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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

John Milton, *De Doctrina Christiana*, edited and translated for the Oxford University Press *Complete Works of John Milton*, with J. Donald Cullington, vol. 8 (2012). This edition won the John T. Shawcross Award of the Milton Society of America for the “Most Distinguished Edition of a work by John Milton Published in 2012.” ISBN 978-0-19-965189-4

Milton and the Manuscript of De Doctrina Christiana: (with Gordon Campbell, Thomas Corns and Fiona Tweedie): Oxford. Oxford University Press (2007). 192pp. This monograph won the James Holly Hanford Award of the Milton Society of America for the “Most Distinguished book on John Milton Published in 2007.”

Hale, J. K., *Milton's Cambridge Latin: Performing in the Genres 1625-1632*. Phoenix. MRTS (2005) 306 pp. ISBN 13 978 0 86698 332 7

Hale, J. K. *Milton as Multilingual: Selected Essays 1982-2004* (February 2005) Otago Studies in English 8, 302 pp. ISBN 1170-6082, ISSN 1-877139-75-0

Hale, J.K. *John Milton. Latin Writings. A Selection, edited and translated by John K. Hale*. Assen, van Gorcum (1998); with Phoenix, MRTS (1999). 250 pp. ISBN 90 232 3374 3

Hale, J.K. *Milton's Languages. The Impact of Multilingualism on Style*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press (1997). 258 pp. ISBN 0 521 58353 5

Hale, J.K. *The Shakespeare of the Comedies: A Multiple Approach*. Berne, Peter Lang AG (1996) 201 pp. ISBN 3-906756-17-3

Hale, J.K. Ed. *Sonnets of Four Centuries 1500-1900: An Anthology for Students of English Literature, Otago Studies in English II*. Dunedin, Department of English (1992) 188 pp. ISBN 0-9597914-6-9