

Chancellor's Lectures 2009

God's Storytellers – from Milton to C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman

Lecture Two, Tuesday 5 May 2009

Welcome to the second of this year's Chancellor's lectures, with the overall title *God's Storytellers – from Milton to C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman*. Last week, having introduced the whole series and its central themes, we explored Milton's turbulent life and times, and ended on a poignant note. Considering the republican side in the English civil war to represent nothing less than God's cause in God's chosen nation, Milton had poured out his great learning and energy in the service of this ultimately defeated cause. While this struggle was taking place his first and second wives died, and he gradually went blind.

Nonetheless, Milton set to work on *Paradise Lost* as the means of exploring his devastated hopes, and fulfilling his long-held ambition to write a Christian epic rivalling the great classical poets such as Homer and Virgil.

This evening we are going to explore both the content of *Paradise Lost*, and what has been made of it in the last 350 years, including the very different interpretations of C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman, the other two of our literary and theological trinity. If you were here last week, though, you will have gathered that one of my lecturing techniques is delayed gratification – I tell you I'm going to do something, and then describe issues and questions I really need to examine before I can do it.

And so it is this evening. Before we can explore *Paradise Lost*, I need to say something about the nature of epic poetry, and also a little more about the doctrine of the fall. You may remember that last week, after discussing C.S. Lewis' night time walk and conversation with Tolkien, I identified five themes, and said I would refer to them from time to time. One of them was to wonder what significance there can be for us in the notion of the Fall – a doctrine eloquently articulated by Augustine of Hippo in the fifth century. This evening we will hear something of the significance Milton and his contemporaries found in it.

But first, epic poetry. In 1942 C.S. Lewis, so eminent a literary critic Philip Pullman is happy to quote him often despite disliking his storytelling, published *A Preface to Paradise Lost*. With his customary clarity, Lewis explains that every poem can be considered in two ways: what the poet has to say, and the form in which he says it. 'It is easy to forget,' he writes, 'that the man who writes a good love sonnet needs not only to be enamoured of a women, but also to be enamoured

of the Sonnet.’ There are a number of different poetic forms, each with particular advantages and disadvantages.

In *Reason of Church Government*, published in 1641, Milton does indeed consider which poetic form to use, and reflects on whether to write an Epic, a Tragedy, or a Lyric. For each of these forms he cites both classical and biblical models. At the risk of over-simplifying a complex subject, for our purposes it is sufficient to say that an epic does not deal with lighthearted or personal matters; rather it tackles, as Lewis puts it, a ‘large national or cosmic subject.’¹ In this Virgil’s *Aeneid*, with its account of the founding of the Roman empire, is the key exemplar, even more so than Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*.

If you’ve read Homer, you’ll almost certainly have done so quietly at home, book on your lap. That is not the kind of setting for which the poem was composed. Think rather of a feast in a hall, robes and garlands, and the words declaimed aloud to a spellbound audience. Virgil and Milton, unlike Homer, wrote for the silent and solitary reader we take for granted. The grand Virgilian and Miltonic style is there to compensate for – to counteract – the privacy and informality of silent reading on a sofa. So to find fault with the elevated, impersonal style of *Paradise Lost*, says Lewis, ‘to blame it for being ritualistic or incantatory, for lacking intimacy or the speaking voice, is to blame it for being just what it intends to be and ought to be. It is like damning an opera or an oratorio because the personages sing instead of speaking.’²

If there is an English academic out there horrified at the brevity of my treatment of the epic, I plead that this is a relatively short series of lectures. I offer a similar plea to any theologian in the audience with a similar reaction to the speed with which I am about to cover the doctrine of the Fall.

I said earlier that Augustine of Hippo’s account of the Fall has proved definitive within the Christian tradition. And we are talking about a distinctively *Christian* theme. Although the book of Genesis is part of the Hebrew Bible, the Jewish faith has no such doctrine. Here is raised the first of the themes I drew from the Lewis/Tolkien midnight conversation: that of the relationship between the stories found throughout the Bible, and the more abstract truths of doctrine and creed. It seems that stories can be interpreted in more than one way, which in turn suggests a key role for theologians in the interpretation process. Rowan Williams puts it like this: the role of the theologian ‘begins as *deciphering* stories, deciphering stories

¹ *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: University Press, 1942) p26

² *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (Oxford: University Press, 1942) p39

that themselves decipher the world'. And for Christian theologians, the key to the deciphering can only be Christ himself.

Milton's version of the fall is substantially that of Augustine, and so it is to that great bishop and theologian that I briefly turn. It's important to realize that Augustine, like Milton, lived through turbulent times himself, and was himself continually troubled by the evil and suffering of the world, including the sacking of Rome in 410 AD. Such is the context in which he wrote on the fall of man, also known as the doctrine of original sin. It is no accident that Augustine's writing on this theme finds fullest expression in *De civitate Dei*, 'The City of God' – the great book he wrote in response to the fall of Rome.

The starting point is straightforward: God created all that is, and as the book of Genesis has it, 'saw that it was good.' For the metaphysically minded, this immediately raises a question – 'where, then, does evil come from?' Augustine's answer is that evil is *privatio boni*, that is the 'privation of good'. God cannot be held responsible for evil, because evil always has its origin in something originally good, which has been perverted or twisted out of shape. Distortion or perversion occurs when a created being becomes more interested in itself than God. This is the sin of pride, and the first creature to commit it was Satan. In the fourteenth book of *The City of God* Augustine describes Satan as follows: 'the proud angel who turned from God to himself, not wishing to be a subject, but to rejoice like a tyrant in having subjects of his own.' As we will see, Milton's Satan is just like this.

Key to Augustine's account is God's gift of free will. Satan misuses this gift and rebels against his Creator. So it is that evil is parasitic upon the good, and cannot exist without it. On the other hand, good can exist without evil, as is the case in Heaven, and in Paradise before it is 'Lost' through disobedience. This is Milton's starting point: 'Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit/ Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste/ brought death into the world and all our woe.'

In fact, Milton's closeness to Augustine is enough for me for to bring my discussion of him to a close, for we will pick up the rest of what we need to know from the text of *Paradise Lost* itself. Suffice to say that one of the strengths of Augustine's account is that it reflects our sense that the evils and sufferings of the world are not entirely of our own making. The children of Adam are born into a world already marred by sin and disobedience, and so all of us have grown up in society formed by our predecessors, shaped by influences and assumptions we did not choose. We don't have to believe in a historical Adam and Eve, as Milton probably did, in order to recognize the truth of this.

As I say, Milton believed in the literal truth of Bible as the Word of God. The fall of Adam and Eve was an historical event for him. It also had symbolic significance, however, conveying fundamental truths about humanity that applied in every age. The moral failures of Adam and Eve, could illuminate the failure of the English peoples in the 1650s. In the final failure of the Commonwealth, and the Restoration of the monarchy, the English people had re-enacted the tragedy of the Fall as a macabre farce.

Milton, as far as I am aware, is the first poet to turn to the Fall to explain the failure of the English revolution. But in doing so he was building on a widespread sense that the fall could explain a number of key aspects of English society; aspects such as private property, social inequality and the nature of the state. It was because Adam and Eve had fallen from grace, for example, that it is necessary to have a coercive state keeping human beings on the straight and narrow. Many of the extreme religious groupings of the time, such as the Diggers and the Ranters, combined the struggle for equality and liberty with continual reflection on the Fall, and the nature of sin. This is the context for the well-known couplet from the Levellers, ‘When Adam dug and Eve span/Who was then the gentleman?’

A radical such as Gerrard Winstanley went so far as to argue that such things as property, inequality and the state were of the essence of the fall, and far from being necessary, they needed to be abolished before the human race could return to paradisaical bliss. Milton didn’t agree with Winstanley, but did accept that the fall had social and political implications. Those who had seen themselves as fighting for God’s cause in England had won power, and then failed utterly. Who was to blame for this? If Milton had been a Calvinist, he might have seen this failure as predestined. This was not his view. Rather the English people had had their chance of liberty, and failed to take it. To quote from Book 4 of *Paradise Lost*, speaking of the rebel angels: ‘Firm they might have stood, but fell.’

Another affinity between Augustine and Milton, for all the centuries that separated them, was their deep knowledge of classical literature. In the seventeenth century it was assumed that classical myths were echoes or distortions of the Bible. Think of this in relation to Tolkien’s assertion that the Norse myths so beloved of C.S. Lewis were not ‘lies’, but contained fragments of divine truth. So it is that Milton can read allegorical truths into classical literature, while drawing attention to its historical untruth. He is happy, for example, when describing Eve, to build up his picture with reference both to the Virgin Mary and the goddess Venus.

The wide range of classical as well as biblical allusions in *Paradise Lost* is one of the most daunting aspects of the text for the modern reader. For most of us, if we were to look up every reference we didn't understand, getting to the end of the poem would take months. But to do this would be to destroy the power of the poem.

Philip Pullman tells how his love of *Paradise Lost* began with sound. As some of you will have done, Pullman studied Books I and II for his English A level. He did this in a small class whose teacher, Miss Enid Jones, was convinced that the best way to get a sense of *Paradise Lost* was to read it aloud. As the class read and stumbled and gabbled, Miss Jones sat, arms folded, patiently helping with pronunciation, but not (as Pullman tells it) 'encumbering us with meaning.'

The writer Charles Williams, whose enthusiasm for Milton greatly influenced C.S. Lewis, used to teach evening classes on *Paradise Lost*. His teaching style was unusual, and included chanting long sections of the poem from memory. He believed that Milton's language had a kind of incantatory and revelatory power, and it is said that young women particularly flocked to these classes, fascinated by his charisma. Really I need someone like Williams, or at least an actor, to help me as I turn (at last, you may be thinking) to *Paradise Lost* itself. What I will try to do is give a flavour both of what the poet has to say, and the form in which he says it. In this I cannot, of course, do proper justice to the poem. Nonetheless I shall make the attempt, albeit relatively briefly, as this evening we are also going to explore key interpretations of the poem from the seventeenth century to the present day.

How else to begin but with the first 25 lines, of the first of the twelve books that make up the poem. Here Milton sets out his great theme, mixing Biblical and classical references from the start. But as I said earlier, it doesn't matter if the some of the references and meaning are obscure. Hopefully the epic grandeur of the diction will survive even my poor reading:

Of Man's first disobedience and the fruit
Of that forbidden tree whose mortal taste
Brought death into the world and all our woe
With loss of Eden till one greater Man
Restore us and regain the blissful seat,
Sing heavenly muse, that on the secret top
Of Oreb, or of Sinai didst inspire
That shepherd, who first taught the chosen seed,
In the beginning how the heav'ns and earth
Rose out of Chaos: or if Sion hill

Delight thee more, and Siloa's brook that flowed
Fast by the oracle of God; I thence
Invoke thy aid to my advent'rous song,
That with no middle flight intends to soar
Above the Aonian mount, while it pursues
Things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme.
And chiefly thou O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples th' upright heart and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st; thou from the first
Wast present, and with mighty wings outspread
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss
And mad'st it pregnant: what in me is dark
Illumine, what is low raise and support:
That to the height of this great argument
I may assert Eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.

This is an audacious opening, with Milton announcing he is to pursue, 'things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme, to 'justify the ways of God to men.' Note also Milton appeal for instruction by God's Spirit in this epic project. Milton believed he was literally inspired in writing *Paradise Lost*; that in the night the Muse, the Spirit, brought him lines Milton would then dictate in the morning. He would certainly have seen himself as a 'sub-creator', to use the term that emerged in that late-night Lewis/Tolkien conversation I've referred to several times.

Some of the first readers of *Paradise Lost* complained that the plot was difficult to follow, and that, as the publisher said, it 'rhymes not'. In the fourth edition of his poem Milton printed a sharply worded rejoinder:

The measure is English heroic verse without rhyme, as that of Homer in Greek, and of Virgil in Latin, rhyme being no necessary adjunct or true ornament of poem or good verse, in longer works especially, but the invention of a barbarous age, to set off wretched matter and lame meter... This neglect then of rhyme so little is to be taken for a defect, though it may seem so perhaps to vulgar readers, that it is rather to be esteemed an example set, the first in English, of ancient liberty recovered to heroic poem from the troublesome and modern bondage of rhyming.

So there, he might have (but didn't) add. Milton may have known great suffering and defeat, but the power of his invective is undimmed, even when turned (as here) on the 'vulgar reader' rather than royalist opponents. He did, however, consent to

prose summaries being added at the beginning of each book. But let us return to *Paradise Lost* itself. Having set out his theme, Milton goes on:

...what cause
Moved our grand parents in that happy state
Favoured of heaven so highly, to fall off
From their creator, and transgress his will
For one restraint, lords of the world besides?
Who first seduced them to that foul revolt?
The infernal serpent; he it was, whose guile
Stirred up with envy and revenge, deceived
The mother of mankind, what time his pride
Had cast him out from heaven, with all his host
Of rebel angels...

And so the story proper begins, with the rebel angels lying stunned and defeated, tormented and in pain, having been cast down from heaven into hell, which is described as a 'dungeon horrible, on all sides round/As one great furnace flamed, yet from those flames/No light, darkness visible'. What can these rebel angels possibly do now, the reader might wonder? But from this dungeon Satan rallies Beelzebub, his lieutenant, and the rest of his shattered troops. 'All is not lost' he tells them, for they still have their 'unconquerable will'. 'Better to reign in Hell, than serve in Heaven', he tells them, and his army gets to its feet and moves forward in a great phalanx. The rebels raise the magnificent palace of Pandaemonium, and gather together to consult on what to do next. So ends Book I.

In the second book the rebel angels debate what to do next, and reject both a frontal assault on heaven, and the opposite tactic of keeping quiet in the hope that God will turn the heat down a little. They decide rather to seek out another world of which they have heard, populated by another kind of creature – human beings. They plan to persuade God to 'abolish' his work, by seducing Man 'to our party'. Satan is the only one brave enough to undertake the necessary journey. He travels to the gates of Hell, where he encounters Sin and Death. And then in the distance he sees the vastness of heaven,

And fast by hanging in a golden chain
This pendent world, in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.
Thither full fraught with mischievous revenge,
Accursed, and in a cursed hour he hies.

Book II ends with this image of a fresh new world, innocent of the evil shortly to arrive on its shores. In Book III we encounter God for the first time, dwelling in ‘unapproached light’. God sees Satan flying towards his newly created world, and foretells that his creatures will fall. ‘I formed them free, and free they must remain/Till they enthrall themselves...’ he pronounces. Here we also encounter the Son, who offers his own life to save his Father’s creatures from the consequences of their action. And Satan, arriving at his destination, manages to deceive the angel Uriel, guarding our world, and is guided to ‘Paradise/Adam’s abode.’

Now if I were to carry on in this vein, Book after Book, this lecture might become a little mechanical and overlong. So I propose both to speed up and slow down. I want to give you an example of the complexity of Milton’s treatment of Satan (that’s the slowing down) and then dash for the ending. Book IV opens with Satan in Paradise, seeing the beauty and mutual love of Adam and Eve, and full of doubts, fear, envy and despair. Here is a taste of Satan’s state of mind, as envisaged by Milton:

Me miserable! which way shall I fly
Infinite wrath, and infinite despair?
Which way I fly is hell; myself am hell;
And in the lowest deep a lower deep
Still threatening to devour me opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven.
O then at last relent: is there no place
Left for repentance, none for pardon left?
None left but by submission; and that word
Disdain forbids me, and my dread of shame
Among the spirits beneath...

In such manner Milton evokes how Satan thinks and feels. But soon after this we are also told Satan is a ‘fraud’ and ‘the first that practised falsehood under saintly show/Deep malice to conceal, couched with revenge.’

And so it is that Satan tempts Eve, first as a toad whispering in her ear, disturbing her dreams. Eve speaks of this the next morning, and Adam learns from an angel the source of this disturbance, who their adversary is, and the full story of the revolt in heaven. He’s also given an account of how the world was made. By Book IX we have arrived at the fateful encounter between Eve, and Satan in the form of a serpent. Eventually Eve succumbs, plucking and eating from the forbidden tree of the knowledge of good and evil: ‘Earth felt the wound, and Nature from her seat/Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe/That all was lost.’

Although Adam and Eve are contrite, it is still decreed that they must leave Paradise. The angel Michael is sent, as it were, to show them the door. And so Milton's great epic closes with the following lines:

In either hand the hastening angel caught
Our lingering parents, and to the eastern gate
Led them direct, and down the cliff as fast
To the subjected plain; then disappeared.
They looking back, all the eastern side beheld
Of Paradise, so late their happy seat,
Waved over by that flaming brand, the gate
With dreadful faces thronged and fiery arms:
Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon;
The world was all before them, where to choose
Their place of rest, and providence their guide:
They hand in hand with wandering steps and slow,
Through Eden took their solitary way.

For a century or more after the publication of *Paradise Lost*, few doubted that Milton's purpose in writing it was anything other than he said it was – to justify the ways of God to men. Neither was there any serious suggestion that his sympathies lay other than with God, who puts down the satanic rebellion against his authority. John Dryden did observe that technically, by giving him such a prominent role, Milton had made an epic hero of Satan. That was in 1697, thirty years after first publication. In 1712 Joseph Addison disagreed entirely, saying 'tis certainly the Messiah who is the Hero, both in the Principle Action, and in the chief Episodes.' Here are the seeds of the divergent ways in which Milton would later be read.

Samuel Johnson, Dr Johnson if you prefer, argued that Milton's republicanism was based on a temperamental 'desire of independence' and that Milton 'felt not so much the love of liberty as the repugnance of authority.' It took a long time, though, for anyone to connect Milton's anti-authoritarian character with the fact that Satan is indeed the central figure in *Paradise Lost*. The process begins, perhaps with Robert Burns, who in a letter of April 1787 writes: 'Give me a spirit like my favourite hero, Milton's Satan.' Burns was a fierce opponent of injustice, and an ardent supporter of the French revolution. However lightheartedly he meant the remark, he sees something of this revolutionary spirit in Satan. Here the chief of the rebel angels is a hero not on a technicality, but because some readers at least are inclined to take his side in the war between heaven and hell. Particularly readers who in their own lives are struggling against oppressive forces or government, and see in Satan's struggles against God a reflection of their own.

In 1793 William Blake published *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. This work contains perhaps the most famous assertion about Milton and *Paradise Lost*: ‘The reason Milton wrote in fetters when he wrote of Angels & God, and at liberty when of Devils & Hell, is because he was a true poet and of the Devil’s party without knowing it.’

‘Of the Devil’s party without knowing it’ – is Blake right? Does Milton, despite his stated purpose of ‘justifying the ways of God to men’, *really* sympathise with Satan? Many have thought so, and have found in the character of Satan virtues of bravery and courage. Others have argued equally strongly that this is a misunderstanding of Milton, and have preferred to see only selfishness and folly in Satan’s character. And so the critical battlelines have been drawn, with many names on either side, amongst them C.S. Lewis and Philip Pullman.

Pullman’s position is entertainingly expressed in introducing his 2005 edition of *Paradise Lost*:

A correspondent once told me a story – which I’ve never been able to trace... about a bibulous, semi-literate, ageing country squire two hundred years ago or more, sitting by his fireside listening to *Paradise Lost* being read aloud. He’s never read it himself; he doesn’t know the story at all; but as he sits there, perhaps with a pint of port at his side and with a gouty foot propped up on a stool, he finds himself transfixed.

Suddenly he bangs the arm of his chair, and exclaims ‘By God! I know not what the outcome may be, but this Lucifer is a damned fine fellow, and I hope he may win!’ Which are my sentiments exactly.³

So Pullman sets out his stall. When, in Book III, God forecasts the fall of man and says ‘Whose fault?/Whose but his own?’ Pullman hears in these lines ‘that unattractive whine we hear from children who, caught at a scene of mischief, seek at once to put the blame on someone else.’

C.S. Lewis sees the matter very differently. For him the key text, from Book I, describes Satan suffering ‘from sense of injured merit’. He paints the following picture of Satan before the fall from heaven:

‘Sense of injured merit’... is a well known state of mind which we can all study in domestic animals, children, film-stars, politicians or minor poets; and perhaps

³ John Milton *Paradise Lost* introduced by Philip Pullman (Oxford: University Press, 2005) p1.

nearer home. ...No one had in fact done anything to Satan; he was not hungry, nor over-tasked, nor removed from his place, nor shunned, nor hated – he only thought himself impaired. In the midst of light and love, of song and feast and dance, he could find nothing to think of more interesting than his own prestige. And his own prestige, it must be noted, had and could have no other grounds than those which he refused to admit for the superior prestige of Messiah.⁴

What can we make of these equally eloquent but diametrically opposed readings of Milton? One obvious tack is to point out both Lewis and Pullman tend to create Milton in their own image. Lewis, the defender and proponent of Christian orthodoxy, finds Milton to be an ally all too often misunderstood by his critics. ‘Many of those who dislike Milton’s God,’ he writes, ‘only mean that they dislike God.’⁵ And so it is that Philip Pullman, of whose atheism we will hear more in my fourth lecture, relishes Satan’s resistance to an oppressive God.

A tendency to create Milton in one’s own image does not necessarily mean being completely wrong. It is possible that both Lewis and Pullman are simply seeing different aspects of an undoubtedly complex poem, and an indisputably complicated central character. In the end I side more with Lewis than Pullman – but not simply because Lewis is Christian, and Pullman is not! In my view *both* of them give far too little attention to Milton’s life and times, what motivated him to write *Paradise Lost*, and the differences between his culture and ours.

Pullman is part, as we all are, of a contemporary culture that tends to value the hero, the solitary figure of charisma and ability, over the saint primarily motivated by obedience and faithfulness to God. In his book *Improvisation: The Drama of Christian Ethics* (SPCK, 2004) Sam Wells argues that because the hero is the one whom makes everything turn out well, he or she tends to be at the centre of the story. The saint, on the other hand, is often not crucial in this kind of way. While the hero’s story tends to be about the hero, the saint’s story is really about God. While the hero is celebrated for his *gifts*, the saint is remembered for being *faithful*.

In my view the roots of this distinction between the ‘hero’ and the ‘saint’ go back at least to the eighteenth century intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment. Enlightenment thinkers encouraged individuals to trust their own reason, mistrust superstition and religious authority, and use rationality to make their own decisions. This may sound a bit like Milton, who wrote a century earlier, as he also encouraged reason and independent thought. For him, however, reason found its place in serving God’s purposes, not as a kind of independent principle.

⁴ C.S. Lewis *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) pp93-4.

⁵ C.S. Lewis *A Preface to Paradise Lost* (London: Oxford University Press, 1942) p126.

Perhaps the supreme Enlightenment thinker was the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. Listen to Iris Murdoch, who brilliantly combined both philosophy and storytelling, on the kind of ideal human envisaged by Kant's philosophy:

How recognizable, how familiar to us, is the man so beautifully portrayed in [Kant], who confronted even with Christ turns away to consider the judgement of his own conscience and to hear the voice of his own reason... this man is with us still, free, independent, lonely, powerful, rational, responsible, brave, the hero of so many novels and books of moral philosophy... In fact Kant's man had already received a glorious incarnation nearly a century earlier in the work of Milton: his proper name is Lucifer.⁶

For our society, then, Milton's portrayal of Satan is likely to be far more attractive than Milton ever intended it to be. I could even say, perhaps provocatively, that our fondness for the hero, and the anti-hero, is precisely a sign of the Fall and how far we are from God.

Remember that according to Augustine evil is a distortion of what was originally good. So it is that in Milton's complex portrayal we see signs of Satan's original goodness. We also see Satan as at times a tempter of subtlety and plausibility. So we might expect if *Paradise Lost* is not to descend into caricature and cartoon. But to conclude from this that Milton is 'of the Devil's party without knowing it' is arguably patronizing and misjudged. I may as well say that Pullman's fascination with theological themes indicates he is 'of God's party without knowing it'.

Whether Milton was wise to give such prominence to Satan in his poem— far more prominence than Satan is given in the Bible itself— is another matter. The dangers as well as the benefits of retelling Biblical stories is a theme to which I will return, with reference to both Lewis and Pullman. Next time our focus is on C.S. Lewis, who at the same time as he was composing his lectures on *Paradise Lost*, was also writing a fictional work entitled *Perelandra*. Many consider it one of his finest works, although it is far less well known than the tales of Narnia. In it Lewis explores a newly created world where their version of the Fall occurs— except this time temptation is overcome and the Fall never takes place. The fact that the Adam and Eve figures are exceptionally tall, and green, shouldn't put you off!

But that is for next time. Thank you very much for your attention and attendance this evening.

⁶ Iris Murdoch *The Sovereignty of Good* (Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970) p80.