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MILTON AND THE IDEA OF THE FALL

In *Paradise Lost* (1667), Milton produced the most magnificent poetic account ever written of the biblical Fall of man. In this wide-ranging study, William Poole presents a comprehensive analysis of the origin, evolution and contemporary discussion of the Fall, and the way seventeenth-century authors, particularly Milton, represented it. Poole first examines the range and depth of early-modern thought on the subject, then explains and evaluates the basis of the idea and the intellectual and theological controversies it inspired from early Christian times to Milton's own century. The second part of the book delves deeper into the development of Milton's own thought on the Fall, from the earliest of his poems, through his prose, to his mature epic. Poole distinguishes clearly for the first time the range and complexity of contemporary debates on the Fall of man, and offers many new insights into the originality and sophistication of Milton's work.

WILLIAM POOLE is a Tutorial Fellow in English at New College, Oxford. He is the editor of Francis Lodwick's *A Country Not Named* (2005) and co-director of the AHRB research project 'Free-thinking and language-planning in late seventeenth-century England'.

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521847636

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First published 2005

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-84763-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-0-521-12016-6 Paperback

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Know the fall is being created, for when we were not
created, and uncome forth, we were as he is, that is in
perfection.

Thomas Tany

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Acknowledgements

This book is built on the ashes of a doctoral thesis (Oxford University, 2001), and both were written in New College, Oxford; Linacre College, Oxford; and finally Downing College, Cambridge, to the Master and Fellows of which I owe so much. They elected me to a research fellowship young, and have tolerated me with wit and the occasional sigh. Norman Powell Williams' classic 1924 Bampton lectures, published in 1927 as *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, shaped my understanding of the theological background to the issues this book addresses, and his work remains one of powerful clarity. J. M. Evans' *Paradise Lost and the Genesis Tradition* (1968) transmitted Williams' work, and the long history of Fall speculation, to Miltonists. A. D. Nuttall's *The Alternative Trinity: Gnostic Heresy in Marlowe, Milton and Blake* (1998) I first heard as undergraduate lectures. I know that this book opposes the assumption of Dennis Danielson's fine *Milton's Good God* (1982) – that you *can* make sense of the Fall – to which it is nonetheless grateful. Various other books are complementary to this one, notably J. M. Turner's *One Flesh* (1987), John Leonard's *Naming in Paradise* (1990), Jim Bennett and Scott Mandelbrote's museum catalogue *The Garden, the Ark, the Tower, the Temple: Biblical Metaphors of Knowledge in Early-Modern Europe* (1998) and Philip C. Almond's *Adam and Eve in Seventeenth-Century Thought* (1999).

I next thank my close circle of friends, who know who they are. I also thank my pupils at Downing College – it is to your type of audience this book is primarily addressed. Valued assistance has also been offered by Matthew Armstrong, Rhodri Lewis, Richard Serjeantson, Marcus Tomalin, Jake Wadham and Jack Wakefield. Sophie Read cheerfully axed one third of the penultimate draft to meet the exigencies of this series. The two anonymous readers for Cambridge University Press produced exemplary reports and opposing courses of revision, and my thanks to Ray Ryan, Maartje Scheltens and Robert Whitelock at the Press for their time.

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My undergraduate tutors, like distant radio galaxies, still exert a pull: they may have nothing to do with the surface of this book, but Mark Griffith and Craig Raine had a hand in making its maker. John Carey, my doctoral supervisor, oversaw a swift thesis with the lightest of hands. Finally, A. D. Nuttall first inspired my interest in the Fall and just about everything else.

I dedicate this, my first book, to my family, and to the memory of my father D. E. Poole (1945–2001): *nunc est bibendum*.

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Note on the text

Texts originally in languages other than English have been cited in translation, or supplied in both original and translation if pertinent. All translations are my own, unless indicated. In the case of classical texts, I have relied heavily on the Loeb editions. Early-modern manuscript sources, like printed sources, are cited unmodernised, although I have italicised expansions.

Abbreviations

- CG Augustine of Hippo, *De civitate Dei [City of God]*, ed. and trans. G. E. McCracken *et al.*, 7 vols. (London: Heinemann, 1957–72)
- CPW John Milton, *Complete Prose Works*, ed. D. Wolfe *et al.*, 8 vols. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958–82)
- CRW Nigel Smith (ed.), *A Collection of Ranter Writings from the 17th Century* (London: Junction Books, 1983)
- E Augustine of Hippo, *Enchiridion in Confessions and Enchiridion*, trans. A. C. Outler (London: SCMP, 1955)
- JFHS *Journal of the Friends Historical Society*
- LC Augustine of Hippo, *De Genesi ad litteram [Literal Commentary on Genesis]* in *La Genèse au sens littéral*, trans. with introduction and notes by P. Agaësse and A. Solignac, 2 vols. (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1972)
- MLQ *Modern Language Quarterly*
- N&Q *Notes and Queries*
- OED *The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner, 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)
- PL John Milton, *Paradise Lost: A Poem in Twelve Books*, 2nd edn revised by the author (London: printed by Samuel Simmons, 1674)