"Song alone escapes the greedy funeral pyre," and DeNeef suggests that *Hesperides* can be seen as the working out, in various ceremonial forms, of the truth of this assertion or this promise (p. 182).

DeNeef's book will certainly have a prominent place in the growing volume of stimulating and appreciative Herrick criticism that has already done much to elevate the poet's reputation far beyond anything he enjoyed in the past and has assured him the immortality which his volume was designed to provide. Not only has DeNeef provided a synthesis of previous criticism, but he has persuasively demonstrated Herrick's continuous concern for the purpose and value of ceremonies. Miner has taught readers how important ceremonial is in Cavalier poetry, and DeNeef provides extended analysis of the especial truth of this statement in the case of Herrick.

ROMAN R. DUBINSKI, *University of Waterloo*

Patrick Grant. *The Transformation of Sin*. Montreal and London: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1974. Pp. xiii, 240. \$11.

One of the most illuminating ways of studying the work of great writers is to observe the manner in which various traditions and bodies of thought and belief have been absorbed into their work. The process thus scrutinized is one of the most complex in which human beings take part, since the aesthetic, spiritual, and intellectual chemistry involved is at all points subject to the individual artist's particular pattern of stresses, and to the personal, inner temperatures available for purposes of fusion.

In the case of religious verse, one asks who the believer is and what the coloration of the belief may be; one asks the relationship of the tensions within the process of search, adoration, or inquiry to similar or differing processes in others; especially, perhaps, one asks for the revelation of the writer as an individual creative force coming to terms with the factors, both implicit and explicit, at the center of the concept of finite mortal being confronting, in whatever mode of obeisance, infinite power. Religious poets, that is, come most sharply into focus when their experiences of both inner and outer spiritual space are most clearly indicated.

In *The Transformation of Sin*, Patrick Grant places major emphasis on the verse of Donne, Herbert, Vaughan, and Traherne. Since Grant is a learned and careful critic, the appropriate questions do come forth, along with possible answers. If both the questions and some of the answers seem a bit strained now and then, the work is nevertheless a significantly rewarding one.

These rewards have partly to do, naturally enough, with the extraordinary qualities of the period itself, for it is probable that there has never been a more energetic explosion of religious poetic impulse than that characterizing the era of the British metaphysicals. Grant feels that the difficulties in seeing common denominators underlying the styles of the school are to be cleared up somewhat by viewing the poets in the framework of what he terms "guilt culture" and "enlightenment"; or, to simplify his argument, hopefully without violence, the casting aside of Augustinian emphasis on original sin and human depravity in

favor of justification through faith, with an accompanying focus on the human being as individual.

In the course of presenting this argument, Grant offers a perceptive account of a wide range of writers and movements on the Continent that may be said to have links to the four poets in their religious development and poetic structuring. His learning is formidable, and offers, it seems to me, the firmest possible indication that the poets are part of a deep and broad series of developments in thinking about God and humanity. From Augustine to Henry More, from medieval vision to a hammering at the door of the Enlightenment (the capital is mine, here, as is the implied interpretation), we are carried through a varied, sometimes heroic, always compelling company, as the four writers are seen to belong now with one party, now with another. We may, in fact, become rather dizzied by the many, many personal introductions to various individuals; for in meeting them, and in attempting to understand their relationship to the poet or poets under consideration, we may tend to lose track of the conversation, the intent of the remark, the direction of Grant's demonstration of relationship.

Grant detects poetic expression responding to the intricacies of theological and ecclesiastical viewpoints as they come to the poet from others, and his presentation of this material is, I think, the finest aspect of his book. What results, very frequently, is both profound and graceful, as when Herbert's music or Donne's use of the first-person pronoun (to mention but two examples from a rich store) is seen as rooted in the religious heritage and acceptance of the two men. We find ourselves responding well to the symmetry of tradition as Grant offers it to us: it is always, I think, a happy experience to be given a new sense of direction or relationship in writing long loved.

As indicated earlier, the book does have some sense of strain in the presentation of questions and answers. Fairly often, I think, the dazzling display of learning with respect to the poets' antecedents on the one hand, and the sensitivity to the verse as poetic process on the other, remain two separated phenomena. We often lack a sense of inevitability, or at least of reasonable sureness concerning cause and effect—or, to be fairer to Grant's claims, concerning religious tradition and poetic response. And when this sense is missing, we may feel that we have worked on fairly demanding intellectual and spiritual materials, and have then been suddenly cast adrift. We see the lines of verse that Grant quotes, but we do not, at times, really feel that the case for influence or cause or specific spiritual ambience has been sufficiently made. But when this strain is not present (and that is most of the time), *The Transformation of Sin* is joyous, enriching going indeed.

FRANKLIN R. BARUCH, *Assumption College, Worcester, Massachusetts*

Hugh M. Richmond. *The Christian Revolutionary: John Milton*. Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1975. Pp. xi, 204. \$8.

The last few decades have provided a rich and varied abundance of scholarly discussions of Milton's work. In spite of the ever-widening chasm that separates us culturally, theologically, politically, psychologically from Milton, his work continues to fascinate, perplex, and inspire us. And the reactions of modern scholarly readers are almost always themselves