Safe Belief: Hobbes, Milton, and Dryden

What presuppositions left unexamined by Milton in *De Doctrina* receive light from comparison with the enquiries of Hobbes (older) and of Dryden (younger)? Milton sought to ground belief safely in scripture alone; hence no Trinity. Hobbes, more skeptical in general, reached opposite conclusions, also heterodox. Scripture left much unsafe in the Old Testament, but Hobbes found both historicity and a sort of Trinity in the New. Dryden in his “Layman’s Faith” addressed the insecurity of scripture, reason, and church authority: Trinity survived. All three are anticlerical, bruised by the power struggles of their turbulent century. Milton dislikes theologians too, despite resembling them in axiom and method. The reasoning and proofs of all three are examined in salient examples. These focus on (1) the authority of scripture and (2) grounds of the doctrine of Trinity and (3) mistrust of the shepherds of the sheep, from their misuse of power.
Selected publications


