Peter Harrison provides a new account of the religious foundations of scientific knowledge. He shows how the new approaches to the study of nature that emerged in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were directly informed by theological discussions about the Fall of Man and the extent to which the mind and the senses had been damaged by that primeval event. Scientific methods, he suggests, were originally devised as techniques for ameliorating the cognitive damage wrought by human sin. At its inception, modern science was conceptualised as a means of recapturing the knowledge of nature that Adam had once possessed. Contrary to a widespread view which sees science emerging in conflict with religion, Harrison argues that theological considerations were of vital importance in the framing of the new scientific method.

For Grace
We desire truth, and find within ourselves only uncertainty . . .
This desire is left to us, partly to punish us, partly to make us perceive from whence we have fallen.

Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, §401
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Acknowledgements

This book has been some eight years in the making. That it has been completed at all is owing to the generosity of several institutions and numerous individuals. I must acknowledge first of all the support of the Australian Research Council which provided funds for teaching relief during the years 2000–3. I am also grateful to the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, where an Elizabeth and J. Richardson Dilworth Fellowship for the first six months of 2005 made it possible for me to complete the first draft of this book. It is difficult to imagine an environment more conducive to scholarly endeavour than that provided by the Institute and the School of Historical Studies. I should also express my gratitude to a second Princeton Institution, the Center of Theological Inquiry. A membership during 2001 was devoted to another project which will be the subject of a forthcoming book. However, my time there afforded me the opportunity to conduct research that has found its way into this volume, and I should thank the members and staff of the Center, in particular Wallace Alston, Robert Jensen, and Kathi Morley. Last, but not least, Bond University, until recently my home institution, was always supportive of my research both financially and in its willingness to allow me to take leave from teaching duties from time to time.

I have benefited greatly from the assistance of numerous individuals. Special thanks are owed to David Lindberg, who kindly read a complete draft of the book and offered invaluable advice. Various chapters were read by other colleagues and friends – Peter Anstey, Rhodri Lewis, and Will Poole. Their comments and observations have also been enormously helpful. Jonathan Israel’s congenial early modern group at the Institute for Advanced Study also read drafts of some of the earlier material and I would specifically like to thank Jonathan himself, along with Kinch Hoekstra, Noah Efron, Karl Appuhn, and Wijnand Mijnhardt. Kinch Hoekstra also offered helpful suggestions for the title. Heinrich von Staden’s history of science seminar was also a source of valuable feedback. Over the years
Acknowledgements

many others have provided suggestions, advice and encouragement – Philip Almond, Stephen Gaukroger, Richard Yeo, Michael Lattke, Ed Conrad, Marina Bollinger, Stephen Snobelen, Ron Numbers, Jon Roberts, Conal Condren, Ian Hunter, Peter Barker, Raoul Mortley, and Bill Krebs. My greatest debt, as always, is to my wife Carol. She has supported me in this endeavour from the start, has happily accompanied me on extended sojourns away from our home in Australia and now here, to Oxford. In what could only have been a labour of love, she has read numerous drafts of each of the chapters. Grace and Thomas, both of whom arrived during the gestation of this book, have also been a source of great joy, providing wonderful distractions from the writing process and keeping me firmly grounded in the mundane realities of life. This book is for Grace.
Abbreviations

BJHS  British Journal for the History of Science
CHLMP  The Cambridge History of Later Medieval Philosophy, ed. Norman Kretzmann, Anthony Kenny, and Jan Pinborg (Cambridge, 1982)
CHRP  The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy, ed. Charles B. Schmitt and Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, 1988)
CSM  The Philosophical Writings of Descartes, tr. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, 2 vols. (Cambridge, 1985)
FaCh  Fathers of the Church, Washington DC, 1932–
JHI  Journal of the History of Ideas
SCG  Thomas Aquinas, Summa contra gentiles, tr. English Dominican Fathers (New York, 1924)