

L'Estrange avoided the appeal and claims of Griffith stating that he was:

not bold enough to be his Champion, in all particulars; not yet so Rude, as to take an Office most properly to him Belonging, out of his Hand; Let him acquit himself, in what concerns the Divine; and I'll adventure upon the most material parts of the Rest . . .²⁴

The 'most material parts of the Rest' was to be L'Estrange's discussion of kingship. Having read extensively in the corpus of Milton's prose work L'Estrange would not only attack *Brief Notes* and *The Readie & Easie Way* but also remind the reader that Milton was the author of such infamous propaganda pieces as *Eikonoklastes* and *Pro Populo Anglicano Defensio Secunda*. With considerable verve and a wicked sense of wit L'Estrange opened his address to Milton: 'Mr Milton, Although in your Life and Doctrine, you have resolved one great Question; by evidencing that Devils may indue Humane shapes; and proving your self, even to your wife, an Incubus: you have yet started Another. . . .'²⁵ By carefully selecting passages from Milton's pamphlets and offering an analysis against a background of political facts L'Estrange could articulate the dangers inherent in his opponent's work. To enliven his polemical prose L'Estrange couched his arguments in a colloquial language and a barbed humour:

KINGSHIP is your old Bondage; RUMPSHIP, OURS: (Forgive the Term) you were then, Past the one: we are now (God be thanked) past the Other: and should be as loth to Return, as You. Yet you are Tampering to delude the People, and to withdraw them from a Peaceable, and Rational expectancy of good, into a mutinous, and hopeless attempt of mischief. By your own Rule now, who are the Deceivers: we, that will not Return to our old Bondage; or you, that would perswade us to't.²⁶

The title *No Blinde Guides* held a twofold meaning for the reader. Firstly, Milton's attempt 'to delude the People' from a 'rational expectancy of good': the believed failure of Milton to see the encroaching political defeat; and secondly the highly personal attack on the writer's loss of vision. Both readings are exploited throughout L'Estrange's work and while attacking Milton's millenary sympathies he states: 'Doe you then, really expect to see Christ, Reigning upon Earth, even with those very eyes you Lost (as 'tis reported) with staring too long, and too sawcily upon the Portraiture of his Viceregent, to breake the Image.'²⁷ Returning to the titlepage, the epigram: 'If the Blinde lead the Blinde both shall fall in the ditch' appears as a warning to the English people, even though there is an implicit criticism of its populace.

Indeed, in the writings of both L'Estrange and Milton, certain assumptions emerge on their relationship as writers to the society