

a warrant to apprehend Thomas Johnson, Griffith's printer, at the Golden Key in St. Paul's Churchyard.¹⁹

Milton relished the confinement of the royalist divine and noted it with some satisfaction in his *Brief Notes upon a Late Sermon Titl'd, The Fear of God and the King, Preachd and Since Published, by Matthew Griffith*. Nevertheless, the Council of State had been able to act against Griffith and Johnson because they had graced the title page with their names. The challenge of anonymous pamphlets discussing political issues continued unabated from the clandestine presses. In *Brief Notes* Milton mounted one of his final prose attacks against the growing wave of royalist support and, in particular, against Matthew Griffith. He argued that Griffith had charged General Monck 'most audaciously and falsly with the renouncing of his own public promises and declarations both to the Parlament and the Army'.²⁰ Likewise, the inept dedication was cause for censure:

He begins in his Epistle to the General; and moves cunningly for a licence to be admitted Physitian both to the Church and State; then sets out his practice . . . commencing his address with an impudent calummie and affront to his Excellence, that he would be pleased to carry on what he had so happily begun in the name and cause not of God onely.²¹

The king was not the anointed agent of God and Milton recalled God's unwillingness to grant the Hebrews a king. Kingship, Milton insisted, had been abolished by the law of the land. His aversion to the nation reverting to monarchy had been stated on six occasions between October 1659 and April 1660; and his argument was reiterated in *Brief Notes*: 'Free Commonwealths have bin ever counted fittest and properest for civil, vertuous and industrious Nations, abounding with prudent men worthie to govern: monarchie fittest to curb degenerate, corrupt, idle proud luxurious people.'²² But Monck and the Council of State were secretly negotiating with Charles Stuart for his return and it seemed inevitable that Milton's fondest hopes would lie in ruins. There is a telling hint of his own loss of hope when he conceded that if the people must condemn themselves to thralldom,

despairing of our own vertue, industrie and the number of our able men, we may then, conscious of our own unworthiness to be governd better, sadly betake us to our befitting thralldom: yet chusing out of our own number one who hath best aided the people.²³

Milton concluded the tract by discrediting Griffith's loose biblical citations and classical analogies.

Brief Notes came to the attention of Roger L'Estrange not long after its printing and he did not hesitate in replying to the pamphlet. *No Blinde Guides* admonished Milton's pamphlet as seditious and