



PROJECT MUSE®

"Till Body Up to Spirit Work": Maimonidean Prophecy and
Monistic Sublimation in *Paradise Regained*

Philippa Earle

Milton Studies, Volume 62, Number 1, 2020, pp. 159-189 (Article)

Published by Penn State University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/mlt.2020.0000>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/748963>

“Till Body Up to Spirit Work”: Maimonidean Prophecy and Monistic Sublimation in *Paradise Regained*

PHILIPPA EARLE

University of Exeter

ABSTRACT This article argues that central to understanding *Paradise Regained* is Milton's Hebraic monism. By amalgamating the philosophy of Maimonides on prophecy and active intellect with his own, Milton logically answers key questions which, for scholars of the poem, remain unsettled: why does the Son enter the wilderness in the first place? How does he survive here for 40 days, and how, precisely, is paradise regained? For Milton, the Son's obedience and intellectual progress effects the transmutation of his body and heightens the capacity of his active intellect. As an intellectually perfect being, the Son experiences what Maimonides terms “veridical dreams,” and this achievement is essential both to his survival and to his regaining paradise. Scholars hitherto have confined Milton's monism to *Paradise Lost*. This article shows that Maimonides offers new insights to the philosophy, and posits the significance of it for unlocking *Paradise Regained*.

KEYWORDS Maimonides, *Paradise Regained*, monism, dreaming, prophecy, Hebraism

There is little consensus about the genre of *Paradise Regained* (1671), or what its title means, and Milton's primary concern here has been notoriously elusive. However, in her standard study, *Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning and Art of "Paradise Regained"* (1966), Barbara Lewalski makes a particularly illuminating observation: “Christ will be in the process of regaining, as Milton expressed it in *De Doctrina Christiana*, the divine understanding which he previously possessed by means of the teaching of the Father.”¹

DOI: 10.5325/MILTONSTUDIES.62.1.0159

Milton Studies, Vol. 62, No. 1, 2020

Copyright © 2020 The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA

Understanding and reason, in mainstream seventeenth-century thought, are the “principall and most noble sences of the soul.”² In *Paradise Regained*, the development of the Son’s understanding (an attribute of his soul), is pertinent to Milton’s animist materialism, but the poem has not been explored in relation to Milton’s philosophy. Neither has it been scrutinized in the light of Milton’s Hebraism, which is central to the articulation of his monism here. In *Paradise Regained*, Milton draws on the teachings of the influential Jewish philosopher Moses ben Maimon (1138–1204), commonly known as Maimonides, to make sense of Jesus’s experience in the wilderness, yet the poem is entirely consistent with the monist ontology of *Paradise Lost* (1667/74).

The Hebraic quality of Milton’s monism has not been of particular interest to scholars of his materialism, and is absent from the recent discussions in *Milton, Materialism, and Embodiment: One First Matter All* (2017).³ Noel Sugimura’s claim that Milton “resists classification as either Aristotelian or Platonic, dualist or monist,” likewise sets aside the poet’s Hebraism.⁴ At the same time, studies of Milton’s Hebraism tend to emphasize the “conflicted manner” of his engagement with Jewish learning, and his “ambivalent, shifting, and sometimes discomfoting” attitude toward Jews, over correspondences between Hebraic philosophy and Milton’s own.⁵ Investigation of the latter has fallen largely to Jason Rosenblatt, who argues for a Hebraic monism in *Paradise Lost* and *De Doctrina Christiana*, and draws attention to Milton’s identifying “nine texts in *Tanakh* featuring the word *nephesh*, in which ‘all properties of the body are attributed to the soul as well’ (YP 6:318).”⁶ Rosenblatt also posits a Hebraic monistic reading of *Samson Agonistes* (1671), owing to “the humanity of the Chorus, its capacity for fellow-feeling, and its considerable spiritual and intellectual development,” as well as Samson’s “monistic union of thought and feeling.”⁷ That *Paradise Regained* centers on the development of Jesus’s self-understanding is well known, but I want to extend the discussion of Milton’s monism, and his Hebraism, by arguing that the Son’s progress toward “the divine understanding which he previously possessed” hinges on a monistic concept of spiritual and intellectual perfection, one that Milton expresses in *Paradise Lost*, and which is shaped, in *Paradise Regained*, by Maimonides’s teaching on prophecy in his *Guide of the Perplexed* (c. 1190).

Many of Milton’s contemporaries engaged the work of Maimonides. Jacob Dienstag’s survey records that *The Guide of the Perplexed*, in particular, is referred to in works by at least 11 prominent natural philosophers and theologians.⁸ Richard Popkin finds that most intellectuals with an interest

in theology read Maimonides and that *The Guide of the Perplexed* appears in many private libraries of seventeenth-century Christian scholars.⁹ Milton himself frequently cites Maimonides's *Mishneh Torah* (c. 1170–80) in his *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio* (1651), and in *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce* (1643), he refers approvingly to Johannes Buxtorf's Latin translation of Maimonides's *Guide* (1629).¹⁰ The latter is a volume known to have been in Milton's library, or to have been read by him, according to Jackson Campbell Boswell.¹¹ However, Sharon Achinstein questions the assumption that Milton read all of the texts that he cited, given his "tactical" use of material in support of his polemical arguments.¹² Scholars now generally agree that Milton received much of his rabbinic knowledge from the works of John Selden, but Selden's favorite source, owing to the Hebraic tradition of respect for and even veneration of him, is Maimonides.¹³

In his early twentieth-century study, Edward Chauncey Baldwin identifies numerous details of *Paradise Lost* that have extrabiblical, Semitic origins, including among the works of Maimonides, and he asserts that these sources were known by individuals "much less well read than Milton."¹⁴ We know that Milton was proficient in Hebrew, that he taught Hebrew in his private school, and that he also instructed his nephews in Syriac and Aramaic dialects, the latter being the dialect in which the midrashic books were written.¹⁵ But if the poet's knowledge of the *Guide* runs deeper than his "tactical" ability to cite it, we might expect to see its particular influence on the poetry. In fact, as early as the 1950s, J. L. Treicher pointed out that the Fall of Adam in *Paradise Lost* is directly derived from Maimonides's *Guide of the Perplexed*. "Milton conceives of Adam's Fall," he writes,

not in the usual Christian manner as a lapse from the state of innocence to the knowledge of sin, but, like Maimonides, in chapter two of the first book of [the *Guide of the Perplexed*], as the overpowering of reason by passion:

Reason in Man obscur'd, or not obeyed,
Immediately, inordinate desires
And upstart passion catch the government
From Reason. (*PL* 12.86–89)¹⁶

In the *Guide*, as Ruth Birnbaum observes, Maimonides explains that Adam was endowed with perfect and complete intellect, but after his disobedience he lost part of his rational faculty.¹⁷ If the Fall in *Paradise Lost* depends on the principle that with Adam's "original lapse, true liberty / Is lost,

which always with right reason dwells" (12.83–84), it makes sense, as I will argue, that the effects of perfect intellect and reason are central to Milton's *Paradise Regained*.¹⁸

For Maimonides, humans have the ability to acquire knowledge because their intellectual faculty is "conjoined" with the divine intellect, an attribute of God himself.¹⁹ This is why Genesis says that man was created "*in the image of God and in His likeness*," the Hebrew word for "image" (*selem*), meaning, not visible shape, but "the essence of a being."²⁰ So man is created in God's image, according to Maimonides, because he is endowed with intellect. The philosopher is generally thought to rationalize Aristotelian philosophy with the Bible, but more specifically, Aristotle provides for Maimonides a system of knowledge that embodies the supreme achievements of the human intellect when operating at its highest possible level.²¹ Aristotle suggests that, through intellectual activity, individuals may transcend the limitations of human nature, and from this philosophical position, it seems, stems Maimonides's view that one's share in divine providence is "proportionate" to one's intellectual powers.²² This Aristotelian principle underlies Maimonides's teaching on prophecy and the Son's achievement in *Paradise Regained*.

For Maimonides, a perfect individual is one who has superior rational and moral qualities, and a perfect imaginative faculty; he has prepared to become a prophet, a rare achievement that is possible for human nature (*Guide* 2:362). But only by God's will can one become a prophet, "only someone perfect and superior to the utmost degree," and "there must be a training and a perfection, whereupon the possibility arises to which the power of the deity becomes attached" (362). Such a person must be naturally prepared to become a prophet, by their "original natural disposition" (362). The true reality of prophecy, according to Maimonides, consists of an overflowing from God "through the intermediation of the Active Intellect, toward the rational faculty in the first place and thereafter toward the imaginative faculty" (362). For Maimonides, this is the highest degree of perfection that may be reached by the human species (369).

In the seventeenth century, as for Maimonides, the function of an Aristotelian active intellect in mental processes appears to be taken for granted, but philosophical debates over its precise role and nature were ongoing. For John Selden, the active intellect is the means by which the precepts of natural law, assumed to come from God, become known to man, and in book 1 chapter 9 of his magisterial *De Jure Naturali et Gentium* (1640), he begins with the Jewish answers to the question of how this occurs.

According to G. J. Toomer, Selden's preferred Jewish authority happens to be an anonymous philosophical introduction to Maimonides, which explains that precepts common to all men, such as honoring one's parents, are intellective precepts, perceived by the active intellect. The author uses a simile, Toomer explains, which Selden adopts, "that the Intellectus Agens makes the human mind active in the same way as the rays of the sun make human sight active," and Selden interprets this to mean that "the Intellectus Agens is either God or the 'ultimate intelligence' which is the agent of God (which may be called an 'angel')." ²³ The concept derives from Maimonides's *Guide*, where the philosopher states that all formative forces are angels, including the active intellect (2:263–64).

We will see that, in *Paradise Regained*, as a hypostatic being, Milton's Jesus is intellectually and substantially realizing his own divine potential, and that this has implications for the possibilities of his intellect. Maimonides does not want to put readers of the *Guide* "on the track of the secrets of the universe, . . . but to give them an inkling of the true nature of things." ²⁴ Milton therefore develops important aspects of Maimonides's teaching on prophecy and active intellect by amalgamating them with his monism. Recognizing how these concepts are explored in *Paradise Regained* not only offers a new dimension to our understanding of Miltonic materialism, but also helps us to resolve key issues in the later poem that scholars have either neglected or been unable to deal with: why does the Son enter the wilderness in the first place? How does he survive here for 40 days? And how, precisely, is paradise regained?

OBEDIENCE, SELF-AUTHORING, AND ENTERING THE WILDERNESS

What it means to be a spiritual being in *Paradise Lost* sheds light on the most perplexing aspects of *Paradise Regained*. In the universe of the former poem, as Stephen Fallon observes, the bodily substance of beings becomes "more fleshly or more spiritual" according to their relationship with God. ²⁵ The angel Raphael teaches that God

created all
Such to perfection, one first matter all,
Endued with various forms, various degrees
Of substance, and in things that live, of life;
But more refined, more spiritous, and pure,

As nearer to him placed or nearer tending
 Each in their several active spheres assigned,
 Till body up to spirit work, in bounds
 Proportioned to each kind. (5.471-79)

The vital importance of process here is signaled by the repeated adverb “nearer” and the verb “tending.” While “placed” and “assigned” suggest determinism, living things exist in “active spheres,” by which Milton emphasizes dynamism and independence. Spiritual beings are “nearer tending” God, that is, developing, or moving toward a “more refined” substance.

The nature of a being’s “tending,” in *Paradise Lost*, corresponds directly to its level of obedience, a notion that finds foundation in Maimonides’s *Guide*. The key discussion is Adam’s expulsion from paradise, which Maimonides interprets in light of Job 14:20, “*He changes his face and Thou sendest him forth*” (*Guide* 1:26). Owing to the etymological roots of “face” in Arabic and Hebrew (it derives from the words for “tending” and “to turn”), Job’s phrase indicates to Maimonides that “when the direction toward which man tended changed, he was driven forth,” the “punishment corresponding to his disobedience” (26). At this point, “Reason [is] in Man obscured,” for Maimonides, as it is in *Paradise Lost* (12.86). After the Fall, Milton’s Adam and Eve experience physiological and perceptual changes, for example, in their sight and sleeping (11.412-14, 9.1044-45).²⁶ But if humans are constantly obedient in Milton’s universe, Raphael suggests that the tending toward God in spirituality may effect two profound instances of transmutation:

time may come when men
 With angels may participate, and find
 No inconvenient diet, nor too light fare:
 And from these corporeal nutriments perhaps
 Your bodies may at last turn all to Spirit,
 Improved by tract of time, and winged ascend
 Ethereal, as we, or may at choice
 Here or in Heav’nly Paradises dwell;
 If ye be found obedient. (5.493-501)

All substance is created to perfection, “more spiritous, and pure” (5.475) when closer to its divine source, and so the proposition that men may “participate” with angels in a quality of food that will prove “nor too light”

indicates the existence of spiritual, or angelic food, which is presumably the same “celestial food, divine” consumed by the Son at the end of *Paradise Regained* (4.588, the implications of which I will return to).²⁷ Moreover, it will “perhaps” be possible, Raphael suggests, not only for the heavenly food of angels to be transmuted by human digestion, but also for the substance of “Your bodies” to “turn all to Spirit.” If Adam and Eve are “found obedient,” they may finally “ascend / Ethereal” (5.498–99), like angels, or dwell in earthly or heavenly paradises “at choice” (5.499). Raphael’s teaching about the reward for obedience invites us to take seriously the implications of God’s words regarding the Fall. Adam and Eve, he says, are “authors to themselves in all” (3.122).

That Adam and Eve are “authors to themselves” is a principle consistent with Milton’s moral scale of materiality, but the correspondence has been insufficiently acknowledged by scholars.²⁸ Marshall Grossman reads the phrase as metaphor, which leads him to conclude that a “rhetorical reversal” takes place, whereby providence becomes the author, and free beings the readers of their life stories.²⁹ In the context of a monistic universe, however, to which a spectrum of materiality is integral, we need to think about *literal* implications. God’s words point to the agency that Adam and Eve have in a process of ongoing self-development, or creation. It is a process that is stimulated by free will and moral judgment, and which, according to the manner of their “tending,” has physiological consequences.

The Latin antecedents of “author”—from *auctor* (writer, progenitor), derived from *auctus* (magnified), which is the past participle of *augere* (to increase)—hint at what I propose is the role that Adam and Eve have in their own spiritual augmentation.³⁰ Their level of spirituality literally is proportionate with their obedience, and therefore, as their fallen experiences suggest, so, too, are their intellectual capacities. Unlike Adam and Eve, the Son, in *Paradise Regained*, is resolutely obedient, and his self-authoring is crucial. While Adam was “made out of the dust,” the Son of God has been formed by what Milton believes is “the hypostatic union,” the union of the divine and human natures in the hypostasis of Christ.³¹ He was “brought forth out of [God’s] substance” (OM 8:133). And yet, the Son’s essence, Milton insists, is not shared with God, but “proper to himself” (OM 8:151, 153). We will see that, combined with Milton’s exploration of Maimonidean prophecy, the concept of bodily mutation when “nearer tending” toward God offers a solution to how Jesus survives in the wilderness *and* how paradise is regained. The universe of *Paradise Regained* corresponds to that of *Paradise Lost*,

and in such a universe, as the words of Raphael indicate, when humans are “found obedient” (5.501), their bodily natures change.

To begin with the question of *why* the Son enters the wilderness, though, we need to examine the level of spirituality that he already possessed. Milton insists in *De Doctrina Christiana* that God is “inaudible, just as he is invisible” (OM 8:172). Yet, as he recalls what he has learned about himself so far, the Son remembers that at his baptism,

The Spirit descended on me like a dove,
And last the sum of all, my Father’s voice,
Audibly heard from heaven, pronounced me his,
Me his beloved Son. (1.282–85)

Maimonides explains that whenever the Bible says that man heard speech from angels, or from God, “this did not occur in any other way than *in a dream or in a vision of prophecy*” (*Guide* 2:386). Prophets experience varying degrees of prophecy, he writes, and the ninth degree “consists in the prophet’s hearing speech *in a vision*” (2:401, 396). The “alighting of the prophetic inspiration upon the prophet,” he explains, in the Scriptures “was termed *descent*” (1:41). So his witnessing the descent of the spirit suggests that the Son is developing intellectual perfection, a necessary attribute of prophecy. Peter, James, and John hear the voice of God when Jesus is transfigured, and in forbidding them to speak of it until “the son of man rise again from the dead,” in Matthew’s account, Jesus calls it “the vision” (17:9). The experience of Peter, James, and John may therefore be read as an example of God’s declaration in Numbers: “If there be a Prophet of the Lord among you, I will be known to him by a vision, *and* will speak unto him by dream” (12:6). The Geneva gloss states, “These were the two ordinary means,” and Luke says that the men who heard God’s voice after the transfiguration were “heavy with sleep” (9:32). Most medieval Jewish philosophers, however, emphasize the superior status of Moses among the prophets, since the Torah singles him out as the only person to whom God has spoken without an intermediary. God says that he will speak to Moses “mouth to mouth, and by vision, and not in dark words, but he shall see the similitude of the Lord” (“so far as any man was able to comprehend,” the Geneva commentators add [Num. 12:8]). The notion is pivotal to Maimonides’s theory of prophecy because it marks Moses as “the sole exception” to all other prophets, uniquely able to hear God’s word (*Guide* 2:403). Maimonides asserts that “what has been apprehended by [Moses], . . . has not been apprehended by anyone before him nor will it be apprehended by anyone after him” (1:123).

That Milton's Jesus in *Paradise Regained* "Audibly heard" the inaudible voice of God suggests that this "last" sign (at least), did not come to him in a prophetic vision (l.284, 283). In fact, Yefet ben 'Eli (fl. 960–1005), whose commentaries were well known and recognized by rabbinical exegetes, explains that the expression, "mouth to mouth," by which Moses is said to hear God speak, signifies "direct auditory revelation."³² In *Paradise Lost*, Milton tells us that the Father "to his Son audibly spake" (7.518). The distance between God and the Son in both poems hints at Milton's Arianism, but hearing God "Audibly" speak at his baptism also suggests to us that, as antitype to Moses, the Son has acquired the hitherto unmatched ability of that supreme prophet, and is progressing in the direction of his former spiritual nature. His ability to hear and understand God's inaudible "pronounce[ment]" (l.284) is a consequence both of the Son's intellectual (and spiritual) perfection, and his obedience, which, etymologically, is the capacity to *hear* and *heed*, from the Latin *oboedire*, "to listen to," and in biblical terms, is "to have enlightened ears that hear and eyes that see with faith (for example, Matthew 13:16–17)."³³ As Jesus says, hearing God's words was the means "by which I knew . . . that I should no more live obscure," that is, hidden, but also, "unenlightened" (l.286–87).³⁴ His intellectual and spiritual development, commensurate with his obedience, re-endsows the extraordinary capacity to hear that the Son possessed in heaven. His aural attribute is rooted in his monistic tending toward God, and the corresponding bodily transmutation of the Son in *Paradise Regained*, we will see, reaches a climax when he dreams of the prophets. The rarefaction of his physical body by sustained obedience and intellectual progress heightens his perceptiveness, in terms both of his hearing God's words, and of his self-understanding, and it is ultimately because of the latter that he enters the wilderness in the first place.

Both poet and protagonist are "prompted" to act by divine inspiration: Milton invokes "Thou spirit who led'st this glorious eremite / Into the desert" to "inspire, / As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute" (l.8–9, 11–12). But what Lewalski observes is the Son's "emerging understanding of his nature and his mission" becomes the momentum behind his journey.³⁵ He

walked alone, the spirit leading
 And his deep thoughts, the better to converse
 With solitude, till far from track of men,
 Thought following thought, and step by step led on,
 He entered now the bordering desert wild. (l.189–93)

In suggesting that the Son is drawn toward the wilderness to “converse / With solitude,” Milton seems to develop Maimonides’s idea of the prophet as a perfect solitary, referring not to the immediate sense of solitude as loneliness, or remoteness, but to the fact of the Son being sole, or unique (*Guide* 2:372; *OED*, *n*, 1b). Milton’s habit of using words both in their English and Latinate senses is well known, and by his use of “converse” here, the poet signals that both walking and the Son’s “deep thoughts” will “better” enable him to live with, or dwell with his exceptional nature (a concept, we will see, that proves surprisingly literal). Referring to the Homeric notion that the self is constituted in the physical body, Ryan Hackenbracht has recently observed that walking in *Paradise Lost* is “a physical register for the growth or decline of a character’s self-knowledge.”³⁶ He finds that Adam and Eve’s walking, for example, is a means to actualize the couple’s transformation “all to Spirit” (5.467). Adam reiterates Raphael’s information, stating, “In contemplation of created things / By steps we may ascend to God” (5.511–12), and, according to Hackenbracht, while Adam has in mind the “intellectual rigour” necessary for his spiritual progression, this is also “a literal statement.”³⁷ The steps Adam and Eve must take hinge on Milton’s animist materialism, Hackenbracht suggests, because Adam intends to obey by using his intellect and by walking in the garden.³⁸

In *Paradise Regained*, the progress of the Son’s walking also appears proportional to that of his self-understanding. Upon entering the wilderness, we are told, “His holy meditations [he] thus pursued” (1.195). Involving physical movement (to go in pursuit), as well as meaning to follow the course of in the imagination, the verb *pursued* (emphasized by its placement in the line here) signals a correspondence between the Son’s intellectual seeking and his wandering into the wilderness. It underscores the sense that the Son’s walking manifests the progress of his thoughts: “Thought following thought, and step by step led on” (1.192). The role of spirit in both movement and thought is accepted even by the non-monist La Primaudaye, who writes that, in the process of understanding, “the soul worketh by [‘internall sences’] in their places, almost after the same manner it doth in divers kindes of her natural faculties and vertues.”³⁹ The Son says that he was led into the wilderness “by some strong motion” (1.290–91), by a sense of agitation in his mind or body. A man who is qualified to become intellectually perfect, Maimonides says, “should be elevated step by step,” either by someone who directs his attention, or by himself, and when he achieves this, “a certain thing is effected” according to what was impressed in his nature when he was formed (*Guide* 1:71, 2:345). As Hackenbracht

suggests, meditative walking is the means by which Adam may transform “all to Spirit” (5.497). Mark 1:12 describes how the Spirit “driveth” Christ into the wilderness, and for the Geneva commentators, “the divine power claddeth [*sic*] Christ . . . with a new person.”⁴⁰ Inspired to act, the Son enters the wilderness of *Paradise Regained* with “the spirit leading / And his deep thoughts,” because he is in the process of realizing—intellectually and materially—his divine potential. From this activity, we will see, the Son ultimately acquires the kind of co-creative capacity that he formerly possessed in heaven.

As Milton explains in *De Doctrina Christiana*,

At another time [the holy spirit means] the father’s power and virtue, especially that divine breath which creates and fosters all things: in which way many interpreters, both ancient and more recent, understand that verse Gen. 1:2: *the spirit of God brooded*. There, however, the son seems rather to be understood, through whom the father is so often said to have created all things. (OM 8:247)

For Milton, the spirit of God that brooded in Genesis is *the Son*, a notion that has not received adequate attention. The passage above sheds significant light on how Milton represents Genesis 1:2 in *Paradise Lost*. Here, we can infer, it is the Son’s “brooding wings” that facilitate the infusion of “vital virtue” into unformed matter (7.235–36), and so it makes sense that it should also be the Son to whom Milton appeals for intellectual vitality:

And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
 Before all temples th’ upright heart and pure,
 Instruct me, for thou know’st; thou from the first
 Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
 Dove-like sat’st brooding on the vast abyss
 And mad’st it pregnant: what in me is dark
 Illumine. (1.17–23)

The muse of *Paradise Lost* has been identified variously by scholars; as the Holy Spirit, as the Son of God, as God himself, and even as all three.⁴¹ Milton is clear that his muse is heard. He follows its “voice divine / . . . above th’ Olympian hill” (7.2–3), and just as the voice of the Son is necessary to mediate that of God to Adam and Eve after the Fall (10.95, 108, 119), so the Son, Milton says, “is the Word by which God is audible” (OM 8:271). If

the Holy Spirit is addressed in *Paradise Lost*, one must accept (as Alastair Fowler does), that this is the case “despite *De Doctrina* i 6, YP vi 294–5 [OM 8:265–67] judging invocation of the Holy Spirit unbiblical.”⁴² One must also overlook Milton’s statement on the subject that “it is through the son that we approach the father” and from the Son that the Holy Spirit is sent (OM 8:267, 251).⁴³ If the Son is the spirit invoked in book 1 of *Paradise Lost*, the notion of him as muse is supported by the invocation of book 3, where Milton addresses the “offspring of Heav’n first-born,” who was created before the sun and heavens, and who, “at the voice / Of God, as with a mantle didst invest / The rising world of waters dark and deep” (3.9–11). The creative force of book 3, like the dove image of book 1 (and 7.235), is imagined to have covered the abyss like a cloak and invested it with vitality. In Raphael’s account of creation, the Son “gave effect” to what “th’ Almighty . . . spake” (7.174–45). The Son emerges from heaven in his chariot as “The King of Glory in his powerful Word / And Spirit coming to create new worlds” (7.192–209), and after circumscribing the universe, the Son is suggested to be “the Spirit of God” through whose “brooding wings” the world was made, just as Milton understands him in *De Doctrina Christiana* (7.235; OM 8:247).⁴⁴

The Son is “the first of created things, through whom all the rest were then made, just as much in heaven as on earth,” and he facilitates Milton’s poetic creativity (OM 8:131). In *Paradise Regained*, as we saw, Milton urges “Thou spirit who led’st this glorious eremite / Into the desert” to “inspire, / As thou art wont, my prompted song else mute” (1.8–12). The spirit who leads the Son in the poem is accustomed to inspiring Milton to write because it is the spirit of God, which the poet receives from the Son in heaven (OM 8:271). Milton’s Jesus cannot mediate the spirit to himself, but facilitation is not necessary. Incitement to action by the spirit of the Lord constitutes Maimonides’s first degree of prophecy (*Guide* 2:396), and while prophets experience varying stages of insight, by the time the Son is led into the desert he has reached a level of intellectual perfection by which he not only has seen the symbol of the dove at his baptism but also has heard God’s voice by direct auditory revelation. Milton insists in *De Doctrina* that nothing was conferred on Jesus at his baptism (OM 8:251); the poet’s depiction of the event in *Paradise Regained* points to the emergence of the kind of intuitive intellectual connection between Father and Son that existed in heaven (*PL* 3.171). In fact, Satan begins to tempt the Son on account of the admission that “his growth now,” in virtue, grace, and wisdom, “multiplies my fear” (1.67–69).

For Milton, the Son is the spirit that brooded on the waters in Genesis, but he is also “the Word and supreme prophet” (OM 8:253). The image of the spirit brooding in *Paradise Lost* uses the reproductive senses of “brooding” and “pregnant,” but creation is also an *intellectual* conceiving. When Sin “combined / In bold conspiracy” with Satan, we are told, she “sprung” out of his head in a grotesque literalization of creative intellect (2.750–51, 758). Mental and materially generative actions of conceiving appear, in this universe, to coalesce; Death is “conceived” in Sin’s womb, and even Eve’s fortune appears inextricable from her intellectual misjudgment: “Thy sorrow I will greatly multiply / By thy conception” (2.766; 10.193–94). That creation is both material and intellectual is precisely why the Son is Milton’s muse (“what in me is dark / Illumine” [1.22–23]).

As well as to incubate, to brood is to meditate upon something, or contemplate with feeling. The Son broods in both senses: incubating before his creative action in *Paradise Lost* and meditating before it in *Paradise Regained*. His brooding comes to signal the anticipation of a creative act, and through it, Milton constructs a typology. The protagonist of *Paradise Regained*, at his baptism (1.282–85), is pronounced Son of God under a symbol that matches his “Dove-like” presence at the creation of the universe. And this is because *Paradise Regained* centers on the Son’s *self-creation*, as a result of which, I will show, paradise is restored. With the gradual realization of his divine potential (commensurate with his obedience), the Son’s bodily nature changes. *Paradise Regained* shows us that this “perfect man” (1.166) is also “author” to himself (3.122).

DREAMING, SURVIVAL, AND REGAINING PARADISE

For Maimonides, Moses is unique among the prophets, because he attained a level of perfection and understanding of God, which meant that, when he was “with the Lord forty days and forty nights” on Mount Sinai, “*he did neither eat bread nor drink water*. [Exod. 34:28]. For his intellect attained such a strength that the gross faculties of the body ceased to function” (*Guide* 2:620). Because of his “nearness to Him,” Moses was able to apprehend and to achieve “union” with God (2:623–24). Shlomo Pines explains that, for Maimonides, “this prophet had attained the union with the Active Intellect that al-Fārābī [870–950], in one authoritative work, supposes to be impossible.”⁴⁵ It is from al-Fārābī, however, that Maimonides takes the view that “forms emanating from the Active Intellect are received not only by the human mind but also by matter and the physical bodies.”⁴⁶ The imaginative

faculty, in the perfect mind of a prophet, was “supposed to transform intellectual concepts into sensible images and thus to enable man endowed with the appropriate gifts to have veridical dreams and, in the waking state, prophetic visions.”⁴⁷ *Paradise Regained* reveals Milton’s thinking through the monistic implications of this notion, and of Moses’s survival on Mount Sinai, for his Jesus.

While “Satan appears to do all the acting,” Lewalski argues, “it is in Christ’s consciousness, not Satan’s, that real development and change takes place.”⁴⁸ As the hero of *Paradise Regained*, the Son’s quest is to undergo “just trial ere I merit / My exaltation,” and the realization of “In what degree or meaning” he is the Son of God literally is compatible with the epic tradition (4.196–97, 516–17). The Son’s understanding (and obedience) becomes materially manifest; it causes the “tending” (5.476) of his substance toward the more spiritual state of his pre-incarnate self. The spiritual perfection the Son achieves also has an important bearing on why Milton frequently refers to the Book of Job in the poem (not just to suggest its significance as typological and brief epic model, as scholars generally assume). Even though the Jewish tradition is divided on whether Job actually lived, he is understood as the protagonist to become an advanced spiritual being, precisely as Jesus becomes in *Paradise Regained*: “The Law of God I read, and found it sweet,” he says, “and in it grew / To such perfection” (1.207–9). The Son has become intellectually perfect in the Maimonidean sense, characteristics of which are evidenced by what happens in his dreams.

The few analyses of the Son’s dreaming offered by scholars suggest that it is incidental to the plot of *Paradise Regained*. Perhaps this is why his dreams appear not to have received much attention since the 1970s. For J. B. Broadbent, Jesus’s dream is a temptation, or at least a commentary on temptation, because appetite, in the poem, is always associated with external enticement.⁴⁹ Don Cameron Allen notes that the Son’s “dreams suggest a hope of divine intervention,” while Mary Ann Radzinowicz finds that “Milton invented the dream episode to exemplify Jesus’s sense of mission represented in John 4:34” (“Jesus said unto them, My meat is that I may do the will of him that sent me, and finish his work”).⁵⁰ Barbara Lewalski argues that the dream primarily conveys the Son’s self-identification with Moses and Elijah as types: “in his dream Christ has already toyed with the notion that he might be supplied like Elijah but he has already concluded that God is able to sustain him without food despite his hunger.”⁵¹

Dreaming, however, is the very means by which, Milton tells us, Jesus survives in the wilderness.

Under the hospitable covert nigh
 Of trees thick interwoven; there he slept,
 And dreamed, as appetite is wont to dream,
 Of meats and drinks, nature's refreshment sweet;
 Him thought, he by the brook of Cherith stood
 And saw the ravens with their horny beaks
 Food to Elijah bringing even and morn,
 Though ravenous, taught to abstain from what they brought;
 He saw the prophet also how he fled
 Into the desert, and how there he slept
 Under the juniper; then how awaked,
 He found his supper on the coals prepared,
 And by the angel was bid rise and eat,
 And eat the second time after repose,
 The strength whereof sufficed him forty days;
 Sometimes that with Elijah he partook,
 Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse. (2.262–78)

The biblical episodes that the Son recalls *seem* to have typological relevance. God's provision of food to Elijah, in the first instance, depends upon the prophet's trust in God; God commands, "hide thyself in the river Cherith," and by the beaks of ravens Elijah is provided with food and drink before the famine (1 Kings 17:3–6). By implication, the Son should emulate Elijah's trust in God and prove himself like Daniel, who ate pulse for 10 days instead of the king's meat, on account of which "God . . . gave Daniel understanding of all visions and dreams" (Daniel 1:17). However, the second provision of food to Elijah occurs when "he went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree, and desired that he might die" (1 Kings 19:4). The Bible recounts how, "as he lay and slept . . . an Angel touched him, and said unto him, up and eat," which he did, before returning to sleep, and we are told that he "walked in the strength of the meat forty days and forty nights" (1 Kings 19:5–8). Elijah in the wilderness awakes from sleep to eat food that is presented to him by God.

Curiously, Elijah's experience matches that of Milton's Adam after his creation, but it is significant that Adam first perceives God's gift in a dream.

Each tree
 Loaden with fairest fruit that hung to the eye
 Tempting, stirred in me sudden appetite
 To pluck and eat; whereat I waked, and found
 Before mine eyes all real, as the dream
 Had lively shadowed. (8.306–11)

In paradise, there is a seamless fusion between Adam's dream vision of the fruits presented to him by God, and his perception of their material existence in waking reality. A parallel phenomenon occurs after Eve's creation; she is perceived first by Adam in a dream, but he wakes to "behold her, not far off, / Such as I saw her in my dream" (8.481–82). This is because *reality itself*, in this universe, is also a material spectrum, comprised of parts, and differing by degrees. Even the Satanically induced dream is difficult for Eve to distinguish from waking reality. She reflects that she "dreamed, / If dreamed, not as I oft am wont" (5.31–32). In the fallen world, Adam and Eve's disobedience leads to perceptual changes in both their sight (9.412–14) and sleeping (9.1044–45), as we saw, as well as in their dreaming, which becomes a "conscious" experience (9.1050). After the Fall, Milton suggests that the parts within the whole (the dream world, or spiritual reality, and waking, earthly reality) become more clearly perceivable. At stake is a model of priority monism, which is "equivalent to the classical doctrine that the whole is prior to its (proper) parts."⁵² Theodore Scaltsas explains that in Aristotle's philosophy of form, it is possible for parts within whole forms not to be substantially related; in such cases, the identities of the related parts are preserved, rather than subsumed within the whole.⁵³ The idea logically justifies the changed relationship between spiritual and earthly reality after the Fall and, in turn, helps makes sense of what it means for paradise to be regained.

In contrast to the experiences of Adam and Elijah, Milton's Jesus finds no food before him when he wakes: "all was but a dream, / Fasting he went to sleep, and fasting waked" (2.282–84). But the key to Jesus's survival is provided as we read on. In Milton's reporting of the Son's dream vision, it becomes apparent that line 76, "The strength whereof sufficed him forty days," refers both to Elijah *and* to Jesus, because it continues: "Sometimes that with Elijah he partook, / Or as a guest with Daniel at his pulse."⁵⁴ That the Son consumes and is sustained by eating food that is present in spiritual

reality, while his body is present in earthly reality, we will see, has profound implications. Most important, it re-establishes (or regains) the substantially unified monistic reality of Milton's paradise.⁵⁵

The Son dreams that "he partook" with Elijah and Daniel. The term is a loaded one, because according to Plato's theory of forms, particular things share in or "partake of" (*metechein*) the forms that they exemplify.⁵⁶ Unchanging forms, for Plato, are the objects of knowledge, that which is ultimately real. This is why the world perceived by the senses, for Plato, has a lower status ontologically than the realm of forms. Just acts are just, for example, because they partake in the form of justice, which gives them their common quality.⁵⁷ In *Paradise Regained* we can see that Milton draws on the Platonic concept of participation in his expression of the Son's nature. In so doing, he alludes to Calvin's Eucharistic doctrine, to which Platonic participation is essential, and according to which the Lord's Supper is seen as a sign of communication of and participation in Jesus Christ.⁵⁸ The symbolism of Christ's claim, "take, eat, this is my body" (Matt. 26:26)—"by me your souls are nourished," as the Geneva commentators have it—is expounded in *Paradise Regained*. Spiritual food is the form or idea in which the Son participates, and, consistent with Milton's monist ontology, the Son can partake of spiritual food because substantially he comes to exemplify or approximate this form.

We should recall that in book 5 of *Paradise Lost* the angel Raphael shares the same food as Adam and Eve at their banquet, but the digestion of this kind of food, we are told, is not necessary for his survival. Raphael explains that

what he gives
(Whose praise be ever sung) to man in part
Spiritual, may of purest Spirits be found
No ingrateful food . . . (5.404-7)

In referring to what God gives "to man in part / Spiritual," the angel simultaneously denotes the bodily nature of humans, and a particular kind of food. Created to perfection, all substance is "more spiritous and pure" when closer to its divine source (5.475), and "purest Spirits," like himself, says Raphael, can gain nourishment from purer, "spiritual" and therefore less material portions of matter, or "part[s]." Though fleshly and human, by his continued intellectual development and resistance to Satan, Milton's Jesus progresses according to what in *Paradise Regained* is the same moral scale of materiality in *Paradise Lost*—toward those "purest Spirits" described by

Raphael, for whom “part[s] / Spiritual” are food. This is why Milton tells us that Jesus “Nor tasted human food, nor hunger felt / Till those days ended” (1.308–9). Unlike Adam and Eve, and even Elijah, the Son does not need to “transubstantiate” (5.438) ordinary earthly food to find nourishment.

For Allen and Lewalski, the Son’s progressive understanding of the meaning of his divine Sonship is signaled by “a growing certitude of tone” and “increased calmness . . . of manner.”⁵⁹ It is also attended by his becoming more spiritual in substance and able to be sustained by eating food in what is the more spiritual reality of the dream world. His bodily digestive process literally becomes compatible with the digestion of spiritual food. In his epic quest, the Son progresses in the direction of his former state, which was that of a purely spiritual being. Those who “remove their heart[s]” from God, the Book of Isaiah warns, “shall be like as an hungry man dreameth . . . when he awaketh, his soul is empty” (29:13, 8). Thus, “the vision of [all the Prophets] is become unto you, as the words of a book that is sealed up” (29:11). Isaiah’s teaching, for Origen, applies to every book of the Bible; each “can be opened only by the Word who closed it, for *he shall shut, and none shall open* (22:22; Rev 3:7).”⁶⁰ The Son’s sharing food with the prophets from Scripture, in dreams that sustain him, suggests that, by his constant obedience (and intellectual perfection), Milton’s Jesus understands the true meaning of these dream visions; comprehension and participation are possible because he approximates “the Word” who alone can “open” the meaning. He therefore has come closer to his former spiritual self: “the Son, under the name of the Word, or Speech, existed in the beginning,” as Milton says (OM 8:129). The manner of Elijah’s and Daniel’s eating, as we saw, is also informed by their obedience to God, and the latter’s abstinence is rewarded with the ability to understand “all visions and dreams” (Daniel 1:17). Jesus as antitype fulfills and supersedes the types that precede him; thus, his food is proportionately “more spiritous, and pure” (5.475) than the food that nourished his forerunners. Consuming in his dream visions, the Son, as we will see shortly, is sustained by what are imagined, and, in the minds of the intellectually perfect, *real* forms. He proves that “Man lives not by bread only, but each word / Proceeding from the mouth of God” (1.349–50).

John Knott observes that while the Son clarifies his mission through his dialectic with Satan, his grasp of the meaning of Scripture is “largely intuitive.”⁶¹ Only perfect men, according to Maimonides, have “intuitive theoretical knowledge,” and only Moses is endowed with “complete intuitive knowledge.”⁶² Just as Maimonides imagines that Moses did, Milton’s

Jesus survives in the wilderness on account of his intellect, but his intuitive approach to understanding further aligns him with a more spiritual nature. As Raphael explains to Adam in *Paradise Lost*,

Man's nourishment, by gradual scale sublimed
 To vital spirits aspire, to animal,
 To intellectual, give both life and sense,
 Fancy and understanding, whence the soul
 Reason receives, and reason is her being,
 Discursive, or intuitive; discourse
 Is ofttest yours, the latter most is ours,
 Differing but in degree, of kind the same. (5.483–90)

“[I]ntuitive” reason is “most” associated with angels, suggests Raphael, while humans most often reason by “discourse.” The Son’s ability to understand intuitively in *Paradise Regained* (for example, “I discern thee other than thou seem’st” [1.348]), underscores the sense that he has already moved, and still is tending toward, a more spiritual nature than, in Milton’s philosophy, is characteristic of human beings. This is not to say that he becomes angelic, however; spiritual development occurs strictly “in bounds / Proportioned to each kind” (5.478–79). The Son perceives the dissembled nature of Satan instantaneously in *Paradise Regained*, whereas, in *Paradise Lost*, it is not until Satan “first lighted” on Earth, that the angel Uriel “discerned his looks / Alien from Heav’n” (4.570–71); at their meeting on the sun, Satan’s true identity remains “unperceived” (3.681). Jesus’s intuitive understanding points to his spiritual augmentation, but also to the actualization of his divine potential: “neither man nor angel can discern / Hypocrisy” (*PL* 3.682–83), but the Son can.

“Man’s nourishment by gradual scale sublimed” inspires “life and sense” into the “vital spirits,” and in consequence of this process, Raphael explains, humans can understand, and reason (5.483–90). Sublimation refers to the converting of a solid substance into vapor by heating it, but also to the process of that vapor resolidifying upon cooling. Is it possible, then, since reason is the soul’s “being” or essence, that, by the “scale” of sublimation in Milton’s monistic universe, what is reasonably understood has the potential to sublimate into nourishment? By his meditating on and dreaming of partaking in the food of the prophets, the Son’s active intellect—*nous poëtikos*, productive, or *poetic* intellect, or, in L. A. Kosman’s translation, “the maker mind”—reaches the height of its unique potential.⁶³ It is this process and

its transmutational effect that ultimately enables the Son's survival, but it also exemplifies the nature of the monistic universe. While Milton's Jesus employs "intuitive" reason, he himself simultaneously is "by gradual scale sublimed" toward "vital spirit."

In fact, it is by the Son's dreaming of Elijah, in particular, that Milton signals the significance of active intellect to the phenomenon. In his *Ductor Dubitantium* (1660), as Jason Rosenblatt observes, Jeremy Taylor pays homage to Maimonides, but takes without acknowledgment "vast sections of Selden's *De Jure*, including an almost verbatim transcription of a section on the intellectus agens":

In this whole affair, God is as the Sun, and the Conscience as the Eye: or else God or some Angel from him being the intellectus agens did inform our reason, supplying the place of Natural faculties and being a continual Monitor (as the Jews generally believe, and some Christians, especially about three or four ages since) which *Adam de Marisco* was wont to call Helias his Crow: something flying from heaven with provisions for our needs.⁶⁴

The provision of food to Elijah (in its Latin form, Helias), is posited by Marisco as a function of the active intellect, and Taylor refers to the idea as it is outlined by Milton's most esteemed Hebraic authority, Selden.⁶⁵ Rosenblatt observes that even in *Paradise Lost* (at Milton's invocation to light in book 3), prophetic inspiration has much in common with Maimonides's notion of overflow: the "Bright effluence [from *ex*, 'out', and *fluere*, 'to flow'] of bright essence increate" (3.6–8).⁶⁶ The concept appears to be echoed in *Paradise Regained* when Jesus rebuts Satan's claims about ancient wisdom, asserting that "he who receives / Light from above, from the fountain of light, / No other doctrine needs" (4.288–89). But the idea that reason itself is not enough to guide beings toward knowledge of God, without a kind of overflowing from him, is attacked by Nathaniel Culverwel.⁶⁷ Milton answers this concern by amalgamating the Maimonidean principle with his monism. In *Paradise Regained*, the Son's status as prophet and his participation in spiritual reality is a rational consequence of his intellectual and spiritual perfection and sublimation. While Elijah signals the relevance of active intellect to the dream, references to Daniel were associated by seventeenth-century readers with conversionary expectations, and this process, in turn, is commonly articulated in a manner that is analogous to the Son's spiritual progress: in the language of alchemy and sublimation.⁶⁸

As we saw, Raphael perceives in *Paradise Lost* that “time may come when men / With angels may participate, and find / No inconvenient diet” (5.492–94). In both the Hebrew and Greek, the Bible uses the same word to denote “angel” and “messenger,” or “prophet.” Thus, Mary tells the Son in *Paradise Regained*, “a messenger from God foretold thy birth” (1.238). Jesus’s eating with angels, then, fulfills Raphael’s proposition, and it is the means by which paradise is regained. Mark 1:13 even tells us that Jesus “was in the wilderness forty days . . . and the angels ministered unto him.” By the digestion of matter from the spiritual reality in the body of the incarnate Son, the parts of reality that are distinct entities in the postlapsarian world become substantially unified. The Son’s body is the instrument of fusion. That his eating with angels establishes this unity makes sense because at the opening of book 9 in *Paradise Lost*, Milton draws attention to the banquet shared by Adam, Eve, and Raphael as a turning point:

No more of talk where God or angel guest
 With man, as with his friend, familiar used
 To sit indulgent, and with him partake
 Rural repast, permitting him the while
 Venial discourse unblamed: I now must change
 Those notes to tragic. (1–6)

The paradise that was lost with the tragic Fall was one where “God or angel” could share food with man, “as with his friend.” His intellectual progress and unwavering obedience become manifest in the Son’s bodily substance and heightened senses. The Son’s eating with the prophets points to a restored monistic spectrum of materiality here; he is a man who can participate in the spiritual food of angels and find “No inconvenient diet.”

RUMINATION, RESTORATION, AND REGENERATION

Jesus’s survival in *Paradise Regained* stems from the Maimonidean principles of prophecy and has a logical basis in Milton’s monism. Maimonides believed that forms that emanate from the active intellect are received “not only by the human mind but also by matter and the physical bodies,” and evidence for Milton’s reasoning about intellectual sublimation can be found elsewhere in his work.⁶⁹ When Raphael presents the truth of things to Adam in *Paradise Lost*, he does so “By lik’ning spiritual to corporal forms, / As may express them best” (5.573–74). In other words, Raphael speaks metaphorically, which, according to Thomas Wilson, requires a “kinde of

mutation” of concept, from intellectual to bodily; for example, “Beinge greved with a matter, we say communelye we can not digest it.”⁷⁰ By transmuting the subject matter into metaphor, Raphael makes it digestible to “human sense” (5.572). And Adam responds, “How fully hast thou satisfied me, pure / Intelligence of Heav’n, angel serene” (8.180–81) because

... while I sit with thee, I seem in Heav’n,
 And sweeter thy discourse is to my ear
 Than fruits of palm-tree pleasantest to thirst
 And hunger both, from labours, at the hour
 Of sweet repast; they satiate, and soon fill,
 Though pleasant, but thy words with grace divine
 Imbued, bring to their sweetness no satiety. (8.210–16)

Upon hearing “words with grace divine / Imbued,” Adam is satisfied both intellectually and physically. Indeed, while the word “but” in the passage points to Raphael’s discourse as distinct from material food, Adam’s experience of hearing the angel’s words is more satisfying than the consumption of earthly fruits and offers a premise for the survival of Milton’s Jesus. The poet implies that, in his dreaming in *Paradise Regained*, the Son “partook” of the same food as the prophets, Elijah’s “supper on the coals prepared” and Daniel’s “pulse” (2.274, 279). That one is fed by the Word of God was a common belief in Milton’s day, and the Son’s ruminating on the divine Word, like Adam’s, is both meditative and gustatory. Further, in *Paradise Lost*, Milton describes his own intellectual feasting, and it bears striking resemblance to that of his Jesus. The poet tells us that he does not forget the blind “prophets old” with whom he identifies, when “Nightly” he wanders “where the Muses haunt,” “Then feed[s] on thoughts, that voluntary move / Harmonious numbers” (3.36, 32, 27, 37–38). Milton himself is nourished by thoughts that allow him to create poetry like improvised music—the purest art form because its numerical proportions correspond to, and make audible, the design of the universe.⁷¹ Early modern writers took it for granted that a discourse might substitute and satisfy as well as food, but Milton, his Raphael, and his Jesus sublimate intellectual thought into a kind of food.⁷² The “gradual scale” (5.483) of digestive sublimation described by Raphael in *Paradise Lost* has the potential to be a two-directional process.

Remarkably, an early intimation of this sublimation theory comes from *Areopagitica* (1644). When Milton describes his logical deduction of the licensing order as alchemical sublimation, the image at first seems figurative, but the poet literally breaks down and dissects the “invention” of

the order (in logic, “the discovery of ‘arguments’”) into smaller constituent parts.⁷³ He writes,

I am of those who beleeve, it will be a harder alchymy then *Lullius* ever knew, to sublimat any good use out of such an invention. Yet this only is what I request to gain from this reason, that it may be held a dangerous and suspicious fruit, as certainly it deserves, for the tree that bore it, untill I can dissect one by one the properties it has. (YP 2:507)

The convergence of knowledge and food is inherent in Milton’s allusion to the Tree of Knowledge. The licensing order is the object of knowledge, the fruit that Milton proposes to hold as “dangerous and suspicious” until, by logic, he has “dissect[ed]” it. Alchemical sublimation clearly is conflated here with the rhetorical act of digestion, “an orderly placyng of thynges, partyng every matter severally,” and Milton doubts the possibility that “any good use” may be sublimated “out of” the analysis.⁷⁴ After asserting that uncensored reading is the “main service & assistance” to true knowledge, moreover, Milton states: “I conceive therefore, that when God did enlarge the universall diet of mans body . . . , he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dyeting and repasting of our minds” (YP 2:513). To read broadly and freely, for Milton, is to feed the mind in a particular way; the knowledge we receive, he goes on to suggest, is nourishment proportional to our needs, just as Manna was to the Israelites’. Because the sublimation of food in Milton’s universe ultimately enables the soul to “receive” reason (5.483–90), the advanced exercise of reason itself, in a perfect mind, has the potential to produce and to sublimate soul-nourishing substance. In the beginning, all things, both in heaven and on earth, were created “through” the Son (OM 8:131, 247), and crucially, the material that enters the Son in the dream (to be metabolized), like the spiritual reality itself, is simultaneously perceived and generated by his active intellect (*nous poētikos*), as a consequence of his advanced understanding and his connection with the overflow. It is not a rematerialization or sublimation of an original, earthly food, but sublimation of what is realized by his perfect mind. The Son literally is “fed with better thoughts that feed / Me” (2.258–59).

In *The Guide of the Perplexed*, as we saw, Maimonides explains that those who have achieved intellectual perfection may experience the true reality of prophecy by an overflowing from God through the active intellect and toward the rational faculty, and then toward the imaginative faculty (2:369). This overflow takes place in the imaginative faculty “only when the

senses rest and do not perform their actions . . . and it is the cause of the veridical dreams" (2:370). What is conceptualized in the imagination passes from potentiality to actuality, and this process enables the mind "to create a reality" (377).⁷⁵ According to Maimonides, true dreams like the Son's may reasonably occur as "part of a continuity of intellectual perfection that starts with ordinary intellect."⁷⁶ His being sustained by eating food in the spiritual reality of the dream world suggests that, in *Paradise Regained*, Jesus's intellect produces, perceives, and partakes of an external reality, which, though different in kind to earthly or waking reality, is material, substantial, and capable of sustaining him. As Milton imagines it, the Son's intellectual perfection means that he actively participates in what Maimonides terms "veridical dreams," dreams that, as a consequence of the "divine overflow" from the active intellect, are truthful, or coincident with real events (*Guide* 2:370).

Thus, in *Paradise Regained*, we find that Satan's conjured banquet—less real than the alimental dreams of the Son—is placed in contrast: "He spake no dream" (2.337). As he does with Adam's unfallen dreaming, Milton points in the Son's dreaming to a material ontological continuity between the intelligible and the real. In so doing, Milton wades into a centuries-old debate about universal knowledge—briefly, the question of whether intelligible forms have real, substantial existence. But he also casts Jesus as a Maimonidean prophet, capable of receiving divine overflow: "the intellect that God made overflow into man and that is the latter's ultimate perfection, was that which Adam had been provided with before he disobeyed" (*Guide* 1:24). For Aristotle, it is soul that unifies a living being: "the souls so present are homogenous with one another and with the whole—the several parts of the soul being inseparable from one another, although the whole soul is divisible."⁷⁷ By his realizing and digesting spiritual food, Jesus permits this Aristotelian principle of unity for reality, which, like all creation, comes into being through himself. The point at which the Son eats is the point at which paradise is regained. In the restoration of paradise, he fulfills his purpose as it is foretold in *Paradise Lost*: "Under his great vicegerent reign abide / United as one individual soul" (5.609–10). So, when Satan perceives that "in thee be united / What of perfection can in man be found, / Or human nature can receive," he is entirely right (3.229–31). More extraordinary than angelic intuition, the Son's intellect extends into what, for Maimonides (and Milton), is the prelapsarian, human prophetic realm of the intellectually perfect.

To those who achieve spiritual growth, Milton writes in *De Doctrina*, "[Whence] also [comes] victory. Rev. 2:7: *to the victor I shall give* [the right]

to eat [of that tree of life]" (OM 8:609). Jesus's intellectual and spiritual advancement enables him both to realize and to penetrate spiritual reality. So, his eating food and drink, "Ambrosial, fruits fetched from the tree of life" (4:589), symbolically underscores the Son's restorative achievement at the end of *Paradise Regained*. Particularly fascinating regarding his spiritual growth, however, is the relevance of the first part of the verse from Revelations (2:7): "Let him that hath an ear hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches: To him that overcometh, will I give to eat of the tree of life which is in the midst of the Paradise of God." In his commentary on the verse, William Perkins places emphasis on the role of *hearing* in spiritual growth. Christ makes a "distinction" between hearers, he writes,

some are deafe hearers, some hearing hearers. The deafe hearers are those that bring with them to the ministerie of the word their outward eares only, but their hearts are not affected with it. . . . The hearing hearers are all such as beside their bodily eares, have eares pi[er]ced in their hearts by the spirit of grace, whereby they doe not only heare the word outwardly, but their hearts are also affected with it, and made pliable unto it; so as they beleeve it, and bring forth obedience unto it.⁷⁸

The Son's exceptional capacity to hear, described at the beginning of *Paradise Regained*, demonstrates not only his use of "the bodily eares which we have by creation, but the spiritual eares of the heart, which we have by regeneration."⁷⁹ His ability to listen points to his unprecedented obedience (*oboedire*), but his eating from the Tree of Life at the end of the poem points to the significance of listening for spiritual growth. The Son's status as a "hearing hearer" is integral to his ongoing self-authoring.

The spiritual process Milton regards as "regeneration" or "ingrafting into Christ" matches his depiction of Jesus's own spiritual growth in *Paradise Regained*: "The old man is abolished . . . in his whole mind. In intellect and will" (OM 8:561). The regenerate will "put on the new man" and be "renewed in full knowledge . . . so that . . . you might be made sharers of the divine nature" and become "A new creature. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (OM 8:563). Humanity's quest to know Christ, for Milton, matches that of his Messiah to know himself because "In Christ the intellect is in great part restored to its [original] enlightenment" (OM 8:599).

Intellectual perfection is the root of correspondence between Milton's Jesus and Job, and the primary reason why the book of Job is heavily alluded

to in *Paradise Regained*. For Maimonides, the book of Job is a parable, and “Job recognizes in the final chapter that his only escape from suffering is to achieve intellectual perfection and a psychological immunity from suffering.”⁸⁰ The allegorical progression toward virtue that we see in Spenser (Redcrosse, becoming “so perfect” that “from the first unto the last degree, / His mortall life” was “frame[d] / In holy righteousnesse”), and the intellectual perfection of Job, become in *Paradise Regained* literally manifest in the Son’s bodily nature.⁸¹ Milton’s Adam and Eve are “authors to themselves” (3.122), and the Son, through his active intellect—*nous poëtikos*—is a poet who *makes* himself.

The Son’s dreaming in *Paradise Regained*, and its implications, give credit to the belief that Milton holds a monist philosophy of the universe, and to what scholars have already observed is the presence of this philosophy in *Paradise Lost*. But the Son’s dreaming also points to Milton’s interest in exploring and refining with his monism the insights of Maimonides on prophecy and active intellect. What Maimonides brings to Milton’s notion of intellect forms an important and unrecognized aspect of his materialism. Both Adam and the Son experience real manifestations of what is perceived by the intellect in dreams, and so Milton invites us to regard even reality in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* as a material spectrum. That his Jesus accesses (and surpasses) the kind of prelapsarian intellect that Milton’s Adam had confirms the Son as the ultimate Maimonidean prophet. Maimonides’s teaching offers a premise and an authoritative justification for the monistic sublimation of Jesus’s body toward pure spirit, and for the sublimation of intellectual forms into nourishment by the latter’s rational faculty. This philosophical foundation enables Milton logically to posit precisely how the Son survives in the wilderness and how paradise is regained. One should search out God’s will, the poet urges, and for this purpose, “*transform yourselves through the renewal of your mind*” (Rom. 12:2; OM 8:925). Christ has one intellect, Milton insists: “he could with the same intellect *progress in wisdom* (Luke 2:52) after he had emptied himself out, and *know all things* (John 21:17), that is to say, through the father’s instruction, as he himself acknowledged” (OM 8:486). The Geneva and King James translations preserve the literal sense of Luke 2:52: “Jesus increased in wisdom and stature,” which allows for the possibility that the Son’s wisdom develops simultaneously with a kind of increase in “bodily form.”⁸² For Maimonides, intellectual perfection also involves “perfection of the bodily constitution and shape” (*Guide* 2:634). The regaining of paradise—Jesus’s becoming, “Son of the

Most High, heir of both worlds" (4.633)—is a material, digestive act, in consequence of his intellect. His progression toward a degree of substance that is "more refined, more spiritous, and pure" (5.475), within "bounds proportioned to [his] kind" (5.478), demonstrates continuity with and validates the moral material spectrum of *Paradise Lost*.

NOTES

I would like to thank Jason Rosenblatt, Karen Edwards, and Stephen Fallon, for reading a draft of this article, and for their helpful comments. Thanks also to my reviewers for their meticulous and constructive feedback.

1. Barbara Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic: The Genre, Meaning, and Art of "Paradise Regained"* (London, 1966), 163.
2. Pierre de La Primaudaye, *The French Academie Fully Discoursed* [1582] (London, 1618), 410.
3. Kevin J. Donovan and Thomas Festa, eds., *Milton, Materialism and Embodiment: One First Matter All* (Pittsburgh, 2017).
4. Noel Sugimura, "Matter of Glorious Trial": *Spiritual and Material Substance in "Paradise Lost"* (New Haven, 2009), 7.
5. Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Milton and the Rabbis: Hebraism, Hellenism, and Christianity* (New York, 2001), 6; and Achsah Guibbory, *Christian Identity: Jews and Israel in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2010), 253.
6. Jason P. Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi: John Selden* (Oxford, 2006), 108. Rosenblatt is quoting from *Complete Prose Works of John Milton*, gen. ed. Don M. Wolfe, 8 vols. (New Haven, 1953–82), hereafter cited as YP.
7. *Ibid.*, 105, 108.
8. See Jacob Dienstag, "Maimonides in English Christian Thought and Scholarship: An Alphabetical Survey," *Hebrew Studies* 26, no. 2 (1985): 249–99 (257–93). The survey is not exhaustive.
9. Richard H. Popkin, "Some Further Comments on Newton and Maimonides," *Essays on the Context, Nature, and Influence of Isaac Newton's Theology* (London, 1990), 2.
10. Jason P. Rosenblatt, *Torah and Law in "Paradise Lost"* (Princeton, 1994), 97.
11. Jackson Campbell Boswell, *Milton's Library* (New York, 1975), 163. Maurice Kelley has pointed out some inaccuracies in Boswell's catalogue (Kelley, "Additions to: Milton's Library," *Milton Quarterly* 10, no. 3 [1976]: 93–94).
12. Sharon Achinstein, "Did Milton Read Selden?" *A Concise Companion to the Study of Manuscripts, Printed Books, and the Production of Early Modern Texts*, ed. Edward Jones (Hoboken, 2015), 268, 284.
13. See Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi*, 79.
14. Edward Chauncey Baldwin, "Some Extra-Biblical Semitic Influences Upon Milton's Story of the Fall of Man," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 28, no. 3 (1929): 366–401 (397).

15. *Ibid.*, 399.
16. J. L. Treicher, "Maimonides and England," *Transactions (Jewish Historical Society of England)* 16 (1945–51): 97–100 (100).
17. Ruth Birnbaum, "The Role of Reason in Bahya and Maimonides," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 19, no. 2 (2001): 76–86 (81).
18. Unless otherwise stated, all references to the former poem are to *Paradise Lost*, ed. John Leonard (London, 2003).
19. Moses Maimonides, *The Guide of the Perplexed*, trans. Shlomo Pines, 2 vols. (Chicago, 1963), 1:23. Hereafter cited as *Guide* parenthetically in the text.
20. Leo Strauss, "How to Begin to Study *The Guide of the Perplexed*," *ibid.*, 1:xxvi.
21. Shlomo Pines, "The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*," in *ibid.*, 1:lix. While he takes Aristotelian doctrines to be generally true, Maimonides does not regard them as adequate (lviii). See also Treicher, "Maimonides and England," 97.
22. Pines, "The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*," lvi, lvii.
23. G. J. Toomer, *John Selden: A Life in Scholarship*, 2 vols. (Oxford, 2009), 2:503, 504.
24. Pines, "The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*," lviii.
25. Stephen Fallon, *Milton Among the Philosophers: Poetry and Materialism in Seventeenth-Century England* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1991), 83.
26. In fact, when "Michael from Adam's eyes the film removed" (11.412), before the latter witnesses the future in a prophetic vision, Milton echoes Maimonides's words in the *Guide*. Experiencing this kind of knowledge, Maimonides writes, "will be like someone's removing a screen from between the eye and the visible thing" (*Guide* 1: 14).
27. All quotations from *Paradise Regained* are from *Milton: Complete Shorter Poems*, ed. John Carey (London, 1971), hereafter cited parenthetically in the text.
28. The phrase receives no comment in John Leonard's, Alastair Fowler's, and Gordon Teskey's editions of *Paradise Lost*, and it has proved difficult to find scholarship that deals with this.
29. Marshall Grossman, *"Authors to Themselves": Milton and the Revelation of History* (Cambridge, 1987), 1, 3.
30. I draw on Grossman's discussion of the Latin antecedents of "author" in *"Authors to Themselves,"* 2.
31. *The Complete Works of John Milton*, vol. 8, *De Doctrina Christiana* (Parts 1 and 2), trans. and ed. John K. Hale and J. Donald Cullington (Oxford, 2012), 133, 157; hereafter cited parenthetically in the text as OM.
32. Marzena Zawanowska, "The Arabic Translation and Commentary of Yefet ben 'Eli the Karaite on the Abraham Narratives (Genesis 11: 10–25: 18)," *Karaite Texts and Studies*, 11 vols., ed. Meria Polliack and Michael G. Wechsler (Leiden, 2012), 4:6, 30.
33. Judith H. Anderson, *Light and Death: Figuration in Spenser, Kepler, Donne, Milton* (New York, 2017), 220.
34. See *OED*, "obscure," *adj.* and *n.*, A.b.
35. Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, 133.
36. Ryan Hackenbracht, "Milton on the Move: Walking and Self-Knowledge in *Paradise Lost*," in *Milton, Materialism and Embodiment*, 61.
37. *Ibid.*, 65.

38. Ibid.

39. La Primaudaye, *The French Academie*, 410.

40. All references to the Geneva Bible are to *Holy Bible*, trans. William Wittingham [Geneva, 1599] (Dallas, 2006).

41. Most recently, David Ainsworth has argued for the Holy Spirit as Milton's muse, in "Getting Past the Ellipsis: The Spirit and Urania in *Paradise Lost*," *Renaissance Papers 2012* (Rochester, 2013), 121. Estelle Haan suggests that the "Holy Light" of book 3 is a symbolic manifestation of God ("'Heaven's Purest Light': Milton's 'Paradise Lost 3' and Vida," *Comparative Literature Studies* 30, no. 2 [1993], 115–36 [117]). For Albert R. Cirillo, it refers to Christ ("'Hail Holy Light' and Divine Time in *Paradise Lost*," *Journal of English and Germanic Philology* 68, no. 1 [1969], 45–56 [50–51]). Ross G. Woodman understands Urania to represent "the agency of the mind of Christ," and William B. Hunter initially argued that the Son is Milton's muse in each invocation, but later revised his view to posit with Stevie Davies that Milton invokes multiple muses in order to represent the Trinity (Woodman, "Milton's Urania and Her Romantic Descendants," *University of Toronto Quarterly* 48, no. 3 [1979]: 189–208 [189]; Hunter, "The Meaning of Holy Light in *Paradise Lost* III," *Modern Language Notes* 74, no. 7 ([1959]: 589–92, and "Milton's Urania," *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 4, no. 1 [1964]: 35–42; Davies and Hunter, "Milton's Urania: 'The Meaning, Not the Name I Call,'" *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1900* 28, no. 1 [1988]: 95–111).

42. Alastair Fowler, ed., *Paradise Lost*, 2nd ed. (Harlow, 2007), 59.

43. Harris Francis Fletcher argues persuasively that Milton's reference to "Wisdom thy sister" (at 7.10), draws on the rabbinic commentary of Ben Gerson, who describes two spirits present before creation, Wisdom and Understanding (*Milton's Rabbinical Readings* [Urbana, 1930], 111). For Fletcher, these are "two different aspects of the Holy Spirit" (112). It makes more sense, though, for Understanding, or Urania, to represent the Son, and Wisdom, the Holy Spirit, since Milton explains in *De Doctrina* that both the Son and the Holy Spirit are emanations of God; the Spirit exists "before the world's foundations were laid," but after the Son, to whom the Spirit is inferior (OM 271).

44. The poet's allusion to Christ's healing the blind man with the waters of Siloam (1.11–13) also points to the Son as muse, as do Milton's "light-sun" and "fountain-stream" images (3.1–8) (see Hunter, "The Meaning of Holy Light in *Paradise Lost* III," 589–90). Milton's calling his muse Urania, in book 7, and his statement, "The meaning, not the name I call" (7.5), has puzzled scholars. Since the meaning of the Greek word Urania (Οὐρανία) is "heavenly," in book 7, Milton likely invokes the same "Heav'nly Muse" of book 1 (1.6) that he appears to "revisit safe" in book 3 (3.21).

45. Pines, "The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*," lxxxi. Feisal G. Mohamed notes that in the seventeenth century, Islamic philosophers like al-Fārābī were being written out of the philosophical discussion of the Active Intellect: "the centre of gravity seemed to shift to Hebraic sources . . . especially to Maimonides" ("Milton's Enmity Towards Islam and the Intellectus Agens," *English Studies* 96, no. 1 [2015]: 65–81 [79]).

46. Pines, "The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*," lxxxiii.

47. Ibid., lxxxi, lxxxiii, lxxxix.

48. Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, 162.
49. J. B. Broadbent, "The Private Mythology of *Paradise Regained*," in *Calm of Mind: Tercentenary Essays on "Paradise Regained" and "Samson Agonistes" in Honor of John S. Diekhoff*, ed. Joseph Anthony Wittreich Jr. (London, 1971), 88.
50. Don Cameron Allen, *The Harmonious Vision: Studies in Milton's Poetry* (New York, 1979), 120; and Mary Ann Radzinowicz, "How Milton Read the Bible: The Case of *Paradise Regained*," in *The Cambridge Companion to Milton*, ed. Dennis Danielson, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 1999), 209.
51. Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, 215.
52. Jonathan Schaffer, "Monism," *The Stanford Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford, 2016).
53. Theodore Scaltsas, "Is a Whole Identical to Its Parts?" *Mind* 99, no. 396 (1990): 583–98 (588).
54. The technique occurs in book 1 of *The Faerie Queene*, when Una is chased in the wilderness by Abessa and her mother Corceca. In the passage, Spenser uses only pronouns to refer to his subjects; his use of only "her" and "she" requires careful reading based on context and the attributes of those subjects to determine who the subject is each time (Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, in *Spenser: Poetical Works*, ed. J. C. Smith and E. De Selincourt [London, 1966], 1.3.23). Another example occurs at 1.2.12, when Archimago takes on the form of Redcrosse.
55. Richard Turner notices that "Christ imagines himself partaking of the two banquets provided by Elijah and Daniel," but does not recognize that Jesus literally participates in spiritual reality ("The Interpretation of Dreams and Audience Response in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*," *Papers on Language and Literature: A Journal for Scholars and Critics of Language and Literature* 19, no. 4 [1983], 361–73 [369]). Turner understands this to be "a wish fulfillment dream," but he observes, "such an explanation cannot adequately justify the elaborate and extensive trappings of the dream. Why should Milton set up the elaborate expectations raised by the dream merely to deny them?" (370). He concludes, along the lines of Lewalski, that the Son's dream represents his superior knowledge of Scripture and his self-identification with Elijah and Daniel (372).
56. Desmond Lee, trans. and ed. Plato, *The Republic*, 2nd ed., rev. (London, 1987), 201.
57. Plato, *The Republic*, 2nd ed., rev., trans., and ed. Desmond Lee (London, 1987), 201, 206.
58. Kilian McDonnel, *John Calvin, the Church, and the Eucharist* (Princeton, 1967), 36.
59. Lewalski, *Milton's Brief Epic*, 162. Lewalski paraphrases Allen, *The Harmonious Vision*, 118.
60. *Isaiah Interpreted by Early Christian and Medieval Commentators*, trans. and ed. Robert Louis Wilken (Cambridge, 2007), 246.
61. John R. Knott Jr., *The Sword of the Spirit: Puritan Responses to the Bible* (London, 1980), 127.
62. Pines, "The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*," cv.
63. L. A. Kosman, "What Does the Maker Mind Make?" in *Essays on Aristotle's De Anima*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and Amélie Oksenberg Rorty (Oxford, 1992), 344–58.

64. Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi*, 212–13; and Jeremy Taylor, *Ductor Dubitantium* (London, 1660), 178.
65. Rosenblatt notes that Taylor is quoting Selden in *De Jure*, 1.9, primarily 114 (where the description “Corvus Heliae” is applied to the “Intellectus Agens”), but also 110–12, and 116. See Rosenblatt, *Renaissance England's Chief Rabbi*, 213.
66. *Ibid.*, 215.
67. *Ibid.*, 213.
68. See Jeffrey S. Shoulson, *Fictions of Conversion: Jews, Christians, and Cultures of Change in Early Modern England* (Philadelphia, 2013), 150, 134, 139, 145.
69. Pines, “The Philosophic Sources of *The Guide of the Perplexed*,” lxxxii.
70. Thomas Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique* (London, 1553), Z4v.
71. See Diane Kelsey McColley, *Poetry and Music in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1997), 8–9.
72. Jason Scott-Warren and Andrew Zurcher, “Introduction,” in *Text, Food and the Early Modern Reader: Eating Words*, ed. Scott-Warren and Zurcher (London, 2019), 2.
73. Walter Ong, ed., “Art of Logic,” in YP 8:156.
74. Wilson, *The Arte of Rhetorique*, Dd2r.
75. See Elliot M. Simon, “Prophetic Voices: Joachim de Fiore, Moses Maimonides, Philip Sidney, Mary Herbert, and the Psalms,” in *Religious Diversity and Early Modern English Texts: Catholic, Judaic, Feminist, and Secular Dimensions*, ed. Arthur F. Marotti and Chantina Goodblatt (Detroit, 2013), 205.
76. Alan Brill, “The Phenomenology of True Dreams in Maimonides,” *Dreaming* 10, no. 1 (2000): 43–54 (49).
77. Aristotle, “On the Soul,” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, 1:656.
78. William Perkins, *A Godly and Learned Exposition* (London, 1606), 95.
79. *Ibid.*
80. Robert Eisen, *The Book of Job in Medieval Jewish Philosophy* (Oxford Scholarship Online, 2007), 212. According to Eisen, “All of the commentaries on Job in medieval Jewish philosophy were composed after Maimonides, with the exception of Saadiah, and all of them bear Maimonides’s influence” (7). Consistent with what Maimonides says of the prophets, Milton’s Jesus comes to articulate his knowledge of the true reality in parables (4.146–51; see *Guide* 1:8).
81. Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, 1.10.45.
82. See *OED*, “stature,” n. 2a.