

Hanford, James Holly, A Milton Handbook Fourth Edition (Appleton-Century-Crofts: N.Y.) 1961

p. 339 (cont'd) In his attempt to restore the poem to its original form, Bentley, guided solely by his idea of what Milton ought to have said, exhibits the most extraordinary bad taste and judgment. He was roughly answered in his own time by Pearce and others, and such ineptitudes as his rewriting of the close of Paradise Lost:

They hand in hand with social steps their way  
Through Eden took with Heavenly comfort cheered.

have furnished a perennial theme of ridicule for later writers. It has remained for

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William Empson<sup>12</sup> to declare Bentley superior both in sincerity and in discernment to those critics who have found no aesthetic difficulties in Milton's poetry and who praise him for the wrong reasons. Of Bentley's vast body of emendations but two have been adopted in the received text, while some five or ten additional ones are held by J. W. Mackail to be all but certain.<sup>13</sup>

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12. Bentley and Milton  
13. Bentley's Milton