratitude, primarily in *De Doctrina Christiana*. In the remaining sections, historical and literary analysis of *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* illuminates how Milton addresses tensions in the doctrine of things indifferent by emphasizing gratitude.

Of the commonly recognized criteria for directing the use of *adiaphora*—the rule of faith, the rule of charity, and the glorification of God, often through gratitude—gratitude toward God frequently receives less thorough attention, yet Milton gives it a prominent role in *A Mask* and allows it to overshadow the other guidelines in *Paradise Regained*. Although gratitude is itself sometimes subject to manipulation in these texts, both *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* suggest that the requirement of God-ward gratitude can serve as a check against subtle distortions of the other guidelines. The effectiveness of this strategy stems from the fact that the vices gratitude guards against—self-indulgent ingratitude, stoical ingratitude, and idolatry—are the vices that underlie licentiousness and superstition, the primary abuses of the doctrine of things indifferent. Milton’s privileging of gratitude thus provides a way of cross-checking appeals to the more contested criteria of faith and love, protecting the doctrine of things indifferent from perversions that would undermine Christian liberty.

DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my committee chair, Dr. Nandra Perry. From my first visit to Texas A&M as a prospective graduate student to the final days of writing my thesis, she has been a great blessing in my life. Both as my adviser and in the classroom, she modeled for me the careful and deep thinking that make for scholarship that means something. Despite her own pressing responsibilities as a scholar, a teacher, a wife, and a mother, she patiently walked with me through times of darkness and confusion and helped me to see my path. Words cannot express how grateful I am to God for bringing her into my life, but I hope to honor her example as I go forward on my journey. Thank you, Dr. Perry, for helping me have the courage to take the next step.

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I am grateful to my father for his support, to my mother for her patient listening and her faithful prayers on my behalf, to my brother and sister for their tolerance and love, and to my grandmother for all that she has been and is to our family. Most of all, I am thankful to God for the many blessings, often unexpected, that have marked my time here at Texas A&M and pointed out my path forward.

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1. INTRODUCTION: MILTON AND GRATITUDE

Physical and familial trials notwithstanding, Milton foregrounds gratitude in the opening lines of his *Second Defence of the English People* (1654), portraying it as a virtue of universal importance: “In the whole life and estate of man the first duty is to be grateful to God and mindful of his blessings” (qtd. in Medine 117; Fenton 165). Despite additional, political trials after the Restoration, Milton also assigns an important role to gratitude in his epics, as Peter Medine argues with reference to *Paradise Lost*.¹ Gratitude has been largely overlooked in Milton’s other literary texts, but its place in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* attests to a life-long engagement with this virtue, further confirmed by its multiple appearances in *De Doctrina Christiana*. Clearly, as Medine comments, Milton has a “remarkable . . . fascination” with gratitude (119)—but why?

At least in the case of *A Mask* (1634) and *Paradise Regained* (1671), Milton’s interest in this virtue appears to be bound up with his concern for the highly contentious doctrine of things indifferent, or *adiaphora*. Of the commonly recognized criteria for

This thesis follows the style of the *MLA Style Manual and Guide to Scholarly Writing*, 3rd edition.

¹ To my knowledge, Medine’s is the only extensive study of the role of gratitude and ingratitude in any of Milton’s longer texts, but others have recognized the issue in passing. For example, Fenton discusses gratitude and Satan’s ingratitude in the context of land rights (164-65), and she notes that, in Book 11 of *Paradise Lost*, “Michael reminds Adam that with possession of the ‘gift’ comes the duty to recognize the value of the gift, which in turn should incite gratitude” (171, 170). Schwartz also comments, “Gratitude for the bounty of Paradise comprises the heart of the liturgy an Adam and Eve’s evening prayer” (46), and her observations on charity and scarcity as interpretive principles are relevant to the opposition of gratitude and ingratitude (45-50, *passim*). Kean makes passing reference to the importance of “thanksgiving for [the Lord’s] many gifts” in her discussion of Jesus’s allusions to Deuteronomy in *Paradise Regained* (439). Kean also notes that an “angelic song of thanksgiving” connects with several other Miltonic texts (433).

directing the use of *adiaphora*—the rule of faith, the rule of charity, and the glorification of God, often through gratitude—gratitude toward God frequently receives less thorough attention, yet Milton gives it a prominent role in *A Mask* and allows it to overshadow the other guidelines in *Paradise Regained*. Although gratitude is itself sometimes subject to manipulation in these texts, both *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* suggest that the requirement of God-ward gratitude can serve as a check against subtle distortions of the other guidelines. As will be seen, the reason this strategy works so well is that the very vices that gratitude guards against—self-indulgent ingratitude, stoical ingratitude, and idolatry—are the vices that underlie licentiousness and superstition, the primary abuses of the doctrine of things indifferent. Milton’s privileging of gratitude thus provides a way of cross-checking appeals to the more contested criteria of faith and love, helping to protect the doctrine of things indifferent from perversions that would undermine Christian liberty.

2. ADIAPHORISM IN EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

2.1 Introduction

Before turning to *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*, reviewing the *adiaphora* debate in early modern England will help to contextualize Milton's treatment of the standard criteria for using things indifferent. At its simplest, the doctrine of things indifferent states that there are some things (objects, beliefs, or behaviors) that, in themselves, are neither good nor bad.² As a subcategory of the doctrine of Christian liberty (Calvin 3.19; Milton, *De Doctrina* 537), the doctrine of things indifferent has obvious appeal for Milton. In the form he adopts, adiaphorism privileges individual conscience over external forms of authority, and in any form, it seeks to prevent both superstition and licentiousness, recurring concerns in Milton's work. However, the interpretation and application of this doctrine remained highly contested in early modern England, and Milton's literary treatments of adiaphorism can be best understood as a response to this controversy.

Historically, adiaphorism has taken several forms, but its particular shape in early modern England reflects the double origins of this doctrine in Greek philosophy and Christian theology. According to Bernard J. Verkamp, the doctrine of things indifferent finds its earliest expression in the teachings of the Cynics and Stoics (20-21, *cf.* Fish, *How Milton* 365).³ Because the Cynics "interioriz[ed] 'virtue' or 'right reason' to the

² Several scholars make this point; see, for example, Kahn ("Revising" 540-41; *cf.* "Allegory" 129), and Verkamp (*passim*).

³ It may not be coincidental that these the only two philosophical schools explicitly mentioned in both *A Mask* (lines 707-08) and that Satan offers Stoicism as a particularly crafty temptation in *Paradise Regained* (4.280), as will be discussed below.

point of almost total identity with the self,” they viewed everything outside the self as “ha[ving] neither value nor disvalue” and accordingly “designated . . . all externals” as “*adiaphora*, or literally, ‘things that make no difference’” (Verkamp 20-21). In contrast, the Stoics did *not* believe that “*adiaphora* were altogether lacking in value or disvalue”—only that a person’s “interior disposition” in using a given thing would override any inherent value or disvalue (Verkamp 21). Thus, “the *adiaphoron* was a thing or action which when considered in itself—i.e., according to its nature—could become either good or evil” (21).⁴ In its Christian form, adiaphorism has traditionally been more limited in scope (Verkamp 22-23; cf. Fish, *How Milton* 365-66). The word “*adiaphora*” is absent from the Bible, but early Christian theologians such as Origen and Clement of Alexandria borrowed the term to explain New Testament passages “about the Christian’s freedom of choice regarding food, drinks, and similar matters” (Verkamp 25, 22).

Though it was clearly no new doctrine, adiaphorism became newly relevant for reformers, in England and elsewhere, who needed a guide for navigating the conflicts that arose with the Reformation (Verkamp 14-15). In fact, Verkamp argues that the doctrine of things indifferent “lie[s] at the very center of [early reformers’] thinking, profoundly affecting almost every move they made” (xv). The practical ramifications of this doctrine vary, however, depending on how one defines things indifferent. Some

⁴ I depart here from Fish’s summary of the classical origins of adiaphorism. Although he references Verkamp’s study, Fish appears to inadvertently conflate the Cynic and Stoic position:

The first and stronger version [of adiaphorism] originates with the Stoics, who identify virtue with the self and believe that self to be sufficient. Consequently all things acquire value only in relation to an inner disposition or intention. Thus, the entire external world of the stoics is a mass of *adiaphora*, which, depending on the circumstances, ‘could become either good or evil.’” (*How Milton* 365).

radical reformers deemed “indifferent” only those things specifically permitted by Scripture, while a more moderate group held that “positive accord with the general directions of Scripture” would suffice to make a thing indifferent (Verkamp 76, *passim*).⁵ Still others maintained that anything not commanded or forbidden by Scripture was thereby indifferent, so that only the use of *adiaphora* (not their status as *adiaphora*) was dictated by general Scriptural principles (Verkamp 76, *passim*). Taking this view, the Canons of 1640 describe *adiaphora* as something “of its own nature indifferent, neither commanded nor condemned by the Word of God, either expressly, or by immediate deduction” (qtd. in Caldwell 97; *cf.* Shagan 505; Verkamp 76-77).

For all three of these positions, indifference is determined, in one way or another, by what the Bible does or does not say. However, a few adiaphorists relied more on philosophical categories for their definition of indifference. William Bradshaw, for instance, interprets indifference as a mean position between extremes in *A Treatise of the Nature and Use of Things Indifferent* (1608) (1-4, 11; *cf.* Fullwood 1, 30). This approach is complicated with regard to moral indifference, though; evil would need to exist in order for it to be one of the extremes between which morally indifferent things lie, but many early moderns deny the positive existence of evil (Bradshaw 11; Brooke 21). In his *Discourse on Opening the Nature of Episcopacy* (1641),⁶ Robert Greville, Lord Brooke resolves this difficulty by claiming that things are indifferent only in the human mind:

⁵ Verkamp comments that, in practice, the more moderate often gave the “general directives of Scripture” such a “narrow interpretation” that they “in effect recognized no wider a realm of *adiaphora* than did the strict biblical reductionists” (Verkamp 76, *cf.* 70-71).

⁶ Caldwell note that Milton praises this text in *Areopagitica* for its temperate call for tolerance of non-conformists (Caldwell 102-03).

all the *Indifference* (in the world) lyes in our Understandings, and the Darknesse thereof (which makes them wavering sometimes, and doubtfull whether to doe or not, so that in Them seemes some *Indifference* to either extreme) but there is none in the things themselves, or Actions; which are still either *unlawfull*, or *necessary* (if Lawfull, at this time in these Circumstances;) never *Indifferent* in Themselves. (29; cf. Caldwell 106)

Things are merely *called* indifferent because of their “seeming *equality of Use*,” but in fact one of two options will always be better, and one is morally obligated to choose the best (Brooke 22, 23-25; cf. Caldwell 105). Since an individual might fail to see the moral quality of any particular thing or action, Brooke’s view leads to the conclusion that everything is (at least potentially) indifferent for this or that person—even though nothing is actually indifferent, in itself.⁷

Whatever “things” are counted as indifferent—whether this includes *everything* or only those things permitted or left unregulated by Scripture—most writers agree that *adiaphora* retain their indifference only when “[c]onsidered nakedly without respect to such *Circumstances* as change their property, and *denominate* them *good* or *evil*”

⁷ Brooke’s views are often cited in studies of Milton’s adiaphorism, presumably because Milton’s internalization of Scripture also leads to a version of adiaphorism that encompasses everything and emphasizes the convictions of individuals. However, these similarities should not obscure significant differences in Brooke’s and Milton’s view of things indifferent. Milton’s adiaphorism will be discussed at length below, but it is worth pointing out a few distinctions at this point. Milton bases his adiaphorism on his understanding of the doctrine of Christian liberty, not on philosophical concerns about the nature of evil. Moreover, contrary to what is sometimes implied, Milton’s adiaphorism does not lead to the conclusion that one is morally obligated to discover and choose the (one and only) best option in every case, as is required in Brooke’s more philosophical brand of adiaphorism. As will be seen, I differ in this point from Fish’s reading of Milton’s adiaphorism. See also Caldwell (102-07), Kahn (“Revising” 545-47), and Fish (*How Milton* 368) for a discussion of Brooke’s view; Kahn also treats Bradshaw’s position (*Machiavellian* 143, 145; “Revising” 526).

(Fullwood 2).⁸ As John Tombes puts it in *Christs Commination against Scandalizers* (1641), “many”—and some would say all—“actions of men *in the generall*, . . . considered without restraint of particularizing circumstances afore they are . . . *actually done* are indifferent” (174). However, Tombes adds, “all humane actions . . . in the particular or singular, that flowe from deliberate reason are either morally good, or evill, as agreeing to, or dis[a]greeing from Gods law” (Tombes 174).⁹ By “all,” Tombes means *all*, everything done intentionally (“from deliberate reason”) (174). Even actions as seemingly neutral as “every act of eating, or wearing apparel, or going a journey with this or that intent, in this or that manner” are always morally charged in practice (Tombes 176); one or more of the clear commands or general principles from Scripture will apply to any particular context of use.

2.2 Authority and *Adiaphora*

As Tombes’s comment indicates, the doctrine of things indifferent can be applied to the use of any indifferent thing—a broad approach that Milton takes up in *Paradise Regained* and in several of his political prose texts.¹⁰ In early modern England, though,

⁸ See also Tombes (172). There is some difference of opinion as to whether any circumstances or only some sorts of circumstances will render an *adiaphora* no longer indifferent in practice, but this distinction is not crucial for the present study. See Fish (*How Milton* 368); Kahn (“Revising” 543). Since it is generally agreed that Milton took an expansive view, according to an *adiaphoron* loses its indifference under any particular circumstances of use, I will focus my analysis on this brand of adiaphorism.

⁹ Similarly, Brooke argues that the proper use of things indifferent must be determined by “every *Morall circumstance*, of time, place, &c. [must] rightly concur” (qtd. in Caldwell 105). On a related note, William Bradshaw claims that nothing can be so “absolutely Indifferent . . . but by some circumstance of time, place, person, use: it may be either very good, or very evill” (Bradshaw 16, marginal note b; qtd. in Kahn, “Revising” 546; cf. Fish, *How Milton* 366–68). Writing in 1641, Tombes reports that a few writers had actually espoused the view that “there is nothing indifferent” ever or at all, but such extreme claims “either hath beene retracted by the author, or conceive so absurd that it hath had either none of very few followers” (Tombes 173).

¹⁰ For instance, Stanley Fish argues that Milton’s *Apology* portrays literary style as a thing indifferent, to be governed by the Christian’s internal sense of what is charitable—even if the result may seem, “by conventional standards, ‘not so mannerly to use’” (Fish, *How Milton* 136, 135). In a famous passage of

debates about this doctrine frequently centered on ecclesiastical questions about issues such as the use of ceremonies in worship (Verkamp 36) or the regulation of recreation on Sabbaths and religious holidays—a category of *adiaphora* that Milton addresses in *A Mask* (Marcus, *Politics* 169-212).¹¹ The controversial nature of ecclesiastical control over things indifferent is conveniently illustrated by the instability of Article 20 in the Thirty-Nine Articles. At the beginning of Elizabeth I’s reign, Article 20 merely required the church to “not ordain anything ‘contrary to God’s word written’” (Caldwell 99). By 1571, this had become a “positive law” (Caldwell 99), stating that “the Church” had “power to decree rites or ceremonies, and authority in controversies of faith” (Article 20, qtd. in Caldwell 99). Caldwell comments that “this alteration in the article mysteriously appeared and vanished from the printed page throughout the reign of Elizabeth” (99),

Areopagitica (1644), Milton invokes the doctrine of things indifferent to account for Truth’s various appearances and to encourage tolerance regarding the use of a wide range of *adiaphora*:

Yet is it not impossible that [Truth] may have more shapes than one. What else is all that rank of things indifferent, wherein Truth may be on this side, or on the other, without being unlike herself. What . . . great purchase is this Christian liberty, which *Paul* so often boasts of. His doctrine is, that he who eats or eats not, regards a day, or regards it not, may doe either to the Lord. How many other things might be tolerated in peace, and left to conscience, had we but charity, and were it not the chief strong hold of our hypocrisie to be ever judging one another. I fear yet this iron yoke of outward conformity hath left a slavish print upon our necks . . . (Milton, *Areopagitica* 1022).

This particular passage touches on many key issues in the general *adiaphora* debate, but Fish argues that *Areopagitica* as a whole also applies the concept of indifference specifically “to the act of reading,” so that “books become things indifferent, neither good nor bad in themselves, but good *or* bad depending on whether they are well or ill used” (Fish, *How Milton* 368, 195-203). Kahn makes a similar argument (*Machiavellian* 174). Another example of writing on *adiaphora* that extends its focus beyond ecclesiastical controversies is the future James I’s *Basilikon Doron* (1599). In the third book of this text, James offers his son guidelines for the kingly use of “indifferent things”—by which he means all sorts of earthly goods, from food to recreation (121). Kahn discusses *Basilikon Doron* from a rhetorical perspective (*Machiavellian* 142-43; “Revising” 544, n35), but contrary to the impression that her study might give, James’s focus seems to be more on a king’s *own* use of *adiaphora*, rather than his authority over how his subjects use things indifferent.

¹¹ Of course, several of Milton’s political prose texts also address various aspects of the ecclesiastical *adiaphora* controversy. *Of Reformation* (1641) is an obvious example; Kahn has also noted references to things indifferent in *A Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes* (1659) (*Machiavellian* 181).

suggesting that the regulation of the use of things indifferent remained a highly contested issue.

In part, the intensity of the debate reflects the fact that adiaphorism raises questions with important implications for political and ecclesiastical authority and for individual Christians' liberty¹²—questions such as: Who has the right to decide which things are not governed by Scripture or what course of action is required by present circumstances? What are the biblical standards that should be used to guide the use of *adiaphora*? How (and by whom) should these standards be interpreted and applied?¹³ Intensifying the debate, writers on both sides of the *adiaphora* controversy express anxiety that giving the wrong answers to these questions may cause spiritual, ecclesiastical, and political harm to individuals, the nation, and the church.¹⁴

At the heart of the debate is the question of what individuals should do if they cannot in good conscience comply with royal or ecclesiastical mandates requiring the use (or non-use) of *adiaphora*. Freedom in the use of things indifferent is generally

¹² In a sense, the debate regarding *adiaphora* in the church is a contest between competing authorities, with contenders including individual conscience, right reason, royal mandates, and ecclesiastical hierarchy and tradition. To cite a few examples of suggested authorities: Fullwood, referencing Clapham, suggests that *adiaphora* should be used in accord with general Biblical rules and "Christian Reason" (Fullwood 31); Tombes mentions Scripture, reason (167), and "true prudence" (168). On Brooke's appeal to "right reason," see Caldwell (104, *passim*) and Kahn ("Revising" 546). Bagshaw (2) and Tombes (168) both cite prudence as necessary for the application of general Scriptural principles to particular circumstances. The relative authority of civil and ecclesiastical authorities is discussed by Verkamp (41-42, 143-44, 168, *passim*), Kahn (*Machiavellian*, *passim*), Clark (23-24, 24 marginal note a, 34-35), and Calvin (3.19.15). See also Kahn ("Allegory" 129; "Revising" 543-44), Fish (*How Milton* 367, *passim*), and Caldwell (*passim*).

¹³ One or more of these and related questions have been raised by scholars such as Verkamp (61; *cf.* 29); Kahn ("Revising" 548); Shagan (506).

¹⁴ As Kahn observes, "[t]he doctrine [of things indifferent] is . . . a touchstone in Tudor-Stuart discussions of sovereignty, royal prerogative, and freedom of conscience," among other issues (Kahn, "Allegory" 129; *Machiavellian* 144). Caldwell also argues that adiaphorism might provoke crises in moral epistemology (101) and with regard to "the validity of man-made moral law" (97).

recognized to be but one part of the broader doctrine of Christian liberty (Calvin 3.19),¹⁵ and pro-conformist writers could use adiaphorism's relative unimportance as leverage—as when John Racster privileges obedience to authorities over what is, after all, “the last and leaste of all” the components of Christian liberty (55). According to some, as long as Christians retained internal awareness of their liberty, they could obediently conform to regulations covering things indifferent, without thereby endangering their Christian liberty (Calvin 3.19.9-10, 4.10.31).¹⁶ For others, however, quite the opposite is true. In fact, Edward Bagshaw argues, in *The Great Question regarding Things Indifferent in Religious Worship* (1660), that *adiaphora* may be used only if they are *not* required. Once ceremonies become “*Necessary*, then the thing so imposed presently loses not its *Liberty* only, but likewise its *Lawfulness*,” lest Christian liberty be subverted (Bagshaw 10).¹⁷ With some adiaphorists advocating complete external obedience and others calling for a rejection of regulations covering things indifferent, it is easy to see how the *adiaphora* controversy could leave pious individuals in a moral quandary.

¹⁵ In Calvin's discussion of Christian liberty, for example, the use of *adiaphora* comes after two other, more theologically crucial expressions of freedom in Christ: the believer's freedom from the obligation to earn righteousness through the law and the believer's freedom to *willingly* obey God, with filial rather than servile obedience (3.19; cf. Kahn, “Revising” 540-41). Milton's description of Christian liberty in *De Doctrina* also includes much more than freedom in the use of things indifferent (*De Doctrina* 535).

¹⁶ Clark also reports this view, though he rejects it (20-21). It should be noted that Calvin offers arguments for *both* sides of this debate. Internalizing the essence of Christian liberty, Calvin argues that as long as Christians have a firm understanding of the fact that they *are* free to use or not use indifferent things, their freedom is not imperiled even if they in fact do not use a given *adiaphoron* (3.19.10). However, Calvin concedes that “it is sometimes also of consequence that we should assert our liberty before men” (3.19.10).

¹⁷ To cite a somewhat later example, in *Of Scandal* (1680), Samuel Clark argues that “*Christian Liberty* extends to the *Practice*” (21); whether or not the believer retains an internal conviction of his or her Christian liberty, this liberty is threatened when the use of *adiaphora* is regulated without any sound biblical reason (Clark 22-23, cf. 53-55).

Lord Brooke offers a more moderate position, but it, too, can lead to moral crises.¹⁸ Based on his subjective conception of indifference (29), discussed above, Brooke does not believe that the church can actually make anything indifferent for anyone (30). Nevertheless, he grants that the church can decide the question of which of two alternatives is best, at least in cases that are generally considered indifferent (30-31).¹⁹ Brooke predicts that it will usually be possible to reach agreement if everyone simply follows his plan to let “right reason” be their guide, but he also recognizes the possibility of enduring scruples (32). He advises individuals who disagree with the church’s decision in such matters not to cause a schism, but Brooke also instructs them to refrain from performing active obedience until (or unless) right reason guides them to the church’s conclusion (32). In fact, he states that acting without the authorization of right reason would *automatically* be sinful (32, 26-27). Taken to extremes, this fairly conciliatory approach to conflict between the church and individual conscience could inadvertently lead to immobilizing indecision for individual believers—much like what the Lady experiences in *A Mask*.

2.3 *Adiaphora* Abused: Superstition, License, and Idolatry

Indeed, on all sides of this controversy, the debate is partly fueled by fear. Christians who fail to properly understand and apply the doctrine of things indifferent are susceptible to the twin perils of superstition and licentiousness in their use of *adiaphora* (Calvin 3.19; cf. Kahn, “Revising” 541-42). Moreover, both superstition and

¹⁸ See Caldwell for an analysis of the implications of adiaphorism for moral epistemology, including with particular reference to Brooke’s position (*passim*).

¹⁹ Brooke clarifies that when he allocates this authority to the church, he refers to *all members* of the church—not particular individuals in the church hierarchy (Brooke 32).

license can lead to the further sin of idolatry. Properly understood, the doctrine of things indifferent should prevent these vices, but each side of the debate worried that its opponents' position would lead to one or more forms of abuse in the use of *adiaphora*.

If Christians eager to obey authorities fail to recognize and embrace their freedom in things indifferent, for instance, they may use (or not use) them as if doing so were *necessary*—a mistake, Frances Fullwood says, “which Divines assert to be *Superstition*” (46; *cf.* Shagan 506; Fish, *How Milton*, *passim*). This sort of abuse of things indifferent is a particularly pressing concern when it comes to ceremonies still associated with pre-Reformation worship practices (Verkamp 163; *cf.* Calvin 4.10.32). Accordingly, Bagshaw writes that it is “utterly unlawfull for any Christian Magistrate to *require* the use of” ceremonies that, though they would usually be indifferent, have become tainted with superstition through custom (2).

Beneath such objections to particular ceremonies, however, there lies a deeper fear that accepting the imposition of one “necessary” ceremony will lead down a slippery slope to more pervasive superstition. As Calvin explains,

when once the conscience is entangled in the net, it enters a long and inextricable labyrinth, from which it is afterwards most difficult to escape. When a man begins to doubt whether it is lawful for him to use linen for sheets, shirts, napkins, and handkerchiefs, he will not long be secure as to hemp, and will at last have doubts as to tow; for he will revolve in his mind whether he cannot sup without napkins, or dispense with handkerchiefs. Should he deem a daintier food unlawful, he will

afterwards feel uneasy for using loafbread and common eatables, because he will think that his body might possibly be supported on a still meaner food. . . . In fine, he will come to this, that he will deem it criminal to trample on a straw lying in his way. (3.19.7)

Such incessant self-questioning shackles the believer, recalling the Lady's fettered state in *A Mask* (line 819). As long as superstitious beliefs govern the use of *adiaphora*, there can be no experience of Christian liberty because, as Calvin writes, "[w]hen men are involved in such doubts whatever be the direction in which they turn, every thing they see must offend their conscience" (3.19.7).²⁰

Superstition regarding things indifferent takes several forms and often leads to additional forms of abuse. It can be either active or passive; as Fish points out, Milton is deeply concerned with the two-fold "danger of too narrowly identifying the proper stance either with an action one must perform or with an action from which one must refrain" (Fish, *How Milton* 132-33, 192). Both sorts of superstition can devolve into theological despair and/or the frustrated rejection of all restraint, transforming superstition into license (*cf.* Calvin 3.19.7). Superstition also foments idolatry, as humans seek to control their circumstances through the use or non-use of external forms, rather than trusting God to give them good things. As will be seen, the danger of

²⁰ Of course, the blame does not lie wholly on the superstitious believer who stumbles over rules governing things indifferent. The authorities whose commands provoke such idolatrous superstition are severely criticized by writers such as Tombes. In his view, these authority figures "put on [Christians'] neckes that yoke that Christ hath freed us from" (Tombes 178)—a freedom purchased, Calvin points out, at a no less a price than Christ's own death (Calvin 3.19.14). Milton makes similarly severe comments about those who restrict Christian liberty: So closely linked are the gospel and Christian liberty that "[i]f a magistrate takes this freedom away he takes the gospel away too" (*De Doctrina* 541). Since "[e]very believer is ruled by the Spirit of God," imposing upon a believer's liberty, "whether . . . in the name of the church or of a Christian magistrate," in effect "plac[es] a yoke not only upon man but upon the Holy Spirit itself" (Milton, *De Doctrina* 590).

superstition and its byproducts plays a key role in the actions (and inaction) of Milton's characters in both *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* (cf. Fish, *How Milton*, *passim*).²¹

Of course, the opposite threat is that Christians will erroneously think they have a free pass to "licentiously abuse the good gifts of God" (Calvin 3.19.9; cf. Kahn "Revising" 541). Defenders of the regulation of *adiaphora* feared that allowing individual freedom in the use of things indifferent would lead to licentiousness and even antinomianism.²² Furthermore, this form of abuse also leads to idolatry, whether through the tacit worship of indifferent things or through an idolatrous devotion to their apparent, non-divine source. Either form of licentious idolatry is dehumanizing and enslaving, as Milton's *Mask* makes particularly clear.

2.4 Criteria for the Proper Use of *Adiaphora*: Faith, Love, and Gratitude

Hedged in by superstition on the one side and licentiousness on the other (cf. Shagan 506), how are Christians to navigate the use of things indifferent? Moral dilemmas resulting from the doctrine of things indifferent can become quite complex, as evident in the careful treatment of cases of conscience in texts such as Fullwood's *Some Necessary and Seasonable Cases of Conscience about Things Indifferent in Matters of Religion* (1661). To help with discernment—and justify their own conclusions—contributors to the *adiaphora* debate often offer criteria for the proper use of things

²¹ Milton discusses what might be called superstition in terms of idolatry in *Of Reformation*, complaining of "the new-vomited Paganisme" in church services "of sensuall Idolatry, attributing purity, or impurity, to things indifferent" (876).

²² See Fish (*How Milton* 353-4), Kahn ("Revising" 541; *Machiavellian* 136, 289), and Verkamp (115-16, 125, *passim*).

indifferent. Although their lists vary in specific content and length,²³ the principles they expound can generally be reduced to three main standards, each of them derived from relevant biblical passages: Christians' use of things indifferent should glorify God, show love to their neighbors, and be an expression of their own faith and clear conscience. Whatever their political and ecclesiastical inclinations, most writers appeal to one or more of these criteria to justify their conclusions about the use of things indifferent. As might be expected, however, the interpretation and application of these three principles vary in telling ways, particularly when it comes to the rule of charity. Closer consideration of the criteria for proper use will set the stage for analyzing the standards that inform Milton's treatment of *adiaphorism* in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*.

Based on passages such as Romans 14.23—"And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin"²⁴—one common requirement is that *adiaphora* be used in faith. In the context of Romans 14 and

²³ To give just a few examples: Bagshaw maintains that the use of *adiaphora* should be governed by "generall Precepts for the Use of them either way," precepts such as "Do all things to the glory of God, And, Do what makes most for edification, and the like" (2). Similarly but with an additional provision for proper self-love, Tombes argues that indifferent but potentially scandalous things should be done if (and only if) "according to true prudence they appeare to bee necessary for Gods glory, our owne salvation, or our brethrens good" (168). Racster notes that using *adiaphora* in ways that are "lawful, profitable, and edifying, is good law, policie and divinitie" (66-67), but he stresses that "both law and profite" should "be tempered by charitie" (67). Fullwood endorses Marlorate's suggestion that the church should follow Paul's example, who "confirmeth his *Traditions* by the *Word of God*, Reason, Edification, the Example of *Churches*, Decency, and Order" (33). Fullwood himself offers an extended discussion of "Rules of expediency, peace, offence of the weak, edification, decency, order, and the custome of the Churches" (46; cf. Shagan 508). Similarly complex, Clark reviews at least half a dozen types of circumstances that could render an otherwise indifferent thing (action, belief) problematic (46-48). Tombes also lists several ways in which *adiaphora* can become evil in practice, including when the use of them would violate "the command or prohibition of the Magistrate" (178) or when either one's own opinion or the conscience of others remains unsettled as to whether this *adiaphoron* is really indifferent (182-[1]83). Verkamp implies on several occasions that faith and love were the two main criteria for the proper use of things indifferent, at least for mainline reformers in the earlier sixteenth century (e.g., 70, 77).

²⁴ When not imbedded in the writing of early modern adiaphorists, all Bible passages are taken from the King James Version (1987).

the debate about things indifferent, acting in faith takes on a rather specific meaning, related to the personal convictions of those who are using (or not using) the *adiaphora* in question, especially their convictions about their freedom to use these things. Brooke thus claims that it is impossible to “Act in Faith,” if one still has “Doubts, or Scruples” about the action in question (32).²⁵ The difficulty with this criterion, of course, is that if taken alone it would seem to create an entirely subjective standard for the use of things indifferent, opening the door to any form of licentiousness, so long as one could claim to feel no compunction about it.

This makes the other criteria for proper use particularly important. The most commonly recognized, perhaps, is the rule of charity.²⁶ As Tombes explains, “[t]he same God that hath . . . given his people so ample a privilege, as leave to use of all indifferent things, hath thought good neverthesse to limit it by the law of charity” (205-06; cf. Verkamp 117; Calvin 3.19.11). This rule serves to restrain the use of *adiaphora* so that Christians’ freedom does not devolve into a licentiousness that would harm others.

²⁵ Brooke urges the scrupulous to seek to reason themselves to the church’s conclusion (32-33), but of course there is no guarantee that everyone ever will reach the authorized conclusions. Some writers advocate accommodating the scrupulous in such cases, but only until they have been properly educated about their Christian liberty (Verkamp 124). Those who persist in scrupulosity are eventually “accounted rather wilfull then weake, and therefore not to be regarded” (Tombes 234-35), since such “are not the weake ones of whom the Apostle speaks” (Tombes 224, cf. 223-25). Milton makes a similar distinction (*De Doctrina* 540-41) and also implies that genuine weakness ought to be a temporary state (539-40). He requires that, rather than “be[ing] over-hasty in judging the freedom of the strong,” the weak “should present themselves for instruction” (Milton, *De Doctrina* 541).

²⁶ This is also spoken of in terms of the edification of the church (cf. Verkamp 167), but the two are closely related. Calvin comments, “Charity is the best judge of what tends to hurt or to edify: if we allow her to be guide, all things will be safe” (4.10.30).

According to Verkamp, it was a perceived lack of charity that helped motivate the early modern revival of the doctrine of things indifferent (115). Erasmus and early reformers believed that Christians’ efforts to obey human traditions in the use of *adiaphora* had led them to neglect charity—or, at least, to “utterly confus[e] it with some trivial, moralistic scheme of works-righteousness” (Verkamp 115). They hoped that renewed emphasis on the doctrine of things indifferent would enable Christians to practice true charity more freely (Verkamp 115).

Unfortunately, since “the question of what charity means is . . . an interpretive one” (Fish, *How Milton* 246), it can be difficult to determine exactly how this rule applies to any particular context. Further complicating matters, the need for charity is two-fold. Verkamp explains, “In addition to consideration of the ‘weak,’ the ‘election’ and ‘doing’ of *adiaphora* in accordance with the rule of charity or edification also require[s] . . . a keen regard for the general welfare of all members of the Church” (167). Love must be shown to individual fellow believers by making appropriate accommodations for the “weak,” whose over-scrupulous consciences might be offended by one’s use of things indifferent; at the same time, one must also demonstrate Christian charity by promoting the wellbeing and growth of the church as a whole, an obligation often interpreted in terms of maintaining unity and peace.

The double aim of the rule of love is important because, by each emphasizing a different aspect of the rule of love, both sides of the *adiaphora* controversy could claim to be fulfilling this criterion.²⁷ For example, within the debate about worship ceremonies, those who wanted allowances for non-conformity complained that it would be uncharitable to require Christians to participate in ceremonies against their consciences—particularly when those ceremonies, though perhaps indifferent in themselves, remained closely associated with superstition and idolatry (Tombes 178). On the other hand, the opposing side worried that emphasizing Christians’ freedom in the use of things indifferent might lead to selfish licentiousness and antinomianism,

²⁷ Charity is the more common and explicitly Biblical criteria, but see also Shagan’s discussion of how both sides of the *adiaphora* debate could claim to promote moderation (506).

without any concern for others' good (Verkamp 115-16, *passim*).²⁸ From this perspective, ceremonies are imposed for the sake of preserving order and promoting the common good, and using the required forms of worship therefore becomes a demonstration of love for the church and commonwealth.²⁹

It is convenient to contrast these two perspectives as though they were completely distinct, but in practice it was often more rhetorically effective to argue both sides of the case—with telling qualifications attached to one or the other. For example, in his lengthy list of criteria for the proper use of *adiaphora*, Fullwood lays particular emphasis on both sides of the appeal to charity: “the great principle of all . . . impositions [regarding the use of things indifferent] must be *charity* and love to our Brethren” (42), while “the most noted Rule of all is that of the Apostle, *Let all things be done decently and in order*” (42-43). Fullwood effectively obviates the potential conflict between these standards by equating concern for the good of one's neighbor with concern for “the *Common good*” (Fullwood 32-33, referencing Rogers). Interpreted along these lines, the rule of charity would tend to privilege order and communal good over the convictions of conscientious objectors.

Predictably, the emphasis shifts in treatises about the danger of “scandalizing.” In scandalizing, “strong” Christians' use of things indifferent offends more scrupulous, “weak” Christians and potentially encourages (or, in the case of authorities, forces) the “weak” to follow suit in using the *adiaphora* in question. This is problematic because,

²⁸ See also Fish (*How Milton* 353-4) and Kahn (“Revising” 541; *Machiavellian* 136, 289).

²⁹ Moreover, it could also be argued that adhering to the mandated ceremonies also shows love for God, since it evinces obedience to him (Calvin 3.19.13) via submission to the authorities he has appointed.

for those with doubts about the “thing” in question, their use of it will automatically be sinful because not done “in faith.” John Tombes pronounces “a woe” on “them that scandalize others by abuse of their liberty in things lawfull *against charity*” (143, emphasis mine *cf.* 149). In his view, it is the scandalizer, not the scrupulous, who “hinder[s] the peace, that sweet peace that should bee between Christians that are members of the same body” (Tombes 153). Supporters of this position sometimes frame the rule of charity in terms of using (or not using) *adiaphora* in ways that will bring “edification” to other believers (e.g., Bagshaw 2). Indeed, for Clark, “*the Rule of Edification*” is the key to navigating “[t]he whole business of Scandal” (109), because edification is “the great end of all Church-matters” (Clark 109).

Clark’s comment provides an instructive contrast to Fullwood’s claim that concern for the good of one’s neighbor means looking out for “the *Common good*” (Fullwood 32-33, referencing Rogers). Those who favor institutional control of *adiaphora* expect individual believers to sacrifice strict adherence to their convictions out of charity toward the church and commonwealth. In contrast, those intent on protecting the consciences of individual Christians feel that charitable concern for the spiritual wellbeing of individuals should prevent the church and crown from hindering Christians’ freedom in the use of things indifferent. Each side makes a good case, as far as it goes, for how it fulfills the rule of charity, yet these two lines of reasoning lead to conflicting courses of action.³⁰ As a result, the rule of charity is perhaps the most

³⁰ See Fish for a discussion of how Milton’s tendency to internalize allows him to claim to promote order and privilege the individual conscience in his *Apology* (1642) (*How Milton* 126).

discussed and yet least helpful of the three criteria—a difficulty that Milton addresses in his reworking of the criteria for proper use in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*.

In large part, he does so through the third common criterion, which requires that *adiaphora* be used (or not used) to the glory of God. This criterion is relatively stable and straightforward. Samuel Rutherford concludes in his 1646 treatise that “*Gods glorie is the end that ruleth the use of Ceremonies, as they are indifferent*” (5); two decades after the Restoration, Samuel Clark similarly affirms that the end for which *adiaphora* are used must be “*the glory of God*” (47, referencing 1 Corinthians 10.31). Compared to love for one’s neighbors, adiaphorists evidently found the requirement of glorifying God to be fairly straightforward; at least, the brevity with which it is often treated suggests general agreement as to its basic interpretation.

When writers do expand on what glorifying God might look like in the use of things indifferent, they often explain this criterion in terms of thankfulness. This connection between gratitude and seeking God’s glory has clear Biblical roots in passages such as Romans 14.6, the end of which states that whoever “eateth, eateth *to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks*; and he that eateth not, *to the Lord* he eateth not, *and giveth God thanks*” (Romans 14:6, emphasis mine). Interpreting the third criterion for proper use as a requirement for gratitude also has other advantages as well. As will be discussed below with reference to Milton’s conception of gratitude, this virtue is particularly useful for guarding against superstition, licentiousness, and idolatry—the three main perversions of adiaphorism (*cf.* Calvin 3.10.3, 3.19.4).

2.5 Adiaphorism in Early Modern England: A Summary

For many writers in the *adiaphora* controversy, then, the use of things indifferent should be guided by the rules of faith and charity and the aim of glorifying God, perhaps especially through thankfulness. Properly interpreted and applied, these criteria guard against both licentiousness and superstition—either of which, as seen above, can lead to idolatry. However, the task of interpreting and applying these criteria is not always as straightforward as one might hope. The rule of faith may seem overly subjective, and the rule of charity is particularly open to debate—so contested, in fact, that both supporters of conformity and advocates of individual freedom can claim that their position best meets this criterion. As will be seen, Milton’s reworking of the three standard criteria in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* addresses this tension by foregrounding the requirement of gratitude, even as it also complicates the generally cursory treatments given to this third criterion.

3. ADIAPHORISM AND MILTON'S *DE DOCTRINA CHRISTIANA*

3.1 Milton, Authority, and the Criteria for Proper Use

As a context for analyzing these literary explorations of adiaphorism, it will be helpful to first review Milton's more direct treatment of the subject in relevant passages of *De Doctrina Christiana*.³¹ Given that adiaphorism is generally seen as a sub-doctrine under Christian liberty, Milton's discussion of Christian liberty provides a logical starting point:

CHRISTIAN LIBERTY means that CHRIST OUR LIBERATOR FREES US FROM THE SLAVERY OF SIN AND THUS FROM THE RULE OF THE LAW AND OF MEN, AS IF WE WERE EMANCIPATED SLAVES. HE DOES THIS SO THAT BEING MADE SONS INSTEAD OF SERVANTS AND GROWN MEN INSTEAD OF BOYS, WE MAY SERVE GOD IN CHARITY THROUGH THE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH (Milton, *De Doctrina* 537).

The first point of interest here is the locus of authority in Milton's conception of Christian liberty. In his view, believers are not obligated by the written law ("THE LAW") of Scripture, (*De Doctrina* 537). He means this in a comprehensive sense: in the discussion of the gospel that directly precedes his treatment of Christian liberty, Milton argues at length for the irrelevance of both the ceremonial *and* the moral law for the Christian believer (*De Doctrina* 525-536; cf. Fish, *How Milton* 324, 367). Likewise, he

³¹ In view of the extensive study performed by Gordon Campbell, Thomas N. Corns, John K. Hale, David I. Holmes, and Fiona J. Tweedie, I follow the current scholarly consensus in assuming that *De Doctrina Christiana* can in large part be attributed to Milton.

maintains that Christians are free from the dictates of human authorities (“MEN”) (*De Doctrina* 537). His explanation is particularly relevant to the controversies surrounding *adiaphora*: “we are freed from the judgments of men, and especially from coercion and legislation in religious matters” (*De Doctrina* 538). Underscoring the implications of Christian liberty for public policy, Milton argues against “magisterial ordinances which compel believers to uniformity or deprive them of any part of their freedom” (*De Doctrina* 541).³² Such interference is inappropriate, as he elsewhere explains, because every individual Christian is equipped with “the spirit” and with “the mind of Christ” and is therefore “entitled to interpret the Scripture . . . for himself” (*De Doctrina* 583). Indeed, Milton maintains that no one else’s interpretation of Scripture can benefit a believer “unless that [other] person’s interpretation coincides with the one he makes for himself and his own conscience” (*De Doctrina* 584, 583).

Clearly, Milton holds that it is up to the individual believer to figure out how to use Christian liberty, including with reference to *adiaphora*. If believers cannot simply follow the guidance of the moral law or human authorities, of course, this raises the question of how they are to discern the right course of action. In Stanley Fish’s view, Milton has no “set of criteria” for the use of things indifferent, since “by interiorizing the landscape of choice, he has detached it from the realm of empirical evidence” (*How*

³² Later, in his discussion of biblical hermeneutics, Milton clarifies that his point extends to both secular and religious leaders; “[n]o visible church, . . . let alone any magistrate, has the right to impose its own interpretations upon the consciences of men as matters of legal obligation, thus demanding implicit faith” (*De Doctrina* 584). However, it should be noted that Milton does acknowledge that rightful authorities may have some power to regulate *adiaphora* earlier in *De Doctrina*, during his discussion of prelapsarian providence (*De Doctrina* 353)—although he generally places much greater emphasis on the liberty of the individual Christian’s judgment.

Milton 477-78).³³ Fish is right to stress the difficulties caused by Milton's tendency to internalize standards of judgment, but his insight should be balanced against the recognition that Milton *does* invoke all three of the standard criteria for proper use.³⁴

³³ Although Fish frequently makes this point, it should perhaps be noted that he also allows that certain considerations do guide Jesus, including "whether [things'] use in particular circumstances advances or subverts God's glory" (*How Milton* 365).

³⁴ Fish argues that Milton believes the only obligation is always "to do God's will" (*How Milton* 484, *passim*), but as Fish himself recognizes, this is too broad to be of much practical help. After all, the "uncertainty" of Milton's protagonists "attaches not to the identification of the imperative—do God's will—but to the identification of the stance or course of action that is its local fulfillment" (Fish, *How Milton* 5). According to Fish, Milton simply does not offer any consistent standard for identifying what God's will is (*How Milton* 484, 500-01, *passim*), at least none that can be reliably verified. The only test for proper use is each individual's own, internal conviction about God's will for him or her (Fish, *How Milton* 477, *passim*). Unfortunately, no one can ever be sure that an alleged conviction of God's will is not merely self-interested self-deception. A believer's sense of what God wants may be guided by the inner light or spirit, but Fish does not believe that this can bring any certainty, since these promptings themselves cannot be empirically verified by those who feel them or by anyone else (Fish, *How Milton* 103, 501, 504). This emphasis on the difficulty of determining the proper course of action leads Fish to view Christian liberty as a doctrine that leads to "a moral life that is fraught with anxiety and danger" (*How Milton* 367). However, the anxiety Fish describes is antithetical to the very purpose of Christian liberty in general and adiaphorism in particular (*cf.* Silver 352, n32). Christian liberty would not be freeing unless it involved a real choice with multiple acceptable options. Indeed, Verkamp asserts that one of the main purposes of the doctrine of things indifferent "[lay] in calming men's consciences before God about the use or non-use of things indifferent" (165). Milton's own discussion of good works in *De Doctrina* offers a similar view. He acknowledges that "one work may be more perfect than another in matters where Christian liberty is exercised," as when Paul says that the one who marries "*does well*" and the one who does not "*does better*" (Milton, *De Doctrina* 644, quoting from 1 Cor. 7.38). Milton's "may" suggests that there may be other situations in which neither choice would be better than the other, but even when one is superior, one has a duty *but not* an obligation to choose what is best. The duty is bound up in glorifying God and loving one's neighbor: "there is nothing by which God's glory or our neighbor's instruction may most effectually be promoted which is not a matter of duty" (644). If one feels convicted that this course of action rather than that will advance God's glory and fellow humans' good, one has a duty to act accordingly—but this conviction does not necessarily create an obligation, in Milton's view. Milton cites examples of extraordinary expressions of love for others in the New Testament and concludes that these "singular proofs of love . . . arise from free choice rather than obligation," since "perfection is set before all men as a goal, but not all are required to reach it" (*De Doctrina* 644). For Milton, in other words, the Christian has a "duty" to choose the best option when using *adiaphora*, and this would be the way of perfection; however, the Christian who does not choose the best option in such cases has not violated his or her moral "obligation," because it is not actually expected that everyone will live up to what is best. This implies that, contrary to Fish's reading, Milton does actually conceive of Christian liberty as something that creates real choices among multiple goods—goods that, while not equal, may all be morally acceptable options for the Christian. See also Kahn's discussion of how Milton follows the Puritan argument "in enlarging the sphere of things indifferent and giving the individual conscience discretion in such matters" (*Machiavellian* 171) yet does *not* do so in order to support "the usual puritan position, according to which 'nothing is indifferent'" (Kahn, *Machiavellian* 174). Instead, Kahn argues, "indifference" *remains* "a matter of individual judgment" for Milton (*Machiavellian* 174). The individual is actually authorized to choose either option.

It could be argued that Milton alludes to all three of the common criteria in his definition of Christian liberty. Because of Christian liberty, believers “MAY SERVE GOD” (presumably for his glory) “IN CHARITY” (the rule of love), “THROUGH THE GUIDANCE OF THE SPIRIT OF TRUTH” (who inscribes the internal Scripture, the basis of the rule of faith, on believers’ hearts)³⁵ (Milton, *De Doctrina* 537). The same criteria are more explicitly stated in Milton’s description of good works. “GOOD WORKS,” he writes, “are those which WE DO WHEN THE SPIRIT OF GOD WORKS WITHIN US, THROUGH TRUE FAITH, TO GOD’S GLORY, THE CERTAIN HOPE OF OUR OWN SALVATION, AND THE INSTRUCTION OF OUR NEIGHBOR” (*De Doctrina* 638). Here the three criteria are clearly present: “THROUGH TRUE FAITH, TO GOD’S GLORY,” for our own assurance and our neighbor’s edification (638).

Given how variously these criteria can be interpreted—and how idiosyncratic Milton can sometimes be—it is important to clarify how he understands the rules of faith and love and the requirement of glorifying God. For Milton, acting “in faith” most basically means acting in accordance with one’s personal convictions, particularly convictions about one’s Christian liberty. He explains that “however we employ this [Christian] liberty of ours, we should act in firm faith, convinced that we are allowed to do so” (Milton, *De Doctrina* 539). The highly internalized nature of this conception of the rule of faith has prompted Fish to claim that “Milton’s thinking” has a “strongly antinomian cast” (*How Milton* 484). While there is some truth to this, it is also important to recognize the (admittedly, internalized) way in which Milton grounds this criterion.

³⁵ On this writing on the believer’s heart, see Milton, *De Doctrina* (587-90).

As he explains elsewhere in *De Doctrina*, the Christian's conviction must be based on Scripture (*De Doctrina* 587-90). To be more precise, conviction should be guided not by the external, communally interpreted Bible but rather by the internal writing of God by his Spirit on the heart of each believer (*De Doctrina* 587, 589-90).³⁶ Fish is quick to point out that there is no way to verify that this is happening; even if one's convictions about one's liberty are based on the internal Scripture, the rule of faith still appears purely subjective from the outside, and perhaps even to the believer himself or herself (*How Milton* 503). However, if one grants Milton's claims about the work of the Spirit—as he clearly expects his readers to do—then his concept of internal Scripture does anchor his version of the rule of faith, preventing a fall into antinomianism (*cf.* Woodhouse, qtd. in *De Doctrina* 531, n15).

Still, it is true that Milton's emphasis on inner judgment makes it difficult for the believer (much less anyone else) to feel confident that a conviction about his or her liberty in a given case accurately reflects the internal Scripture (Fish, *How Milton* 503). This is particularly unsettling when the believer's convictions seem to contradict human authorities or even the letter of the external Scripture. Such a conflict is possible because, though the internal and external Scriptures generally agree, "where particular commandments are concerned," sometimes "the spirit is at variance with the letter"

³⁶ Milton holds that Christians "have . . . a double scripture": "the external scripture of the written word" and "the internal scripture of the Holy Spirit which he, according to God's promise, has engraved upon the hearts of believers" (*De Doctrina* 587). As Fish suggests, this amounts to "decentering . . . Scripture as a self-sufficient and publicly available source of authority in favor of the internal authority of rightly constituted hearts" (*How Milton* 71). See also Schwartz's helpful analysis of Milton's belief in a double Scripture. She comments, "we have 'a double scripture', an external one and an internal one, and because the written one does not address many concerns and because it must be interpreted, 'all things are eventually to be referred to the Spirit and the unwritten word'" (49, quoting from *De Doctrina*). Schwartz also discusses how, in *Reason of Church-Government*, Milton argues that this Spirit-informed internal Scripture outweighs the traditions to which church authorities were apt to appeal (49).

(Milton, *De Doctrina* 532). When this happens, “breaking the letter of the law” is necessary so that believers can “behave in a way which conforms better with our love of God and of our neighbor” (*De Doctrina* 532-33).

As this implies, the rule of charity works in tangent with Milton’s internalized rule of faith. Thus, after affirming that “the whole Mosaic law is abolished by the gospel,” Milton is quick to add that, “in reality the law, that is the substance of the law, is not broken by this abolition” (*De Doctrina* 531). Rather, the law’s “purpose is attained in that love of God and of our neighbor which is born of faith, through the spirit” (*De Doctrina* 531). Accordingly, Milton stresses that “attention to the requirements of charity is given precedence over any written law” (Milton, *De Doctrina* 532-33). The rule of charity interprets the rule of faith, since “charity is ‘the interpreter and guide of our faith’” (Schwartz 40, quoting Milton, *De Doctrina*)³⁷

As would be anticipated, Milton focuses not on “charitably” maintaining order through conformity but rather on Biblical directives about not offending other individual Christians. The use of Christian liberty, he explains, “should give no just cause of offence to a weak brother” (*De Doctrina* 539).³⁸ Since both Jesus and the Lady are

³⁷ See also Schwartz’s analysis of Milton’s use of the rule of charity as a Biblical hermeneutic. Schwartz comments, with reference to *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*,

Milton argues here and elsewhere that all biblical laws are submitted to the higher divine laws of nature and charity – it is by these principles that we should judge the validity of biblical injunctions and by these principles that he will labour to interpret them. (39).

As will be evident, in the context of the use of adiaphora, I interpret the rule of charity more in terms of human-human relations, whereas Schwartz focuses on the charity of God toward humanity (43).

³⁸ Milton’s use of the verb “give” here is significant, gesturing toward the common distinction between *giving* offense by abusing liberty and having someone else (unreasonably) *take* offense at one’s justifiable use of liberty. In his description of Christian liberty, Milton underscores this point with the qualifier “just”: Christians should not give any *just* offenses (*De Doctrina* 539), but evidently, they do not need to worry about unjust accusations of offensiveness. It is a distinction he makes more explicit when writing about good works. In general, good works should be done “TO THE INSTRUCTION OF OUR NEIGHBOR”

tempted in isolation from “weak” humans whose consciences might be offended by their use of *adiaphora*, it is also important to note the place Milton gives to self-love at several points in his discussion of good works.³⁹ In addition to instructing others, a Christian’s good works should give him or her greater confidence about his or her own hope of salvation (*De Doctrina* 638). Likewise, just as Christians are to avoid being a stumbling block to others, so also the believer should be sure to protect herself or himself from stumbling (Milton, *De Doctrina* 642).

Of course, the danger in love for one’s neighbor (or for oneself) is that the loved human can become an idol. This liability is partly addressed through the third criterion commonly invoked by adiaphorists, the requirement that all things be used to the glory of God. Milton explicitly includes this criterion in his guidelines for good works, which must be done “TO THE GLORY OF GOD” (*De Doctrina* 640). As has been seen above, some adiaphorists conceive of this criterion primarily in terms of thankfulness in the use of things indifferent, but others merely mention the need to glorify God in passing, apparently assuming that the implications of this requirement are self-evident. Within his theological discussion of good works, Milton is similarly brief, offering only a few Biblical proof texts (*De Doctrina* 640), none of which mentions a specific form of glorifying God in practice.

(*De Doctrina* 641), setting a good example and not causing others—or ourselves—to stumble (641-42). However, should a neighbor be offended, “if the offence comes about not through our fault but through the over-niceness or the wickedness of the other party, then offence is not given but taken” (*De Doctrina* 642). Like some of the writers noted above, Milton differentiates between the “weak” and “the malicious or the obstinate” (*De Doctrina* 541). For the latter, “[n]o consideration is to be shown” (540) when they take offense.

³⁹ This allowance for self-love is not unique; see also Tombes (168).

3.2 Milton, Gratitude, and Its Contraries

Nevertheless, in both *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*, Milton does interpret this criterion in terms of gratitude toward God; in the latter text, Jesus even explicitly links thanks and God's glory (Milton, *PR* 3.127-28). Milton's discussion of gratitude elsewhere in *De Doctrina Christiana* helps illuminate the reason for this emphasis on gratitude: the typical abuses of things indifferent are also expressions of the vices to which gratitude is opposed. Milton comments on this virtue and its contraries at several points in *De Doctrina Christiana*, but his account of gratitude toward God—a component of “internal worship” (*De Doctrina* 656)—will be most relevant for analyzing gratitude and adiaphorism.⁴⁰

Gratitude toward God, Milton maintains, requires “that we acknowledge that we are unworthy of the gifts God bestows upon us” (*De Doctrina* 659). It ensures, in other words, that *adiaphora* are used in a way that preserves proper relationships between humans, God, and indifferent things. Milton's description is generally consistent with Peter Medine's findings in his survey of the Judeo-Christian tradition of gratitude,⁴¹ in which this virtue is conceived of as “acknowledgement, praise, and thanksgiving to God for benefits received” (129). However, Medine's summary of the broader theological

⁴⁰ Gratitude and related virtues and activities are discussed at several points in *De Doctrina*. Milton discusses gratitude and thanksgiving with regard to both inter-human obligations (*De Doctrina* 780) and the worship of God (659-660, 683). Gratitude toward humans is described elsewhere in *De Doctrina* as “the virtue which corresponds to generosity,” a virtue which “requites favors with favors, or with thankfulness” (*De Doctrina* 780). Presumably because inter-human gratitude does not involve worship, it is opposed only to ingratitude (*De Doctrina* 780). The inward disposition of gratitude, or thankfulness, is distinct from but obviously related to the action of thanksgiving, which falls under the category “Of External Worship” in *De Doctrina* and is defined as “giving thanks with a joyful heart for divine benefits. . . sometimes accompanied by singing, and by hymns in honor of the divine name” (*De Doctrina* 683).

⁴¹ Medine offers this survey as context for his detailed study of gratitude and ingratitude in *Paradise Lost*. Surprisingly, he does not draw on Milton's discussion of gratitude in *De Doctrina*.

tradition emphasizes an important point that remains only implicit in this section of *De Doctrina*. Beyond thankfulness for daily blessings, gratitude is “fundamentally the acknowledgement of God’s originary power in creating the universe” (Medine 117, *cf.* 122). Creation itself is thus the first of the “gifts God bestows upon us” (*De Doctrina* 659), the foundation for all creatures’ thankfulness. Although *De Doctrina Christiana* does not here refer to the grace of creation as the grounds for thanksgiving, this concept plays an important role in Milton’s literary representations of gratitude.⁴² Medine has shown that “Milton uses the fact of Creation and God as the originary source as a matrix within which he presents gratitude and ingratitude” in *Paradise Lost* (124), and as will be shown, both *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* also assume a fundamental link between creation and the obligation of thankfulness.

Both texts also present gratitude in opposition to ingratitude and idolatry, the two vices with which it is contrasted in *De Doctrina Christiana*. For Milton, gratitude basically involves (1) the recognition that a gift is undeserved and (2) the acknowledgement of God as the ultimate giver of any gift (*De Doctrina* 659). Ingratitude and idolatry each violate one or both of these requirements. *De Doctrina* first describes ingratitude, implying that this perverse response to blessings results from self-satisfied indulgence in God’s gifts. Milton cites Hosea 13.6 as a biblical illustration: the people “found good pasture so they were well filled, and as soon as they were filled their hearts were exalted, and this is why they have forgotten” God (qtd. in Milton, *De Doctrina* 660). Those who are ungrateful thus fail with respect to the first point of

⁴² See also Lehnhof on the connection between divinity and the act of creation in Milton’s thought (235-36, *passim*). Schwartz makes related comments in the context of divine charity (43, 50, *passim*).

gratitude. Because they do not recognize the goods they enjoy as *undeserved gifts*, they make no return of thanks to their benefactor. Instead, as the image from Hosea perhaps suggests, ungrateful humans sink to the level of thoughtless beasts, unable to look beyond the satisfaction of the appetites that have enslaved them. In the context of adiaphorism, ingratitude thus provokes the sort of licentiousness that conformists feared would ensue if every individual had freedom to follow his or her personal convictions in the use of things indifferent.

As Medine argues, ingratitude is essential to fallenness in *Paradise Lost*, and it is worth pausing over Satan's ingratitude in that text because of the way in which this vice shapes his temptation of Christ in *Paradise Regained*.⁴³ Satan's reflections in *Paradise Lost* underscore how deeply resentful he is of "[t]he debt immense of endless gratitude, / So burdensome still paying, still to ow" (*PL* 4.52-53, qtd. in Medine 141). As Medine explains, gratitude "depends on recognition and acknowledgement of the basic reality of God's beneficent creation and the individual's undeserved creation" (141). Refusing to admit these truths, Satan interprets giving and thanksgiving merely as strategies in a struggle for domination. He cannot or will not see gratitude as the "empowering virtue" that it is, enabling even the poorest of poor to repay their benefactor simply "by *feeling* the debt" (Medine 122, 141). As a result, even though he knows that gratitude is "[t]he

⁴³ Ingratitude also plays an important role in humanity's Fall in *Paradise Lost*, as foreshadowed in the Father's prophecy about "ingrate" humanity (Medine 139-140, *passim*; *PL* 3.97) and confirmed in Eve's changed mindset immediately following her sin. Once fallen, Schoenfeldt points out, Eve suddenly sees God as the anti-giver, "'Our great forbidd' (IX.815), known for his single prohibition rather than the bounteous gifts she and Adam had praised profusely in Book IV" (373; *PL* 9.815; cf. Medine 135-36).

easiest recompense” (*PL* 4.47; Medine 140), Satan views this obligation of as an onerous burden.⁴⁴

Of course, Satan is also guilty of idolatry. In contrast to the mindless consumption of ingratitude, idolatry does involve thankfulness for gifts received, but it is misdirected “toward idols or created things, rather than toward God” (*De Doctrina* 660). Idolatry thus amounts to using *adiaphora* to the glory of someone or something other than God, whether by means of licentiousness or superstition. As indicated by Milton’s proof texts for idolatry and his representation of this vice in *Paradise Lost*, idolatry can take several different forms. Most obviously, idolatry includes any overt worship of created things, such as “sacrificing to the heavenly bodies. . . .and pouring out libations to them” (Jeremiah 44.17, qtd. in Milton, *De Doctrina* 660). More subtly, idolatry can also be seen in humans’ submission to worldly pursuits, as seems implied by Milton’s reference to Habakkuk 1.16: “the wicked man sacrifices to his nets and burns incense to his fishing-tackle” (qtd. in *De Doctrina* 660). Satan and his followers model yet another version of idolatry in *Paradise Lost*. When Abdiel points out the angels’ obligation to the Father and to the Son through whom he created them (*PL* 5.35-39), Satan counters that they are “self-begot, self-raised” (*PL* 5.860). Particularly given the close association between divinity and the act of creation in Milton’s theology (Lehnhof, *passim*), this assertion clearly amounts to *self*-idolatry, as is confirmed by Satan’s later declaration that the fallen angels will “assert” “[t]hir Dieties” (*PL* 6.157). Thus, while Medine is

⁴⁴ See Donnelly for one of the more extended analyses of Satan’s misunderstanding of God’s giving and self-giving, framed in terms of “competing accounts of reality (ontology)” (117; *cf.* 75, 104-05, 112, 197; *cf.* Schwartz 50-51). On a related note, Ricciardi comments, “Satan defines friendship not in terms of how one gives, but in terms of how one receives” (135).

right to comment that, “[i]n denying God’s originary act, Satan denies God’s authority and so becomes completely ungrateful” (Medine 143), it is also true that this ingratitude is accompanied and rationalized by idolatry.

Ingratitude and idolatry both appear in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*, but each text foregrounds a different perversion of gratitude, along with corresponding abuses of things indifferent. The earlier drama more emphatically distinguishes between true gratitude and ingratitude, with Comus and his followers providing an extreme image of license. *Paradise Regained*, however, addresses the more complicated vice of idolatry (Lewalski, “Milton” 224). Though Satan occasionally includes temptations to license in his appeals, he more frequently tries to lure Jesus into superstition and idolatry, primarily by suggesting that Jesus *must* use the gifts Satan offers if he is to fulfill his mission on earth.⁴⁵ Although there is no clear indication that Milton planned *Paradise Regained* as a supplement to his work with gratitude and adiaphorism in *A Mask*, obvious similarities between the two texts—most notably the banquet temptations (Kean 440)—do invite comparison. Written at opposite ends of his adult life, Milton’s masque and brief epic together provide a rich literary probing of gratitude and its contraries as they relate to the use of things indifferent, not only illustrating but also complicating Milton’s treatment of gratitude and *adiaphorism* in *De Doctrina Christiana*.

Indeed, before discussing *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained* in detail, it is worth previewing a third vice that, though evident both in these texts and in *Paradise Lost*, is not explicitly recognized in *De Doctrina Christiana*’s discussion of gratitude. As a

⁴⁵ Fish comments extensively on Satan’s presentation of his gifts as necessary. See *How Milton* (especially 364-70).

variation on ingratitude, this third deviation from proper thankfulness can be called stoical ingratitude. If ordinary (self-indulgent) ingratitude enjoys blessings without giving thanks for them, stoical ingratitude is a similarly thankless response that refuses to acknowledge the goodness of God's gifts at all. As Fenton notes when discussing Adam's education in *Paradise Lost*, "Michael reminds Adam that with possession of the 'gift' comes the *duty to recognize the value of the gift*, which in turn should incite gratitude" (171, emphasis mine; cf. 170). Without recognition of a gift's goodness, gratitude will not follow, even though mindless self-indulgence may be averted. Whereas self-indulgent ingratitude promotes licentiousness and leads to the idolatry of created things and their immediate sources, stoical ingratitude expresses itself as an excessive abstemiousness that might be seen as a passive form of superstition or as implicit self-idolatry.⁴⁶ A hypocritical version of ingratitude, stoical ingratitude *seems* virtuous but in fact is not—rendering it especially threatening for those most set on avoiding idolatry and licentious forms of ingratitude.

⁴⁶ Eve's reaction to the Fall in *Paradise Lost* provides a clear example of this more subtle vice. When she suggests suicide as a means to curtail the consequences of sin (*PL* 10.966-106), Adam admits that such "contempt of life and pleasures" seems to suggest that there is "in [her] something more sublime / And excellent then what [her] minde contemnes" (*PL* 10.1013-15). However, having earlier wrestled with this type of ingratitude himself (10.743-55; cf. Medine 143), Adam sees through Eve's superficial piety. Her death wish actually bespeaks "anguish and regret / For loss of life and pleasures *overlov'd*," rather than laudable "contempt" for lesser goods (10.1018-19, emphasis mine).

4. *A MASK*: GRATITUDE, ADIAPHORISM, AND THE *BOOK OF SPORTS* CONTROVERSY

4.1 Introduction: *A Mask* and the *Book of Sports*

The Lady in *A Mask* (1634) is just such a person. Indeed, she grapples with both forms of ingratitude and the associated abuses of things indifferent. Though Milton does not privilege gratitude over charity as fully here as he later does in *Paradise Regained*, he does give gratitude a particularly prominent part in his masque, suggesting the usefulness of this criterion as a charm against both license and superstition. While this has implications for any use of *adiaphora*, *A Mask* can be fruitfully read in a narrower context, as a contribution to the controversy over licit recreations that was reinvigorated when Charles I reissued the *Book of Sports* (1633) (Marcus, *Politics* 187, 169).⁴⁷

Initially issued by James I in 1618 as a defense of his policy against the prohibition of sports on holidays and Sundays,⁴⁸ the *Book of Sports* stirred renewed

⁴⁷ Marcus reports that this connection has been recognized off and on since at least 1884 (Marcus, *Politics* 169). See also Kahn (*Machiavellian* 144-45) and Marcus ("John" 237-38). Of course, *A Mask* is about much more than the conflict over the *Book of Sports* (Marcus, *Politics* 172), but of the various historical and biographical influences that scholars have identified in *A Mask*, the *Book of Sports* controversy is most relevant for understanding Milton's emphasis on gratitude as a response to the challenges raised by *adiaphorism*.

⁴⁸ When first issued by James I in 1618, the *Book of Sports* served, Kahn explains, as "an implicit defense of Anglican ritual and court ceremony," at a time when "James was trying to bring the Scottish church into conformity with the Church of England" (*Machiavellian* 190). It presents itself, however, as a response to "Papists and Puritanes" who had criticized James for chastising "some Puritans & precise people" who prevented or punished licit recreation on Sundays and holidays (James 2-3). The text defends James's approval of Sabbath recreation, lists licit and illicit sports, and reaffirms the king's desire that—provided a few conditions are met—there be no prohibition of Sabbath pastimes that are not inconsistent with civil and ecclesiastical laws (James 5, 7). Licit recreations include dancing, May-games, Morris dances, and more (James 7); the conditions include that recreation may not interfere with church services (7), that no recusants may participate, and that some pastimes, such as bull-baiting, remain prohibited (at least on Sundays and for some people) (7-8). James authorizes church officials to seek the reformation of nonconformists and to turn the unrepentant over to the judicial system, where they will be forced to choose between conformity and exile (6). James explains that this severe punishment for nonconformity is justified by the need to protect both "Our Authority" and "Our Church" (6). As this rationale indicates, the

controversy when reissued. The details of the conflict cannot be explored here, but it is important to note that the *Book of Sports* became associated with Archbishop Laud and his emphasis on church ceremonies (Marcus, *Politics* 197-98). As a result, in addition to those who simply felt compunction about Sabbath activities, those who opposed Laud's policies in general might also feel obligated to reject sports—perhaps *all* sports, excessively, like Milton's Lady—as a means of distinguishing themselves from Laud and his conservative Anglican supporters (Marcus, *Politics* 197-98). In the midst of these tensions, “[d]ancing, festivity and even masquing itself became strongly politicized activities” (Marcus, “John” 238).

This conflict directly affected John Egerton, First Earl of Bridgewater, whose installation as President of the Council of the Marches of Wales was the occasion for the performance of *A Mask* (Marcus, *Politics* 171). He experienced the effects of this conflict both through his political position (Marcus, *Politics* 171) and through the differing convictions about courtly entertainments held by his own family members—three of which performed as the Lady and her Brothers in Milton's masque but two of whom had known scruples about masquing (Marcus “John” 239; *Politics* 198).⁴⁹ Given

Book of Sports assumes the typical conservative position on charity in the use of things indifferent, according to which charity first and foremost requires the promotion of order and social stability for the sake of the common good.

⁴⁹ According to Marcus, the Earl's responsibilities would have included “enforcing Privy Council order and royal declarations like the *Book of Sports*,” and in fact, evidence indicates that the “there was indeed some attempt to enforce that document by prosecuting those who participated in ‘unlawful games.’” (Marcus, *Politics* 171). The Earl of Bridgewater in some cases showed tolerance for conscientious nonconformity (Marcus, *Politics* 175-76), whereas Archbishop Laud tended to invoke the standard pro-ceremony conception of charity, according to which unity in externals is more important than honoring individual consciences (Marcus, *Politics* 201). Marcus emphasizes that Archbishop Laud, whom Bridgewater opposed, was “very active in Wales,” seeking by various means to “remov[e] Wales from the darkness of its superstition and enforc[e] ecclesiastical conformity” (*Politics* 175). The Earl's family contained a variety of opinions on such matters: the women of the Bridgewater family appear to have had

this context, it is clearly significant that *A Mask* includes and interrogates many forms of recreation and entertainment. Marcus observes,

Within its compact space, [*A Mask*] displays an amazing range of dances, rituals, and holiday pastimes both wholesome and nefarious, from the ‘wavering Morrice’ of the sea and the riot of Comus and his crew, to the harvest festivities of the shepherds about Sabrina, and finally to the Ludlow revelry of the Earl of Bridgewater and his guests. (*Politics* 169-170; cf. “John” 238)

As this comment suggests, the alternately good and bad use of these things attests to their indifference. On one level, then, *A Mask* can be seen as an exploration of the meaning of the criteria that should guide one’s use of indifferent pastimes and associated pleasures.⁵⁰

Based on Comus’s Cavalier rhetoric and behavior, scholars have persuasively described him as “a figure of court entertainment or sport” (Kahn, *Machiavellian* 195), representative of “a libertine courtier” (Marcus, “John” 240-41; cf. *Politics* 187) who

“their own strongly Protestant religious culture” (Marcus, “John” 237), and at least two of them had expressed reservations about masquing (“John” 239; *Politics* 198). However, “the Earl and at least the elder son were more orthodox, though probably anti-Arminian and anti-Laudian” (“John” 239).

⁵⁰ Although it would be beyond the scope of the present project to perform a detailed analysis of Milton’s use of the genre of the masque, the political overtones of *A Mask* are reinforced by his manipulation of generic conventions (Marcus, *Politics* 171). To cite one of the more obvious departures from convention, whereas the king or a representative of his centralized power is traditionally the one who restores order in a masque, in *A Mask* the question of how to use external goods is faced by the Lady alone, and the problematic consequences of her response are resolved by a small group of (sometimes supernatural but never royal or ecclesiastical) individuals. See also Marcus, *Politics* 171, *passim*.

Similarly, the many connections between Milton’s masque and earlier masques cannot be fully explored here, but one connection bears mentioning as additional evidence for reading *A Mask* as a response to the *Book of Sports* controversy. As several scholars have noted, Milton’s *Mask* echoes (with a difference) Ben Jonson’s *Pleasure Reconcil’d to Virtue*, a masque produced in 1618, which was what Kahn calls “an ideological justification of James’s ‘Declaration of Sports,’” though not without qualification (*Machiavellian* 186, 191, 194; cf. Marcus, “John” 238). Milton’s allusions to *Pleasure Reconcil’d to Virtue* suggest a more critical response to the *Book of Sports* (Marcus, “John” 238-39).

supports the policies promoted by the *Book of Sports*, albeit in an extreme, licentious way that Charles I himself would not have condoned (*cf.* Marcus, *Politics* 193). The Lady, on the other hand, behaves like a “strong” Puritan (Marcus, *Politics* 198, 197), privileging her personal convictions and tending toward the opposite extreme of superstitious abstemiousness. Their competing versions of adiaphorism, neither of which is entirely affirmed by *A Mask*, highlight the dangers lying on both sides of the *Book of Sports* controversy—and the way in which honoring the requirement of gratitude can prevent these deviations from proper use.

4.2 Round One: Charity, Pro-Sport Adiaphorism, and the Power of Giving

As noted above, Comus builds his temptation to licentious revelry on distorted appeals to the rule of love and the requirement of gratitude, presumably because he anticipates the Lady’s adherence to these commonly recognized guidelines. His strategy emerges clearly in the central temptation scene. When the Lady initially refuses his cup, Comus implicitly accuses her of both a lack of (self-)love and ingratitude: she is “cruel to [her]self” (*Mask* line 679), and she is breaking a contract that she ostensibly made with Nature when she received her body—a body which (however young and beautiful) is also mutable and mortal (680-89). He reasons that refusing the physical pleasures that he offers is the equivalent of disdaining her embodied state,

Scorning the unexempt condition

By which all mortal frailty must subsist,

Refreshment after toil, ease after pain (*Mask* 685-87).

From Comus's perspective, as Marcus observes, the Lady is guilty of "spiritual pride by refusing to drink" and embrace her human limitations (*Politics* 194).

Defenders of the *Book of Sports* and traditional pastimes used a very similar line of reasoning (Marcus, *Politics* 194)—so similar, in fact, that Marcus suggests that the obvious topical reference may explain why much of Comus's argument here was apparently cut from the performance of *A Mask* (*Politics* 195). Supporters of the *Book of Sports* and related policies, she explains, advocated "a surrender of individual striving . . . and a reimmersion in community" (Marcus, *Politics* 194). Promoting a "lesson of *carpe diem*," such activity fostered "a willingness to acknowledge human frailties and the limits imposed by time and the season" (Marcus, *Politics* 194).⁵¹ This united, humble activity was in turn believed to "brin[g] divine blessings upon all and enric[h] and restor[e] the community" (Marcus, *Politics* 194). The pro-sport argument thus assumes the conservative conception of the rule of charity, in which charity is primarily concern for the community, even at the expense of violating some individuals' consciences. In *A Mask*, this line of reasoning takes the form of Comus's insistence that the Lady must partake of his potion—even against her conscience—and thereby join his community of revelers (*cf.* Marcus, *Politics* 194-95).

Nevertheless, though Comus's appeal to self-love and community may be reminiscent of common arguments in defense of sports, the Lady does not initially bother to refute him on these points. Instead, she focuses on the implications of accepting a gift from Comus. Calling his offerings "lickerish baits fit to ensnare a brute"

⁵¹ Guibbory also notes that "Comus speaks in the voice of the libertine and *carpe diem* poetry that had become associated with the court of Charles I" (77).

(*Mask* 700), she justifies her resistance by referring to her past experience of Comus's duplicity and her observation of his "ougly-headed Monsters" (695). These comments point toward the requirement of gratitude in the use of *adiaphora*, in that accepting a gift from Comus would create a debt of gratitude to *him*, rather than to heaven. At least for the audience, his opposition to the divine has already been established by the Attendant Spirit's explanation of how Comus's followers became dehumanized. They once had a "human count'nance, / Th' express resemblance of the gods" (*Mask* 68-69). After drinking from Comus's cup, though, they became like their new, beastly benefactor: their godlike heads are

. . . chang'd

Into som brutish form of Woolf, or Bear,

Or Ounce, or Tiger, Hog, or bearded Goat (*Mask* 69-71).

Accepting Comus, rather than heaven, as the source of gifts would put the Lady under "another obligation" to this new "bestower" (Fish, *How Milton* 34)—creating the "divided spiritual loyalty" that Susan M. Felch calls "the essence of idolatry" (61). The Lady accordingly refuses to entertain any of Comus's proposals once she recognizes him as a "foul deceiver" (*Mask* 696): "none / But such as are good men can give good things" (702-3).

The overwhelming power of Comus's potion also has important implications for the debate about the use of indifferent pastimes. Marcus comments, "Advocates of the *Book of Sports* liked to portray political obedience as a delightful form of liberty. But in Milton, what may appear to be liberty—a free choice of pleasure—turns out to be base

submission” (*Politics* 188). Given by a threatening character like Comus, the order to “[b]e wise, and taste” is not liberating but terrifying (*Mask* line 813). In the context of the *Book of Sports* controversy, the Lady’s sad predicament—unwilling to consent to Comus’s offer but unable to escape his palace—is suggestive of the dilemma faced by those who were not allowed to act in accordance with their more stringent Sabbatarian convictions. Comus’s persistence, on the other hand, illustrates how the pro-sport party could be just as guilty as the Puritans of becoming legalistic (Marcus, *Politics* 202-03)—and superstitious—by deeming it *necessary* to participate (rather than refrain from) indifferent sports.

4.3 Round Two, Part One: Licentious Consumption and the Rule of Charity

And Comus is persistent. Undaunted by the Lady’s rejection of him as a giver, Comus mounts a second attack with a similar strategy, again suggesting that indulging in the pleasures he offers is the only way to fulfill the rule of love and the requirement of gratitude. The two rationalizations of license are interlinked in Comus’s argument, but it will be convenient to analyze them separately, beginning with his pretended concern for charity. He first implies that the Lady is being uncharitable toward Nature. Nature has brought forth many things “to please, and sate the curious taste” (*Mask* 714, 709-20), yet the Lady refuses to enjoy them. Moreover, if others follow suit, Nature will be harmed by a destructive glut of unused natural resources (720-21, 728-36). Without waiting for a reply, Comus proceeds, in more typically Cavalier fashion, to argue that the virginal Lady is also showing a lack of charity toward would-be lovers, since she selfishly insists on keeping her lovely, young body to herself (737-42).

It is this last charge that makes the Lady angry enough to talk back (*Mask*, lines 757-61), but she never directly refutes Comus's attack on sexual abstinence, since he is unworthy to hear the "serious doctrine of Virginitie" (787). Instead, she begins her reply—which was "strengthened and extended" as Milton revised the text of *A Mask* (Marcus, "John" 241)—by almost immediately describing Comus's strategy as a manipulation of standards, an attempt to deceive her with "false rules pranckt in reasons garb" (*Mask*, line 759). Having called him out for his distortion of the real criteria for proper use, the Lady proceeds to counter Comus's claims about charity toward nature and the wider human community.

One might expect that her response would echo the reasoning of adiaphorists sympathetic to the plight of scrupulous consciences: the rule of charity is a call to accommodate the convictions of the individual ("weak") Christian. However, she does not take up this line of argument. Instead, the Lady reinterprets the rule of charity within the framework of the common good, skillfully co-opting the ground typically held by those who favored conformity. Nature's purpose for her many works, the Lady says, is not that one individual might excessively indulge but rather that everyone should charitably share natural resources, so that all may have enough (762-74; cf. Fish, *How Milton* 12, 155-56). Moderate consumption, not Comus's revelry, is the way to love both Nature and one's neighbors.⁵² The Lady's version of the rule charity thus promotes

⁵² Her reply reflects a broader conception of the rule of charity that Verkamp describes in his study of earlier English adiaphorism:

The Christian who really believes in the indifferent nature of food, money, clothes, and like matters, will not be anxious or avaricious in their regard, but having cast his lot with the Lord, and recognizing the latter's Providence, he will accept all such things in a

communal wellbeing while also stressing that licentious excess is not compatible with the common good.

4.4 Round Two, Part Two: Gratitude as a Cross-Check for Alleged Charity

If the Lady merely offered an alternative version of charity, Comus and his supporters could object that they simply prefer their own conception of charity to the Lady's. Milton corroborates the view of charity that the Lady espouses—and undermines Comus's supposed charity—by shifting the focus to the requirement of gratitude. It is a criterion that Comus first brings up in the second round of temptation, discussed above with reference to the rule of charity. Hoping to sway the Lady by appealing to her virtue, he presents self-indulgence as the path to not only charity but also gratitude: consumption of natural resources is a necessary step toward thanking Nature and Nature's God (*Mask* 705-755). If the Lady rejects his revels, Comus suggests, her only alternative is "lean and sallow Abstinence" (*Mask* 709; *cf.* McGuire 161). Associating the latter option with caricatured images of Stoicism and Cynicism (*Mask* 707-08; Flannagan 155, n474), Comus claims that refusing his feast will cause mass asceticism, leading down a slippery slope to globalized ingratitude. With no one consuming anything, "the all-giver" himself will go completely "unthank't, . . . unprais'd" (*Mask* 723), and all of Nature's provision will be ungratefully left to rot.

Rejecting his reductive equation of temperance with total abstinence (*cf.* McGuire 161), the Lady corrects Comus's distortion of the requirement of gratitude,⁵³

spirit of thanksgiving, and exercise in their regard a charitable stewardship that is in accordance with his station in life. (167; *cf.* Calvin 3.10)

⁵³ Kahn comments that the Lady responds to Comus's temptation by "redefin[ing] the problem as one not simply of use but of right use" (*Machiavellian* 206). However, to some extent, Comus is already

arguing that true gratitude comes not through licentiousness but rather through the moderate use of temporal resources. This way, not only would everyone have enough (*Mask* 759-774), but

. . . the giver would be better thank't,
His praises due paid, for swinish gluttony
Ne're looks to Heav'n amidst his gorgeous feast,
But with besotted base ingratitude
Crams, and blasphemes his feeder. (*Mask* 755-59)

Gluttons simply are not grateful but blasphemous; Comus's sort of consumption cannot meet the requirement of glorifying God through gratitude, and it must therefore be rejected. The aptness of the Lady's reply can be seen in Comus's response. Like Satan before Christ in *Paradise Regained*, he is confounded by her reasoning, even fearing that her rebuttal is "set off by som superior power" (*Mask* 801). Out of arguments, Comus seems about to turn to force when the Lady's brothers burst in on the scene.

4.5 The Rule of Faith or Passive Superstition?

In light of her witty reply to Comus's temptation, it is clear that the Lady intellectually recognizes his abstinence-indulgence dichotomy as fallacious (*cf.* McGuire 161). Nevertheless, her immobility after her brothers' arrival suggests that, in practice, she may have fallen into Comus's categories (*cf.* Marcus "John" 240-41, 243). Subtle changes in her range of motion seem to support this reading of the Lady's predicament. When the main temptation scene opens, she finds herself at a luxurious banquet in

presenting it as an issue of right use. He simply (and wrongly) argues that right use means total self-indulgence.

Comus's palace, described by the stage directions as "set in an enchanted Chair."⁵⁴ In response to Comus's proffered glass, she "goes about to rise,"⁵⁵ only to be quickly reprimanded by her host, who claims that his wand can freeze her nerves and turn her into "a statue" (*Mask* 661, 660-62). Both the Lady's motion and Comus's warning suggest that, although she is already "immanacl'd" (*Mask* 665), the Lady retains some freedom of movement. After her brothers scare Comus away, however, the Attendant Spirit describes the Lady as "[i]n stony fetters fixt, *and motionless*" (*Mask* 819, emphasis mine). The difference could be a mere oversight on Milton's part, but the alteration may be significant—particularly given that the masque was originally written for performance. The Lady could not have earlier "go[ne] about to rise,"⁵⁶ if she were already reduced to a "motionless" state (*Mask* 819), nor would Comus's threat have had any meaning if she were already as still as stone. Although one might be tempted to attribute her progressive immobilization to Comus's magic, neither Comus nor the Lady indicates that he casts any further spell on her during their debate, despite his initial warning.

What, then, makes the Lady less able to move at the end of their conversation than she was at the beginning? As Marcus suggests, her temporary paralysis may imply that the Lady has been *too* severe in rejecting earthly things ("John" 241-45). Intent on resisting licentiousness, she has unwittingly fallen into the very stoical ingratitude that

⁵⁴ *Mask* page 153, stage direction preceding line 658.

⁵⁵ *Mask* page 153, stage direction preceding line 658.

⁵⁶ *Mask* page 153, stage direction preceding line 658.

Comus described as the only alternative to gluttony (*cf.* McGuire 161).⁵⁷ In the terms of the *adiaphora* debates, this stoical ingratitude is a passive expression of superstition. The Lady's inability to move attests to a deep-seated belief that it is *necessary* not to use indifferent pleasures such as food and dance—*adiaphora* previously offered by Comus but also available (in moderation) at her intended destination, Ludlow Castle. If the Lady believes that she is not free to use these things, then abiding by her conviction would seem to be in keeping with the rule of faith. However, much as the incompatibility of gluttony and gratitude highlights the distortions in Comus's reasoning about things indifferent, so also the Lady's inability to fulfill the other two criteria indicates that something has gone awry in her convictions about her (lack of) freedom in using *adiaphora*. She rejected Comus's feast because consumption should be moderated by charity, but the Lady's overcorrection has brought her to an immobilized state in which she cannot actively love others. Likewise, her scruples have left her unable to make use of—much less give thanks for—indifferent things.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Several scholars have proposed less negative views of the Lady's immobilization. At least at one point, Kahn suggests that the Lady's immobilization can be read as positive *or* negative, making it part of "the interpretive crux of the masque: is the Lady's stasis a form of action or inaction, willed obedience or the inability to will (to go forward)?" (*Machiavellian* 196). Fish argues that the Lady's physical immobilization is not truly important, because "from a point of view that denies the primacy of the physical, she is formidable, protected, and free" (*How Milton* 153). However, it seems likely—particularly given the visual symbolism often prominent in masques—that the Lady's physical state is meant to reflect her inner, spiritual condition. Moreover, the efforts of her brothers, the Attendant Spirit, and Sabrina to free the Lady all suggest that her confinement is a problem.

⁵⁸ Though not specifically referring to *A Mask*, Fish's observation on Milton's attitude toward the created world aptly captures the reason why superstition abstention is so problematic:

Milton asks us not to shun the world of moral experience but to appreciate it for the right (Augustinian) reason—for the reason that it is, in all its variety, a testimony to the goodness of its creator. If this reason is the content of your apprehension and appreciation, then delight in the created world is not only allowable but is, as Uriel tells the disguised Satan, an obligation. (*How Milton* 11-12)

Thus, the Lady wisely corrects Comus in theory but overcorrects herself in practice, another likely connection to the *Book of Sports* controversy. As mentioned above, Marcus suggests that the Lady may be in a position parallel to that of Puritans who believed that some pastimes were licit and yet felt compelled to refrain from all sports in practice, in order to make a statement against Laudian policies (Marcus, *Politics* 198, 197). The problem, of course, is that by following this strategy the Lady inadvertently undermines the very principles that she advanced in her arguments against Comus.

4.6 Adiaphorism Restored: Grateful Deliverance and Celebration

The means by which the Lady can be released from her fixed state supports the view that her paralysis is an expression of her stoically ungrateful, superstitious rejection of indifferent things. Before their rescue effort, the Attendant Spirit instructs the Lady's brothers to "sease [Comus's] wand" (*Mask* 653). When they fail to do so, he belatedly explains that the wand, if inverted, would have enabled them to free their sister (*Mask* 815-17). Of course, the idea that "[r]eversing a magician's rod . . . would obviate his power" does not originate with Milton (Flannagan 160, n522). In the context of the Lady's and Comus's debate about the proper use of *adiaphora*, however, this detail seems particularly significant. It suggests that the solution to Comus's excess is not to (stoically, superstitiously) expel all desires but rather to properly direct them to the charitable, thankful use of blessings.

With Comus's wand of desire gone, the Lady can only be freed by Sabrina, "a gentle Nymph" (*Mask* 824) who models the principles of proper use that the Lady has

lost sight of. Prior to becoming a nymph, Sabrina was herself resurrected from a violent death through the anointing of “the porch and inlet of each sense” (*Mask* 839), making her a particularly apt figure to restore the Lady to her proper desires. Sabrina is also explicitly associated with both charity and thanksgiving. Particularly interested in helping maidens in distress, she also makes a general practice of bringing restoration and healing to local herds, using “pretious viold liquors” that, as Marcus notes, stand in direct opposition to Comus’s cup (“John” 243; 847).⁵⁹ Moreover, Sabrina’s charity elicits gratitude, including God-ward gratitude. In response to the aid she gives their herds, “the Shepherds at thire festivals / Carrol her goodness lowd in rustic layes” (*Mask* 848-49; *cf.* Marcus, “John” 243).⁶⁰ Once she has freed the Lady, the Attendant Spirit also blesses Sabrina and, furthermore, acknowledges that it is ultimately “Heaven” that has given him and the children “grace” (*Mask* 937)—preventing Sabrina or the freedom she brings from becoming an idol.

Sabrina also serves as a foil for Comus in ways specifically relevant to the debate about policies regarding participation in sports and entertainment (Marcus, *Politics* 199-201; “John” 243). Like Comus, she “is associated with music and dancing” (Marcus, “John” 243; *Politics* 199), and as mentioned, she “becomes a focal point for holiday pastimes” celebrated by shepherds (Marcus, *Politics* 200). However, Sabrina illustrates an alternative to Comus’s policy of using verbal and threatened physical force to compel participation in recreation. As noted above, Comus’s insistence on the Lady’s

⁵⁹ Flannagan notes that Sokol characterizes Sabrina’s actions on behalf of the herds as a “charitable practice” (Sokol, qtd. in Flannagan 161, n533).

⁶⁰ As McGuire suggests, the simple, thankful celebration honoring Sabrina stands in sharp contrast to the revels of Comus’s followers, who glut themselves on his banquets and show no true gratitude (161; *cf.* Marcus, *Politics* 200).

participation in his revels is reminiscent of pro-sport authorities' refusal to allow individual conviction to upset the uniformity that they deemed good for the church (Marcus, *Politics* 198-99, 201.). In contrast, Sabrina is not coercive;⁶¹ she "comes only in response to earnest prayer" (Marcus, *Politics* 200). When invoked, she comes and truly liberates the Lady, enabling her to travel on to her intended destination and participate in guilt-free, celebratory dancing. The contrary outcomes of Comus's and Sabrina's contrary strategies imply that forcing sports on the scrupulous will lead to an overreaction into puritanical superstition, whereas granting greater freedom in recreation will promote the proper use of pastimes in keeping with personal convictions, the rule of love, and the need for God-ward gratitude.⁶²

After the Lady's liberation, *A Mask* concludes with two images of proper use, one earthly and the other heavenly. The earthly setting of proper use, Ludlow Castle, is explicitly associated with gratitude—appropriately, since the plot thus far has shown gratitude to be an antidote to the vices that cause both license and superstition. The Attendant Spirit describes Ludlow Castle to the children as a place "[w]here . . . are met in state / Many a friend to gratulate" their father's "wish't presence" in Wales (*Mask* 948-150). Presumably, the "gratulat[ing]" friends are "express[ing] joy at the coming or

⁶¹ Marcus notes that this may align her with "the Earl of Bridgewater's tolerant stand toward nonconformity (*Politics* 201).

⁶² Marcus makes a similar observation: "If Comus and his crew enact a travesty of the Laudian style of church government, in which individual spiritual well-being is subordinated to the preservation of power at the center and the cohesion of the whole," she argues, "then Sabrina can be seen as offering an alternate paradigm for the relationship between pastimes and 'authority'" (*Politics* 200). However, Marcus does not imply that Milton here adopts an extraordinarily radical position on the question. In fact, given the connections that William B. Hunter has noted between *A Mask* and the Anglican liturgy for the Feast of St. Michael and All Angels, celebrated on the day of *A Mask*'s performance, she maintains that "Milton's trenchant criticism of a corrupt ecclesiastical power is . . . cast in a framework which upholds the liturgy of the church" (Marcus, *Politics* 201).

appearance of” the children’s father (“Gratulate,” def. 1). However, a more archaic sense of the verb, still in use in Milton’s day, may also be relevant. At least as late as 1673, “gratulate” was sometimes used to mean “[t]o be grateful for or show gratitude for,” to “thank” or “express gratitude to (a benefactor)” (“Gratulate,” def. 4). Ludlow Castle is thus an atmosphere colored by thanksgiving, offering moderate entertainments in a context conducive to their proper use. Having resisted the lure of licentious, self-indulgent ingratitude *and* learned by hard experience the subtle dangers of stoical ingratitude and superstition, the Lady joins her brothers “in victorious dance / O’re sensual Folly, and Intemperance” (*Mask* 974-75)—an image that need be incongruous only if one accepts Comus’s fallacious reasoning (*cf.* McGuire 161).⁶³

Following the dance at Ludlow Castle, the Attendant Spirit closes *A Mask* with an epilogue describing his ascent back to his place in the heavenly realms, offering what

⁶³ The liturgical context in which *A Mask* was performed is also worth noting: In reaffirming the possibility of rightly using indifferent pastimes such as dance, the scene at Ludlow Castle also echoes the message of the morning liturgy for the Feast of St. Michael and All the Angels, which coincided with the performance of *A Mask* (Marcus, *Politics* 201). Most directly relevant to adiaphorism is a passage from Ecclesiasticus 39, part of the morning lesson:

The principal things for the whole use of man’s life are water, fire, iron, and salt, flour of wheat, honey, milk, and the blood of the grape, and oil and clothing. *All these things are for good to the godly: so to the inners they are turned into evil. . . . All the works of the Lord are good: and he will give every needful thing in due season.* (qtd. in Marcus, *Politics* 202, 201, emphasis mine)

The triumphant children show that pleasant pastimes can be well-used, “for good to the godly” (Ecclesiasticus 39, qtd. in Marcus, *Politics* 202), even as the Attendant Spirit’s reference to their trials also reminds the audience of the strenuous effort needed to recognize and reject licentiousness and superstition (*Mask* 970-72).

Given that the *Book of Sports* controversy specifically focused on the use of recreation on the Sabbath, it is also worth noting that the morning lesson for the day included Mark 2.23-28, in which Jesus corrects the Pharisees’ legalistic understanding of the Sabbath by explaining, “The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath” (qtd. in Marcus, *Politics* 202). Unsurprisingly, “[t]his was one of the proof texts in the *Book of Sports* controversy, cited repeatedly by the prosport party to buttress their own position in defense of Sunday and holiday pastimes against the Sabbatarians” (Marcus, *Politics* 202). However, as Marcus suggests, Milton also implies a critique of those who legalistically demand recreation on the Sabbath (*Politics* 203). Comus’s threat of forced licentiousness is, after all, at least as disturbing as the Lady’s immobilization, and neither extreme allows for the proper—charitable and thankful—use of *adiaphora*.

Felch has called “the heavenly perspective on earthly life” (68). For present purposes, two points should be emphasized. First, “the broad fields of the sky” (*Mask* 979) are apparently strewn with pleasures. When relating what he will experience on his heavenward flight, the Attendant Spirit invokes almost all of the senses: The daughters of Hesperus sing (982-83), provided with cool “shades and bowres” (984). Pleasant smells include nard and scents wafted in by the “musky wing” of the “West wind” (991, 989). Visually, the inhabitants of heaven enjoy flowers more colorful than the rainbow (992-95). The evocative details of this description underscore the potential value of the arts and sensory pleasures even in heaven, suggesting that their corresponding shadows on earth are not *necessarily* evil or dangerous, contrary to the over-scrupulous.

As a second, related point, the epilogue may also imply that the proper use of *adiaphora* here fits one for greater delight hereafter. Particularly noteworthy is the contrast between two heavenly couples: the weeping Venus and wounded Adonis, on the one hand, and the “Celestial *Cupid*” and “his dear *Psyche*,” on the other (*Mask* 1004-05). The latter couple is “farr above” Venus and Adonis (1003), and Flannagan observes that there may be a tacit “contrast between the love of Venus as profane and outside marriage and the love of Cupid and Psyche, within a marriage sanctified by the gods” (170, n626). This heavenly privileging of love in the approved context of marriage highlights the long-term value of right use: the choices one makes about earthly *adiaphora*, such as romantic love, evidently affect the extent to which one is able to enjoy the amplified version of these goods in heaven. Delayed gratification—patiently waiting to act until

the rule of charity and the requirement of gratitude are *truly* fulfilled—ultimately brings greater gratification, not only in this life but also in the next.

Of course, the whole plot of *A Mask* has shown just how challenging it can be to discern when the criteria for proper use have truly been fulfilled. Fittingly, the image of Cupid and Psyche in the epilogue may subtly emphasize this difficulty while also underscoring the value of making the effort to use *adiaphora* according to the dictates of conscience, charity, and gratitude. The Attendant Spirit's description of Cupid and Psyche includes a brief reference to Psyche's "wandring labours long," which she had to endure prior to winning the gods' approval and being exalted to her now-blissful state (*Mask*, line 1106). In *Areopagitica* (1644), Milton mentions, in particular, the test in which Psyche had to sort out many "confused seeds" (qtd. Flannagan 170, n627). Flannagan notes that, in *Areopagitica*, Milton interprets this myth "as a symbolic representation of the way that grains of truth or goodness can be extracted from masses of evil knowledge" (Flannagan 170, n627). Like the Lady and her brothers, Psyche's trial required her to find the truth amidst many counterfeits, but her hard labors were followed by heavenly rest. The children have already won "a crown of deathless Praise" for their proper use of *adiaphora* (*Mask* 973); Psyche's bliss suggests that still greater rewards await them if they persevere in resisting the temptation to abuse things indifferent.

Accordingly, the Attendant Spirit ends the masque with an exhortation to mortals desirous of heaven:

Love vertue, she alone is free,

She can teach thee how to clime

Higher then the Spheary chime” (*Mask* 1019-21).

The way to heavenly pleasures, he implies, is not to seize *this* day, as Comus claims—nor to utterly reject it, as the Lady once thought—but rather to use indifferent recreations and other *adiaphora* virtuously, assisted as necessary by “Heav’n it self” (1023).⁶⁴ As has been shown, gratitude provides a particularly helpful guide to virtuous use, not only because it can help confirm (or refute) claims about what is charitable but also because it averts both Comus’s ungrateful, licentious consumption and the Lady’s (stoically) ungrateful, superstitious rejection of *adiaphora*.

⁶⁴ Similarly, Kahn comments that “the Spirit’s final vision of nature’s bounty appropriates and revises Comus’s *carpe diem* through its allusion to Spenser’s erotically charged Garden of Adonis” (Kahn, *Machiavellian* 207).

5. *PARADISE REGAINED*: THANKSGIVING DEFENDED, IDOLATRY RESISTED

5.1 Introduction: Adiaphorism and Gratitude in *Paradise Regained*

In his brief epic, Milton embarks on a broader, more sophisticated treatment of adiaphorism, in which God-ward gratitude becomes the primary criterion for proper use, central both to Satan's temptations and to Jesus's resistance. While Comus pretends concern for gratitude merely as a means to promoting license, Satan's goal is more directly tied to the perversion of gratitude. He wants Christ to accept something—anything—from his hand, so that the Son of God will be beholden to *him*, an idolatrous inversion of the power relations of giving and thanksgiving against which Satan rebelled in *Paradise Lost*. Indeed, for Satan all of the proposed abuses of *adiaphora* are a means to this end. Perhaps partly as a response to the Tempter's strategy, God-ward gratitude becomes the main standard by which Jesus exposes the counterfeit charity and distortions of Scripture in Satan's arguments. When Christ repeatedly refuses his offers, Satan finally attempts to manipulate this nay-saying itself by urging Jesus to embrace idolatry and subtle ingratitude under the guise of Stoicism. Nevertheless, Jesus proves more astute than the Lady, successfully resisting even this seemingly virtuous lure, largely by holding fast to the requirement of God-ward gratitude in the use of things indifferent.

5.2 The Stones-to-Bread Temptation: Distrust and the “Bait of Charity”⁶⁵

If Satan wants to gain power over Christ by persuading him to accept his aid, Satan first needs to convince Jesus to distrust the Father’s provision. Accordingly, the Tempter insinuates that Christ has been abandoned by the Father in their very first conversation (Lewalski, *Milton’s* 200-01). He suggests that “ill chance”—not the providential prompting of the Spirit (*PR* 1.189)—“hath brought” Christ to the wilderness (*PR* 1.321; cf. Lewalski, *Milton’s* 200-01). This echoes Comus’s opening temptation in both language and aim, recalling how he asks the Lady “[w]hat chance . . . hath bereft [her] thus” of company in the woods (*Mask* 277). However, the divergent paths the tempters take in developing this similar strategy attest to their differing aims.

For the purpose of tempting her to ungrateful, licentious consumption, it is not essential that Comus persuade the Lady to distrust her brothers. He simply needs to get her to his lair, where he can present her with his various attractions. It may be easier to convince her to follow him if he can “replace [her brothers] with himself in the Lady’s affection” (Flannagan 136, n193), but other means to the same end will suffice. Thus, when the Lady does not accept Comus’s negative portrayal of her brothers, he readily shifts to praising the boys, even offering “[t]o help [her] find them” (*Mask* 291-304). This sycophantic concern achieves the goal of Comus’s earlier efforts to provoke distrust: in desperation, the Lady reluctantly accepts him as a guide and helper (*Mask* 320-330). In contrast, distrust is essential to Satan’s plan to become Christ’s provider,

⁶⁵ The phrase “bait of charity” is from Stein (91) and is also quoted by Fish (*How Milton* 332).

prompting the Arch Tempter to pursue this goal relentlessly (Lewalski, *Milton's* 225).⁶⁶ However, in this first encounter, Jesus anticipates and rejects the offer of guidance to which the Lady fell victim, preemptively telling Satan, “Who brought me hither / Will bring me hence, no other Guide I seek” (*PR* 335-36; Lewalski, *Milton's* 201).

Undeterred, Satan attempts a less direct approach to distrust, this time under the guise of charity. To support his prediction that Jesus will probably die—like others who travel the desert alone—of hunger and of thirst (*PR* 1.337-39), Satan claims that he and his desert community, “[m]en to much misery and hardship born,” must struggle to “[l]ive on tough roots and stubs, to thirst inur’d / More then the Camel” (*PR* 1.339-41). Taking a page from the Lady’s rebuttal of Comus’s Cavalier charity, Satan frames the stones-to-bread temptation in terms of what appear to be legitimate duties of love. When he demands that Christ, “if . . . the Son of God / Command” stones to become bread (*PR* 1.342-43), Satan reasons that doing so will not only meet Jesus’s own needs (self-charity) but also (charitably) provide for the less fortunate desert dwellers (Stein 91; Fish, *How Milton* 332).

Jesus sees through Satan’s false appeal to the rule of charity and rejects his temptation for what it is—a continuation of the call to distrust that Satan initiated in their

⁶⁶ The repeated recommendation of doubt in *Paradise Regained* confirms its importance as a key first step in Satan’s scheme to replace the Father as Christ’s benefactor. This can be seen, for example, in Satan’s early claim that Christ has been neglected by the Father longer than any previous prophet was (*PR* 2.315), and it continues in his much later assertion that a storm (which *Satan* caused) signifies that Christ has missed his chance to act and will suffer as a consequence (4.465-84). There is a sense in which every temptation is designed to persuade Jesus to distrust the Father, thereby making way for Satan to enter as his new benefactor. As Fish comments, Jesus “would evidence distrust if he accepted any of the actions Satan urges as paramount; for he knows . . . that what is paramount . . . is the obligation to do God’s will”—whether or not the means Satan offers are used (*How Milton* 53-54).

opening exchange.⁶⁷ In keeping with some Protestant exegetes' interpretation of the stones-to-bread temptation as a call to doubt the Father's provision (Lewalski, *Milton's* 178, 223),⁶⁸ Satan's demand "suggest[s] . . . distrust" (*PR* 355) by implying that God cannot be counted on to sustain Jesus (and any other desert dwellers) with or without the assistance of bread. As Fish points out, Jesus's refusal affirms the indifference of bread, despite its apparent importance for human survival (Fish, *How Milton* 375). Like any other indifferent thing, it must be used with true charity toward others, which is never incompatible with the God-ward gratitude that would be undercut by distrusting the Father.

Before moving on to the second part of Satan's food temptation, it will be helpful to highlight a pattern that begins in the stones-to-bread temptation and continues through at least Satan's offering of Rome. As Arnold Stein argues, Satan frames his temptations as charitable means to address various human needs:

The stones turned to bread would provide food for self and the
 'wretched'; the acceptance of the banquet would relieve nature and her
 'gentle Ministers' of their troubled shame over the hunger of the lord of
 nature; the affectation of 'private life' was depriving 'All Earth her
 wonder at thy acts'; the acceptance of Parthia would deliver the ten tribes,

⁶⁷ Fish claims that "the reality of [the desert dwellers'] suffering is not diminished simply because the tempter is discerned to be other than he 'seem'st' (348)" (*How Milton* 332). While it is true that hunger, like Satan's other grounds for temptation, is a "real proble[m]" (Fish, *How Milton* 332), it appears clear that Satan is lying about the existence of this particular, hungry desert community. The next day, when Jesus awakes hungry, he climbs a hill "[f]rom whose high top to ken the prospect round, / If Cottage were in view, Sheep-cote or Herd; / But Cottage, Herd, or Sheep-cote none he saw" (*PR* 2.236-38). If there actually are wretched desert dwellers in the area, why does Jesus see no one?

⁶⁸ The reasoning behind this was that eating bread after a forty day fast hardly seems like gluttony—the more traditional diagnosis of this temptation (Lewalski 178, 223).

as their fathers were delivered from the land of Egypt (Stein 91; qtd. in Fish, *How Milton* 332).

Satan's distortions of the rule of charity will be considered in detail below, but it is worth noting here that his strategy has important implications for the use of things indifferent in *Paradise Regained*. Citing Stein's summary, Stanley Fish argues that all of these problems "are either ignored or scorned by the responses of the Son" (Fish, *How Milton* 332). In fact, though, Jesus often does give a reason for rejecting the act of charity that Satan proposes, and in many cases his reason is bound up in the requirement of gratitude. With some temptations, acting as Satan suggests would misdirect Christ's own gratitude. On other occasions, Jesus refrains from performing a proposed act of charity because he is waiting for the inner promptings of God or conscience to bring idolatrous or ungrateful people to repentance, thereby fitting them for freedom. Even when Satan seems to be supported by the rule of charity and Scripture itself, Jesus's awareness of these failures in gratitude enables him to resist the Tempter's lures.

5.3 Satan's Table: Charity, Superstition, and the Idolatry behind Satan's Gifts

Though the "bait of charity" often involves aid to some group of humans, it takes rather different forms in the next temptation, Satan's banquet in the wilderness (Stein 91; cf. Fish, *How Milton* 332); echoing Comus, Satan portrays Nature and, less obviously, Jesus himself as the potential objects of Christ's charity. Satan's initial call to distrust remains implicit in all of the temptations, but beginning with the banquet temptation he more directly pursues the goal of giving something to the Son as a means of gaining power over him through a debt of gratitude. Though he follows this strategy throughout

much of the rest of *Paradise Regained*, the banquet temptation provides a particularly apt example for the present study. A Miltonic invention, the feast strongly recalls Comus's table (Kean 440),⁶⁹ but the two banquets and the tempters' presentations of them differ in telling ways. Again, the distinctions reflect the fact that, whereas Comus just wants the Lady to follow him in the licentious abuse of *adiaphora*, for Satan the abuse of *adiaphora* is a means to a more ambitious end, the aim of making Jesus owe him the gratitude that Satan refused to pay the Son of God in *Paradise Lost*.

Like Comus in *A Mask*, Satan justifies his feast by pretending that partaking will fulfill the law of charity. In offering food to the fasting Jesus, Satan makes a tacit appeal to self-love, since hunger is generally classed among the "[l]awful desires of Nature," as Satan himself points out when strategizing with his demonic council (*PR* 2.230). In addition to invoking self-love, Satan also adapts Comus's argument that consumption is a charitable response to Nature's bounty. When Comus claims that the Lady has a duty to participate in the feast, lest Nature become overburdened (*Mask* 720-36), the Lady counters that Nature would not *have* a surplus if her provisions were justly distributed to all (*Mask* 760-775). Satan avoids this retort by shifting the focus away from Nature's

⁶⁹ Visual and verbal echoes reinforce the connection. Satan appears in a courtly guise that recalls Comus's Charles-like description in *A Mask*. Satan is now "[a]s one in City, or Court, or Palace bred" (*PR* 2.300). When Satan asks if the hungry Jesus would eat "if Food were now before [him] set," Jesus's answer clearly echoes the Lady's refusal of Comus's cup: he will eat "[t]hereafter as [he] like[s] / The giver" (2.321-22). On the other hand, while Satan's sumptuous spread clearly serves a similar purpose as the Comus's luxurious table, it is worth noting that the narrator's description of Satan's feast also recalls the Attendant Spirit's description of heaven, with its more pleasant offerings. Critics have proposed a number of (not necessarily exclusive) interpretations of Satan's feast, not all of which can be given here. To cite just a few examples, it has been seen as a foil for the Communion table (e.g., Martz, qtd. in Hillier 5; Lewalski 217), an image of "the Roman Catholic mass" (Lewalski 217), and an ironic foreshadowing of Christ's spiritual repast at the end of *Paradise Regained* (e.g., Lewalski 218). The feast is somewhat conventional, "a literary temptation" whose details are "familiar from past romances" (Kean 436). Kean sees connections to *A Mask* but focuses on "echoes . . . of the descriptions of Eden in *Paradise Lost*" (440).

needs, toward Christ's. Playing off of Jesus's newly felt hunger and his developing sense of his special status and purpose, Satan inverts the relationship suggested by Comus, claiming that Nature offers the feast out of a sense of duty to Christ. She is, Satan says, "asham'd, or . . . / Troubl'd that" he—"her Lord"—"shoul[d] hunger" (*PR* 2.332-33, 35). Since Jesus's participation in the feast would alleviate Nature's shame, consumption of the banquet would be a charitable (and therefore justifiable) use of these indifferent things (*PR* 2.332-36, 369-76; Stein 91; Fish, *How Milton* 332)..

Accordingly, Satan implies that refusing to eat represents a failure to recognize the indifference of natural resources, comparable to the puritanical form of superstition that binds the Lady in *A Mask*:

What doubts the Son of God to sit and eat?
 These are not Fruits forbidden, no interdict
 Defends the touching of these viands pure,
 Thir taste no knowledge works, at least of evil,
 But life preserves, destroys life's enemy,
 Hunger, with sweet restorative delight. (*PR* 2.368-73)

Satan reasons that, in the absence of an "interdict" to render their use evil in this case, it is permissible and even right to use these (indifferent) dishes, drawing on their natural, life-giving properties to meet Jesus's legitimate physical needs. There even seems to be

some truth to Satan's claims; carefully avoiding superstition, Christ rejects the feast without denying either his hunger or his right to Nature's adiaphoristic provisions.⁷⁰

Since food is indifferent when considered in the abstract, some circumstantial factor must account for the hungry Christ's decision to refrain from feasting. Given the recurrence of similar offers and refusals throughout *Paradise Regained*, it is worth more closely considering Christ's motivation for abstaining in this early instance. Perhaps the most obvious explanation is that, like Comus's table, Satan's banquet is marred by erotic overtones, excessive quantities of food, and overly fancy dishes, raising concerns about licentiousness—more specifically, gluttony and the other lusts of the flesh (*cf.* Kean 436; Ricciardi 144, 198; Dei Segni 166-68). After all, Jesus does “contemn” the food as “pompous Delicacies” (*PR* 2.390), and the satanic feast can be seen as a Miltonic extension of the stones-to-bread temptation, which was often interpreted as a temptation to gluttony and fleshly indulgence (Lewalski, *Milton's* 177, 223). However, feasting itself is not prohibited in either *A Mask* or *Paradise Regained*. Christ even enjoys a salutary banquet immediately following his final desert temptation (*PR* 4.586-93). The danger of license may partly explain his refusal of Satan's feast, but something more than the mere quantity and quality of food seems to be at issue.

Aside from simple gluttony, critics have proposed two other explanations that merit particular consideration. Both reflect the suspicion that Satan's assurances

⁷⁰ Lewalski offers a similar reading of Christ's response (*Milton's* 217-18), but Fish disagrees, maintaining that Christ makes his reply “in the context of Satan's assertions, which he entertains as hypotheses” (“Things” 172). Fish's argument is essentially that that Christ deems derivative both his *and* Satan's right to and power over earthly goods, implying that they both have this power/right only as granted by the Father (“Things” 172). Although there is a sense in which this is true, Fish's argument seems overly precise, particularly in the case of the banquet temptation.

ironically highlight exactly what is *not* acceptable about his offering. First, several scholars have pointed out that the description of the feast in *Paradise Regained* (2.327-28) belies Satan's claim that it is in compliance with Mosaic Law;⁷¹ this violation, the reasoning goes, would render the food no longer indifferent but rather evil. However, as Barbara Lewalski argues, the presence of illicit foods might not, in itself, motivate Christ to refrain from eating (*Milton's* 216). Abstaining on these grounds could suggest that he "subject[s] himself (and his church) to the dietary prohibitions of the Law which he has come to supersede" (Lewalski, *Milton's* 216)—a form of superstition. Whether or not one accepts Lewalski's view of Christ's relationship to the Law, Jesus simply does not mention dietary regulations when he refuses Satan's banquet.

Given that Satan lies about whether the meal contains unclean foods, it is unsurprising that scholars have also questioned his assertion that the food was not sacrificed to idols (*PR* 2.328-29; Lewalski, *Milton's* 216, *passim*; Kean 436). Taken literally, however, the idea that the dishes must be shunned because they have been sacrificed to idols is difficult to support. Neither Jesus nor anyone else in *Paradise Regained* ever indicates that the food has been used in actual idol worship.⁷² Even if it

⁷¹ For instance, see Lewalski (*Milton's* 216, 226) and Kean (436). Lewalski credits Michael Fixler with this observation (*Milton's* 216).

⁷² Milton does not clearly indicate that the food has been sacrificed to idols, as he easily could have done. Even if Milton did explicitly state that the food had been sacrificed to idols, basing Christ's abstention on this fact alone might seem to imply that he was "still subservient to the scruple about eating foods offered first to idols, whereas Paul declares that the Christian is free to eat such things" (Lewalski 216). Moreover, had Milton warned only the reader about the food being tainted, it is not apparent how Jesus—particularly Milton's Jesus, with his strikingly circumscribed knowledge—could be aware of the banquet's history. If he did not know that it was previously sacrificed to idols, he would not be responsible for rejecting it on those grounds, since, as Paul also teaches in 1 Corinthians 10, Christians can purchase meat and attend dinner parties without inquiring as to whether the food has been sacrificed to idols (1 Corinthians 10.25-30). Indeed, the main reason Paul gives for abstaining from food *known* to have been sacrificed to idols is that one should not eat such dishes if doing so would offend someone else's conscience (1 Corinthians

had been, New Testament directives regarding food sacrificed to idols—often invoked in the *adiaphora* debates—portray such food as remaining indifferent; it is to be eaten or not eaten depending on the convictions of the eater, the requirements of charity, and the glorification of God.⁷³ In Jesus’s temptation, there are no “weak” believers present to accommodate, nor does Jesus indicate that he has scruples about the food itself.

The requirement of gratitude, however, does raise concerns, not because the food has been literally sacrificed to idols but because the banquet is hosted by the Enemy. Lewalski makes a similar point in proposing a more plausible explanation for why the meal is idolatrous—a reason closely linked to issues of giving and thanksgiving and one that also applies to Comus’s offerings in *A Mask*, where Jewish dietary laws and the prior use of Comus’s food are not matters of concern. The food offered by Satan is linked to idolatry, Lewalski maintains, precisely *because* “this is the Devil’s table, Paul’s symbol for the apex of idolatry in I Corinthians X:21, ‘Yee cannot drinke the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lords Table, and of the table of devils’” (*Milton’s* 203-04). This reading stretches the sense of 1 Corinthians 10.21,⁷⁴ but Lewalski’s basic claim aptly highlights what is really at issue in the temptation: Christ rejects the feast “simply on the basis of the giver” (Lewalski, *Milton’s* 217),

10.25-30; 8.4-13). Since there is no one else present at Christ’s temptation, this consideration would not seem to apply. Thus, there is little reason to believe that Satan’s feast has been literally sacrificed to idols or that Jesus would know it if it had been, and it appears that Jesus would not necessarily need to refuse the feast on those grounds, even if he did know that this were the case.

⁷³ See, for example, Romans 14.13-23; 1 Corinthians 8.1-13; 10.23-33.

⁷⁴ The problem with this interpretation of Satan’s feast is that, in context, Paul seems to imply that food would be the “the table of devils” (1 Corinthians 10.21, qtd. in Lewalski 204) because it had previously been sacrificed to (demon-supported) idols (1 Corinthians 10.19-20). He simply is not discussing whether a feast actually offered *by* Satan would, as a matter of course, be idolatrous.

because it is “the Devil’s table” (Lewalski, *Milton’s* 203; “Milton” 224; cf. Kean 436).⁷⁵

As already noted, Jesus cites neither unclean foods nor idolatrous associations to explain his refusal. Instead, recalling the Lady’s sentiment that “none / But such as are good men can give good things” (*Mask* 702-03), Christ says that he will partake only “thereafter as [he] like[s] the giver” (*PR* 2.321-22). Even in addressing the issue of gluttony, he rejects not *these* fancy dishes but “*thy*”—that is, Satan’s—“pompous Delicacies” (*PR* 2.390).

Beyond the quantity, quality, and past use of the feast, the deciding factor for Jesus is the identity and disposition of the one who offers it.⁷⁶

Since Jesus is admittedly hungry and since he implies that he does have a right to make use of Nature’s goods (*PR* 2.252; 2.379-82), one might wonder why it matters so much who offers him this sustenance. Tellingly, Milton puts this very question in Satan’s mouth. Anticipating that Jesus will not be fooled by his half-hearted claim that the feast is “Not proffer’d by an Enemy” (*PR* 2.330), Satan asks, “[W]ho / Would scruple” to receive food from an enemy when “with want opprest?” (*PR* 2.330-31). The answer may not be immediately apparent, but the fact that the Tempter himself raises this question suggests its importance. In the context of Jesus’s other trials, accepting

⁷⁵ Kean similarly comments, “This is a dietary ethic where one is defined not just by what one eats but by those from whom one is willing to take subsistence” (436). It should be noted that Lewalski goes on to connect the giver with idolatry (*Milton’s* 217) in the way argued against the previous footnote. In her study of “Milton and Idolatry,” Lewalski similarly maintains that Jesus rejects Satan’s offers because accepting them “as indispensable to the good life or to the achievement of his own role. . . could potentially make idols of them *and him that gave them—in this case, Satan.*” (“Milton” 224, emphasis mine). Stanley Fish makes a relevant claim when he argues that “Christ continually rejects [Satan’s offered goods] *as they are offered*, while being very careful not to condemn them altogether and thus make them, rather than an interior disposition, the source of evil” (Fish, “Things” 175). As will be seen, the giver is one of the primary criteria by which the gifts are judged “*as they are offered*,” although Fish is not primarily interested in this element of the equation (Fish, “Things” 175).

⁷⁶ Medine notes that gifts and gratitude were both traditionally valued more for the disposition of the giver/recipient than for the actual value of the gift or thanks (120). As an evil benefactor, Satan causes a perversion of this relationship.

provision from Satan may be problematic partly because it would imply distrust of the Father (*cf.* Lewalski, *Milton's* 215, 203). It may also give Satan undue “influence” (Kean 440). However, turning to *A Mask* reveals an additional explanation, relevant for all humans but particularly important in view of Satan’s opposition to Jesus as the Son of God. In *A Mask*, the bestial debasement of Comus’s followers vividly illustrates why the Lady must refuse his offerings (*Mask* 65-77). Partaking of Comus’s fare would put her under his power—or worse, rather, since Comus himself seems to be ruled by his appetites. In view of the multiple parallels between *A Mask* and this scene of Milton’s brief epic, it seems likely that Satan’s gifts similarly threaten to put Christ under *his* power. As Satan’s gifts, the foods at the banquet threaten to create a debt of gratitude to him, idolatrously reorienting Jesus’s God-ward gratitude.

Both in the banquet scene and later in *Paradise Regained*, ample evidence supports the view that Satan’s obsessive desire is to give something to Christ. This is particularly evident in Satan’s repeated, frustrated claim that he has the power and right to do so. As noted above, Christ explicitly objects to Satan as an unacceptable “giver” in the banquet scene (*PR* 2.321). Significantly, it is not until Jesus has thoroughly rejected the offered food that Satan makes an extended case for his authority as a giver. Though Satan briefly defends his gift and himself early in the temptation (*PR* 2.27-31), he is initially more interested in redirecting Jesus’s attention toward a different giver. *Nature*, Satan claims, is dutifully offering her goods to “her lord” (*PR* 2.335, 332-36, 369-76); indeed, charity demands that Jesus accept her humble tribute. Nevertheless, Jesus does not lose sight of the fact that that, “[t]hough Satan presents it as nature's free offering,

this banquet is in fact the Devil's table" (Lewalski, "Milton" 224). The Son continues to focus on Satan's attempt to be his giver and "refuses [the banquet] simply as from that source" (Lewalski "Milton" 224). Unwilling to "receive by gift what" is his by right (*PR* 2.382), Jesus recognizes that "thy"—again, *Satan's*—"specious gifts" are "no gifts but guiles" (2.391). Like Comus's "lickerish baits fit to ensnare a brute" (*Mask* 700), Satan's offerings are not what they seem. Only after Christ has thus rejected his gift and repeatedly drawn attention to his attempt to be a benefactor does Satan make a fuller argument for his "power to give" (*PR* 3.393, 394-402). Since the tempting feast vanishes immediately following this tirade (*PR* 3.403-405), it seems clear that Satan's defense is more of a rant than anything else; he does not seriously expect Jesus to buy his argument and accept him as a benefactor.

A similar pattern emerges later in *Paradise Regained*, during the long kingdoms temptation. Almost in passing, Satan claims to have "power" to give when he first offers Rome to Christ (*PR* 4.103-4). However, he does not develop this argument until later, when he is demanding that the Son worship him in exchange for the kingdoms of this world (*PR* 4.154-69). As Lewalski has noted, it is already apparent by this point that Jesus will reject the proposal: "after Christ has categorically refused the kingdoms offered apparently as a free gift," surely "Satan can hardly expect him to accept a new offer of them with the price tag of idolatry boldly attached" (*Milton's* 260; *cf.* 280). Again, Satan's transparency comes as the fruit of despair. Being Christ's benefactor is his secret aim, revealed only in moments of honest frustration over the failure of more appealing temptations.

Satan's efforts to give Christ something touch on the heart of his manipulation of *adiaphora* in *Paradise Regained*. Ever since his rebellion in *Paradise Lost*, Satan has resented the unending debt of gratitude that renders him beholden to the exalted Son of God, who had a hand in his creation and to whom he therefore owes thanks for the gift of existence (*PL* 5.831-45; cf. Medine, 140-01, *passim*). As will be further discussed below, Satan in *Paradise Regained* still resents the Father's claim to glory (*PR* 3.108-120), and presumably he remains at least equally bitter about the exaltation of the Son. Before Satan even begins to tempt Christ, his comments in the demonic council attest to his fear that *this* Son of God may somehow be the same Son of God whom he earlier opposed, the mighty Son who drove Satan and his demons out of heaven (*PR* 1.89-93). Though outwardly various, Satan's many "gifts" are all an attempt to invert the power relations against which he rebelled in *Paradise Lost*, efforts to trick the Son of God into incurring a debt of gratitude to him. The temptations to abuse *adiaphora* are, in other words, Satan's attempt to regain something of what *he* lost in Milton's earlier epic.

5.4 Riches and Rule: "Necessary" *Adiaphora* and Superstitious Idolatry

Satan's offers contain a more or less explicit temptation to use *adiaphora* as though using (or not using) them were necessary in itself. Following Fullwood's terminology, this is a temptation to superstition: if *adiaphora* are "imposed as if they were *in themselves necessary*" they become "*Superstition*" (46). It is also a temptation to idolatry, as Milton suggests in his description of ecclesiastical *adiaphora* in *Of Reformation* (876; cf. Fish, *How Milton*, *passim*). This underlying lure to superstitious

idolatry runs throughout Satan's temptations, but the offer of riches and earthly rule provides a convenient example.⁷⁷

After Jesus has resisted both food temptations, Satan attributes his "temperance invincible" to a commitment to a higher purpose (*PR* 2.408). Shifting his strategy accordingly, Satan frames the rest of the *adiaphora* he offers as necessary for the achievement of Jesus's mission, as defined by the rule of charity and Biblical prophecies. "Great acts," Satan reasons, "require great means of enterprise" (*PR* 2.412)—means such as money, which can buy worldly power. To the contrary, however, Jesus tells Satan,

Riches are needless . . . both for themselves,
And for thy reason why they should be sought,
To gain a Scepter, ofttest better miss't. (*PR* 2.484-86)

Commenting on these lines, Fish emphasizes "the precision with which riches are pushed away but not condemned altogether" (*How Milton* 54-55). While Jesus's "thy" implies that there might be other reasons for which riches *could* be righteously used, riches "are not to be sought 'for themselves,' as a supreme value" (Fish, *How Milton* 54).

Fish's analysis helps clarify the reason why accepting Satan's gifts would result in both superstition and idolatry. It would amount to a superstitious affirmation that using these indifferent things is necessary, as Satan implies. At the same time, it would also be doubly idolatrous. Taking Satan up on his offer would put Jesus in a debt of

⁷⁷ Fish places considerable emphasis on this component of adiaphorism in his reading of *Paradise Regained* (*How Milton* 349-90).

gratitude to him, while also tacitly privileging the offered *adiaphora* above Jesus's reliance on the Father. As Fish explains, "anything sought for itself is a false God and . . . the reason for seeking it—whether it be material comfort, political power, social welfare, or *even love*—is always a bad reason" (*How Milton* 55, emphasis mine).⁷⁸ Of course, the difficulty is that Jesus must resist not only Satan's suggestion that various *adiaphora* are necessary to be used but also the contrary assumption that the proffered *adiaphora* are necessarily evil (Fish *How Milton* 365), lest he fall into the sort of passive superstition demonstrated by the immobilized Lady in *A Mask*.

5.5 The Glory Debate: God-ward Gratitude Vindicated

Since Jesus frequently uses the requirement of gratitude to discredit Satan's claims about "necessary" *adiaphora*, it is perhaps unsurprising that Satan falls to directly attacking gratitude in the debate about glory that opens Book 3. Of course, he does not bluntly begin with an assault on gratitude and glory; Satan starts with a pretended appeal to charity, craftily building off of Jesus's stunning rejection of his earlier offer of riches and worldly rule (*PR* 2.484-86, 3.1-6). Jesus had commented that being a king is more difficult than Satan implied: "the office of a King" lies mainly in bearing "each mans burden," for the sake of "the Publick" (*PR* 2.465, 463). In other words, kingship, like everything else, must be used charitably if it is to be used well. Taking his cue from Jesus's response, Satan weaves the rule of charity into his next temptation. He commends the Son for his "large heart" that "[c]onteins of good, wise, just, the perfect

⁷⁸ See also Lewalski *Milton's* 280; "Milton" 224. Fish aptly comments that "there is only one good reason for positively valuing created things: as either a manifestation of the creator's goodness and glory or as part of a response to the creator's goodness and glory. Any other reason is a bad reason—an idolatrous reason. . . ." (*How Milton* 55).

shape” (*PR* 3.11, 10)—and then he accuses Jesus of being unloving by keeping this greatness to himself (3.21; *cf.* Stein 91; Fish *How Milton* 332). In a reworking of the more sexualized *carpe diem* rhetoric that Comus uses against the Lady, Satan claims that Jesus’s reclusiveness uncharitably “deprive[s] / All earth” of the “wonder” that his deeds would inspire, while also preventing Christ from receiving his fair share of “fame and glory” (*PR* 3.23-25).

After setting up the temptation as a fulfillment of the rule of charity, Satan focuses on perverting the requirement of glory or gratitude. Rather than seeking the Father’s glory in the use of *adiaphora*, Satan wants Jesus to seek his own glory. In language reminiscent of Milton’s earlier poem, “Lycidas” (Flannagan 751, n2), Satan exalts glory as the highest end, “the reward / That sole excites” the purest souls—even those “who all pleasures else despise, / All treasures and all gain esteem as dross” (*PR* 26, 27-28).⁷⁹ In case this positive appeal fails, Satan adds a guilt-trip, again appealing to self-love and the *carpe diem* philosophy of Comus.⁸⁰ Jesus’s “years are ripe, and over-ripe” for achieving glory, Satan says (*PR* 3.31). Nevertheless, like the Lady who is “but young yet” (*Mask* 755), Jesus still has time to repent of his “[i]nglorious” ways (*PR* 3.42). Just as Comus tells the Lady that there is no time like the present to put her youthful body to its proper use, so Satan assures Jesus that he is “yet . . . not too late” for glory (*PR* 3.42; *Mask* 737-55).

⁷⁹ Of course, for Milton’s reader, the echo of Philippians 3.8 underscores the perversity of Satan’s appeal; he asks Christ to place glory on par with the Apostle Paul’s valuation of knowing Christ: “Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Philippians 3.8).

⁸⁰ For example, *Mask* 737-755 and 679-691. Comus’s *carpe diem* rhetoric has often been noted; see, for example, Guibbory (77) and Marcus (“John” 240).

Christ responds by reframing the discussion in more abstract terms, as a debate about the nature of true glory.⁸¹ Through a series of oppositions, he deconstructs Satan's temptation, showing the vanity of the popular military glory that the Tempter espouses. Satan's version of glory depends on the fickle opinions of the ignorant people, who often laud deeds "scarce worth the praise" (*PR* 3.51). The deeds that win this dubious approbation, Jesus implies, are characterized by "ambition, war, or violence" and motivated by a thirst for personal fame (3.90, 100-06). Instead, he maintains, "true glory and renown" come from God (*PR* 3.60), as a reward for "deeds of peace" marked by wisdom, patience, and temperance (3.91-92)—deeds done because they are just, rather than merely to earn glory (3.100-07). As Fish argues, Jesus's analysis of the value of glory confirms its indifference: if "embraced as the 'highest' or 'prime end,' it becomes an idol, and . . . must be rejected," whereas when glory "is something that happens to a man rather than something he actively seeks, [it] can be accepted not as the reward of virtue but as its accidental by-product" (*How Milton* 378).

Satan takes full advantage of Jesus's definition of glory, but before examining his response and its relevance for gratitude and *adiaphora* in *Paradise Regained*, it is worth pausing over the worldly rulers whose fame Christ denigrates. They are conquerors of others who remain enslaved by their own licentious appetites and who are subject, ultimately, to death (*PR* 3.85-87). Nevertheless, they set themselves up as "Gods, / "Great Benefactors of mankind" (*PR* 3.81-82). As self-styled benefactors, the idolatrous worship that they demand presumably includes thanksgiving, but there is no sign that

⁸¹Barbara Lewalski also briefly comments on the reconceptualization of glory in *Paradise Regained* her article on Milton's use of "Genre" (17, 18).

these rulers themselves thank God for their victories or for the pleasures they pursue as they “[r]owl in brutish vices” (*PR* 3.86).⁸² Like Satan, the conquerors are guilty of not only ingratitude but also self-idolatry, and they lead others into idolatry as well. Failing to fulfill the requirement of gratitude in multiple ways, they cannot use *adiaphora* properly at all. In rejecting these rulers and their practices, then, Christ clearly dissociates himself from licentiousness and the idolatry that it breeds. Less obviously, this move also aligns him with Stoicism. As Barbara Lewalski explains,

Christ’s evaluation of glory . . . is evidently closely patterned on those Stoic-Christian texts in which Alexander, Caesar, Scipio, and Pompey served as illustrations of the false renown conferred by the multitude, the false glory attending upon military conquest for world dominion, and the impiety of seeking divine honors. (*Milton’s* 239)

In fact, as Satan’s introduction to this temptation implies, it appears that Jesus has been behaving much as one might expect a Stoic to behave, with seeming adherence to classical *contemptus mundi* in his rejection of “all pleasures” and his devaluation of “[a]ll treasures and all gain” (*PR* 3.28-29; Lewalski *Milton’s* 245; cf. Fish, *How Milton* 13, *passim*). This is important to note because, already, Satan is laying the groundwork for the learning temptation that is yet to come—although, as will be seen below, he will again be disappointed when Jesus shows just how far he is far from classical Stoicism and from superstitious, stoical ingratitude.

⁸² It is not even clear that they thank other gods; “[o]ne is the Son of *Jove*, of *Mars* the other” (3.84), but the focus of the worship seems to be on the conquerors, rather than their purported fathers. It is interesting to note that Milton uses the same verb to describe their brutish indulgence and that of Comus’s followers, who “roule with pleasure in a sensual stie” (*Mask* 77).

In the glory temptation itself, however, the debate takes a different turn, as Satan lashes out over Christ's final comment on true glory—"I seek not mine [own glory], but his / Who sent me, and thereby witness whence I am" (*PR* 3.106-07). Differentiating himself from Satan and all of the self-worshipping conquerors of this world, Christ's comment at once affirms his submission to the Father and suggests his divinity through the closing "I am" statement.⁸³ Moreover, Jesus not only rebuffs Satan's offer but, knowingly or not, dredges up the Adversary's bitter memories of the angelic fall, itself a direct response to the Father's command that all should glorify the Son (*PL* 5.772-802, 853-71).

Unable to contain himself, Satan "murmur[s]" a bitter reply (*PR* 3.108; *cf.* Flannagan 754, n.17). He at first tries to continue the temptation of Christ, insinuating that his failure to seek glory casts doubt upon Jesus's claim to be the Son of God (*PR* 3.109-11; Lewalski, *Milton* 221, 247). However, reflecting his personal obsession with questions of divine right and creaturely obligation, Satan's argument quickly devolves into an attack on the Father's demand for glory. In what is essentially a sophisticated temptation to distrust, Satan appropriates Christ's description of true and false glory and attempts to show, point by point, that the Father's glory—so essential to Jesus's conception of proper use—is no glory at all, even by the Son's own standards.

Jesus first objected to Satan's proffered glory on the grounds that it comes from the ignorant masses (*PR* 3.47-56). Tacitly accepting the critique, Satan argues that the

⁸³ The concluding "I am" statement may be suggest deity, as Ricciardi has noted with reference to another instance in *Paradise Regained* (66-67, *cf.* 188). It is of course outside the scope of this paper to analyze in detail exactly what such a claim would mean within Milton's somewhat unorthodox Christology.

Father himself is similarly indiscriminate. He demands “Glory from men, *all men good or bad, / Wise or unwise*” (*PR* 3.115-16; emphasis mine). This raises additional problems in light of Jesus’s claim that true glory is won “[b]y deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent, / By patience, temperance” (*PR* 3.91-92). As Satan sees it, the Father’s glory-hunger appears both intemperate and violent: “glory he receives / *Promiscuous from all Nations,*” even “*exact[ing]*” glory from “his foes pronounc’t” (*PR* 3.119, 121 754, emphasis mine). Most significant of all, Satan also picks up on Jesus’s qualification about motive. Jesus specifically stated that

if for fame and glory aught be done,
Aught suffer’d . . .

The deed becomes unprais’d . . . (*PR* 3.100-02, 104).

At least, the one who does it loses personal glory (*PR* 3.103-04). Satan, again ostensibly conceding the point, objects that the Father “seeks glory, / And for his glory all things made” and maintains (*PR* 3.110-12). Jesus’s own criteria for true glory seem to undermine the creator’s right to creation’s praise, apparently supporting Satan’s rebellious resentment over his creaturely debt of gratitude (*PL* 4.42-57; qtd. in Medine 140-41). Indeed, Satan even obliquely references the angelic revolt when he complains of the Father’s demand for glory from all and sundry, “*exact[ing]*” glory even the demons, “his foes pronounc’t” (*PR* 3.121).

When Satan finishes his tirade, Jesus “fervently” corrects his half-truths (*PR* 3.121). Tackling the most fundamental issue first, Christ affirms that the Father’s role as creator does give him the right to demand glory from “every soul” (*PR* 3.125). The

creator's status simply *is* different from that of created humans (and presumably created angels, too). After all, mere creatures “of [their] own / Ha[ve] nothing”—nothing, that is, except “condemnation, ignominy, and shame” (*PR* 3.134-36). Of course, these sad possessions are the result of the Fall; they are not the direct product of creation.⁸⁴

Rather than mere glory-hunting on God's part, Jesus portrays creation as an unequivocal blessing for creatures, intended

to shew forth [the Father's] goodness, and impart

His good communicable to every soul

Freely. . . (*PR* 3.123-25).

This brief statement undercuts several of Satan's chief grounds for complaint. Unlike earthly conquerors who vanquish others and then force their captives to worship them, the Father's expectation of glory comes after he has first blessed his creatures—and that with the considerable gifts of existence and (in the case of rational souls) the opportunity to participate in his goodness. What Satan views as an intemperate desire for glory from all is, in the Son's account, simply a reasonable expectation that creatures will make grateful return for these gifts, using all *adiaphora* to the glory of the God who gave them. Indeed, since God's creatures have nothing else *to* give him, allowing them to make this return through grateful use can even be seen as a way of dignifying them (Medine 122).

⁸⁴ Fish offers a different perspective on Jesus's defense of the Father's right to glory. In Fish's view, God is “[t]he model” for the Son's prescription for human glory: just as humans only acquire real glory if it “simply befalls” them while they are “act[ing] in a higher service,” so also, Fish argues, God's glory “is incidental to his action,” rather than the motivation of his action (*How Milton* 377). However, this view does not address the clear distinction the Son draws between fallen creatures and the Creator in this passage.

Besides, Jesus reasons, “glory and benediction” are nothing else but “thanks, / The slightest, easiest, readiest recompence” (*PR* 3.127-28)—hardly an onerous burden, as Satan himself admits in a moment of solitude in *Paradise Lost* (*PL* 4.41-57). When Jesus further argues that creatures unoccupied with thanksgiving “would likeliest render / Contempt instead,” he has hit on a key element of Satan’s rebellion, in which Satan and his rebels abused the indifferent gift of existence by refusing to use it to the glory of the Son. Whether or not Milton’s Jesus has direct knowledge of *that* event, he clearly is aware of the central role that ingratitude played in humanity’s Fall, and his retrospective judgment echoes the Father’s prediction in *Paradise Lost*: sinful man is fundamentally an “ingrate” (*PR* 3.139; *PL* 3.97; Medine 140)—“despoil’d,” in part, by Satan himself (*PR* 3.320).

Jesus concludes with a comparison that underscores again how wrongheaded Satan’s notions of God are. The ingratitude of humanity led to the loss “of all true good,” yet God is so full of “bounty” and “grace”—so contrary to the usurious miser that Satan envisions⁸⁵—that “he himself to glory will advance” those creatures who rightly seek his glory, “not thir own” (*PR* 3.139, 142-44). Of course, such a contrast between divine blessing and punishment cannot but rankle with Satan, who is dumbstruck “[w]ith the guilt of his own sin” (*PR* 3.147). As the narrator is careful to explain, “he himself / Insatiable for glory had lost all” (3.148).

⁸⁵ It is interesting to observe that Satan’s view of God as a miserly, usurious lender of good recalls the perspective of the unfaithful steward in the parable of the talents (Matthew 25.14-30), which Flannagan notes has been studied by Dayton Haskin as an influence on “Milton’s spiritual autobiography” (Flannagan 85). See also Donnelly, *passim*.

Clearly, Jesus's speech hits a nerve, and its force may be compounded by one additional detail in his retort. Although Christ is primarily intending to affirm the Father's right to glory based on his role as creator, the language of his defense also gestures toward the role of the Son in creation: the Father's "*word* all things produc'd" (*PR* 3.122, emphasis mine). Medine's observation about a similar use of "word" in *Paradise Lost* also applies here; Christ "invokes the scriptural tradition of the Son as the creative word, by whom 'the mighty Father made / All things, ev'n'" Satan, in his former glory (Medine 142; *PL* 5.836-37). Of course, as has been mentioned, Satan "flatly den[ies] the angels' status as creatures of God" in *Paradise Lost* (Medine 142), claiming self-creation to avoid admitting that he owes obedience and glory (or gratitude) to the Father and his exalted Son (*PL* 5.35-39, *PL* 5.860; Schoenfeldt 375; Medine 141-43).⁸⁶ Faced with Jesus's articulate and well-supported explanation of the Father's (and, implicitly, the Son's) rights over creation, it is no wonder that Satan again becomes speechless (*PR* 3.145-46). The swiftness with which he changes the subject (*PR* 3.149) confirms that Christ's rebuttal has hit close to home.

⁸⁶ It might be argued that Jesus's own submission to the Father in *Paradise Regained* may reflect not only the orthodox idea of kenosis—"[t]he self-renunciation of the divine nature, at least in part, by Christ in the incarnation" ("Kenosis")—but also Milton's personal Christology, which is commonly taken as subordinationist, based particularly on certain passages of *De Doctrina Christiana* (e.g., *De Doctrina* 206, 215). As McColley explains with reference to *Paradise Lost*, "By accepting creature hood—refusal to do which is Satan's first sin—the Son has become worthy of his pre-eminence and able to be both the agent of the creation already prophesied and the redeemer of it after the Fall" (171). See also Lehnhof (*passim*) regarding Milton's view of deity and creation.

5.6 The Kingdoms Temptation: Gratitude and the Interpretation of Scripture and Charity

Satan's next lure, the kingdoms of this world, also fails—unsurprisingly. After all, Milton's Jesus has already eschewed kingship in the abstract when rejecting riches (*PR* 2.484-86). This second temptation to political power, however, is somewhat different. Most obviously, it is different because Satan gives extensive detail about the force and luxury of the offered kingdoms, perhaps another attempt to encourage licentiousness. For present purposes, though, a much more important difference is that in this set of temptations Satan repeatedly builds his appeals on the false claim that accepting his gifts will uniquely enable Jesus to fulfill the law of charity and/or the prophecies of Scripture, the external version of the rule of faith.

As will be seen in more detail below, Jesus is able to refute Satan on both counts, largely by testing every proposed use of an *adiaphoron* against the requirement of gratitude. In keeping with the view of Scripture that Milton proposes elsewhere,⁸⁷ Jesus internalizes the rule of faith, making clear that what guides his use of *adiaphora* is his inner conviction of how and when the Father wants him to act out the external Scripture's prophecies about his Messianic reign. This reign will be experienced as charity, Jesus implies, only by those who themselves abide by the criteria of proper use—particularly the requirement of gratitude—because only such inwardly reformed humans can properly receive Christian liberty. In contrast, the would-be recipients of the charitable deeds proposed by Satan are enslaved by idolatry or ungrateful licentiousness,

⁸⁷ See, for example, *De Doctrina* 587; cf. Fish, *How Milton* 71, *passim*.

confirming that it would not (yet) be right to use the means Satan proposes for their deliverance. The requirement of properly oriented gratitude thus proves key, again, to discerning distortions of the other criteria for right use.

The first example of this sort of exchange immediately follows the glory temptation. Even if Jesus does not want to pursue glory, Satan reasons, he has already been “ordain’d” to reign as the Davidic king (*PR* 3.152). To that end, it is necessary that Jesus free Israel from the “*Roman* yoke” so that he will be able to rule over his people (*PR* 3.168). Satan has three reasons for suggesting this, corresponding to the three criteria for proper use of things indifferent. Jesus should free Israel from Rome for the sake of his “Zeal of [his] Fathers house” (God’s glory), out of concern for his “Duty to free / [his] country from her Heathen servitude” (charity), and as a means to ensure the fulfillment of Scriptural prophecies about Jesus’s “endless reign” ([external] rule of faith) (*PR* 3.175-78).

Jesus addresses charity and gratitude more directly later in this temptation sequence, but his immediate reply focuses on Satan’s distortion of the letter of Scripture, the external counterpart to the internal Scripture on which the law of faith is based.⁸⁸ Reflecting Milton’s view of the external Scripture as *adiaphora*, to be interpreted and even overruled by the Scripture written on believers’ hearts (*De Doctrina* 587-90), Jesus

⁸⁸ As Fish comments with reference to a later passage in *Paradise Regained*, the fact that “the devil can also quote Scripture . . . means . . . that Scripture, like anything else, can be perverted to a bad use” (*How Milton* 384). For Milton, Fish explains, “[i]t is not the Scriptures but the Scriptures as they are filled with the spirit of God that are sacred; read in the absence of that spirit, by a (literally) unfaithful interpreter, they become dead letters” (*How Milton* 384).

replies to Satan by rejecting his reading of Biblical prophecies.⁸⁹ In fact, Satan's misinterpretation is one that Milton's Jesus considered and rejected before beginning his desert sojourn. Earlier in *Paradise Regained*, Jesus remembers how, as a child, he had a mind "[s]erious to learn and know, and thence to do / What might be publick good" (*PR* 1.203-04). His heart hoped to do "heroic acts," but it took some thinking before Jesus figured out which sort of acts would be best. At first, he wanted

To rescue *Israel* from the *Roman* yoke,
Then to subdue and quell o're all the hearth
Brute violence and the proud Tyrannick pow'r,
Till truth were freed, and equity restor'd (*PR* 1.217-20).

This is very much what Satan has in mind; indeed there is even a verbal connection in the references to "the *Roman* yoke" (*PR* 1.217; 3.168). However, after Jesus's mother revealed his divine Father, he returned to the Scripture,

again revolv'd
The Law and Prophets, searching what was writ
Concerning the Messiah, to our Scribes
Known partly, and soon found of whom they spake
I am. . . (*PR* 1.259-63).

⁸⁹ Although the internal rule of faith is less prominent in Jesus's temptations, it is alluded to several times in *Paradise Regained*. Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert (*PR* 1.189), and he describes his own mission as initiating a fuller communication of God's will: "God hath now sent his living Oracle / Into the World, to teach his final will" (1.460-61). Moreover, the Spirit who leads Jesus will now write the Scripture on the hearts of believers, imparting to them the internal Scripture that allows for better and willing obedience: God "sends his Spirit of Truth henceforth to dwell / In pious Hearts, an inward Oracle / To all truth requisite for men to know" (1.462-64).

As a result, he came to a new, inward conviction that entirely transformed his conception of his earthly mission. Rather than a quick ascent to political power, his

... way must lie

Through many a hard assay even to the death,

E're [he] the promis'd Kingdom can attain,

Or work Redemption for mankind, whose sins

Full weight must be transferr'd upon [Christ's] head. (*PR* 1.263-67)

When Satan urges Jesus to immediately deliver Israel from Rome so as to fulfill the prophecies about his reign, Jesus holds fast to this conviction about the nature of his mission, privileging the internal rule of faith over what might appear to be the surface meaning of the external Scripture (*PR* 3.188-97).⁹⁰

Jesus relies on both the internal rule of faith and the requirement of gratitude in his reply to Satan's next manipulation of charity, here defined more specifically in terms of Jesus's aforementioned "Duty to free / [his] country from her Heathen servitude" (*PR*

⁹⁰ This does not stop Satan from making a related argument after showing Jesus some of the empires of the world, this time calling Scripture into doubt:

... thy Kingdom though foretold
By Prophet or by Angel, unless thou
Endeavor, as thy Father *David* did,
Thou never shalt obtain; prediction still
In all things, and all men, supposes means,
Without means us'd, what it predicts revokes. (*PR* 3.351-56)

Satan's goal is to insinuate that using the *adiaphora* he offers is *necessary* for the fulfillment of Scripture—another temptation to superstition. However, for Milton's readers, the passage may also underscore the susceptibility of the external law to manipulation and distortion, since Satan's description of David's rise to the kingship is quite contrary to the Scriptural account. Even after David had himself been anointed by a prophet as the next king of Israel (1 Samuel 16), he repeatedly chose *not* use available means to take King Saul's life (1 Samuel 24, 26)—despite Saul's attempts to kill him (e.g., 1 Samuel 19). Instead, David waited to assume kingship until Saul was dead (2 Samuel 1-2). If Satan can so twist Scripture as to make David a precedent for seizing kingship by force, this further confirms that even the external Scripture is a thing indifferent, susceptible to abuse. Fish notes that, in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, Milton treats the Bible itself as a thing indifferent (Fish 192), rejecting the view of "extreme literalist[s]" in favor of a charity-based standard (qtd. in Fish 192).

3.175-76; cf. Stein 91; Fish, *How Milton* 332). Even if Jesus manages to attain the Davidic throne, Satan argues, he is bound to face interference from the Roman or Parthian armies (*PR* 3.357-62). He “must make” one of the two his ally (3.363); Satan suggests the latter, superstitiously telling Jesus that *only* with Parthia’s help can he achieve the freedom of the ten tribes of Israel, a necessary precondition for meaningful rule as the prophesied Davidic king (*PR* 3.371-74).

Jesus’s response addresses both the alleged necessity of seeking means to fulfill prophecy and the proposal that he should charitably deliver Israel right away. Rejecting Satan’s offered means but resisting the temptation to overreact in the opposite direction, Jesus affirms that he *will* appropriately “endeavou[r]” to gain the kingdom, when his time comes (*PR* 3.399). However, presumably based on his understanding of the Messianic prophecies, he trusts that even then he will not need the means that Satan offers—“politic maxims” and the “cumbersome / Luggage of war” (3.401-02).

Having avoided both active and passive superstition with regard to the fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus next uses the requirement of gratitude to show that Satan’s appeal to charity relies on a false understanding of the rule of love. The Tempter’s suggestion again touches on an interpretive crux that Jesus resolved for himself before the temptations began. As seen above, Jesus recalls early in *Paradise Regained* how he once planned to heroically deliver Israel and take over world power, putting down injustice and ending oppression (*PR* 1.217-20). However, he soon realized that it would be even better “first / By winning words to conquer willing hearts” (1.220-22)—and then to “subdue” those who remain “stubborn” (1.226). In other words, the would-be recipients

of Christ's charity must first be changed within, if they are to receive his rule *as* love. This principle informs Jesus's response to Satan's suggestion that he immediately free Israel. "As for those captive Tribes," Jesus says, "themselves were they / Who wrought their own captivity," when they turned to idols instead of worshipping only the true God (*PR* 3.414-15, 416). Despite being disciplined with exile, the Israelites continued in idolatry, as have their descendents (3.420-26). As a result, Jesus implies, they are not only unworthy of deliverance but actually incapable of receiving—using—liberation properly (3.427-32). Until God changes their hearts, if they were restored to freedom in their land they would likely just return to the idols they worshiped before (3.427-40), rather than glorifying God for and with their liberty.

Jesus makes a similar point with reference to licentious ingratitude when Satan offers him Rome. The Tempter seeks to ensnare Jesus partly by eliciting charity for the Roman people. After listing the glories of Rome (*PR* 4.44-90), Satan contrasts this greatness with the character of the current Roman emperor, who is elderly, heirless, and evil, hidden away on an island where he is ruled by base passions (4.91-97)—far from the ideal ruler that Jesus envisioned earlier in *Paradise Regained* (2.466-72). With Satan's help, the Enemy argues, Jesus could oust this vicious absentee ruler, thereby liberating the noble Romans, "[a] victor people" (4.103), from the oppression of a debauched emperor and his corrupt proxy (4.91-95). With typically Miltonic emphasis on the internal, Jesus points out that he could instead bring inward deliverance: Rather than dethroning the wicked emperor, he asks, "what if I withal / Expel a Devil who first made him such?" (4.28-29). Leaving the emperor to "Conscience" (4.30), however,

Jesus focuses most of his reply on the larger question of whether he should deliver the Romans at all. They may have been “a victor people” before (4.103, 132), but they are “now vile and base, / Deservedly made vassal” as a consequence of their failure to rule over their own passions (4.132-33). Jesus asks,

What wise and valiant man would seek to free
 These thus degenerate, by themselves enslav’d,
 Or could of inward slaves make outward free?” (4.144-46)

Like the idolatrous ten tribes of Israel, in their present state the ungrateful Romans are not only unworthy but also incapable of properly using any political freedom that Jesus might give them.

Throughout the kingdoms temptation Jesus resists both active and passive superstition by refusing Satan’s gifts yet affirming his right to what Satan offers. In an interesting twist at the end of this temptation sequence, Jesus questions *Satan’s* right to that which he seeks to give away. Reasoning that the Tempter can only offer what has been “giv’n” to him by God—or, more accurately, what God has “[p]ermitted” him to temporarily steal (*PR* 4.182-83)—Jesus marvels aloud at how Satan can be “so void of fear or shame” as to offer the kingdoms “to me the Son of God, / To me my own” (*PR* 4.190-92). If the Father allowed Satan the kingdoms that the Tempter offers Christ, “how fairly is the Giver now / Repaid?” (*PR* 4.187-88). In using *adiaphora* to tempt Jesus, Satan is himself being ungrateful, failing to fulfill the requirement of gratitude.

Suggesting growing certainty about his Adversary's identity,⁹¹ Jesus finds this ingratitude unsurprising. In what appears to be an allusion to the angelic rebellion, he tells his would-be benefactor, "[G]ratitude in thee is lost / Long since" (*PR* 4.88-89). Soon after, Satan overtly demands worship in exchange for the kingdoms (4.189-90), demonstrating that his ingratitude is tied to idolatry and that this was the underlying aim of his earlier temptations (Lewalski, *Milton's* 280). Such manifest ingratitude and idolatry leave Christ with no doubt about his Tempter's identity: "That Evil one, Satan for ever damn'd" (*PR* 3.194).

5.7 The Learning Temptation: Stoical Ingratitude and Self-Idolatry

The jig is up, or so it seems. But Satan has another trick up his sleeve. If the Son is too sharp to accept *his* gifts, perhaps Satan can trick him into rejecting the Father's blessings. This sort of passive superstition would prevent active charity and thanksgiving for creation, as seen in the case of the Lady. Moreover, as suggested by Eve's perverse *contemptus mundi*, though such stoical ingratitude might look like virtuous self-control, it would in fact evince a bitter, ungrateful love for earthly goods (*PL* 10.966-1019), coupled with idolatrous self-reliance (*cf.* Lewalski, *Milton's* 245-47). Jesus refuses to worship Satan, explicitly or implicitly, through the abuse of *adiaphora*, but will he fall for Satan's own characteristic sins—ingratitude for gifts and improper confidence in himself?

Satan's suggestion of stoical ingratitude comes in the midst of the learning temptation, a Miltonic interpolation whose full complexity lies outside the scope of this

⁹¹ Jesus seems to have a general idea of his Tempter's identity as early as Book 1 (*PR* 1.355-56), but his previous references to Satan's identity could apply to any fallen angel.

study. On one level, it is about “the concept of wisdom—whether its substance is natural learning or revelation, whether its source is God or man” (Lewalski, *Milton’s* 290). This general concern relates the learning temptation to the question of whom Christ will accept as his benefactor; Jesus’s affirmation of the supremacy and sufficiency of “Light from above, from the fountain of light” (*PR* 4.289) makes clear where he stands. However, equally important to the brief epic’s representation of proper use, giving, and thanksgiving is Satan’s offer (and the Son’s rejection) of Stoic philosophy. In his litany of philosophical schools, Satan mentions Stoicism only in passing, and “the *Stoic* severe” (*PR* 3.281) sounds much less impressive than Socrates, “[w]hom well inspir’d the Oracle pronounc’d / Wisest of men” (*PR* 4.275-76). Nevertheless, in responding to this temptation, Christ shifts the emphasis. He dispatches Socrates in a mere two lines (*PR* 4.294-95), while his rejection of Stoicism extends for nine to nineteen lines, depending on how broadly one interprets his later remarks (*PR* 4.300-19).⁹² As Lewalski suggests, these differences in Jesus’s rejection of different philosophical schools raise a key interpretive question: Why does “Christ renounc[e] so categorically all the realms of knowledge, *sometimes in a tone of matter-of-fact objective analysis, sometimes in a tone of harsh denunciation*” (*Milton’s* 282-83, emphasis mine)?

The brief epic’s concern with the requirement of gratitude helps make sense of Christ’s varied response, at least with reference to his markedly vehement rejection of Stoicism. As briefly noted above, Christ appears very much like a Stoic, at least

⁹² The first nine lines most clearly refer to Stoicism; the subsequent lines might be taken as referring to classical philosophy generally. They clearly at least include Stoicism in their frame of reference, since stoicism has been repudiated at length immediately before, and it is possible to interpret the entire passage (4.300-19) as referring to Stoicism.

superficially. Just as Jesus “contemn[s]” Satan’s feast and other offerings (*PR* 2.391, *cf.* 3.448), the Stoics purportedly “contem[n] all / Wealth, pleasure, pain or torment, death and” even “life” itself (*PR* 4.304-05). As Lewalski observes,

Christ’s behavior in totally rejecting all Satan’s offers, and the terms he uses to describe that rejection—his stated ‘aversion’ to the riches and realms (II.457-58), his frequent references to the noted Stoic exemplars of temperance and self-conquest, Satan’s observation that he is ‘unmov’d’ by hunger—seem to relate Christ to the Stoic wise man in the rigorous formulation of that ideal which owes much to Cynic asceticism. (*Milton’s* 245)

Inconspicuously appended to the end of Satan’s list of philosophical schools, Stoicism is a threat precisely because of these parallels (*cf.* Lewalski, *Milton’s* 246-47). It represents an almost imperceptible, but profoundly significant, deviation from Christ’s path of grateful submission to the Father. Accordingly, drawing attention to what Satan perhaps sought to obscure, Jesus’s extended repudiation of the Stoics highlights how greatly he in fact differs from them, with special emphasis on how their attitudes toward *adiaphora* fail to meet the requirement of gratitude and the glorification of God.

Both Jesus and the Stoics seem to condemn temporal goods, for instance, but they do so for different reasons and to different degrees. In theory, an ideal Stoic condemns the world completely, an absolute denial of both the pain and the pleasure brought by indifferent earthly things. On one level, this is problematic because it prevents thankfulness for blessings. Why would creatures glorify the creator if they do not

appreciate creation? Worse still, Jesus's comments suggest that Stoics' thankless repudiation of earthly goods is hypocritical; their "tedious talk is but vain boast" (*PR* 4.307). Like Eve's false *contemptus mundi*, Stoics' asceticism simply masks a frustrated love for earthly goods. Ultimately, they reject these blessings only because they cannot always have them on their terms, not because using them would somehow violate the guidelines for proper use. In contrast, Jesus never pretends insensitivity to earthly things, whether pleasurable or painful. Although he rejects all of Satan's gifts, Christ "does not repudiate absolutely any of the goods offered, or deny them to be goods" (Lewalski, *Milton's* 247). As becomes particularly evident in the closing banquet, Jesus remains willing to (thankfully) enjoy many of the goods that he refuses to take from Satan, provided that they come from the proper Giver (*cf.* Fish, *How Milton* 347).⁹³

Jesus and the Stoics also diverge drastically with reference to the source and goal of their seemingly similar contempt for the world. Christ has all "the endurance and self-conquest of the Stoic moral hero," but this "self-conquest is not grounded upon his own self-sufficiency" (Lewalski, *Milton's* 246). Instead, as evident in his persistent rejection of Satan's quick-fix plans, Christ's self-governance is based "upon his trust in God" (Lewalski, *Milton's* 246). He accordingly seeks to obey the Father in each circumstance, discerning his will by jointly considering the internal rule of faith, the rule of charity,

⁹³ More than one scholar has commented on this. Lewalski, for instance, writes, Christ's victory is proclaimed and celebrated by the angelic host, and, as if in reward, all the goods which he refused to receive at Satan's hand are given or promised to him in a more exalted form—instead of diabolic agents disguised as ministrants of Nature he has angelic ministrants, instead of a carnal banquet a heavenly one, instead of satanic recognition of his divinity an affirmation by God's angelic choir of his divine sonship and mediatorial role, instead of a false earthly kingdom an assurance of a true and immortal kingdom. (*Milton's* 114)

and the requirement of gratitude. It is far otherwise with the Stoics. They set themselves up as “all possessing / Equal to God” (*PR* 4.302-03). Moved by “Philosophic pride,” they look for virtue merely “in themselves” (*PR* 4.300, 315). Rather than aligning them with Christ, Stoics’ self-reliance recalls Satan’s assertion of self-creation in *Paradise Lost*, a form of ingratitude that tends toward self-idolatry. Indeed, the Stoics’ attitude toward glory confirms that their ingratitude has idolatrous implications. While the Son seeks the Father’s glory (*PR* 3.106-07), Stoics “to themselves / All glory arrogate, to God give none” (*PR* 4.315-16). Beyond failing to thank God, the Stoics go so far as to make accusations against him, portraying him as “regardless quite / Of mortal things” (*PR* 4.318-19). This is the very sort of distrust that Satan has been suggesting to Jesus all along.

It is also a claim that seems particularly apt to offend the Son of God incarnate, whose hunger pains have already proven him far from “regardless quite / Of mortal things” (*PR* 4.318-19).⁹⁴ However, Satan is not alone in thinking that Jesus might fall prey to stoical ingratitude. Critics commonly read Milton’s Jesus as “cold” (Flannagan 712), and some have even claimed that he *is* a Stoic.⁹⁵ Jesus’s extended rejection of the Stoics may be Milton’s way of emphatically denying such a misreading of Christ’s persistent nay-saying.

⁹⁴ Ricciardi offers an extended meditation on the implications of the incarnation in *Paradise Regained* (*passim*).

⁹⁵ Lewalski notes that “H. J. C. Grierson, E. M. W. Tillyard, and others have ascribed Stoicism to Christ” (*Milton’s* 242)—although she does not herself endorse this view (243). More recently, Margaret Kean describes Jesus as stoic (442), albeit in passing.

5.8 A Balancing Act and a Feast

In the steeple temptation, Satan again manipulates Scripture, and Jesus again resists him.⁹⁶ The encounter does not add substantially to the image of proper use developed earlier in *Paradise Regained*. However, Jesus's position in this scene does memorably capture some of the difficulty involved in properly using *adiaphora*. As Fish comments, Jesus's "station is uneasy because it is precarious; that is, it requires balance. It is thus a perfect visual emblem of what has been required of the Son all along" (*How Milton* 386-7). In a way, Jesus's balancing act corresponds to the children's final dance in *A Mask*: it conveys the vigorous effort required for proper use, while also providing an image of triumph over temptation.

Further confirming Jesus's conquest over the superstition of stoical ingratitude, as well as all other forms of abusing *adiaphora*, *Paradise Regained* concludes with a licit feast (*PR* 4.587-593).⁹⁷ Recalling the Attendant Spirit's blessing of Sabrina (*Mask* 922-37), Jesus's replenishment is accompanied by angels' "spontaneous hymns of thanksgiving" (Kean 442; *PR* 4.593-635; cf. Lewalski, *Milton's* 114). Still more clearly, their hymn echoes the Attendant Spirit's exultant song before the children's parents, in

⁹⁶Fish points out that Satan's appeal to Scripture in the pinnacle scene plays on Jesus's practice of having recourse to Scripture:

As recently as line [4.]175, the Son has turned away from a temptation with the formula 'It is written,' and when Satan appropriates the same formula here he seems to be inviting the Son to reaffirm an allegiance he himself has repeatedly proclaimed. This is not simply the temptation to presumption (although it is surely that), but the temptation of Scripture. (*How Milton* 384)

However, as seen above, the same could be said of Satan's earlier comments about the need to fulfill prophecies regarding the Davidic kingship, which clearly allude to the Scripture. One might even argue that Milton's Satan's manipulation of Scripture in the steeple temptation is less significant than these earlier examples, since the Biblical accounts of Jesus's temptation record Satan explicitly twisting Scripture in the Temple temptation but not in the other two temptations (Matthew 4.6-7; Luke 4.9-12).

⁹⁷ There is some biblical basis for this in Matthew 4.11, but Milton expands greatly upon the biblical hint of a feast, and he further emphasizes it by providing a negative counter-feast earlier in the brief epic.

celebration of their “*triumph . . . / O’re sensual Folly, and Intemperance*” (*Mask* 974-75). In response to Christ’s more perfect use of *adiaphora*, the angels sing “Heavenly Anthems of [Christ’s] victory / Over temptation, and the Tempter proud” (*PR* 4.594-95)—glorifying the Son who has faithfully defended the Father’s right to thanks.

6. CONCLUSION

This study began with the question of why Milton would emphasize gratitude, as he clearly does in *A Mask* and *Paradise Regained*. It is not an idle question since, as Achsah Guibbory argues, “[a]ll of Milton’s writing was driven by an educative, redemptive purpose” (73). Why did Milton—why might we—deem gratitude so important? The foregoing analysis suggests that at least one answer to this question lies in the relationship between gratitude and the proper use of things indifferent.⁹⁸ Indeed, Milton not only foregrounds gratitude but also vividly illustrates the consequences of its perversion, whether in Comus’s self-indulgent ingratitude, the Lady’s stoical ingratitude, or Satan’s attempts to provoke idolatry by giving *adiaphora* to Jesus. As has been shown, these vices are closely allied to the common abuses of the doctrine of things indifferent, making gratitude a particularly important criterion for securing the proper

⁹⁸ Although gratitude’s role in adiaphorism seems to be the primary reason for its prominence in Milton’s work, there may be other reasons for its appeal as well. For example, emphasizing gratitude is consistent with Milton’s tendency to internalize (Keeble 129): he himself categorizes gratitude as part of internal worship (*De Doctrina* 656), and this is consistent with the Judeo-Christian tradition surrounding gratitude, as summarized by Medine. In the Hebrew Scripture, thanksgiving becomes “the supreme form of sacrifice,” thereby “shift[ing] the sacrificial act from the external to the internal” (Medine 128). Later, the “essential inwardness of gratitude” received further confirmation from Christian theologians such as Thomas Aquinas, who “locat[ed] the source of gratitude within the individual and in his personal responses” to gifts received (Medine 121). Moreover, as an inward virtue, gratitude not only caters to Milton’s preference for interiorizing but also supports individual freedom and choice. Because gratitude is fundamentally an interior disposition, it “can never be compelled externally” (Medine 120), nor can it be prevented by external hindrances such as poverty (122). In fact, gratitude is so essentially tied to freedom that it is meaningful if—and only if—“experienced and expressed willingly and freely” (Medine 120). Given Milton’s known emphasis on free will and the individual’s control over his or her own spirituality, it is unsurprising that such a virtue would appeal to him. As an individualized, internalized virtue, gratitude can be practiced by Jesus alone in the desert, by the Lady bereft of her brothers—and presumably also by Milton, even when faced with loss of sight, loved-ones, and political hopes. Medine marvels that Milton could stay grateful in times of such deep distress (117), yet one might also argue, based on Medine’s own findings, that gratitude should particularly appeal to those who lack the material and social resources with which to repay their benefactors. As Medine argues, gratitude is “empowering” even for those in dire straits, because the one who gives thanks to God enacts “a mirror image of God’s actions toward mankind,” achieving “ultimate freedom” by becoming “godly—godlike” (122).

use of *adiaphora*. Particularly in Satan's attempts to subvert gratitude in *Paradise Regained*, Milton's literary representations of gratitude also complicate this seemingly straightforward criterion, showing that, like the rules of charity and faith, it requires careful interpretation and application. This effort is worthwhile, however, because a well developed understanding of the requirement of gratitude enables one to recognize ungrateful distortions of the more frequently manipulated criteria of faith and love. Thus, in the context of early modern controversies surrounding the use of things indifferent, Milton's "remarkable . . . fascination" with gratitude (Medine 119) begins to make more sense.

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