Collected Works of Erasmus, Volume 42, New Testament Scholarship: Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians, edited by Robert D. Sider, translated and annotated by John B. Payne, Albert Rabil Jr., and Warren S. Smith Jr. Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1984. Pp. xxxviii, 192. \$29.50

Erasmus devoted more of his scholarly energies to the New Testament than to any other work, yet few of his writings on the scriptures have found their way into English translation. The translators of his *Paraphrases on Romans and Galatians* have thus performed a genuine service by making the *Paraphrases* accessible to students and others without Latin. Moreover, they have produced a work useful for scholars as well. In the absence of a critical edition, their annotations on the textual history of the *Paraphrases* represent an improvement on the standard Leiden edition. And their comments on Erasmus' patristic sources and on the theological significance of the *Paraphrases* help to place the work in proper intellectual context.

Only the organization of this volume leaves me with reservations. As late as 1978 the general plan for the *Collected Works of Erasmus* called for translations of the *Paraphrases* and *Annotations* to the New Testament to appear in the same volume (CWE, vol. 23, pp. xv-xvi). This arrangement would have facilitated comparison of Erasmus' technical analysis of philological and theological issues with his more general expository views. A recent revision of the earlier plan provides for translations of the *Paraphrases* and *Annotations* to be published separately, according to the order in which the works originally appeared. The editor and translators, however, omit from this volume the *Paraphrases* to the two Corinthian letters – originally published between the *Paraphrases* to Romans and Galatians – and the emphasis here consequently falls on themes like faith and righteousness. Individual readers will determine for themselves the usefulness of this rather Lutheran principle of organization that governs the volume, but to me it seems to misrepresent Erasmus' view of his *Paraphrases* and of Christian theology. Inclusion here of the *Paraphrases* to the Corinthian letters would have resulted in a volume of normal rather than slender size; more important, it would have encouraged a more balanced view of Erasmus' thought by introducing themes like morality and charity that played so large a role in his understanding of religion. His warm, inspired paraphrase of 1 Cor. 13, for example, would counterbalance the dark pages dedicated to Rom. 8 and 9, where Erasmus engaged in truly paraphrastic literary gyrations in an effort to read some measure of human free will into the original Pauline text.

The organization, however, does not seriously diminish the value of this volume. The translators have succeeded admirably in their effort to put Erasmus into accurate and eminently readable English. Furthermore, in their notes they elucidate effectively the various theological issues that stood behind Erasmus' *Paraphrases*. Two of the translators, John B. Payne and Albert Rabil Jr., have recently contributed publications that depend on the *Paraphrases* both to characterize Erasmus' theology and to illustrate his reactions to the developing thought of Luther and other Reformers. Together with this translation, their work will perhaps encourage further research into Erasmus' *Paraphrases*, their significance

for his theology, and their influence on literature and religious thought in the sixteenth century.

JERRY H. BENTLEY, *University of Hawaii*

James H. Sims and Leland Ryken ed. *Milton and Scriptural Tradition: The Bible into Poetry*. Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1984. 208 pp. \$19.50

Milton and Scriptural Tradition: The Bible into Poetry, edited by James H. Sims and Leland Ryken, includes essays by eight Miltonists who explore how Milton transformed the Bible and scriptural tradition into poetry. At first glance, this collection of essays appears to be one more of a long line of similar studies that trace sources and note parallels between Milton's works and the Bible. A closer look, however, discovers the collection's central thrust emerging from a rather recent wave of criticism called intertextual criticism, the leading theorists of which are Harold Bloom and Sims himself in *The Bible in Milton's Epics*. According to Ryken, "The new procedure is built around the concept of a pre-text and an intertext. The pre-text is any previous work that a writer assumes as a necessary framework for his work. The real meaning of the new work is not self-contained but consists of what lies *between* the texts" (p. 19).

In exploring the intertextual relationships between Milton's poetry and the Bible, these essayists attempt also to correct or at least to balance the prevailing view that the chief influences on Milton's work are classical texts and English predecessors like Spenser. They hold "that the Bible was Milton's single most important pre-text and that the majority of what he wrote can be read as an interpoem in which the Bible figures as one of the active ingredients" (p. 20).

Michael Lieb, in "Scriptural Formula and Prophetic Utterance in *Lycidas*," draws upon biblical use of incremental repetition and the earlier studies of David Berkeley, Joseph Wittreich, Jr., and Edward LeComte to explore Milton's indebtedness to Haggai 2:6-7 and Hebrews 12:26-27 for his opening phrase "Yet once more." Tracing the formulaic language, "once more" – "no more," Lieb illustrates how *Lycidas* "subscribes to these forms in its adoption of a formulaic system" and how, by employing them, Milton draws upon "a complex of significations, at once unique to the settings in which they appear and commonplace to the traditions to which they are indebted" (p. 42).

Leland Ryken's "Paradise Lost and Its Biblical Epic Models," one of the more seminal essays in the collection, explores Milton's employment of Genesis, Exodus, and Revelation to create the central features of his epic. Ryken holds that *Paradise Lost* "depends for its full effect on being read against the background of its predecessors, which it often evokes only to challenge and refute them" (p. 45). By informing his work with biblical epic models, Milton composed "what can truly be called an anti-epic" (p. 48). Abandoning the warrior/ruler hero of the classical epic, Milton finds his model in the domestic life portrayed by Abraham and others in Genesis. Discarding the classical emphasis on human greatness, Milton exalts the glorious acts of God, drawing from the precedents of Moses' exaltation of God in Exodus. Shifting the classical themes of warfare and conquest from an earthly