

# John Milton

## AREOPAGITICA

*read by*  
*Thomas A.*  
*Copeland*



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John Milton

**Areopagitica is the noblest and most extensive defense of freedom of the press in English, perhaps in any language. Although Milton was sufficiently practical to serve as a censor of books himself when his opposition to this practice was ignored by the government, he never lost his conviction that the best way to battle falsehood was to let it have its say and be defeated by the superior power of truth. Strangling infants in the cradle was simply not his style. As a teacher, he knew that stifling rational dissent leads to tyranny by stopping thought, and he placed far more trust in education than in legislation for fostering virtue and good sense. In this long essay, in the form of a five-part Classical oration addressed to Parliament (the counterpart of the Areopagus or council of elders in ancient Athens), he brings to bear on this subject a wide variety of arguments, including antique precedents, philosophical and religious considerations, and his own experience as a published author. The document presents the portrait of the idealistic heart of the British republic struggling against the political expediency that upholds government. (Summary by Thomas Copeland)**

Read by Thomas A. Copeland. Total running time: 2:47:27

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