

And then there is Michael Bryson's provocative essay on God in Milton which is more fully developed in Bryson's *The Tyranny of Heaven: Milton's Rejection of God as King*.

Most polemical in its first chapter, Bryson's book takes seriously William Empson's famous criticism of Milton's God, while rejecting Empson's atheist stance. Showing the intersection of theology and politics in Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Bryson argues that the Father is indeed dislikeable, an "image" of God as powerful king, indeed tyrant, that Milton, the iconoclast, is out to demolish. In Bryson's strong, unconventional reading, the portrayal of God as king is Milton's way of rejecting not just monarchy but the very imagination of God as monarch. God turns out to be Satan's twin, and the Son, modeling a different understanding of divinity, unseats the Father, assuming the throne. This is a bold, interesting reading, and there is a lot of learning here. The chapter on "The Biblical Roots of Divine Kingship and Milton's Rejection of 'Heaven's King'" and Bryson's reading of the "developing" (p. 133) character of the Son are particularly fine. But some readers may be bothered by Bryson's description of the split (whose assumptions remain unexamined) between Father and Son that turns Milton's God into a (Hebraic?) figure (described as lying [p. 125] and having "'hate' for mankind" [p. 145]) that must be superseded by a distinctly Christian son.

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