

Secular Chains

*Poetry and the Politics of Religion from
Milton to Pope*

PHILIP CONNELL

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	xi
<i>Abbreviations</i>	xiii
<i>Note on the Text</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
I. COMMONWEALTH	
1. ‘Hireling wolves’: Poetry, Prophecy, and Republican Religion	23
Writing the Godly Republic	23
Milton, Marvell, and the Revolutionary Church	27
Harrington, Milton, and the Fracturing of the Good Old Cause	37
Mosaic Law and the Politics of Spirit in <i>Paradise Lost</i>	49
Orphic Song and the End of the Republic	55
II. RESTORATION	
2. The Failure of Uniformity	63
‘Fanatique Bays’ and Augustan Literary Culture	63
Royalist Panegyric and the Restoration Church Settlement	69
Comprehension, Kingship, and <i>Paradise Regain’d</i>	82
Dispensing Power in <i>Samson Agonistes</i>	91
3. ‘Priests of all Religions are the same’: Dryden and the Politics of Irreligion	98
Libertine Wit and Political Allegiance in the 1670s	98
The Exclusion Crisis and the Rhetoric of Imposture	104
Anti-Clericalism and Civil Idolatry in <i>Absalom and Achitophel</i>	110
Dryden’s Religion and the Politico-Theology of Tory Reaction	120
III. ENLIGHTENMENT	
4. Whig Poetics and the Church in Danger	133
The Rage of Religious Party	133
John Dennis and the Reformation of Poetry	144
Toland and Shaftesbury: Fable, Fiction, and Rhapsody	151
From Public Religion to Polite Letters	159
The Sacheverell Trial and the Making of the <i>Characteristicks</i>	167

5. The Literature of Physico-Theology	177
Newton's Fame and the Bounds of Orthodoxy	177
Cosmic Whiggism in <i>The Seasons</i>	187
Ecclesiastical Faction and the Politics of Enthusiasm	198
Thomson among the Patriots	207
6. Alexander Pope and the Modes of Faith	210
<i>An Essay on Man</i> and the Limits of Enlightenment	210
Pope's Early Career and the Later Stuart Church	217
A Priestless Muse: Satire, Religion, and Party in the 1730s	224
<i>The Dunciad</i> and the War on Free-Thought	233
Coda: Pope, Milton, Modernity	244
<i>Bibliography</i>	249
<i>Index</i>	293