Milton’s contempt for women has been accepted since Samuel Johnson’s famous *Life* of the poet. Subsequent critics have long debated whether Milton’s writings were anti- or pro-feminine, a problem further complicated by his advocacy of “divorce on demand” for men. *Milton and Gender* reevaluates the charge that Milton was antifeminine, pointing out that he was not seen that way by contemporaries, but espoused startlingly modern ideas of marriage and the relations between the sexes. The first two sections of specially commissioned essays in this volume investigate the representations of gender and sexuality in Milton’s prose and verse. In the final section, the responses of female readers ranging from George Eliot and Virginia Woolf to lesser-known artists and revolutionaries are brought to bear on Milton’s afterlife and reputation. Together, these essays provide a thoroughly new perspective on the contested issues of femininity and masculinity, marriage and divorce in Milton’s work.

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MILTON AND GENDER

EDITED BY
CATHERINE GIMELLI MARTIN
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Abbreviations

AV Authorized Version
DDo Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce
Hughes Non-poetic prose citations or commentary
OED Oxford English Dictionary
PL Paradise Lost
PR Paradise Regained
SA Samson Agonistes

References to the prose works are given by volume and page number, references to Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained are given by book and line numbers. Unless otherwise noted, Milton’s poetry is cited from Merritt Y. Hughes, John Milton, Complete Poems and Major Prose (New York: Odyssey Press, 1957).