

Milton writes ". . . the exercise of their religion, as far as it is idolatrous, can be tolerated neither way. . . ." Miss Barrett's comment is direct: "Nothing can excuse this. Milton was in my opinion a great bigot. When it suits his purpose he is for liberty, as the sacrifice of a King. If however, any of his preconceived ideas be violated, any of his "conscientious" notions called into question, then it is a "great offence to God," an "insufferable scandal." *Areopagitica* evoked comment as well as approving markings. Against a reference to Epicurus she writes: "The grand idea of Epicurus, seldom understood—Thomson. Even Milton seems to be an example of this." Anon, "for books are not absolutely dead things, but do contain a progeny of life in them . . ." writes Milton, and she underlines appreciatively. Similarly does she notice the passage including ". . . For books are as meats and viands are; some of good, some of evil substance."

The following telling passage in *Eikonoklastes in answer to Eikon Basilike* (which her margin note attributes to Charles I, despite the introductory discussion of Dr. Gauden's authorship) she marks as epitomizing in a way, the case against the king. "He hoped by his freedom and their moderation to prevent misunderstandings. And wherefore not by their freedom and his moderation? But freedom he thought too high a word for them, and moderation too mean a word for himself. . . . We in the meanwhile must believe, that wisdom and reason came to him by title with his crown; passion, prejudice and faction came to others by being subjects."

One could continue such citations, but these examples chosen with no particular care, show something of Elizabeth Barrett's youthful active mind in its impact upon the works of the most vivid and dynamic figure in English literature as indicated in the marginalia in the two volumes.

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