“No other doctrine needs”:
Knowledge in *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*

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**Abstract**

The problem of knowledge was one of the major intellectual concerns at the Age of Scientific Revolution in early modern Europe. With the rise of new sciences, the expansion of learning, and the broadening of world view came the explosion of knowledge, this posed enormous challenges, not only to church authorities, but also to individual thinkers. The question of how the desire for knowledge may be reconciled with faith has been debated in the writings of the time. Citing other critics, Lee A. Jacobus points out that the struggle between reason and faith is one of the major conceptual dualisms of the century (16). Howard Schultz, examining the metaphor of Lady Curiosity in the 17th-century English intellectual history, remarks that “intellectual sin came in for a scolding somewhere in every influential kind of writing” (1). For John Milton—a writer who devoted himself to learning and the path toward true faith throughout his life, the issue of how knowledge may be subsumed into the system of Christian faith, rather than becoming a subverting force, constitutes the core of his thinking. This concern is found most manifest in his major epics about the fall of man and the redemption through the Son—*Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*, in which knowledge stands in the center of the loss and the regaining of paradise. The Forbidden Tree (often referred to as “the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”) poses a major challenges to the characters and the readers about the knowledge of God, of the self, and, in sum, about true knowledge. The exchange between Raphael and Adam essentially revolves around the questions of knowing—of what God wants man to know, of what man should or should not know, of the manners in which man understands what is known, and most importantly of how

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knowledge should be bridled with faith so as to attain true wisdom. On the other hand, in *Paradise Regained*, the Son’s sustained resistance to Satan’s temptation is in many respects grounded on his knowledge of himself and of God. Even the last and ultimate temptation that Satan placed in front of the Son—one he easily defied—is the temptation of all knowledge: the possibility of comprehending all things in the world. It is, therefore, the aim of this paper to explore the problem of knowledge as presented in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* by examining the rhetoric of the characters on knowledge with cross-reference to Milton’s ideas of knowledge in his prose works such as *Areopagitica*, *Of Education*, *The Reason of Church Government*, *De Doctrina Christiana* and other tacts. The paper argues that the tension between being satisfied with the knowledge revealed by divine grace and pursuing worldly knowledge is fully played out in *Paradise Lost* whereas *Paradise Regained* offers a moral solution to the human dilemma through wisdom and the Son.

**Keywords:** knowledge, wisdom, *scientia*, *sapientia*, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained*
A major question that often arises in the modern reader’s mind when reading *Paradise Lost* is: “Why is knowledge forbidden?” The fact that the forbidden fruit comes from a tree specifically named the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil prompts a series of doubts regarding the nature of God’s injunction, as well as the nature of that knowledge. Is it bad to learn about good and evil? Would it not be beneficial to humanity to be able to distinguish evil from good? Such doubts remind us of Satan’s reaction when he first heard of the tree by eavesdropping on Adam and Eve: “. . . can it be sin to know, / Can it be death? and do they onely stand / By Ignorance, is that thir happie state, / The proof of thir obedience and thir faith?” (*PL* 4.517-20) These doubts become exactly the ground from which Satan works toward the human ruin. Upon hearing about the forbidden fruit, Satan straightway interprets the interdiction as God’s envy and regards it as a “fair foundation . . . to build [the human] ruin” by inflaming the desire to know (*PL* 4.521-26). More than once is Adam warned not to be overwhelmed by knowledge, as Raphael’s important remark exemplifies: “Sollicit not thy thoughts with matters hid, / Leave them to God above, . . . ;” “be lowlie wise: / Think onely what concernes thee and thy being” (*PL* 8.167-168, 173-174).

In *Paradise Regained*, after rejecting all of Satan’s proposals, the Son is offered knowledge as the ultimate means to establish his kingdom on Earth, but he dismisses all human learning right away as inessential. Like Satan who is flabbergasted by the Son’s total refusal, the reader’s mind may boggle at Milton’s dismissal of knowledge, which seems to be usually invested with the highest value in the humanistic tradition. From the above instances found in these epics, we find that Milton persistently provokes his reader into reconsidering the definition of knowledge and its relation to the faith of God. Posing the question through the mouths of his characters, Milton warns his reader—that is, the postlapsarian human being who lives in a world infested with evil and consequently false reason—not to take the idea of knowledge at face value and be extremely cautious with its uses.

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1 All quotations of *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained* are from the on-line full text available in Thomas H. Luxon, ed. *The John Milton Reading Room* (Trustees of Dartmouth College - Creative Commons License Copyrighted, 1997-2016).
Knowledge in the Garden before the Fall

To resolve these doubts and warnings, it is necessary to inquire into the idea of knowledge within Milton’s conceptual scheme. Following the Augustinian tradition, Milton views knowledge in a two-fold division, the division between *scientia* and *sapientia*, or knowledge and wisdom. While *scientia* has often been used, since the classical antiquity, to designate knowledge about the world intelligible and explicable by human intellect, the term *sapientia* are variously defined by different philosophers, theologians, and writers in antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance. Augustine modified the Stoic conception of *sapientia* (wisdom) as *rerum humanarum divinarumque scientia* (knowledge of both things human and divine) and established an explicit distinction between the knowledge of human things and that of divine things based on his Christian perspective:

In disputing, then, about wisdom, they have defined it thus: Wisdom is the knowledge of things human and divine . . . . But according to the distinction made in the apostle’s words, To one is given the word of wisdom, to another the word of knowledge, this definition is to be divided, so that the knowledge of things divine shall be called wisdom, and that of things human appropriate to itself the name of knowledge; . . . (359)

For Augustine, Knowledge—which pertains to temporal things that can be known by men—should not be attributed too much importance, for it will lead to “empty vanity and mischievous curiosity” (359). Rather, only the part of human knowledge that will help nourish and strengthen wisdom (which concerns the eternal) and lead men to true blessedness should be considered. Furthermore, Augustine identifies God as wisdom and the worship of God as the wisdom of man (358). Although human beings can neither attain nor comprehend God’s Wisdom in its entirety, they can share a portion of that wisdom through piety and divine revelation. In other words, knowledge may be acquired by learning whereas wisdom derives from faith and divine grace.

Augustine’s division of knowledge and wisdom has become a commonplace for many Christian writers in the Middle Ages up to the 17th century. Although some writers have
moved away from the Augustinian distinction and offered alternative definitions and categorizations, writers such as Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Nicolas of Cusa, Luther, and John Colet inherit and expand the Augustinian view. Regardless of the differences in their applications, they agree that scientia is restricted to the knowledge of human things or human virtue, that wisdom is God himself, and that human wisdom comes from piety and revelation (Lewalski 293).²

A similar division may be found in Milton’s works, especially in the preface to the second book of The Reason of Church Government (1642), in which Milton distinguishes the highest wisdom, which consists of knowing things “of God, and of his true worship,” from the lower wisdom, which is “the contemplation of naturall causes and dimensions” (CPW 1, 801).³ The highest wisdom pertains to the spiritual knowledge that can only be attained through faith, reason, love of God, and divine inspiration while the lower wisdom applies to the earthly knowledge human intellect is capable of acquiring. Although Milton does not elaborate on this division in his epics, his arguments regarding knowledge are often grounded on this underlying hierarchy, in which sapientia is always placed before and above scientia. In sum, the issue of knowledge in Milton’s epics is “the contrast between the role of learning in the order of nature and its role in the order of grace. The subject of the debate is the concept of wisdom—whether its substance is natural learning or revelation, whether its source is God or man” (Lewalski, Milton’s Brief Epic 290).

Hence, the question of knowledge in both Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained has to be read along this division. Before the Fall, Adam is already gifted with the knowledge of grace—the wisdom sufficient for him to obey and worship God, to stay in concord with God in a blissful state. He is created a full-grown man with that wisdom built into his being.⁴

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³ All quotations of Milton’s prose works come from the Yale Milton: The Complete Prose Works of John Milton, hereafter referred to as CPW.
⁴ For the debates regarding whether Adam is born a child-like being or a fully grown adult and the
When Adam first gains life and comes to his self-awareness, he instinctively stands up and looks up to the sky, “By quick instinctive motion up I sprung, / As thitherward endevoring, and upright / Stood on my feet” (PL 8.259-261). He examines his body and immediately inquires upon who his creator is, posing the question to the Sun and the creatures:

Tell, if ye saw, how came I thus, how here?
Not of my self; by some great Maker then,
In goodness and in power praeminent;
Tell me, how may I know him, how adore,
From whom I have that thus I move and live,
And feel that I am happier then I know. (PL 8.277-82)

By intuition, Adam seeks his creator. He is “happier then [he] know[s],” for the feeling of blissful satisfaction and worship is inborn, beyond his limited human cognition (PL 8.282). He is gifted with sufficient capability to know God aright, to worship and glorify Him.

Adam is also formally instructed and infused with the knowledge sufficient for him to live a happy life when God leads him to the Garden. God gives Adam everything in the Garden to enjoy and to lord over. He understands instinctively the nature of all the animals—“their language and their ways,” the knowledge that enables him to name the animals correspondingly (PL 8.373).

More importantly, Adam is endowed with the capacity to know himself. Despite the presence of the animals, he seeks human companionship. When asked why such companionship is necessary to him, Adam demonstrates a clear understanding of himself through his argument. Responding to God’s testing question, Adam argues that God is perfect and infinite whereas man is imperfect and therefore requires “collateral love, and dearest amitie” to soothe a keen sense of deficiency (PL 8.415-26). Besides, man cannot raise animals to his level for conversation whereas God can do so at will—even though no such lack is found in

interpretation of the Fall in the 16th and 17th century, see William Poole, Milton and the Idea of the Fall. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.
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Him (*PL* 8.427-33). Adam’s argument is greeted by God’s approval:

Thus farr to try thee, *Adam*, I was pleas’d,
And finde thee knowing not of Beasts alone,
Which thou hast rightly nam’d, but of thy self,
Expressing well the spirit within thee free,
My Image, not imparted to the Brute,
Whose fellowship therefore unmeet for thee
Good reason was thou freely shouldst dislike,
And be so minded still; . . . (*PL* 8.437-44)

Adam’s clear self-awareness is intimately connected with his knowledge of God, the God-endowed wisdom he receives upon gaining life. In fact, the knowledge of the self and the knowledge of God are so closely integrated into the Christian idea of wisdom that they can hardly be separated, as Lee A. Jacobus observes:

> The Christians . . . will, upon coming to an understanding of his own nature, very shortly come to an understanding of his limitations, his weaknesses, his failings—in short his character. He will then see himself not as self-created nor as self-sustaining, but as a creature of God and dependent on His grace. As Calvin says, “Every person, therefore, on coming to the knowledge of himself is not only urged to see God, but is also led as by the hand to find him.” (23-24)

Adam’s response to God’s test, then, proves that Adam possesses the necessary and sufficient knowledge for his happiness in the Garden from the start, both that of the animals and of himself as the highest creation on Earth in God’s image. This is the knowledge of grace, *sapientia*, the inspirational wisdom coming from God, for Adam is created with it, and he is supposed to draw upon that knowledge for his actions and choices in the Garden. As Milton has noted in *De Doctrina Christiana*, “Man was made in the image of God, and the whole law of nature was so implanted and innate in him that he was in need of no command” (*Book I, Chapter X, CPW* 6, 353).

Unfortunately, Adam cannot adhere to this original knowledge without being distracted.
He tends to forget the first principle and get confused by the second type of knowledge, *scientia*, the human learning of nature, of things in the world. Thus, he has to be reminded, and even tested, time and time again of that first principle, of the original grace God has given man at the moment of creation. “Nothing now adayes is more degenerately forgott’n, then the true dignity of man,” as Milton remarks in *Tetrachordon*, in which he contrasts the “inward goodness, and stedfast knowledge”—born with the image of God man partakes at his creation—with the “Will-worship and the meer shew of wisdom,” the result of confusing the means for the end (*CPW* 2, 587).

In the conversation between Adam and Raphael, Adam’s attention is repeatedly drawn to the knowledge of the external, of the vicissitudes of events and show, even though he remains innocent. When Raphael mentions the fall of the angels as a warning of human fallibility, Adam appears to be interested more in hearing the curious event of the Heavenly warfare than the admonition. He is so much assured of himself, “my constant thoughts / Assur’d me and still assure,” that he takes the angel’s warning for granted and goes on to request a detailed account of the angelic war that fascinates him (*PL* 5.552-53). Upon hearing Raphael’s account of the war in Heaven, Adam admiringly characterizes what he has heard as “Great things, and full of wonder in our eares, / Farr differing from this World, . . .”, even praising it as “to highest wisdom seemd” (*PL* 7.71-72, 83). Thanking Raphael briefly for the warning, Adam seems to find the opportunity to increase his knowledge about the world from an angel rather enticing, for the heavenly messenger may provide him answers to the questions previously unanswerable with his limited human capacity. Adam proceeds to find further gratification from the angel regarding how the world is created. Although the knowledge about the creation of the world is harmless and even beneficial to man—as Raphael has noted in his response, it is Adam’s attitude that suggests the potential danger—the attitude of placing the knowledge of the world (*scientia*) before the knowledge of grace (*sapientia*).

Even after the angel answers Adam’s request with a full narrative, Adam’s thirst to know more does not subside. Instead, his curiosity about knowledge of the phenomenal world seems to have reached such a height that he becomes preoccupied. As he thanks
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Raphael for the account, he stresses the wonder he enjoys in hearing such things, which would otherwise be unavailable to him: “Things else by me unsearchable, now heard / With wonder” (*PL* 8.10-11). Although Adam says that the account “hast allayd / the thirst [he] had for knowledge,” he immediately poses another demand for more: “something yet of doubt remains, / Which onely thy solution can resolve” (*PL* 8.7-8, 13-14). At the moment of delivering his doubt, Adam is portrayed ironically as a schoolman deeply entrenched in the maze of thought: “So spake our Sire, and by his count’nance seemed / Entring on studious thoughts abstruse, . . .” (*PL* 8.39-40).

Moreover, Adam’s tendency to be attracted to the external things and forget the first principle is further intensified by his disproportionate and irrational obsession with Eve’s beauty. Concluding the account of his own nativity in Book 8, Adam tells Raphael that he has never been moved by any of the external delights such as “Taste, Sight, Smell, Herbs, Fruits and Flours, / Walks, and the melodie of Birds,” yet he is absolutely fascinated by the beauty of Eve (8.527-28). He is well aware of Eve’s inferiority to him in the order of God’s creation (“For well I understand in the prime end / Of Nature h’erinferiour” [*PL* 8.540-41]), as he confesses to Raphael. However, he cannot help but be overwhelmed by her “seeming” superiority:

... so absolute she seems  
And in her self compleat, so well to know  
Her own, that what she wills to do or say,  
Seems wisest, vertuousest, discreetest, best;  
All higher knowledge in her presence falls  
Degraded, Wisdom in discourse with her  
Looses discount’nanc’t, and like folly shewes;  
Authority and Reason on her waite,  
As one intended first, not after made  
Occasionally; (*PL* 8.547-55)

Despite the privilege and authority God has endowed on Adam over Eve, Adam still falls
into the snare of attributing too much importance to external things. While enchanted by the outward beauty of Eve, which signifies only “seeming” virtue, Adam has forgotten the true, inward virtue of faith and the dignity he enjoys as the first human being created by God in his image.

There is, therefore, a sustained struggle or tension in *Paradise Lost*, as well as Milton’s other works, between the moral wisdom to follow the eternal Creator (*sapientia*) and the knowledge and appreciation of the fickle things in the world (*scientia*). As Stanley Fish remarks,

> what is really interesting in Milton’s work [is] a sustained and incredibly focused effort to explore the relationship between an imperative to be single-minded—to affirm one thing, one truth, one meaning, one God, one obligation—and a world (his world and our world) that seems to offer many paths and to invite us, . . . , to search for other meanings. (51)

Indeed, the fundamental issue of *Paradise Lost* revolves around the choice between knowing God aright and exploring the ephemeral world, bathing in the light of grace or obsessing oneself with the “appearances.”

Nevertheless, in Milton’s idea of knowledge, the struggle between the two choices cannot be resolved once and for all. Rather, it is a continual trial that characterizes the freedom of choice—the fundamental principle in God’s creations. True knowledge for Milton, especially the higher wisdom of grace, has to be proved true through recurring trials. Even in the prelapsarian life of the Garden, trials are an integral part of knowledge. When Adam pleads for human companionship, God tests him intentionally by asking him to follow God’s example and be satisfied with his singularity. The forbidden tree is also set up early on as a device to test Adam’s fidelity—as many of Milton’s contemporaries concur (Patrides 240). Milton explains clearly in *De Doctrina Christiana* the nature and purpose of the Tree as “a kind of pledge or memorial of obedience” (Book I, Chapter X, *CPW* 6, 352):

> The providence which relates to his prelapsarian state is that by which God placed
man in the garden of Eden and supplied him with every good thing necessary for a happy life. And, so that there might be some way for man to show his obedience, God ordered him to abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and threatened him with death if he disobeyed: . . . (Emphasis added) (Book I, Chapter X, CPW 6, 351)

The Fruit from the Tree does not carry any material power that increases knowledge, for it is a test that “gave substance to the assurance of God that the pre-lapsarian period of existence was man’s happiest possible state” (Patrides 241). The name of the Tree—the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil—simply designates the result of transgression, for “since it was tasted, not only do we know evil, but also we do not even know good except through evil,” as Milton said in De Doctrina Christiana (Book I, Chapter X, CPW 6, 352). This “[k]nowledge of Good bought dear by knowing evil” is clearly illustrated in Areopagitica (PL 4.222):

It was from out the rinde of one apple tasted, that the knowledge of good and evill as two twins cleaving together leapt forth into the World. And perhaps this is that doom which Adam fell into of knowing good and evill, that is to say of knowing good by evill. (CPW 2, 514)

It is the moral choice to disobey God that separated human existence from good, the blissful state of obedience and worship, and that separation is the state of doom, the effect of an evil action.

Indeed, the necessity of continual trial and choice-making is the central mechanism in Milton’s idea of knowledge. It is “a concept that requires the action of dramatic conflict in order to test and purify values—if not the real values themselves, at least creaturely understanding and possession of those values” (Stein 99). Milton has made it clear in Areopagitica that trial is necessary for virtue even in the Garden of Eden:

Many there be that complain of divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgresse, foolish tongues! When God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose, for
reason is but choosing; he had bin else a meer artificiall Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions. We our selves esteem not of that obedience, or love, or gift, which is of force: God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes; herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly temper’d are the very ingredients of vertue? (Emphasis added) (CPW 2, 527)

What Milton’s theory of knowledge lays out is an outlook of the Christian life. God creates man and gives him everything. God endows man with the moral wisdom and reason to make his own moral choice—choosing whether he would live his life on a spiritual or a worldly path. God also gives man all the world to live and enjoy, along with the faculties to appreciate and enjoy the abundance of the world. All of these are given to man for his happiness, a good way of living. However, there is the danger that man may get overwhelmed by the means of happiness, becomes too much devoted to the things that make him happy and forgets the true source of his happiness, God. Thus, he might worship the things more than he worships God and becomes idolatrous. It is therefore necessary to place continual tests on man so that his faith can be verified and strengthened over and over again. The situation is illustrated by Stanley Fish as follows:

[Milton] never wavers in his conviction that obedience to God is the prime and trumping value in every situation. But because in his antinomian theology the road-way of obedience is an internal one not available to external confirmation or disconfirmation, the taking of any path is fraught with the danger that it may be the path of self-aggrandizement rather than the path of faith. In the midst of resolving to love the Lord thy God with all thy soul and with all thy might, you could end up embracing and enacting a form of the self-love you think to have renounced. (5-6)

Considered in this framework, knowledge of things (scientia) is nothing evil in itself; it is neither good nor bad. It is the excess in the pursuit of knowledge, the over-devotion to knowledge above the devotion to God that turns it into an idol, a distraction from the love of
God—from sapientia. Thus, Raphael’s admonitions to Adam on knowledge cannot be interpreted as anti-intellectualism or discouragement for the pursuit of knowledge.\(^5\) The angel attempts to guide Adam away from subjecting himself to the appearances, the outward show, and forgetting the inner light:

To ask or search I blame thee not, for Heav’n
Is as the Book of God before thee set,
Wherein to read his wondrous Works, and learne
His Seasons, Hours, or Dayes, or Months, or Yeares:
This to attain, whether Heav’n move or Earth,
Imports not, if thou reck’n right, the rest
From Man or Angel the great Architect
Did wisely to conceal, and not divulge
His secrets to be scann’d by them who ought
Rather admire; (PL 8.66-74)

In response to Adam’s question about the disproportion in the hierarchy of the stars, Raphael acknowledges Adam’s aspiration for knowledge of the world as natural and permissible, for it is another means to appreciate God’s creation, apart from the Holy Scriptures. However, this permissibility does not come without a premise. The appreciation or studies of nature should not be the end itself; rather, it should be seen as the means to ensure and appreciate the good life God endows man with by observing the seasons, hours, days, months, and years—the rhythm of life and order of nature designed as part of the creation for man’s happiness. If man understands this properly (“if thou reck’n right”), he will not attribute too much importance to the inquiries into the phenomenal world (“whether Heav’n move or Earth, / Imports not”), allowing himself to be ensnared by conjectures and calculations (PL 8.70-1).

In the final bout of question and answer between Raphael and Adam, as well as in

\(^5\) Karen Edwards holds a similar view but explains her point in relation to Milton’s views on biblical exegeses. See Edwards’s article “Cosmology” in the Works Cited list.
Adam’s confession about his love for Eve, Adam becomes so much enticed by the literal “appearances” that he is virtually standing on a threshold looking at the mesmerizing diversity of the phenomenal world and thirsting to know more, with the apprehension of the moral wisdom behind him. Seeing the dangerous path Adam is likely to take if he continues to entertain the pursuit of outward values, Raphael has to draw him back with an admonition.

Instead of giving Adam satisfaction with a clear answer regarding the appearing disproportion in the motion of the stars, Raphael reminds him not to lapse into literalism, for the Sun, though larger and brighter, is itself barren and serves to give light to the Earth, which is full of life (PL 8.90-97). In other words, Raphael is reminding Adam not to take the order of the universe at face value. Or as Karen Edwards duly says, since “Adam’s question . . . shows him to be a literal reader of the heavens,” “Raphael’s answer is designed to free him from his literalism” (113). More importantly, what the Sun serves is man, the inhabitant on Earth: “Yet not to Earth are those bright Luminaries / Officious, but to thee Earths habitant” (PL 8.98-99). It is therefore the dignity of man in the universe that Adam should always put into perspective.

Similarly, Adam has to be warned not to overvalue Eve’s “appearances” and holds her in higher esteem above his dignity and the wisdom of grace, for he should be the head for Eve rather than the other way around: “fair no doubt, and worthy well / Thy cherishing, thy honouring, and thy love, / Not thy subjection” (PL 8.568-70). Although Eve’s outward beauty might seem divine, it is only a manifestation of the spiritual power that has graced her upon creation. To attribute too much respect for her seemingly divine beauty runs the risk of literalism and idolatry. As Stanley Fish remarks, “To mistake a possible manifestation of the spirit for the spirit itself is to have literalized it and to have made that manifestation into an idol” (206).

To counter the excess in idolizing the unessential and forgetting the essential, one has to observe the rule of temperance. As the earlier quotation from Areopagitica shows, passions or pleasures have not been denied in human life, since God creates passions within man and pleasures around. Both can be “the very ingredients of virtue” as long as they are “rightly temper’d” (CPW 2, 527). Hence, the question is not whether man should enjoy the
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pleasures, pursue knowledge, or do other things in this world; rather, it is whether man is wise enough to do it moderately, in proportion to his capacity, so that his body, mind, life, and faith would not be muddled. Such an exercise of temperance is the key to good reason and a balanced life—a mechanism Milton likens to the digestion of food in the human body:

I conceive therefore, that when God did enlarge the universall diet of mans body, saving ever the rules of temperance, he then also, as before, left arbitrary the dyeting and repasting of our minds; as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his owne leading capacity. How great a vertue is temperance, how much of moment through the whole life of man? Yet God commits the managing so great a trust, without particular Law or prescription, wholly to the demeanour of every grown man. (*Areopagitica, CPW 2, 513*)

Adopting this extended alimentary metaphor several times in both his prose and poetry, Milton establishes the link between knowledge (that is, knowledge of the ephemeral world) and food as basic human needs, comparing the desire for knowledge to appetite, hunger, or thirst. This is done most evidently in Raphael’s warning to Adam:

> But Knowledge is as food, and needs no less  
> Her Temperance over Appetite, to know  
> In measure what the mind may well contain,  
> Oppresses else with Surfet, and soon turns  
> Wisdom to Folly, as Nourishment to Winde. (*PL 7.126-130*)

If one eats properly with moderation, food will become nourishment. If taken in excess, the extra nutrition is wasted and can even cause indigestion. In the same vein, temperance observed in the pursuit of knowledge will benefit the human mind, yet wisdom will turn into folly if excess overtakes temperance. Therefore, the idea of temperance is intrinsically connected with making choices, which is the central issue in the fall and redemption of mankind. Trusting the serpent’s false reason, Eve subjects herself to appetite and eats her fill from the forbidden fruit. Adam, not beguiled but “fondly overcome with Femail charm,” subjects
himself to the beauty of Eve “against his better knowledge” (*PL* 9.998-9). Despite Raphael’s warning of their mutability and the advice on temperance over appetite, the Edenic couple lets lose their appetite, choosing a path away from God.

**Knowledge in the Postlapsarian World**

If man is not able to choose rightly before the Fall despite the wisdom he has been endowed with since nativity, the chance for him to choose badly after the Fall with tainted reason would be much greater. In the postlapsarian state, after evil enters the world, intertwining with good, man loses that innate wisdom God gifts him with at the moment of his creation. To withstand the attraction of worldly experience and remain a true follower of God becomes ever more difficult, for man cannot escape from the effect of sin. This is exactly what happens when Adam and Eve find themselves subject to the inner turbulence of passion and desire after the Fall:

\[
\text{Thir inward State of Mind, calm Region once} \\
\text{And full of Peace, now tost and turbulent:} \\
\text{For Understanding rul’d not, and the Will} \\
\text{Heard not her lore, both in subjection now} \\
\text{To sensual Appetite, who from beneath} \\
\text{Usurping over sovran Reason claimd} \\
\text{Superior sway (*PL* 9.1125-1131)}
\]

In the postlapsarian state, the higher wisdom of grace, the Supreme Truth originating from the divine spirit, has been lost, shattered into pieces and scattered around the world, losing its original unity due to the wickedness of man, as Milton’s allegory of Truth in *Areopagitica* illustrates:

\[
\text{Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on: but when he ascended, and his Apostles after him were laid asleep, then strait arose a wicked race of deceivers, who as that story goes of the Aegyptian Typhon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris,}
\]
took the virgin Truth, hewd her lovely form into a thousand peces, and scatter’d them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the carefull search that Isis made for the mangl’d body of Osiris, went up and down gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall doe, till her Masters second coming; he shall bring together every joynt and member, and shall mould them into an immortall feature of loveliness and perfection (CPW 2, 549).

For the postlapsarian humans, Truth is irretievable, at least not in its entirety. Only some scattered fragments of Truth can be gathered from diverse places. When pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle, the collected parts might yield a glimpse of Truth, but never the whole Truth, which can only be regained at the Son’s second coming.

Continual trials, then, become ever more essential to counteract the impurity, the intermingling of good and evil in the postlapsarian world. Since evil can no longer be fully separated from good, one can only attain true wisdom by strife, by resisting evil in continuous trials of temptation, and by applying reason to one’s choices of action. Hence, Milton does not trust untested knowledge or virtue because it is not attained by implementing one’s reason to make the choices. Only when one is challenged by adversarial forces and compelled to make choices can it be shown that he is not following orders simple-mindedly but truly understands the meaning of his action.

As therefore the state of man now is; what wisdome can there be to choose, what continence to forbeare without the knowledge of evill? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring Christian. . . . Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world, we bring impurity much rather: that which purifies us is triall, and triall is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evill, and knows not the utmost that vice promises to her followers, and rejects it, is but a blank vertue, not a
After the Fall, Adam loses that innate wisdom as his guidance and therefore has to be made ready to face a world of both good and evil through further education. He has to learn it the hard way, not by innate endowment nor by divine inspiration but by discursive education. In other words, the knowledge has to be told, and even illuminated to him, due to his darkened senses, so as to ensure clear understanding. After attempting to show the early part of biblical history through a spiritual vision, Michael soon realizes that the vision is too much for Adam with his limited human capacity: “Much thou hast yet to see, but I perceive / Thy mortal sight to faile; objects divine / Must needs impaire and wearie human sense” (PL 12.8-10). Moreover, Michael has to guide Adam through the interpretation; otherwise, it is very likely for Adam to read the vision literally, as Adam’s repeated mistakes in reading the vision have shown. The angel eventually gives up the visual approach and proceeds to teach Adam in the form of narration.

Although what Michael reveals to Adam is the progression of human history according to the Bible, it is a lesson of moral history rather than factual history, for it is intended to teach Adam of the persistent wickedness of man in the fallen world with the prospect of redemption through the Son. What is intended for Adam to learn through this history is the moral consequences of his transgression, the fallen world that has been altered and tainted by evil, and the hope for redemption through the Son in God’s providence.

However, this “summe of wisdom” is not quite enough, for it is learned rather than innate. It is wisdom pieced together from glimpses of Truth gathered from the history of man, even though this wisdom is taught by a divine messenger. The wisdom Adam learns also needs to be seasoned by other moral qualities, as Michael instructs him in the end:

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6 This is also cited from Milton’s Areopagitica collected in the second volume of the Complete Prose Works of John Milton. An alternative wording for “warfaring” is “wayfaring,” which appeared in the printed text. However, “wayfaring” was changed to “warfaring” in all four presentation copies and the “F” copy—copies the editor of the Complete Prose Works judges to have authority. The quotation here simply follows the wording in the Complete Prose Works. For details concerning the editor’s decision, see the Complete Prose Works, Volume 2, page 515, note 102.
This having learnt, thou hast attained the summe
Of wisdom; hope no higher, though all the Starrs
Thou knewst by name, and all th’ ethereal Powers,
All secrets of the deep, all Natures works,
Or works of God in Heav’n, Aire, Earth, or Sea,
And all the riches of this World enjoydst,
And all the rule, one Empire; onely add
Deeds to thy knowledge answerable, add Faith,
Add vertue, Patience, Temperance, add Love,
By name to come call’d Charitie, the soul
Of all the rest: then wilt thou not be loath
To leave this Paradise, but shalt possess
A Paradise within thee, happier far. (PL 12.575-587)

Since the wisdom Adam learns from Michael is still partial—not the complete wisdom he is endowed with before the Fall, it requires the observance of other virtues—As Irene Samuel says, “the happiness of Adam and of mankind will be determined by ethical habit” (712). Among these virtues, temperance is listed along with virtue and patience, all of which are different aspects of self-discipline for a moral life. Here Michael is laying out before Adam the prospect of a good Christian life in the postlapsarian world. It is also a prospect Milton intended to convey to his reader. In the world after the Fall, when the Garden of Eden is no longer tangible, when the first endowed wisdom is lost, when the animals and natural elements are not in harmony with man, and when man’s reason is tainted by evil, human beings have to keep vigilant, observing temperance and other virtues in order to live a happy mundane life.

Therefore, the wisdom of this moral principle is placed above all other values, including intellectual knowledge of the phenomenal world. Michael’s remark strikes home the conviction Milton holds throughout his works: regardless of how much knowledge of the world you can attain through human intellect (“though all the Starrs / thou knewst by name, . . .”), how much wealth you can accumulate (“all the riches of this World enjoys”),
and how great a mundane empire you can build ("all the rule, one Empire"), only the moral wisdom of obedience, worship, and temperance, exemplified by the Son, can help you live in sustained happiness in an inward paradise (PL 12.576-580). This is the ultimate goal of education above all other learning as Milton asserts in Of Education:

[the end then of learning is to repair the ruins of our first parents by regaining to know God aright, and out of that knowledge to love him, to imitate him, to be like him, as we may the neerest by possessing our souls of true vertue, which being united to the heavenly grace of faith makes up the highest perfection (CPW 2, 366-67).

Knowledge in Paradise Regained

Consistent with the idea of knowledge in Paradise Lost and other prose works, Milton's portrayal of the Son in Paradise Regained is a model of perfection in following the wisdom of grace and rejecting all the possible temptations from the ephemeral world. The Son is exactly the antithesis of Adam in the matter of reason and choice—the choice between observing the wisdom of grace (sapientia) and getting distracted by the knowledge of the elemental world (scientia). While Adam forgets the dignity and wisdom he has already enjoyed from his creation—choosing to be convinced by external values, the Son adheres to the first principle from beginning to end—rejecting all the seemingly justifiable satisfactions offered by Satan.

In contrast to the temptation in the Garden, which connects the satisfaction of physical hunger to the increase of knowledge and then to the vain hope of ascending to God-like position, the temptations in the wilderness in Paradise Regained pertain to Jesus's fulfillment of the prophesied role as the Son of God whose kingdom in this world shall be no end. Satan offers Jesus a series of opportunities to distinguish himself as the Son of God, including the relief of famine, the gaining of wealth, the reach of dignity and power, the rise of fame and glory, the expansion of empire, and finally the attainment of all knowledge. All of these are proposed as means to justify and fulfill Jesus's divine role, schemes designed by Satan to prompt Jesus into action.

However, Jesus refuses to take any of these actions, for he persistently adheres to the
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wisdom of grace already infused in his nature. Ever since he is a child, he knows the purpose of his life intuitively, as we can see in his first internal monologue:

When I was yet a child, no childish play
To me was pleasing, all my mind was set
Serious to learn and know, and thence to do
What might be publick good; my self I thought
Born to that end, born to promote all truth,
All righteous things: therefore above my years,
The Law of God I read, and found it sweet,
Made it my whole delight, and in it grew
To such perfection, . . . . (PR 1.201-209)

The education Jesus receives since childhood, then, is not new knowledge that increases his wisdom. What he reads, hears, or does is confirmation or intensification of the wisdom he already possesses. The Holy Scriptures—“the Law of God”—he reads only reinforces what he has known (PR 1.207). When he enters the Temple at the age of twelve, his purpose is “to propose / What might improve my knowledge or their own,” not to add new knowledge to what he has known (PR 1.212-3). Although he is admired by others for his precocious maturity, he knows clearly his mission and the manner in which he will fulfill it, which is “to conquer willing hearts” “[b]y winning words,” to “teach the erring Soul / Not wilfully mis-doing, but unaware Misled,” and finally “to subdue” “the stubborn” (PR 1.222-6).

In contrast to the inward means that Jesus intends to employ to build his spiritual kingdom, the means Satan characterizes as necessary are external measures only useful for building a worldly empire, which is why Jesus accepts none of them. More importantly, Satan’s strategy of temptation is designed to lure Jesus from the essential and attribute unnecessary importance to the means rather than the end. If Jesus falls into the trap of mistaking the means for the end—which is exactly the mistake Adam has made, he would be pitted by idolatry, as Stanley Fish keenly observes:

Being faithful to that obligation may or may not involve the means (wealth, power,
eloquence) to which Satan would bind him. When, however, those means are urged not as auxiliaries to the doing of God’s will but as substitutes for it or as vehicles it uniquely requires, they must be rejected, not because they are bad in and of themselves . . . , but because as Satan presents them they occupy the position of idolatry, and invite the twin mistakes of idolatry: the mistake of preferring the created thing (or agent) to the creator, and the mistake of thinking that without the created thing the creator’s will cannot be done. (54)

Thus, instead of being provoked into action by Satan’s proposals, Jesus “holds all the power & retains his freedom by his inaction” (Denham 193). In contrast to the model represented by classical epic heroes, Jesus takes the biblical anti-hero Job as the model, for whom waiting and enduring with sustained integrity and humility is the only way not to be compromised in faith by the attractive, yet transitory and confusing mundane world:

But if there be in glory aught of good,
It may by means far different be attain’d
Without ambition, war, or violence;
By deeds of peace, by wisdom eminent,
By patience, temperance; I mention still
Him whom thy wrongs with Saintly patience born,
Made famous in a Land and times obscure;
Who names not now with honour patient Job? (PR 3.88-95)

In this anti-heroic model, temperance is again most vital as in Paradise Lost. It is a manifestation of self-control that keeps oneself from falling prey to external satisfactions. It enables one to abstain from hunger, both physical and nonphysical hunger, which is the root of all desire and is in frequent danger of excess. It is interesting to note that Satan’s first temptation for Jesus addresses precisely the issue of hunger, a real bodily hunger that becomes the ground for all the subsequent ambitions Satan attempts to excite. This unifies all of Satan’s temptations and Jesus’s resistance with the extended metaphor of hunger for food and the dialectics of temperance over excessive appetite. The last temptation, on the other
hand, deals with knowledge, which renders it the last and supreme aspiration of all earthly pursuits and mirrors the temptation to eat from the Tree of Knowledge in *Paradise Lost*.

The knowledge proffered by Satan is dressed in the guise of spiritual wisdom (*sapien-
tia*), while it is actually the knowledge of the phenomenal world (*scientia*). Satan contrasts the acquisition of such knowledge with the pursuits of “a worldly Crown,” which he endeavors to entice Jesus with and referred to it as “contemplation and profound dispute” (*PR* 4.213-4). To cement his argument, Satan (mis)interprets Jesus’s debates with the Rabbis in the Temple as the sign of Jesus’s interest in disputing and winning over argumentations. However, Jesus’s real intention, as we have found in his internal monologue earlier, has nothing to do with conquest; rather, his sole purpose is to improve himself and the Rabbis in the wisdom of grace. Hence, Satan’s version of knowledge is intrinsically intertwined with the logic of conquest, even though it is presented in the guise of contemplation. Despite its seeming innocence, knowledge is seen as another channel toward power—only it is done through intellectual prowess and discourse, rather than physical violence, as we can see in Satan’s deliberation on the subject:

... Be famous then
By wisdom; as thy Empire must extend,
So let extend thy mind o’re all the world,
In knowledge, all things in it comprehend,
All knowledge is not couch’t in Moses Law,
The Pentateuch or what the Prophets wrote,
The Gentiles also know, and write, and teach
To admiration, led by Natures light;
And with the Gentiles much thou must converse,
Ruling them by perswasion as thou mean’st,
Without thir learning how wilt thou with them,
Or they with thee hold conversation meet? (*PR* 4.221-32)

Satan proclaims that the Son’s extended “Empire” should be built upon the comprehension of all things in the world, and the moral wisdom in the Holy Scriptures is not sufficient. Ac-
According to Satan’s argument, the Gentiles are also capable of worship from their natural instinct; the range of their knowledge is much broader than the moral wisdom taught in the Bible; and therefore it would require a wide expanse of knowledge for Jesus to persuade and subjugate the Gentiles. Again, Satan is confusing the wisdom of grace with the knowledge of the world and reversing their order of importance. He falsely places the moral wisdom as subservient to the greater range of intellectual knowledge and diverts the purpose of learning from moral bliss to worldly conquest.

In the face of such seemingly justifiable temptation, it is imperative that Jesus counters Satan’s argument by breaking the confusion. As Barbara K. Lewalski rightly remarks: “Milton is again forcing discriminations—that Satan offers classical learning for power, for dominion, for fame, as essential for the Son’s teaching mission, as embodying truth, and as equivalent to wisdom—and that the Son must refuse it on those perverse terms” (“Milton and the Hartlib Circle” 218). Jesus’s reply cuts the dividing line between the wisdom of grace (σαπεντία), which he is imbued with by the Father and the knowledge of the ephemeral world (scientia) attributed to the ancient philosophers:

Think not but that I know these things, or think
I know them not; not therefore am I short
Of knowing what I aught: he who receives
Light from above, from the fountain of light,
No other doctrine needs, though granted true;
But these are false, or little else but dreams,
Conjectures, fancies, built on nothing firm. (PR 4.285-92)

Jesus stands firm with a sense of fullness and satisfaction based on the wisdom of grace he receives from God, for he knows well that it is the first and last moral principle he should value above all others, as he earlier challenges Satan’s credibility strikingly with the first commandment: “Thou shalt worship / The Lord thy God, and only him shalt serve” (PR 4.176-7). He places this moral wisdom above all other knowledge as Truth, the ultimate end
of all knowledge, as well as all pleasures and human endeavors.

Compared with this absolute value, the knowledge gathered by human intellect from this world is partial and incomplete. It might resemble truth in appearance, for it does take moral philosophy into consideration to some extent—issues such as the Soul and virtue. However, since the pursuit of such knowledge is motivated by self-love (even self-aggrandizement) rather than loving God (“And in themselves seek vertue, and to themselves / All glory arrogate, to God give none, . . .”), seeking virtue and glory in the human self rather in God, it only leads man to self-importance rather than true moral wisdom and spiritual bliss (PR 4.314-15). Knowledge so gathered may be a means to improve the human life if employed properly, yet it cannot replace the moral wisdom of grace, which is the foundation of a good Christian life. Or as Irene Samuel crisply remarks, “To set up any branch of learning, however useful, as the prerequisite to wisdom is false, and to identify it with wisdom is absurd” (719).

To conclude, the story of temptation and refutation in Paradise Regained sets forth a prospect of a good Christian life by the example of Jesus. Instead of describing the Passion, which concerns the rarer experience of sacrifice and martyrdom, Milton chooses to depict Jesus’s sustained resistance to temptation, which pertains to the universal human condition of making distinctions between what is good and what is evil, what is beneficial and what is harmful, and what is sustainable and what is not on a daily basis, for the purpose of living a good moral life. To make Jesus a practical role model for the postlapsarian man, he is portrayed as a human being in flesh and blood, who experiences real hunger, thirst, and all the physical sensations and emotions as any other man does. The fact that he is able to resist all the possible temptations Satan can come up with projects the possibility for any man to resist the variety of temptations swarming daily into one’s life in this mundane world. The key to this successful resistance, as Milton repeatedly asserts or implies throughout his works, is the continual observance of the first principle, the wisdom of grace, regardless of the vicissitudes of pleasures and worldly pursuits (including the pursuit of knowledge). As long as man follows Jesus’s example and adheres to this principle—as Adam has learned at the conclusion of the historical vision, he is better prepared to live a good life in the fallen world, a
world infested with sin and death because of the first transgression.

Among all the temptations, knowledge is considered the highest by Milton and others, yet, knowledge—or specifically knowledge of the mundane world—ranks only secondary in Milton’s system of moral philosophy and theology, for knowledge does not necessarily lead to happiness in life whereas knowing God properly can. Milton makes such a distinction ever more clearly in De Doctrina Christiana:

Wisdom is the virtue by which we earnestly search out God’s will, cling to it with all diligence once we have understood it, and govern all our actions by its rule (CPW 6, 647).

Opposed to wisdom is folly, and folly means, primarily, ignorance of God’s will. . . . Folly can also mean a false opinion of one’s own wisdom. . . . Seeking for knowledge of things which are hidden from mankind is a third type of folly: as for example, when our first parents sought to attain knowledge of good and evil, which God had forbidden them. . . . And human wisdom is also folly. . . . Thus when we contemn the true, divine wisdom, we are often punished with what seems to be human wisdom. (CPW 6, 648-51)

Although Milton does not discredit the value of knowledge (or “human wisdom”), it should not be the ultimate end of human life. Rather, “obedience and love are always the best guides to knowledge, and often cause it to increase and flourish, though very small at first” (CPW 6, 129). That is the unifying principle and uncompromising belief Milton has held throughout his life.
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「本自俱足」**—《失樂園》與《復樂園》中的知識

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摘要

在十六、十七世紀科學革命時代的歐洲，知識的渴求成為當時社會菁英極為關切的課題之一。隨著現代科學的萌芽，知識領域逐漸擴展，世界觀更加開闊，歐洲人面臨了一個知識爆炸的時代，而這樣的轉變對於基督教會的權威及個別的思想家都是一場極大的挑戰。如何在知識的渴求與基督教信仰之間取得平衡，使得彼此相容而不衝突，成為當時許多作家論辯的議題。在彌爾頓的兩部主要史詩《失樂園》與《復樂園》裡，知識成了失去樂園與回復樂園的關鍵。善惡知識樹作為一種上帝的禁令，促使《失樂園》中的角色以及讀者，重新審視對知識的定義和理解，包括對上帝的認識，對自己的認識，以及何謂真正的知識。天使拉斐爾和亞當的對話，討論的往往是上帝要人類知道什麼，人類應該和不應該知道什麼，應該如何恰當理解所知的事物，以及如何以信仰來駕馭知識以達到真知。在《復樂園》中，上帝之子之所以能夠堅決抗拒撒旦的誘惑，是因為他對自己和對上帝的認識。而在撒旦所使出的所有伎倆中，最終極的誘惑即為知識的誘惑——擁有全世界知識的誘惑。因此，本篇論文試圖探討彌爾頓在

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** The Chinese translation of the title is a phrase borrowed from《六祖壇經》(Liùzú Tán Jīng, The Platform Scripture of the Sixth Patriarch) in which the Fifth Patriarch exposes the meanings of the Diamond Sutra to the Sixth Patriarch. Upon hearing the teaching, the Sixth Patriarch expresses what he understands to be the essence of the self. The original passage “何其自性，本自具足” in English translation may mean something like this: “Who could have expected that one’s essence could be complete in itself?” (Jordan) Here I take the phrase “本自具足” out of context to approximate the title quote “No other doctrine needs” taken out from Jesus’s reply to Satan in the knowledge temptation sequence (PR 4.290). Since Jesus stresses the full satisfaction and sufficiency derived from the wisdom of grace, I think it appropriate to highlight this idea of sufficiency using a phrase in a similar sense, even though it is originally used in the Buddhist context.
兩部史詩作品中如何看待知識這個議題，一方面參考彌爾頓的幾篇論辯文章中有關於知識的論述，包括《論出版自由》、《論教育》、《教會制度原則推論》、《論基督教教義》等，另一方面分析兩部史詩中對於知識的思辨及呈現。本論文認為滿足於信仰上的道徳智慧(sapientia)與追求世俗的知識(scientia)構成了《失樂園》中最主要的內在張力與衝突。而在《復樂園》中，彌爾頓藉由上帝之子，為人類提供一種信仰道德上邁向真知的路徑。

關鍵詞：知識、智慧、《失樂園》、《復樂園》