The Biblical Influences in John Milton’s Paradise Lost

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ABSTRACT

This paper aim at exploring John Milton’s poetic style in his epic poem Paradise Lost and the internal and external influences that shaped it. The greatness of the conception which inspires the poem. A rich imagination and the use of certain technical devices which add to the interest and dignity of the language. It is impossible to understand Paradise Lost, including book I and II without annotations, there are many passages written in a lucid style that charms us. A list of important quotations is taken from “Paradise Lost” by Milton that would help me to support the statements. It deals with the saga of biblical legend of man’s first disobedience, which holds Satan as a glorified God or fallen angel and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden.

KEY WORDS

Paradise, disobedience, expulsion, imagination, biblical influences.

INTRODUCTION

John Milton was a very important English poet, author of monumental Paradise Lost (1667), which was one of the great literary masterpieces of the seventeenth century which was also to have a major influence on literature on his country and especially on the romantic poets. He was born on 9 December, 1608 in bread street, cheapside, London. He was baptized at all hallows, bread street on 12 December into the protestant faith of the church of England. Milton’s grand father, Richard Milton a yeoman was a devout Roman catholic but his father embraced protestant faith. His father elder John Milton was scrivener and his mother was Sarah Jeffery Milton. His first schooling was under a tutor called Thomas young.
at home. Milton was sent to St. Paul’s school London at the age of seven, where he studied Hebrew, Latin, Greek, French his father also guided him to learn Italian and English too. The headmaster of the school also encouraged his students to inculcate an interest in English literature, especially the poetry of Spencer. These influences are all evident throughout Milton’s works: he shows his acquaintance with the Hebrew text of the old testament and with, stood him in other Hebrew writings in Paradise Lost his love of the classics is to be seen everywhere and the very form of his great poem is classical in origin; he himself paid tribute to Spencer as his great predecessor and his influence is to be found in many parts of Paradise Lost, the rhetorical training the art of composition, which was rigorously followed by every grammar school boy for centuries before and after Milton’s own day, stood him in good stead all his life. The subject of paradise lost and composition of paradise lost commenced in 1658 and issued in 1667. Paradise Lost first published in ten books or parts, but in the second edition it was redivided into twelve. It is a rewriting of the book of Bible, in form it follows the strict unity of the classical epic in theme it deals with the fall of man, but by means of introduces narratives it covers the rebellion of Lucifer in heaven, the celestial warfare and expulsion of the rebels. Paradise Lost is the work of a true and devout puritan. It was this which led Milton to leave the Arthurian legends for his subject and take up the Biblical story of the fall of man but on serious essay in the vindication of God’s ways towards man. The way in which they are furnish by Milton in “Paradise Lost” offers a new reading of the Biblical Adam and Eve. Fairly a great deal of critical and scholarly attention has been loyal to explicate Milton’s versions of the Biblical characters Adam and Eve in “Paradise Lost”. A kind of religious arrangement through poetry on the origin of man, the works get its inspiration as much from one Bible for its fulfillment as from Virgil’s twelve book Latin epic poem Aeneid for its form.

Biblical Influences

Milton intent, expressed clearly in the epic poem’s opening lines, was to “justify the ways of God to man” (Book I, 126) that Milton wished to justify where he succeed in fulfilling his purpose to the maximum extent. The Biblical account of the fall in the book of Genesis, with his epic poem, Paradise Lost, John Milton adds a lot of detail about the complete story of man, the being of Satan, his rise and man’s fall. Although the ideas for paradise lost came from a few pages in the book of Genesis, Milton’s account kept readers wondering what was going to happen next. Because he was going against the church already with paradise lost, it was more fascinate for him to take the same ideas in the Bible extend them into more detail making Satan look the hero and succeeding at what he wanted to do. Satan the perfect angel banished from nothing to the pits of hell, with no chance to return conjures up a plan to get revenge building a legacy and an army to over throw those who put him there. Then god created the son, the angels, man, heaven, earth, everything else. Milton faced a difficult task with creating tension about what would happen since God already knew. In Paradise Lost god is almost emotionless or aloof he embodies pure reason and pure justice, every response he gives seems to be cold. In Genesis god is wise and known as the creator and is more the narrator of what is happening than in Milton’s epic; he is referred to as lord god instead of god as Milton refers to him. The short and fall man to summarize the creation and reason for human nature are:

“God gave man free will, from man’s free will, sin and death came into the world”.

Blind Milton might be when he wrote “Paradise Lost”, but to him the Bible remained an open book. After reading his paradise lost anyone shall appreciate the exactness of his knowledge in using the influences from the Bible. The words of the Bible are the familiar by the use of the Bible. Tales of Greek and Roman Mythology and Aesop’s fables these are certainly the Bible furnishes the largest number of references. Three great poems in the order of their value are of course paradise lost, Samson Agonistes and paradise regained. Who ever knows anything of Milton knows these three and knows
they a scriptural from first to last in phrase, in allusion and in part at least in idea. There is not him for extended illustration. One instance may stand for all, which shall illustrate how Milton’s mind was like a garden where the seeds of scripture came to flower and fruit. He will take one phrase from the Bible and let it grow to a page in Paradise lost. In the Genesis it is said that “the spirit of God moved on the face of the waters”.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, we therefore agree that Milton has transmitted to us, the literature of the Bible. Whatever one’s religious faith or lack of it every student who sincerely wishes to appreciate English literature must know the Biblical stories that have been constantly on the English novelists and dramatists. Fortunate the students who has been required to learn Biblical passages in youth. The section of the Bible most frequently referred to by Milton are the first chapter of Genesis. There are dozens of Biblical references and allusions many of which an annotated edition of Milton will explain sufficiently to know the poetry of John Milton works is indeed to have a liberal, a generous, education.

**REFERENCES**