Christian History

Issue 113

Seven literary sages

Why we still need their wisdom today

THE ORIGINAL LUCY? *Left:* Lewis dedicated *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to Lucy Barfield; like Lucy Pevensie she had "fair hair and a lively personality."

PARTNERS IN POETRY *Below:* Chesterton's wife, Frances, authored the Christmas carol "How Far Is It To Bethlehem?"

LUCY BARFIELD DANCING—WITH PERMISSION OF THE OWEN BARFIELD LITERARY ESTATE
G. K. CHESTERTON WITH HIS WIFE FRANCES BLOGG, FROM *THE CHESTERTONS* BY MRS CECIL CHESTERTON, PUBLISHED IN 1941 (LITHO), ENGLISH SCHOOL, (20TH CENTURY) / PRIVATE COLLECTION / KEN WELSH / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

Did you know?

MacDonald's players, Tolkien's grave, Chesterton's pajamas, and Lewis's hat

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN

One of the ways the MacDonald family made enough money to spend winters in Italy for George MacDonald's ill health was to dramatize *Pilgrim's Progress* and other literary works in their home. Since George and his wife, Louisa, had 11 children (he jokingly referred to his brood as "the wrong side of a dozen"), there was no need to go outside the family for actors. Louisa adapted and produced the plays (an 1875 copy of *Pilgrim's Progress* containing their tour schedule resides at the Wade Center at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, today), and their eldest daughter, Lilia, a talented actress, starred.

When the MacDonalds toured the United States in 1872—George lectured on Robert Burns, Shakespeare, and Tennyson—Greville, their oldest son, accompanied them. He often had to produce family pictures to convince unbelieving audiences that the petite Louisa really had given birth to so many children.

TREASURE IN TWEEDS

C. S. Lewis's personal appearance—an old tweed coat with baggy flannel pants and a floppy fisherman's hat—was at odds with fan impressions. According to biographer A. N. Wilson, Lewis once agreed to meet with a priest to discuss the man's doubts about the Christian faith. Said Wilson, "The priest, who had expected the author of *The Problem of Pain* to look pale and ethereal, was astonished by the red-faced pork butcher in shabby tweeds he actually encountered."

Lewis's chauffer Clifford Morris told how Lewis lost one hat on a picnic: "On the way to Cambridge, at the beginning of the next term, we looked inside the field gate where we had picnicked, and there was the hat, under the hedge, being used as a home for field mice. Jack retrieved it, of course, and later on continued to wear it." Warnie Lewis, his brother, also told a hat story: "It is said that Jack once took a guest for an early morning walk on the Magdalen College grounds . . . after a very wet night. Presently the guest brought his attention to a curious lump of cloth hanging on a bush. 'That looks like my hat,' said Jack; then, joyfully, 'It *is* my hat.' And, clapping the sodden mass on his head, he continued his walk."

Lewis refused to spend extra money on clothes (or on anything else) and gave away his book royalties. In fact, he was surprised to find that he had to pay taxes on the royalties even after he had given them away; to avoid this, Owen Barfield, his lawyer as well as his friend, set up a philanthropic trust fund.

GUESS WHO *DIDN'T* DO THE SHOPPING

As a journalist G. K. Chesterton wrote over 100 books and 4,000 newspaper articles, often dictating two articles at once to his secretary while waving a swordstick for dramatic effect. Yet his absent-mindedness is legendary. One day he misplaced his pajamas while traveling. When his exasperated wife, Frances, asked, "Why did you not buy a new pair?" he replied plaintively, "Are pajamas things that one can buy?" He also supposedly telegraphed Frances from a lecture tour: "Am in Market Harborough. Where ought I to be?"

His letters to Frances are also legendary. One, about her mother's financial objections to their marriage, contains this paragraph: "When we set up a house, darling…I think you will have to do the shopping.…There

AN ENDURING FELLOWSHIP *Above left:* Tolkien's grave has become a shrine for many admirers; people even leave copies of his books atop the grave.

"THAT *IS* MY HAT!" *Above right:* Lewis wore one of his hats even after it had become a rain-sodden nest for field mice.

was a great and glorious man who said, 'Give us the luxuries of life and we will dispense with the necessities.' That I think would be a splendid motto to write . . . over the porch of our hypothetical home. There will be a sofa for you, for example, but no chairs, for I prefer the floor. There will be a select store of chocolate-creams . . . and the rest will be bread and water. We will each retain a suit of evening dress for great occasions, and at other times clothe ourselves in the skins of wild beasts (how pretty you would look) which would fit your taste in furs and be economical."

NOT SO EASY TO MARRY OFF

Dorothy L. Sayers meant to end her successful series of Lord Peter Wimsey mysteries sooner than she actually did. She wrote of introducing Peter's love-interest, Harriet Vane: "Let me confess that when I wrote *Strong Poison*, it was with the infanticidal intention of doing away with Peter; that is, of marrying him off and getting rid of him." But: "I could find no form of words in which [Harriet] could accept him without loss of self-respect. . . . She must come to him as a free agent, if she came at all, and must realize that she was independent of him before she could bring her dependence."

It took another three novels and five years of "story time"—*Have His Carcase*, *Gaudy Night*, and *Busman's Honeymoon*—before the two were successfully wed.

PREACHING A SERMON TO STUDENTS

Despite Charles Williams's unassuming—even ugly—personal appearance and lack of a university education, he was a dynamic speaker. Lewis and Tolkien arranged for him to give over 40 public lectures in Oxford during the time he was living there. In a 1940 letter to his brother Warnie, Lewis wrote: "On Monday [Charles Williams] lectured nominally on [Milton's] *Comus* but really on Chastity." Williams, unlike most modern critics, really cared about virginity, delivering what Lewis called a "sermon" on its importance: "It was a beautiful sight to see a whole room full of modern young men and women sitting in that absolute silence which can NOT be faked, very puzzled, but spell-bound: perhaps with something of the same feeling which a lecture on unchastity might have evoked in their grandparents—the forbidden subject broached at last. . . . That beautiful carved room [in Oxford] had probably not witnessed anything so important since some of the great medieval or Reformation lectures. I have at last, if only for once, seen a university doing what it was founded to do: teaching Wisdom."

LETTERS ON A GRAVE

J. R. R. Tolkien's works have created a community among his admirers—a community still reflected at his gravesite. Joe Ricke, a professor at Taylor University, found the following collection: "dead roses and lots of dead flowers, a brilliant red rosary hanging from a rosemary bush, lavender, letters (lots), books, coins (lots from everywhere), thank you notes, bracelets, cigarettes, runes (really), hairbands, drawings, a wood carving with a dragon and runes, butterflies (artificial), sunglasses, rocks, buttons, watercolors, pages from a book, prayer cards, poems, business cards, crosses, a medallion, ribbons, locks of hair, a framed tribute in Spanish titled 'Viejo professor' [old professor], notes in perfect Elvish script, and now, a bracelet I got in Pamplona during the festival of San Fermin. And it's now missing one rose bud.

"This seems like a lot, and you'd think it would be garish and trashy. Not at all; it seems very sweet and just about right." CT

On our cover: books from all seven of this issue's sages

Editor's note

IN LATE 2013 I was walking through the streets of Oxford and London, seeking traces of seven sages amid bustling modern shops, chattering businesspeople, and shuttered churches.

Why was I there? To see a stone memorializing C. S. Lewis formally installed into Poet's Corner at Westminster Abbey on November 22. There great authors and artists of Britain have historically been remembered. (You can read more about the service on p. 9.) He gained a memorial stone there beside British literary greats like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Byron, Dickens, Austen, the Brontë sisters, T. S. Eliot, and W. H. Auden. My husband, kids, and I spent the days before the service joining fellow Lewis enthusiasts at a meeting of the Oxford C. S. Lewis Society, a tour of the Kilns (Lewis's home, now a museum), and a symposium on Lewis's works. (You can see us below at his grave.)

On the way home, we visited Dublin, Ireland, and attended Sunday morning worship at Trinity College. There I met a woman who became interested in our trip to the Lewis memorial service. She obviously knew of Lewis's status as a British author and had seen the movie *Shadowlands*. But she was puzzled by my being there on behalf of a Christian magazine. "Was Lewis particularly religious?" she asked.

I wondered: though Christians have valued his work for decades, how much did Lewis and his friends and mentors change the society around them? What legacy did they leave to the modern secular world?

ART, GRACE, AND TRUTH

Quite a lot, it turns out. The seven Christian writers featured in the coming pages began influencing readers with George MacDonald's *Phantastes,* a fairy tale published in 1858. Some years later, G. K. Chesterton's rollicking stories and forthright newspaper columns brought a Christian perspective to the social issues of his day. After World War II, five authors who had read and taken to heart both MacDonald and Chesterton—Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Charles Williams—took on a generation of secularists and modernizers with their weapon of choice: the pen.

They expressed a vision for society in areas such as economics, education, and the environment; a vision for Christian literature in moving treatments of goodness and self-sacrifice; a vision for discipleship in pictures of love in community. (We'll talk about one area made famous by each author in this issue.) Millions read their books and were inspired, by God's grace, to create art, practice goodness, and seek truth. I am one of them: from *Prince Caspian* to *Lord of the Rings* to *Gaudy Night* to *The Greater Trumps* to *Orthodoxy*, the logical arguments and poetic visions of these "seven sages" have enriched my Christian discipleship for decades. Perhaps yours too.

American English professor Clyde Kilby, who visited Tolkien in Oxford in 1964, was so inspired that in 1965 he established a study center devoted to these seven authors at Wheaton College. Today called the Marion E. Wade Center, it has cooperated generously with time and talent in the production of this issue, dedicated to its 50th anniversary.

Many today willingly venture into the fantasy worlds created by these sages. But, as they enter Narnia, the Shire, and the worlds of Lord Peter Wimsey and Father Brown, do they realize that they are connecting to something larger than themselves and that they will find deep treasures of truth awaiting them? Join us as we look into these authors' works to, as Lewis once put it, steal "past watchful dragons" of fear, doubt, and disdain to tell, once again, the old, old story that we have loved so long.

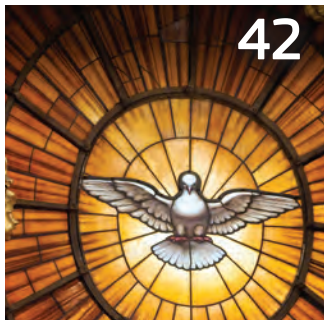
Jennifer Woodruff Tait
Managing editor,
Christian History

Find *Christian History* on Facebook as ChristianHistoryMagazine or visit our website at www.christianhistorymagazine.org.
Don't miss our next issue on Francis Asbury and the story of early American Methodism. Dynamic worship, energetic circuit-riding preachers, and a close-up, personal style of leadership made this movement perfectly suited to bring the word of God to the new nation of America.

Correction: A caption on p. 24 of *CH* issue 111 erroneously identified the date of Billy Graham's famous New York City crusade as 1958, not 1957. *CH* regrets the error.

VISION VIDEO/CHI HEADQUARTERS—LINE DRAWING BY ROBIN HELLER
LEWIS MEMORIAL STONE—ANDREW DUNSMORE/WESTMINSTER ABBEY
THE WOODRUFF TAITS AT C. S. LEWIS'S GRAVE—TRICIA PORTER

Christian History



Seven literary sages *Why we still need their wisdom today*

Also:

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Friends, warriors, sages

How seven writers gave us stories that endure, imparting truths that never fade

WHY ARE THESE *seven sages still around? Why do people still read their books, talk about their ideas, and debate their influence?* Christian History *sat down with three experts who have written widely about these authors to probe the ways in which they still speak to us today.*

Crystal Downing is Distinguished Professor of English and Film Studies at Messiah College (PA) and writes on the relationship between Christianity and culture. Colin Duriez is an author and poet living in the Lake District of England. Alister McGrath is Andreas Idreos Professor of Science and Religion at the University of Oxford and a senior research fellow at Harris Manchester College, president of the Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics, and a priest in the Church of England.

CH: *Why can we treat these seven authors as a coherent group?*

CRYSTAL DOWNING: They all proclaimed their faith at a time when Christianity was dismissed as superstitiously anti-intellectual—much more so than in our own day—and defied the modernist sensibilities that surrounded them.

For example, when T. S. Eliot became an Anglican in 1927, famous author Virginia Woolf proclaimed, "Tom Eliot may be declared dead to us from this day forward. . . . There is something obscene about a living person sitting by the fireside and believing in God."

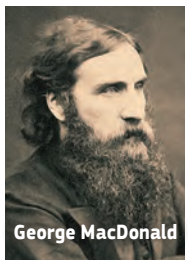
Similarly, in 1953 a British writer named Kathleen Nott attacked contemporary "poets and critics who have attached themselves more or less firmly to the cause of dogmatic theology," asserting that they are "engaged in the amputation and perversion of knowledge." Nott was especially disdainful of C. S. Lewis and Dorothy Sayers, calling them "braver and stupider than many of their orthodox literary fellows" because of their "tub-thumping" popularizing of the faith.

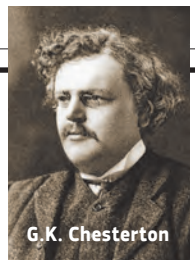
The book in which Nott's statements appear, *The Emperor's Clothes*, was reprinted several times by popu-

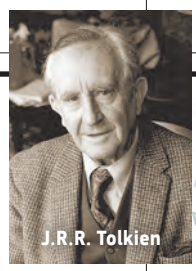
SPIRES OF OXFORD—DARRELL GODLIMAN

"CITY OF DREAMING SPIRES" *Left:* Many of the seven sages had a connection with the city of Oxford, where their presence is still felt today even by casual visitors.

TRUTH AND CONSEQUENCES *Right:* These writers represent a breadth of Christian imagination and faithfulness stretching over a century and a quarter.







lar demand. These seven authors put their intellectual reputations at stake to take a stand for Christ.

CH: *How did they know of or influence each other?*

ALISTER MCGRATH: There is no doubt that Lewis's brilliance as a writer emerged through dialogue and debate with others—above all, J. R. R. Tolkien and Charles Williams. They sparked his imagination, challenged him to develop both the style and content of his writing, and encouraged him to keep going as a writer. Every author benefits from encouragement and constructive criticism!

Although not all of the seven sages were members of the Inklings (a group of Christian writers and thinkers centered in Oxford; see "The Inklings," p. 25), they shared a web of relationships and associations that makes it meaningful and appropriate to speak of them as a coherent group and to tease out their mutual dependencies.

COLIN DURIEZ: Only some of the seven authors directly interacted, of course, as between them their writings span about 130 years—from George MacDonald's *Phantastes* published in 1858 to Owen Barfield's *Eager Spring*, written around 1988. But the influence of their books lasted a long time and still lasts today.

MacDonald's writings touched most of the seven, particularly Lewis, with Barfield acknowledging his "spiritual maturity" and Chesterton relishing his subtlety and simplicity—evidenced in MacDonald's declaration that God is hard to satisfy but easy to please. G. K. Chesterton's writings also impacted most of the "sages" who came after him. And the five later authors—Tolkien, Lewis, Sayers, Barfield, and Williams—interacted frequently. (For more on the connections between all seven sages, see our Timeline, pp. 26–27. And if you are curious about the life stories of any of them, check out their short bios on pp. 24–25 and 28–29.)

All seven writers were very distinct from each other. Considering the range of time involved, all seven are not as cohesive as are the four who belonged to the (admittedly still diverse) Inklings: Lewis, Tolkien, Williams, and Barfield.

Yet there is a living co-inherence, to borrow a useful and deeply charged term from Williams (see "The poetic vision," pp. 42–45), to the seven. It can at least be glimpsed by seeing them within their times and recognizing some themes and preferences they had in common.

Of the seven Lewis was the most articulate in placing himself and his friends in their historical context, though G. K. Chesterton also certainly laid bare the foibles of his age.

In Lewis's depiction of the loyal Narnians in his book *Prince Caspian*, a disparate collection of talking animals and dwarfs remains true to the memory of "Old Narnia" and the distant days of the reigns of Peter, Susan, Edmund, and Lucy in the Golden Age. The varied Inklings group were, to Lewis, similarly "Old Westerners" holding up the flame of truth in the darkness of a post-Christian world.

Lewis's "Old West" was particularly focused on the sixteenth century—the subject of his great volume in the *Oxford History of English Literature*. He also drew nourishment and encouragement, like Tolkien, from the pagan world of Greece, Rome, and the northern lands. He considered them to have an unfocused prefigurement of truth, in the period before the advent of Christ.

CRYSTAL: Sayers was profoundly influenced by Chesterton, Williams, *and* Lewis. She credited Chesterton with saving her faith and quoted him throughout her letters, usually writing, "As Chesterton says somewhere…."

Charles Williams, however, contributed to Sayers's greatest vocational joys. Williams reviewed with exuberant praise Sayers's 10th detective novel, *The Nine Tailors* (1934), which led to multiple conversations between them. After his play *Thomas Cranmer of Canterbury* was performed at the 1936 Canterbury Festival, Williams recommended that Sayers be asked to write the next year's play.

The result, *The Zeal of Thy House* (1937), transformed Sayers's life (see "A Christian revolutionary?," pp. 37–40). In *Zeal* she first explored creativity as an expression of the *imago Dei*, the image of God in humanity. That idea informed her *Begin Here* (1940; see p. 18) and was elaborated more thoroughly and successfully in *The Mind of the Maker* (1941), which Lewis read and complimented.

WATCH OUT FOR THE BUS 21st-c. Oxford displays the same mix of old and new as it did when Tolkien complained of its traffic in the 1950s.

Williams also contributed to the next stage of Sayers's life: her translations and annotations of Dante. His book *The Figure of Beatrice* (1943) inspired her to learn medieval Italian to read the *Divine Comedy* in Dante's original language. Sayers wrote Williams about her ensuing discoveries in letters so interesting that Williams shared them with Lewis.

Hence, when Williams died in 1945, Lewis asked Sayers for a contribution to *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* (1947). The resulting essay was Sayers's first publication on Dante, spearheading her translations and annotations of *Inferno* (*Hell*) and *Purgatorio* (*Purgatory*), published by Penguin in 1949 and 1955, and read attentively by Lewis. (Sayers died before completing the third volume, *Paradiso* [*Paradise*]).

Lewis also hosted a reception for Sayers following a lecture she delivered on Dante in Oxford. This supportive gesture, along with the eulogy he wrote for Sayers after she died ("A Panegyric for Dorothy L. Sayers," published in *On Stories*), illustrates Lewis's admiration for the woman he once described as "the first person of importance who ever wrote me a fan-letter."

Already famous for her Lord Peter Wimsey detective novels when she sent her initial "fan-letter" to Lewis in 1942, Sayers recommended *The Problem of Pain* to others throughout her life. *The Man Born to Be King* (1943), the published edition of Sayers's BBC radio plays about Jesus, profoundly impacted Lewis, who read them for his Lenten devotions every year until he died.

CH: *What common themes united these Christian authors? How do these these themes still speak to us today?*

COLIN: The seven authors all had a blend of what Lewis tried to capture in his first prose fiction, *The Pilgrim's Regress*: the trio of reason, Romanticism, and Christianity. They all had remarkable abilities as innovative thinkers in their own unique ways. All turned to the making of stories: myth, parable, allegory, mystery, fantasy, or a mix of these. The appeal for all in this kind of writing lay in making other worlds which, when visited, transformed the traveler's perception of the ordinary, everyday world.

Lewis in particular sought to undeceive his readers, challenging the narrow and inadequate modern views they might well hold of reality. Chesterton memorably spoke of hearing the horns of elfland.

A youthful Sayers also glimpsed the potency of such a renewed vision when she gave a lecture in Hull in 1916 entitled "The Way to the Other World." She speculated about the presence of the eternal in the temporal: "One must remember," she wrote, "that though in one sense the Other World was a definite place, yet in another the kingdom of gods was within one, Earth and fairy-land co-exist upon the same foot of ground. It was all a matter of the seeing eye. . . . The dweller in this world can become aware of the existence on a totally different plane. To go from earth to faery is like passing from this time to eternity; it is not a journey in space, but a change of mental outlook."

MacDonald had a similar outlook threading through his fiction and other writings and directly expressed in his essays, "The Imagination: Its Functions and its Culture" (1867) and "The Fantastic Imagination" (1882). Changes in outlook and consciousness, captured by and caused by glimpses of another world, were the very heartbeat of MacDonald, Sayers, Chesterton, and Inklings Lewis, Tolkien, Williams, and Barfield. They were concerned with the presence of the eternal in the temporal.

ALISTER: Lewis was neither modern nor postmodern, as we now understand those terms, but rather saw himself as standing within a literary tradition that was nourished by the Christian faith and

HIGH STREET—TRICIA PORTER

STILL OPEN FOR BUSINESS *Right:* The Inklings met for many years for Tuesday lunches at favorite pubs, especially the Eagle and Child, which they jokingly termed the "Bird and Baby." *Below:* They gathered in the "Rabbit Room," a private lounge at the back.

which appealed both to reason and the imagination. Lewis's remarkable intertwining of reasoned argument, skilled deployment of images, and rich appreciation of the imaginative capacity of the human soul allowed him to speak to both modern and postmodern, affirming their strengths and subtly correcting their weaknesses.

Lewis affirmed modernity's longing for reasonableness in matters of belief but refused to confine himself to any "glib and shallow rationalism." He thought that truth was grasped and realized through the imagination—hence the importance of narratives and images.

And Lewis likewise, while affirming postmodernity's realization of the importance of stories and images, insisted that truth really matters. He had no time for the easygoing relativism ("my truth" and "your truth") that has become so characteristic of our postmodern world in recent decades.

CRYSTAL: These friends all anticipated the ways postmodern people would subvert the rational arguments of secular humanism. How? They argued that all thinkers, from the scientist to the Sunday school teacher, understand reality according to presuppositions they must take on faith—including faith in reason itself.

Like these authors, more recent postmodern thinkers have also challenged the exaltation of reason above all that fueled modernist denunciations of Christianity. It is no coincidence that old Marxists, and "New Atheists" like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, disdain postmodernism as much as they do Lewis and Sayers (and others of the seven sages.)

CH: *Why was imaginative literature a particularly potent way for the seven sages to express those themes?*

COLIN: All of the seven could be said to be, in their own ways, Romantics. In some sense they carried forward the Romantic movement that is associated with such English poets as Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Keats, and German poets and writers like Goethe and Novalis.

Lewis saw the great cultural divide between the "Old West" and the post-Christian era (which he also called the Age of the Machine) as falling roughly around 1830. That date, by no coincidence, marked the end point of the English undergraduate syllabus introduced by Tolkien and Lewis at Oxford in 1931. The syllabus remained in effect for over 20 years; it would be the mid-1950s before Oxford students were allowed to study more modern authors.

It could be said that the romanticism that seems to mark the seven authors is operating in a new and different era from the original Romantics like Coleridge and Wordsworth. Central to romanticism, of course, is the importance of the imagination as a reaction to rationalism. The relationship between thought and imagination was explored by the seven in many different but related ways, such as in the so-called Great

EAGLE AND CHILD—COLIN DURIEZ
RABBIT ROOM—PHILIP IVESTER

War between Barfield and Lewis. There Lewis eventually conceded the importance of imagination in some forms of knowledge (see "The forgotten Inkling," pp. 46–49).

But unlike Barfield he decided that reason was the organ of truth and imagination the organ of meaning. Some scholars have argued (Verlyn Flieger is one) that Barfield's ideas on the imagination permanently marked Tolkien's imaginative output, which may in fact account for some of the differences between Lewis and Tolkien.

Lewis's view that imagination is concerned with meaning led him to pursue fiction, and fiction that often had deeply poetic prose. Eventually, he turned his energies as a Christian apologist more to imaginative writing than to the discursive, explanatory nonfiction for which he had become famous.

Lewis embraced the view, however, that myth uniquely combines meaning and truth in illuminating what would otherwise be abstraction. He felt that his two greatest efforts in retelling myth (*Perelandra* and *Till We Have Faces*) were the best of his imaginative works. Many would argue that *The Chronicles of Narnia* may be his greatest imaginative achievement.

All these other authors we are talking about similarly poured themselves into imaginative writing as well as discursive or scholarly writing. Most may be said to have been, to various extents, lay theologians, whose secret as popular communicators lay in their imaginative writing or speaking. MacDonald was unique among them in having theological training.

What Lewis said of Charles Williams's romanticism after his untimely death may perhaps apply to all seven. He described Williams as a romantic theologian, which "does not mean one who is romantic about theology but one who is theological about romance, one who considers the theological implications of those experiences which are called romantic. The belief that the most serious and ecstatic experiences either of human love or of imaginative literature have such theological implications and that they can be healthy and fruitful only if the implications are diligently thought out and severely lived, is the root principle of all his works."

ALISTER: Lewis came to appreciate the importance of the imagination as a child and never lost sight of this point. He saw his imagination as the means by which he was able to recognize and then break free from the "glib and shallow rationalism" of his atheist phase. Indeed, Lewis singles out certain writers—especially George Herbert and Thomas Traherne—as helping him see that imaginative writing could convey truth (in the deepest sense of the word) more effectively and faithfully than reasoned argumentation.

Lewis used imaginative literature as a way of allowing people to enter and explore new worlds and grasp their reasonableness, truthfulness, and beauty. He helped people desire truth and offered them models of how truthful living works out in practice.

The best example is Aslan himself, whom Lewis portrays as drawing people—such as the Pevensie children—to himself on account of his nobility and magnificence. A second good example is the

BOOKS AND TEA ... *Top:* Blackwell's, the iconic Oxford bookshop founded in 1879, will happily sell you a walking tour of the Inklings' Oxford.

...AND CONVERSATION *Above:* People still gather for fellowship and learning at the Kilns in suburban Oxford, C. S. Lewis's home for much of his life and now a Christian study center.

BLACKWELL—TRICIA PORTER
LEWIS SUMMER SEMINARS—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE C.S. LEWIS FOUNDATION, REDLANDS, CA

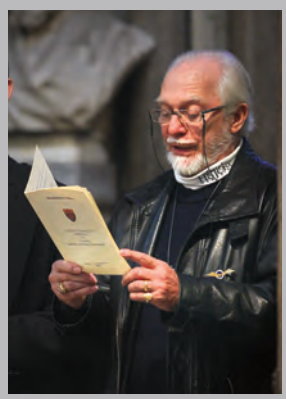
description of the "New Narnia" toward the end of *The Last Battle*, where Lewis evokes a deep sense of longing for this restored world through his careful use of imaginative language.

CRYSTAL: Modernist empiricists, that is people focused on what can be observed scientifically, transformed the Latin term *bona fide*, (good faith) into the definition still used today: something is *bona fide*, i.e. authentic, only if it is empirically verifiable.

But for medieval Christians, authentic truth was *bona fide* because it was something taken by faith and practiced through community. Sayers didn't fully appreciate the *bona fide* of community until she began writing imaginative literature for the theater, asserting that "I recognize in the theatre all the stigmata of a real and living church." Thanks to *The Zeal of Thy House* and her other religious plays that followed, Sayers experienced the interdependence of a writer, director, actor, scene designer, costume-maker, lighting technician, etc., all contributing to and learning from each other.

Theater thus echoes St. Paul's most extended metaphor: the church as one body with many members, each with an important role to play. But, more important, the imaginative literature that the theatrical body performed—whether on stage or on the radio—was what powerfully affected many of Sayers's contemporaries. She received scores of letters from people telling her that for the first time in their lives, thanks to her plays, Christ and/or Christian doctrine made sense to them.

Sayers, then, would encourage Christians to engage theater as a means to get past watchful dragons. I particularly think she would be delighted with the imaginative work of my colleague Ron Reed, who is currently writing a play exploring the complexities of the friendship between Tolkien and Lewis—a play that includes parts for Williams, Sayers, Joy Davidman, and Inklings Warren Lewis (C. S. Lewis's brother), Hugo Dyson, and Roy Campbell. Even today, the interaction between these authors still fascinates—and their truths still compel.



HONORING A WRITER AND SCHOLAR *Left:* Walter Hooper, John Hall (dean of Westminster), Michael Ward, and Douglas Gresham lay flowers on Lewis's memorial stone in Westminster Abbey. *Below:* Gresham reads from *The Last Battle* in honor of his stepfather: "Further up and further in!"

LEWIS MEMORIAL 1—ANDREW DUNSMORE/WESTMINSTER ABBEY
WESTMINSTER ABBEY—JENNIFER WOODRUFF TAIT
LEWIS MEMORIAL 2—ANDREW DUNSMORE/WESTMINSTER ABBEY

Sermons in stone: Lewis comes to Poets' Corner

WHEN THE FATHER of English poetry, Geoffrey Chaucer, died in 1400, he was buried in Westminster Abbey, England's coronation church. The transept where he rests has become known as "Poets' Corner" because many other great figures of English literature—dramatists and novelists as well as poets—have been buried or memorialized alongside him. Shakespeare, Milton, and Jane Austen are just a few of them.

Now C. S. Lewis's name joins that eminent fellowship. On the 50th anniversary of his death (November 22, 2013), a memorial to Lewis was unveiled in a thanksgiving service at Westminster Abbey attended by 1,000 people.

Prayers came from the rector of St. Mark's, Belfast, where Lewis was baptized; from representatives of Magdalen College, Oxford, and Magdalene College, Cambridge, where he worked; and from the vicar of Holy Trinity, Headington Quarry, where he is buried.

Scripture passages were read by Lewis's pupil, Francis Warner, and by his successor as professor of medieval and Renaissance English at Cambridge, Helen Cooper. Lewis's stepson, Douglas Gresham, recited a passage from *The Last Battle*, and his editor, Walter Hooper, laid flowers on the memorial.

Former archbishop of Canterbury Dr. Rowan Williams, now master of Magdalene College, Cambridge, gave the address.

The choir sang "Veni Sancte Spiritus" by George Fenton from the film *Shadowlands* and a musical setting of Lewis's poem, "Love's as Warm as Tears"—the latter especially written for the occasion by royal wedding composer, Paul Mealor.

The memorial bears words from Lewis's address to the Oxford Socratic Club, "Is Theology Poetry?":

"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen, not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else." —*Michael Ward*

The storyteller

George MacDonald's stories showed a world of goodness and holiness to Lewis and Chesterton, and still shows that same world to us

KIRSTIN JEFFREY JOHNSON

ONCE UPON A TIME . . . a long time ago—though not so long as you might suspect—there was a man who believed that stories must be told. For after all, he knew that was what had happened in the beginning: stories were told. *Once upon a time* . . . a long time ago, stories changed the world forever in the beginning; in the days of Caesar Augustus; and ever since.

And so this man told stories too: some were of real events, some could have been, and others were pure fantasy. But all were shaped by an imagination that strove to make stories in imitation of the goodness and holiness of the Original Story Crafter.

A poor composition tactic, some would say. They would argue that goodness and holiness are boring elements in a tale and never as interesting as evil. Yet again and again, this man's stories changed lives. They changed the lives of boys, girls, men, and women; the lives of anonymous readers and those well known: John Ruskin, Florence Nightingale, Oswald Chambers, Madeleine L'Engle, Hans Urs Von Balthasaar.

The storyteller wrote sermons, poetry, and essays too, and his disciples found them likewise full of treasures. But it was his stories that drew the most praise from his advocates. These stories—even the fairytales—had truly changed their lives.

"MY IMAGINATION WAS BAPTIZED"

The Princess and the Goblin, proclaimed journalist and philosopher G. K. Chesterton, "made a difference to my whole existence. . . . Of all the stories I have read, including even all the novels of the same novelist, it remains the most real, the most realistic, in the exact sense of the phrase the most like life."

And *Phantastes*, about a scholar lost in fairyland, asserted critic and apologist C. S. Lewis, was a "voice which called to me . . . I knew that I had crossed a great frontier . . . my imagination was, in a certain sense, baptized." When asked near the end of his life and career (in 1962) to list books that had most shaped his "vocational attitude" and "philosophy of life," Lewis placed the works of Virgil, Boethius, George Herbert, and even Chesterton subservient to that tale about the fairyland wanderer.

Lewis explained that what he had found there went beyond the expression of things already felt. It arouses in us sensations we have never had before, never anticipated having, as though we had broken out of our normal mode of consciousness and "possessed joys not promised to our birth." It gets under our skin, he said; it hits us at a level deeper than our thoughts or passions, troubles oldest certainties till all questions are reopened, and shocks us fully awake.

Some story. And the storyteller? George MacDonald.

BOOKSHELF—RON BLOCK

A SHELF OF IMAGINATION *Left:* MacDonald wrote realistic novels of Scottish life as well as famous fantasy tales.

THE FIRE AND THE ROSE *Right:* To receive the gift of discernment, Curdie in *The Princess and Curdie* must thrust his hands into the princess's cleansing fire.

CURDIE AND THE FIRE OF ROSES— ILLUSTRATION BY CHARLES FOLKARD; USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

One of the most striking facts about the eminent status granted MacDonald by Chesterton and Lewis is just *how many other* stories they had read. These men were obsessive bibliophiles, reading more than most of us ever could or would. Their brains were legendary; their standards exacting. While they did not claim MacDonald to be the best writer they had encountered, they did declare that his books revolutionized their lives as no other books had.

In him they found a scholar who explained that the divine gift of imagination is not merely the partner to reason, but its flip side; imagination and reason are mutually dependent. But it must be exercised and practiced. Lewis noted in his well-marked copy of MacDonald's *Dish of Orts*: "Repression of Imagination leads not to its disappearance but to its corruption."

MacDonald reminded readers that imagination forms a powerful component of human identity. How and where and why we exercise it shapes our present, future, past—and affects every relationship, with all God's creation, human or otherwise. He sought to exercise that imagination in a manner pleasing to God and in a way that would invite, even compel others to do the same. Chesterton and Lewis *were* compelled.

"A wise Imagination," wrote MacDonald, "is the presence of the spirit of God." But as his essay "The Imagination: Its Functions and Its Culture" convinced Lewis the imagination requires cultivation in the presence of goodness and holiness.

To truly understand how this is so, we must experience it. Lewis wrote that the best way to grasp how MacDonald's presentation of goodness and holiness can have such dramatic impact is to read and experience for oneself stories such as *Sir Gibbie, The Wise Woman*, or *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*. Mere explanation will not suffice.

That MacDonald could craft such stories was not simple talent. He diligently studied other presentations of goodness and holiness: he examined, explored, compared them. He considered their representation within Scripture as well as works by Dante, Chaucer, Sidney, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Tolstoy.

CAREFUL CRITIC AND SCHOLAR

And he endeavored to practice what he found, convinced that "nobility of thought" would corrupt without "nobility of deed." What Lewis learned over years of reading MacDonald, what changed his life and helped prepare him to receive the Gospel, came from MacDonald's care-filled labor. MacDonald's vocation, his prime profession for decades, was as a literary scholar. And his critical methods, particularly his determination to draw his readers into conversation with literary greats from Plato and Paul to Bunyan and Coleridge, left their mark.

While each of our seven sages engaged with MacDonald in one fashion or another, Lewis claimed the greatest debt. In his *Anthology* of MacDonald, Lewis sounded a bit exasperated that his readers had not taken him at his word:

> In making this collection I was discharging a debt of justice. I have never concealed the fact that I regarded [MacDonald] as my master; indeed I fancy I have never written a book in which I did not quote from him. But it has not seemed to me that those who have received my books kindly take even now sufficient notice of the affiliation. Honesty drives me to emphasize it.

Yet Lewis's attempt to direct his readers to one of his primary influences continues to be largely ignored. That an author of fairy tales and fantasies could have such profound impact on the famed Oxbridge apologist often evokes a slightly patronizing response: isn't Lewis exaggerating a tad? But a close reader of both authors cannot deny the truth of the admission.

Lewis had imbibed MacDonald's fairy tales since childhood, a shared love that was one of the first things drawing him to become friends with Tolkien. Upon adult reflection Lewis realized that "the quality which had enchanted me in [MacDonald's] imaginative works turned out to be the quality of the real universe, the

CARRIED AWAY *Left:* Poor boy Diamond has magical adventures riding *At the Back of the North Wind.*

DEEP IN THOUGHT *Below:* MacDonald composes a story at his desk.

A LITTLE PUZZLE *Bottom:* Rearrange the letters in MacDonald's motto, "Corage God Mend Al," from his bookplate and you get . . . "George MacDonald."

divine, magical, terrifying, and ecstatic reality in which we all live."

LOVE OF GOODNESS

Returning to Lewis's remark that MacDonald's *Phantastes* "baptized" his imagination in 1915 at the age of 17, it is helpful to remember that he spoke as an Anglican for whom baptism was not a premeditated, full-immersion, public declaration. Instead the image is of an infant brought to the font on another's initiative; the holy commencement of something unexpected, yet full of promise. "Nothing was at that time further from my thoughts than Christianity." In reading *Phantastes* Lewis "learned to love" goodness and discovered "a new quality": holiness. It was, he later reflected, a *beginning.*

Having rediscovered MacDonald as a teenager, Lewis became a passionate fan. Letters to his friend Arthur Greeves teems with enthusiastic discussions of realistic novels as well as of fantasies. Lewis's transition from student to professor did little to abate this fervor, not least because he kept finding fellow MacDonald admirers.

When Owen Barfield gave Lewis a copy of MacDonald's book-length prayer-poem *Diary of an Old Soul* in 1929, Lewis confessed this was the first he had read the work properly: "[It] is magnificent. You placed the moment of giving it to me admirably, I remember with horror the absurdity of my last criticism on it, with shame the vulgarity of the form in which I excused it." Lewis read each stanza, allocated for each day of the year, faithfully—like a devotional.

At the end of 1930 and still preconversion, Lewis bought what would become his favorite MacDonald novel: *What's Mine's Mine*. Within the text, two brothers struggle with concepts of faith, commitment, obedience, and love. They fight against community destruction and environmental degradation. They discuss Isaiah, Euclid, and Virgil. All these themes reiterated what Lewis had read elsewhere in MacDonald as a child and young adult.

By the time Lewis became a Christian, he had been repeatedly exposed to these emphases in MacDonald. He wrote: "When the process was complete—by which, of course, I mean 'when it had really begun'—I found out that I was still with MacDonald and that he had accompanied me all the way and that I was now at last ready to hear from him much that he could not have told me at that first meeting. But in a sense, what he was now telling me was the very same that he had told me from the beginning."

Those willing to meet MacDonald themselves in the originals should remember he was a Victorian author, using nineteenth-century language and metaphors. Thus his readership dwindled in the twentieth century. But it is rising significantly in the twenty-first.

Chesterton predicted that the time for readers to truly understand MacDonald had yet to come: the recent surge suggests he was correct.

Perhaps MacDonald meets a need recently identified by author Toni Morrison. She cautioned of "the death of goodness in literature" and described a cultural obsession with evil. Denying that goodness is monotonous, she pledged to write novels in which goodness has "life-changing properties," "never trivial . . . never incidental." She acknowledged it won't be easy; *evil* is easy.

IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE STORY

But what she sought was exactly what Chesterton and Lewis found in MacDonald. Both knew too well the attraction and compulsion of literature that give evil an intellectual platform. Yet MacDonald convinced them what Morrison urged her Harvard audience to believe: that goodness is never trivial, but life-changing—as it was in the beginning; in the days of Caesar Augustus; and is now and ever shall be.

MacDonald gave considered attention throughout his works to the relationship between imagination and science. But he was clear that in the beginning there was a Story in which we were called to participate. Even in his novels he reminded the reader that once upon a time the Original Story Crafter invited us to imagine with him; and that in the days of Rome, Christ reminded us to see how others imaged and re-imaged truths.

MacDonald also drew our attention to other storytellers who used their imaginations to communicate Gospel truths to their particular cultures and eras. He was convinced that those who are attentive to such conversations throughout the ages will be better able to communicate to their own eras. Chesterton and Lewis stand as witnesses.

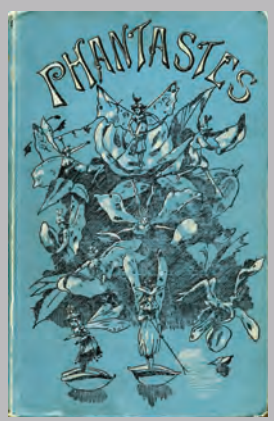
As MacDonald the storyteller (and essayist, sermon writer, poet, professor, hymnist, anthologist, and literary critic) continues to receive renewed attention, perhaps the recommendations of Lewis and Chesterton will become a mere footnote, and readers will independently discover the transformative power of his work. Even for Lewis endorsement was only a start. He wrote of MacDonald, "I dare not say he is never in error; but to speak plainly I know hardly any other writer who seems to be closer, or more continually close, to the Spirit of Christ Himself." And then he told some stories to explain: not so very long ago.

Kirstin Jeffrey Johnson is the author of Storykeeper: The Mythopoeic Making of George MacDonald (2015); *lectures internationally on MacDonald, Tolkien, and Lewis; and is on the board of* SEVEN: An Anglo-American Literary Review. *For more, see kirstinjeffreyjohnson.com.*

What C. S. Lewis learned from his "master"

Lewis's writing is often recommended to those seeking to better understand Christianity. But his recommendation to seekers was to read George MacDonald: "My own debt to [*Unspoken Sermons*] is almost as great as one man can owe to another: and nearly all serious inquirers to whom I have introduced it acknowledge that it has given them great help—sometimes indispensable help toward the very acceptance of the Christian faith."

MacDonald not only discipled Lewis as a Christian, but also as an author and literary scholar. If, like Lewis, you delight in what he calls "source-hunting," then tracing Lewis's literary roots in MacDonald may prove boundless. You will discover the source of the title of *Till We Have Faces*, of Lewis's vision of "Shadowlands," of his designation *unman* for the diabolical villain in *Perelandra*. You will find characters who step into pictures, pass between worlds, and discuss the options of liar, fool, or truth-teller. You will meet a "child of Adam," know heaven as a "high country," and be reminded that God is not tame. You will read of a dwarf who thinks himself a man, trace reconfigurations of the Psyche myth, and detect familiar approaches to Dante, Milton, and Spenser. You will identify intimations of Jadis in her ancestress Lilith, recognize parallels to Ransom in the "Curdie books" he gives to Jane, and realizes that the character of "George MacDonald" in *The Great Divorce* is only one of many homages Lewis pays to his "master."



A "FAERIE ROMANCE"
Phantastes influenced Lewis's conversion and has delighted readers for over 150 years.

If archives entice, visit Wheaton College's Wade Center to peruse Lewis's personal editions of MacDonald. In the essay "Imagination," for instance, he responded with a sentence at the top of every page. But don't just scan the notes, do Lewis the honor of reading MacDonald yourself. You too may find great, perhaps indispensable, help.
—Kirstin Jeffrey Johnson

PHANTASTES COVER—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

Bread of the earth and bread of heaven

G. K. Chesterton's Christian economics

RALPH C. WOOD

MANY READERS know G. K. Chesterton as a slashing satirist, uproarious comic, master of paradoxes, deft apologist, and defender of the faith. A famed journalist in his day, he was also the author of over 100 books and became one of the most notable English converts to Roman Catholicism in the twentieth century. His output included popular books like *Orthodoxy*, *The Man Who Was Thursday*, and *The Ballad of the White Horse*. Interestingly, C. S. Lewis attributed his return to Christian faith largely to reading Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*.

Critics often identify Chesterton as arch-conservative, even reactionary. He certainly admired things medieval and scorned things modern: woman suffrage, divorce on any grounds, contraception. His main objection to dueling, he joked, was not that it leaves someone dead, but that it settles no arguments. He was also an avowed advocate of nearly all things ancestral, describing tradition as "the democracy of the dead"—granting voice to our ancestors, the most numerous of all voters.

But don't put Chesterton in a box marked "conservative" too quickly. He was a lifelong economic liberal, defending the poor against the rich. Long before he began to identify as a Christian, Chesterton lamented what he called the "revolution of the rich": Henry VIII's sixteenth-century government seizure of monastery property and estates, as well as the closing of public lands that had once served as shared grazing ground for sheep and cattle owners. But Chesterton's anger was no antiquarian obsession. He thought market capitalism had made such exploitation ever more pernicious, especially from the nineteenth century on. He protested with a relentless barrage of denunciations:

> The poor have sometimes objected to being governed badly; the rich have always objected to being governed at all. . . . It is a sufficient proof that

CHESTERTON AT DESK—*WIKIPEDIA*

CARTOONIST *Right:* Chesterton gently mocked his own social views (presented in *The Outline of Sanity*), by picturing his large girth as the "three acres" to be given to the poor along with a cow.

THREE ACRES AND COW—COURTESY KIRSTIN JEFFREY JOHNSON
OUTLINE OF SANITY—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

> we are not an essentially democratic state that we are always wondering what we shall do with the poor. If we were democrats, we should be wondering what the poor will do with us. . . . Among the rich you will never find a really generous man even by accident. They may give their money away, but they will never give themselves away; they are egotistic, secretive, dry as old bones. To be smart enough to get all that money you must be dull enough to want it. . . . The whole case for Christianity is that a man who is dependent upon the luxuries of life is a corrupt man, spiritually corrupt, politically corrupt, financially corrupt. There is one thing that Christ and all the Christian saints have said with a sort of savage monotony. They have said simply that to be rich is to be in peculiar danger of moral wreck.

MAKING GOOD AND DOING GOOD

Chesterton believed that much of modern economics, like much of modern science, envisions humans as merely animals to be controlled and manipulated like any other species. He especially opposed philosopher and political theorist Herbert Spencer's misconstrual of Darwinism as an *economic* struggle for "the survival of the fittest," a phrase that Darwin never used (see *CH* 107, *Debating Darwin*). For Chesterton this slogan enabled ruthless corporate capitalists to sanction their greed as in accord with nature, privileging the energetic and the bustling over the laggard and the straggler.

He was not altogether pleased, either, with his trips to America. He admired it as "the home of the homeless" and saluted the vigorous witness of churches and church-related colleges. Yet he was appalled by American economic competition, saying that it led to the worship of success and money as moral imperatives.

"America does vaguely feel," he wrote in *What I Saw in America* (1926), that "a man making good is something analogous to a man being good or a man doing good." Ironically, he thought, competition produced sameness rather than variety: "Where men are trying to compete with each other they are trying to copy each other."

Chesterton was a capital-L Liberal in its original political meaning. This British political party believed that people had the right to exercise freedom and self-determination and that it was the job of good government to help them do so by setting them free.

He argued that nineteenth-century English culture largely resulted from the successful effort of the British political establishment to stave off radical social reform. Absent a revolution such as the one in France (1789), hereditary aristocrats joined the newly rich middle class to prevent the masses from gaining any real power of self-determination. (In France, by way of contrast, the masses had briefly overthrown both.) Chesterton called their victory "the cold Victorian compromise."

Chesterton's literary heroes, on the other hand, were morally passionate Liberals who raised the alarm to break the shameless silence about the plight of the poor and the passed over: Browning and Stevenson, Ruskin and Carlyle, and *especially* Dickens—these writers were unafraid to mount political pulpits and proclaim their abiding concern for the down-and-out.

Like his literary champions, Chesterton regarded the poor and destitute not as an abstract "surplus" class, but as companions encountered in the streets and lanes and shops of London. Chesterton's friend W. R. Titterton reported that GKC "exalted cabbies and carpenters and charwomen and fishermen and farm labourers, and was on pally terms even with small

AUTHOR A cartoon of GKC writing *The Outline of Sanity* mocks his well-known absent-mindedness.

shopkeepers, farmers, and country squires. He visited the slum, not slumming, but hob-nobbing; and he found everything there admirable except the slum."

Though a devout Catholic, Chesterton proclaimed enthusiasm for the French Revolution despite its anti-Catholic crimes and horrors. He believed that at great cost it had established truths that, by cooperating with aristocrats and royalty, the Catholic Church in France had largely lost sight of. With a triple theological, political, and visual pun he stated the Christian premise undergirding democracy: "All men are equal, as all pennies are equal, because the only value in any of them is that they bear the image of the King."

Chesterton exalted, but never romanticized, the poor as occupying an inherently blessed condition. He hoped they would make their way up into the middle class. He feared, however, that capitalists and socialists alike were keeping them in perpetual bondage, sealing them off from the freedoms and delights to be found in the life of towns and suburbs rather than of tenements and slums.

For most of his life, Chesterton assumed that enough residual Christianity remained at work in the common people that they would use their freedom wisely. The newfound liberty he advocated through his political and social writings would enable ordinary families, communities, and institutions to flourish, he thought, provided that gigantic governments and corporations did not devour them.

But gradually he discerned that, in an increasingly secularized Britain, Christianity was dying, and freedom disappearing along with it. The vision of Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor was coming to terrible fruition, in which more and more people demanded material security in exchange for their spiritual liberty (much like modern debates over the sacrifice of privacy on the Internet in the name of convenience).

Chesterton argued that both economic options are flawed. Socialists insisted that the state should protect everyone from economic and personal failure, without regard to any merit or incentive. Capitalists urged the state to promote the instinct to acquire ever more comforts and conveniences, with the result that the plutocratic few could wall themselves off from the impoverished many.

NO GUARANTEES OF SURVIVAL

Chesterton eventually came to believe the Liberal economic and social program had a canker at its core. While offering protections against common evils, it had difficulty defining common goods, especially when its religious basis was eroded. This political movement that had aimed to set people free from unnecessary rules and restrictions, he reluctantly admitted, would instead drain Christian virtue from the public realm and lead to a return to the brute state of nature, without a moral compass to direct and limit human desire.

Every civilization has failed, Chesterton observed, and there is no guarantee that modern Western civilization will endure simply because it is democratic. As a self-generating and self-preserving enterprise, democracy cannot provide the center to keep things from falling apart.

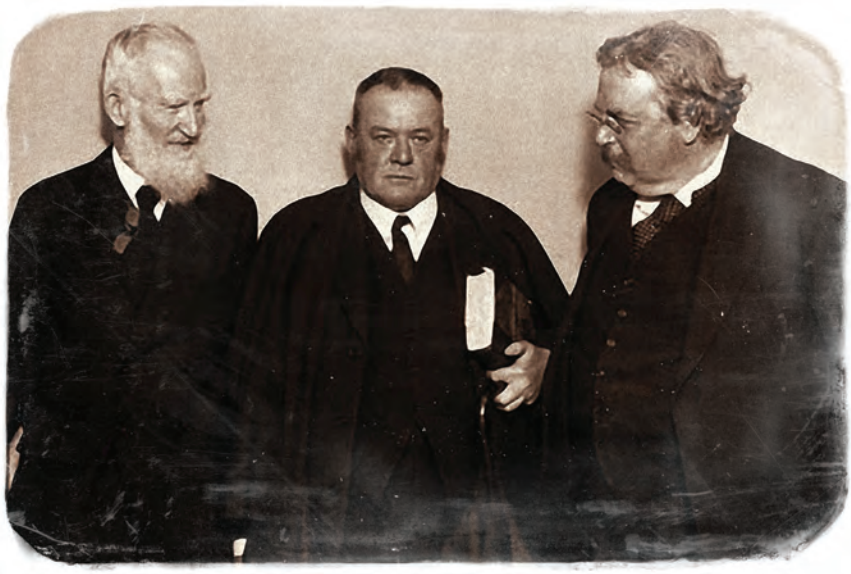
Yet Chesterton never panicked. Instead, he joined forces with his friend Hilaire Belloc (1870–1953), not only to find a way beyond the socialist-capitalist impasse, but also to keep his wits about him. Belloc was a writer, historian, and politician now notable mostly for his polemical essays and witty verse, including the rather macabre *The Bad Child's Book of Beasts* and *Cautionary Tales for Children,* including rhymes like this one:

"THE OUTLINE OF SANITY" SATIRICAL CARTOON OF G.K. CHESTERTON—PRIVATE COLLECTION / BRIDGEMAN IMAGES

I shoot the hippopotamus
with bullets made of platinum,
Because if I use leaden ones
his hide is sure to flatten 'em.

The two friends rejected capitalism as built on a profoundly anti-communal devotion to competition and thus on the desire to gouge rather than help the neighbor. They also rejected socialism as surrendering important personal and local endeavors—family, health, education—to a supposedly omnicompetent state. In both cases, the result would be what Belloc called the Servile State: voluntary slaves chained to wages and pensions and governmental controls.

Hence their revolutionary idea, which they called "distributism," inspired largely by economic claims made in papal encyclicals *Rerum Novarum* (1891) and *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931). These encyclicals argued that the Christian virtue of justice must be understood not only as a system of reciprocity, but also as a system of distribution. *Distributive justice* is the notion that nothing belongs exclusively to a private individual; whatever she or he possesses is also a share of those goods belonging to everyone.



MATCHMAKER *Top:* Chesterton drew compulsively even after leaving art school. Here he produced a set of possible husbands for a friend.

PARTNER *Above:* Belloc (*middle*) and Chesterton were so closely linked that playwright George Bernard Shaw (*left*) dubbed them "the Chesterbelloc."

THREE ACRES AND A COW

Rather than dealing out money equally to all, like the socialists, Chesterton and Belloc wanted a system of government that would distribute modest acreages of land; newly propertied landholders would achieve personal self-respect and economic self-sufficiency in cooperation with neighbors. The two also sought to revive a modern version of the medieval guild system, so that urban laborers would own and manage the factories and companies in which they worked.

Finally, they supported the Catholic principle of *subsidiarity*: the idea that most important political and social matters should be negotiated as near to their source as possible. The *Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904), Chesterton's hilarious novel in defense of neighborhoods, takes this principle to its utmost conclusion as hero Adam Wayne fights battles in defense of his own small district of London. "Notting Hill is a nation," declares Wayne. "Why should it condescend to become a mere Empire?"

Distributism has been ridiculed as impractical. Even Chesterton's most ardent admirers often lament the labors he devoted to it instead of producing even more of the poetry, fiction, and cultural criticism for which he is rightly remembered. But Chesterton regarded it as his vocation to develop a distinctively Christian regard for money and property.

These things could not be left to sort themselves out, given the cultural collapse of the West—what Chesterton's interpreter Stephen Clark called "the Laodicean mood … that nothing is worth dying for, but life is not worth living." Chesterton thus came to put his trust ever more surely in the body of Christ, not the Liberal Party, as the authentic public and political alternative to the capitalist and socialist Leviathan.

He envisioned the church, for all its failings and compromises, as the world's one truly revolutionary force. When it is faithful, he argued, it constantly pushes us toward a radical reordering of our desires, both corporal and spiritual; toward an economics capable of multiplying a handful of loaves into temporal bread for the world as well as eternal Bread of Heaven.

Ralph C. Wood is University Professor of Theology and Literature at Baylor University, a member of Seven*'s editorial board, and author of* The Gospel According to Tolkien *and* Chesterton: The Nightmare Goodness of God.

CHESTERTON ILLUSTRATION—FROM *RETURN TO CHESTERTON* BY MAISIE WARD (NEW YORK: SHEED AND WARD, 1952)
SHAW, BELLOC, CHESTERTON—*WIKIPEDIA*

Sayers "begins here" with a vision for social and intellectual change

WHEN G. K. CHESTERTON died, Dorothy L. Sayers wrote to his widow saying, "G. K.'s books have become more a part of my mental make-up than those of any writer you could name." Chesterton's *Orthodoxy* (1908) prevented Sayers from abandoning Christianity during her adolescence, and his insights later informed her education at Oxford University.

In 1913 Sayers read Chesterton's *What's Wrong with the World* (1910), and the next year she attended several of his Oxford lectures. Chesterton laid the groundwork for Sayers's analysis of what was wrong with her world.

Already famous for her Lord Peter Wimsey detective stories, Sayers was asked to compose a wartime message in September 1939. *Begin Here* appeared only four months later (and included a quote from Chesterton). In her preface, she noted: "This book does not pretend to offer any formula for constructing an Earthly Paradise: no such formula is possible. It suggests only that there is at present something incomplete about the average human being's conception of himself and society, and that the first step towards constructing the kind of world he wants is to decide the kind of person he is, and ought to be."

Sayers's book outlined how views of human nature had changed in the modern era, when biological, sociological, psychological, and economic explanations of behavior replaced theological ones. Though endorsing the theological worldview, she noted that the church's capitulation to political agendas had contributed to its subsequent idolization of reason and "progress."

She wrote decades before today's postmodern challenges to the Enlightenment's sanctification of reason. But Sayers anticipated today's troubles with the modern era's emphases on reason and progress. She suggested that unquestioned belief in progress often leads to violence: for instance, Marxist faith in communism and German belief in national socialism.

However, while many contemporary postmodern texts emphasize the *deconstruction* of such modernist absolutes, *Begin Here* encouraged the creative *construction* of something new. Sayers wanted to nudge people out of their passivity, to get them to think independently rather than conform to cultural dogmas.

Exhorting people to analyze what they read, to discuss with others different works on the same topic, and to compare multiple viewpoints, she asserted that "words . . . can change the face of the world."

NOT JUST THE FACTS, MA'AM

Sayers knew that the words of Chesterton had changed the face of her own world. As she explained in a 1954 letter, "If I am not now a Logical Positivist, I probably have to thank G. K. C." Sayers's attraction to logical positivism, a philosophy that held that only empirically verifiable facts can ground truth, explains why, in 1947, she dismissed *Begin Here* as "a very rush job, undertaken much against my will," with factual "errors and omissions."

Little did she know that *Begin Here* would foreshadow our eventual attack on the "just the facts, ma'am" attitude. One day postmodernists would echo her insight that "with the abandonment of an absolute Authority outside history, the seat of absolute authority within history tends to become identified with the seat of effective power."

Thanks largely to Chesterton, Sayers's solution to the arbitrary absolutes and power of secular culture was the divine authority of Christian orthodoxy: an absolute transcending all culturally contingent dogmas. She would have reminded us that the creative work of contributing to culture, as an expression of the image of God, the *imago Dei*, must therefore always *begin here*, with these words: "In the beginning, God created." —*Crystal Downing*

SIGNED PORTRAIT—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL
BEGIN HERE—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

Why hobbits eat local

J. R. R. Tolkien and his friend C. S. Lewis shared an ideal of remaining rooted on the land of God's good creation

MATTHEW DICKERSON

SOME SEVEN OR SO YEARS before the 1937 publication of *The Hobbit*, J. R. R. Tolkien spoke to his friend C. S. Lewis about the importance of eating locally grown food. Tolkien's words made an impression, and Lewis referenced them in a letter written in 1930 to another friend:

> Tolkien once remarked to me that the feeling about home must have been quite different in the days when a family had fed on the produce of the same few miles of country for six generations, and that perhaps this was why they saw nymphs in the fountains and dryads in the wood—they were not mistaken for there was in a sense a real (not metaphorical) connection between them and the countryside. What had been earth and air & later corn, and later still bread, really was in them. We of course who live on a standardized international diet (you may have had Canadian flour, English meat, Scotch oatmeal, African oranges, & Australian wine to day) are really artificial beings and have no connection (save in sentiment) with any place on earth. We are synthetic men, uprooted. The strength of the hills is not ours.

A PIPE AND SOME BOOKS Tolkien pondering Middle-earth, perhaps, in his study. He once described himself as "a hobbit in all but size."

PROPHETIC THOUGHTS

It is remarkable that Tolkien and Lewis had this conversation more than 80 years ago, before the modern movement to "think global, eat local" began, or the term "agrarian" came into wide usage, or broad criticisms arose of industrialized agriculture. Their concerns were both prophetic and profound.

The word "agrarian" appeared in the title of the book *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition,* written by 12 southern writers and first published in 1930, the same year Lewis wrote the letter.

A GREEN AND PLEASANT PLACE *Left:* Tolkien drew this illustration of the Shire in which hobbits lived in peace and plenty.

ONE STATELY TREE *Below:* Tolkien's favorite tree in the Oxford Botanical Gardens recalls one of his Ents. Sadly, weather damage led to its felling in 2014.

HOBBITON ILLUSTRATION—THE BODLEIAN LIBRARY, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD, MS. TOLKIEN DRAWINGS 26 "THE HILL: HOBBITON-ACROSS-THE-WATER"; USED BY PERMISSION OF THE JRR TOLKIEN ESTATE
FAVORITE TREE—JIM LINWOOD / FLICKR

Although evidence suggests the term was coined over a century earlier from a Latin word meaning "of the land," it did not gain popularity until much later in the twentieth century. Landmark conservationist books—Aldo Leopold's *Sand Country Almanac* (1949) on rehabilitating a farm ravaged by industrial agriculture and Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* (1962) decrying the widespread use of pesticides—remained decades in the future.

Over the decades since Tolkien's death, poet, essayist, and novelist Wendell Berry outlined many of the principles of agrarianism. Like Leopold and Carson, Berry argued that respectful agricultural practices are healthier for the land and food grown on it. Future generations benefit from a long-term commitment to that land, especially when the food grown there is eaten by those who live on or near it.

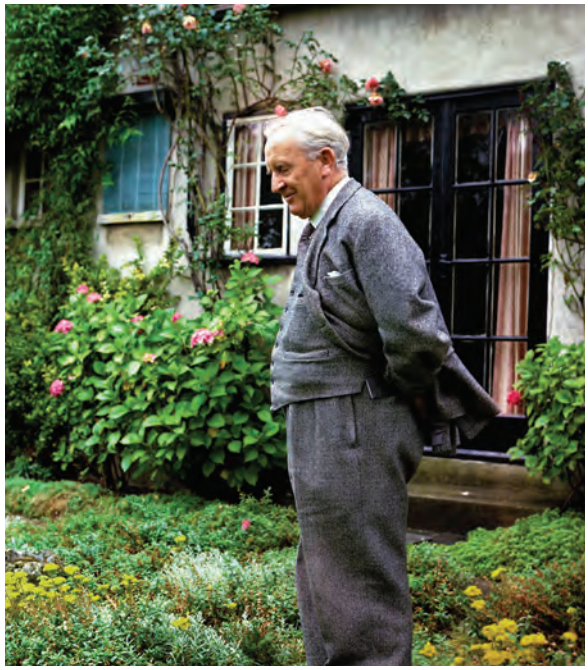
Likewise the agrarian movement maintains that when those who work the soil are the same as those who have an economic stake in the soil and live near that soil, their practices are healthier. By contrast, Berry said, the "standardized international diet" eaten today often requires large-scale industrialized mono-crop agriculture dependent on synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, and high shipping costs.

THE STRENGTH OF THE HILLS

Tolkien, while he did not use the term "agrarian" (or any other single term like it) in *The Hobbit* or *The Lord of The Rings*, referred in his personal letters to its opposite: "industrialized and militarized agriculture." He provided in his stories an imaginative portrayal of the destructiveness of these techniques in contrast to the goodness and health of agrarian methods.

It is evident from correspondence that Tolkien—and Lewis—believed that when we eat locally we have a more profound connection to the land around us. We are thus more inclined to care about its health and more likely to see ourselves in relationship to that land.

When we are connected to our local land through our eating, they argued, something of the "strength of the hills" is in us—a reference by Lewis in his letter to the King James Version of Psalm 95:4: "In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also." Those words were composed in praise of God by a psalmist within the ancient



STONE STREETS *Left:* Tolkien lived in seven houses in Oxford (this is the final one) and complained about the traffic outside all of them.

GOOD SOIL *Above:* But he did find some peace in his garden. Here he stands in the garden at Sandfield Road where he lived for 15 years.

agrarian Hebrew culture tens of centuries earlier. Thus Lewis and Tolkien suggested that something of God's strength becomes ours when we are connected to the local hills and soil that God created. And something of that strength is lost, they thought, in a culture of industrialized agriculture and international diet. When we lose that connection, we become uprooted.

While it may be tempting to dismiss the Tolkien-Lewis conversation as passing comments by sentimental romantics, there is considerable evidence that Tolkien—whose younger brother Hilary ran a small family farm—was thinking more deeply about the issue than that.

By the 1950s when *The Lord of the Rings* was published, Tolkien was explicitly referring to "industrialized agriculture" and portraying its ravages in his fiction. His villains—from Sauron and Saruman in their dark towers to the hobbit Lotho Sackville-Baggins who takes over the Shire—regularly despoil the land over which they rule through industrialization. Mordor has slave-based agriculture and poisoned earth, Isengard is stripped of trees, and finally the Shire comes perilously close to moving to a culture in which food is grown as an export crop.

The Ent Treebeard, a treelike being in Tolkien's mythology who serves as guardian of actual trees, responds to the wizard Saruman's deforestation of Isengard: "We Ents do not like being roused; and we never are roused unless it is clear to us that our trees and our lives are in great danger."

Treebeard continues, "It is the orc-work, the wanton hewing—*rárum*—without even the bad excuse of feeding the fires, that has so angered us; and the treachery of a neighbour, who should have helped us. Wizards ought to know better: they do know better. There is no curse in Elvish, Entish, or the tongues of Men bad enough for such treachery. Down with Saruman!"

WEEDS AND NOT GARDENS

This same devastation is brought home to the hobbits when they return to the ravaged Shire:

> The pleasant row of old hobbit-holes in the bank on the north side of the Pool were deserted, and their little gardens that used to run down bright to the water's edge were rank with weeds. Worse, there was a whole line of the ugly new houses all along Pool Side, where the Hobbiton Road ran close to the bank. An avenue of trees had stood there. They were all gone. And looking with dismay up the road towards Bag End they saw a tall chimney of brick in the distance. It was pouring out black smoke into the evening air.

On April 25, 1954, Tolkien penned a letter to a fan who had inquired about the fate of the Entwives, the spouses of Tolkien's beloved mythical tree-herding Ents. Tolkien thought that mechanized agriculture must have done the Entwives in too. "Tyrants," he wrote, "even in such tales, must have an economic

21 MERTON STREET—TRICIA PORTER
TOLKIEN IN GARDEN—©PAMELA CHANDLER / ARENAPAL / THE IMAGE WORKS

DEEP IN A MOUNTAIN GLADE This illustration Tolkien made of Rivendell, home of some of his elves, shows that hobbits were not the only ones living in harmony with nature.

and agricultural background to their soldiers and metalworkers." This letter is one of many hints that Tolkien associated large-scale, slave-based agriculture with horrific evil.

The letter goes on to say. "If any [Entwives] survived so [as agricultural slaves of the tyrants], they would indeed be far estranged from the Ents, and any rapprochement would be difficult—unless experience of industrialized and militarized agriculture had made them a little more anarchic. I hope so. I don't know."

We also see Lewis and Tolkien not only defending the importance of having a connection to soil, woods, hills, and landscape, but also recognizing the sort of stories growing out of and upholding those connections; the sort of stories in which we see "nymphs in the fountains and dryads in the wood." What Tolkien called "the literature of Faërie" grew out of the principles of agrarianism.

Both Tolkien and Lewis would go on in the 30 years following the letter quoted at this article's beginning to devote much of their lives to writing that very sort of literature. Lewis, in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, explicitly includes river gods and wood gods (nymphs and dryads). The killing of a dryad presages the downfall of Narnia in *The Last Battle*.

And in the final book of his space trilogy, *That Hideous Strength*, Lewis offers a stark contrast between the traditional English agricultural practices associated with the heroes of his farming community at St. Anne's and the industrialized practices of the villainous folks at the Belbury mansion. Though the book does not portray dryads or nymphs, it does offer the famed sixth-century magician Merlin—who rises back to life from an old well in an old wood—a spirit much in communion with the spiritual qualities of nature.

TREES THAT WALK

Tolkien avoided the linguistic associations of dryads with Greek mythology. But he still gave us in *Lord of the Rings* sentient trees (or near-trees and tree spirits) in creatures such as Ents, Entwives, and Old Man Willow.

And the beautiful and compelling Goldberry, spouse of Tom Bombadil, in human form is actually the Daughter of the River—which is to say, a naiad or river nymph. Tom Bombadil himself is probably best understood as a sort of earth spirit.

Did Tolkien intentionally set out to write "agrarian literature?" Almost certainly not. At least not in the sense that Aldo Leopold, Wendell Berry, or Annie Dillard did. Tolkien was primarily concerned with telling good and compelling stories. And several other themes held greater importance for him. Nonetheless, though agrarianism may not be the central theme, it seems clear from their letters and from the texts themselves that both Tolkien and Lewis took it seriously.

But why? The answers are many and complex. But one answer suggests that however peripheral the outward expression of agricultural concerns are in the writings of Tolkien of Lewis, the underlying *principles* behind their agrarian views came from a deep ideological core.

Both Tolkien, a devout Catholic, and Lewis, an Anglican, believed that the cosmos in general and the earth in particular were created by a good, caring, and loving Creator and were themselves proclaimed by that Creator to be good. The call to care for that good creation is central to the created purpose of humans—and elves and dwarfs and hobbits and talking animals.

All these are image-bearing creatures of the creative God (called in Elvish *Eru Ilúvatar* and in Narnia the Emperor-Beyond-the-Sea). And while this creation has worth and value as a place for God's creatures to live, it also has worth and value in and of itself.

Tolkien's whole Middle-earth creation narrative (the *Ainulindalë*, the first part of the published *Silmarillion*) echoes this idea from the book of Genesis, as does *The Magician's Nephew*, Lewis's creation account of Narnia.

TILLING THE SOIL

What results from this doctrine of creation is an ethic of land stewardship that ought to govern the behavior of humans (as well as elves, hobbits, and dwarfs). It finds its clearest and most concise expression in the words of the wise wizard Gandalf, who near the end of *The Lord of the Rings* gives to the gathered heroes and Captains of the West at the Last Debate this call to duty:

> Other evils there are that may come; for Sauron is himself but a servant or emissary. Yet it is not our part to master all the tides of the world, but to do what is in us for the succour of those years wherein we are set, uprooting the evil in the fields that we know, so that those who live after may have clean earth to till. What weather they shall have is not ours to rule.

In the context in which they are spoken, Gandalf's words refer to duties other than agricultural ones. But the fact that he chose that metaphor speaks to its truth and importance. Each person has a duty to care for the soil—the earth that is to be tilled—so that it will be clean for future generations.

Lewis includes a similar charge given by Aslan to Frank, the first king of Narnia: "Use a spade and plough and raise food out of the earth", care for the animals and do not enslave them. Such a duty stemmed from these authors' understanding of a doctrine of creation, and is at the core of their portrayals of agrarian practices, so that future generations might find the strength of the hills still in them. ✠

Matthew Dickerson is professor of computer science at Middlebury College and the author of numerous books on myth, fantasy, and the Inklings, including Ents, Elves and Eriador: The Environmental Vision of J. R. R. Tolkien *and* Narnia and the Fields of Arbol: the Environmental Vision of C. S. Lewis.

Meeting Professor Tolkien

CLYDE S. KILBY (FROM *TOLKIEN AND THE SILMARILLION*)

PRESERVING OLD TALES *Above:* Kilby's encounters with Tolkien and Lewis would one day lead him to found the Wade Center.

I FIRST MET J. R. R. Tolkien late on the afternoon of September 1, 1964. His fame was then rapidly on the rise, and he had been forced to escape his public whenever he could. Visitors were more or less constantly at his door and his telephone busy. Phone callers from the United States sometimes forgot the time differential and would get him out of bed at two or three o'clock in the morning.

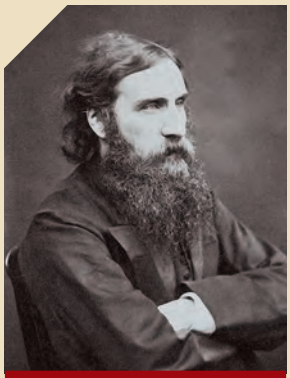
With great hopes and some fears I walked to 76 Sandfield Road, opened the gate, nervously approached his door, and rang the bell. I waited what seemed to me a very long time and was on the point of a reluctant departure when the door opened and there stood the man himself. Tolkien matter-of-factly invited me inside.…We went into his downstairs office, remodeled from a garage. Possessing no automobile, he was then using taxis for errands to Oxford, two miles away, and elsewhere.

After his sober greeting at the door, I found him immediately friendly as we sat down. Tolkien was a most genial man with a steady twinkle in his eyes and a great curiosity—the sort of person one instinctively likes. I…told him that, like thousands of others, I had come to love [*Lord of the Rings*] and regard it as something of a classic. He laughed at the idea of being a classical author while still alive, but I think he was pleased. He then became a bit apologetic and explained that people sometimes regarded him as a man living in a dream world. This was wholly untrue, he insisted, describing himself as a busy philologist and an ordinary citizen interested in everyday things like anybody else.…

To my surprise, at the end of our brief visit, Tolkien warmly invited me back for the morning of September 4, the day before I was to fly home to the US. At that time Mrs. Tolkien greeted me at the door and showed me upstairs to her husband's main office, a room crowded with a large desk, a rotating bookcase, wall bookcases, and a cot. I was received like a longtime friend.

After returning to the United States, Kilby wrote to Tolkien, offering to come help him gather his scattered manuscripts regarding Middle-earth into publishable form; he spent the summer of 1966 in Tolkien's company.

George MacDonald



FEW WRITERS in English have influenced the genre of fantasy literature as much as George MacDonald. His novels pulled back the curtain on magical worlds and inspired Lewis Carroll, C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Madeleine L'Engle.

Born in 1824 in Scotland, MacDonald attended Aberdeen University and then Highbury College, a school in London for training Congregational ministers. For three years he served as pastor of Trinity Congregational Church in Arundel, in the south of England. Less Calvinistic than the denomination he served, he left pastoral ministry and depended on writing and tutoring to provide for his large family.

Poor health led him to move his family to the Italian Riviera for 20 years. Highly respected by his literary peers, MacDonald counted among his acquaintances novelists Charles Dickens, Wilkie Collins, and Anthony Trollope. He also came to know Mark Twain, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow while touring in America.

Fantasy and fairy tales are often considered "juvenile" fiction, but MacDonald proved the critics wrong as he used the genre to explore Christian themes and explicate the human condition.

- **Born** December 10, 1824, Huntly, Aberdeenshire, Scotland
- **Died** September 18, 1905, Ashtead, Surrey, England
- **Married** Louisa Powell (m. 1851)
- **Children** Lilia, Mary, Caroline, Greville, Irene, Winifred, Ronald, Robert, Maurice, Bernard, George
- **Selected Works**
  - *Phantastes* (1858)
  - *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872)
  - *The Princess and Curdie* (1883)
  - *Lilith: A Romance* (1895)

G. K. Chesterton

A GENERATION separated the Inklings from the life of George MacDonald. The interim years, however, were not devoid of writers who viewed culture through the eyeglasses of faith. One of the best known for this role is G. K. Chesterton, artist and literary critic. He authored not only entertaining whodunits (there are over 50 Father Brown mystery stories) but also some of the most compelling Christian theology of his time for lay readers.

Born in London in 1874, Chesterton attended St. Paul's School, after which he went to the University of London where he studied art and literature without earning a degree in either subject. Chesterton's career began when he found work in a London publishing house. Not long after, he began working as a freelancer, writing articles on art and literature. This led to a job with the *Daily News* and eventually a position with the *Illustrated London News*, where he was a columnist for 30 years.

Chesterton was known for his good-natured personality and imposing physical presence. Often caricatured as obese, he stood six foot, four inches tall and weighed 286 pounds. A natural debater, he did not hesitate to argue in print and in person with the luminaries of his day. Most famously, he debated playwright and social critic George Bernard Shaw, whom he considered a friend.

While Chesterton's reputation as an author of fiction orbits around his novels (especially *The Man Who Was Thursday*) and the Father Brown stories, his true legacy may turn out to be *Orthodoxy* and *The Everlasting Man*. These two books have become classics of Christian apologetics. Though Chesterton was an Anglican turned Roman Catholic, a wide spectrum of Christians read his books today.

- **Born** May 29, 1874, Kensington, London, England
- **Died** June 14, 1936, Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, England
- **Married** Frances Blogg (m. 1901) (no children)
- **Selected Works**
  - *Orthodoxy* (1908)
  - *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908)
  - *The Everlasting Man* (1925)
  - The Father Brown mysteries (51 stories, written from 1910 to 1936)

J. R. R. Tolkien

TO THE GENERAL moviegoing public, J. R. R. Tolkien is well known. As the creator of Middle-earth and author of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*, he enjoys an exalted place among fantasy novelists. Many authors look back to first reading about hobbits and wizards as the spark that launched their own creativity.

John Ronald Reuel Tolkien was born in South Africa to British parents, Arthur and Mabel. His father worked for a bank based in England. When he was three, his mother took him and his younger brother, Hilary, to England to visit family. While they were away, his father died. His mother, left to rely on the financial support of her family, converted to Roman Catholicism, much to the disappointment of her Baptist relatives who then refused further funds. When Mabel died in 1904 from complications of diabetes, her close friend Fr. Francis Xavier Morgan took in John (12) and Hilary (10). Tolkien remained a committed Catholic throughout his life.

Forever fascinated by languages—he created them even as a child—Tolkien's first job after World War I service was researching the etymology of words for the *Oxford English Dictionary*. He later became a professor of philology (the study of how language works) and wrote a vocabulary for Middle English. Tolkien's novels are heavily indebted to his work as a philologist.

Meanwhile he had worked on a private mythology for years, but without real intentions to publish fiction. He had to be persuaded to submit *The Hobbit*, originally written for his children, to publisher Allen and Unwin. The success of the book and a demand for more led him to write *The Lord of the Rings*, set in the invented landscape he had been developing in his spare time for so long.

Since Tolkien's death his son Christopher has edited and published much of his father's manuscript work—most recently, a translation of *Beowulf*.

- **Born** January 3, 1892, Bloemfontein, Orange Free State, South Africa
- **Died** September 2, 1973, Bournemouth, England
- **Married** Edith Bratt (m. 1916)
- **Children**: John, Michael, Christopher, Priscilla
- **Selected Works**
  - *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* (1925, ed. with E. V. Gordon)
  - "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics" (1936)
  - *The Hobbit* (1937)
  - *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–1955)
  - *The Silmarillion* (1977, posthumously, ed. Christopher Tolkien)

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The Inklings

FOUR OF OUR SEVEN SAGES belonged to the Inklings, a group of literary men that grew out of C. S. Lewis's circle of friends. They took the name, a pun on "people who dabble in ink," from a club of undergraduates that had gone defunct. Our image of men in tweeds discussing ideas in front of a roaring fire, perhaps with a pint in hand, is not far from the mark. They met on Tuesdays in local pubs and (until 1949) on Thursday evenings to read their works to each other in Lewis's rooms at Magdalen College. Not exclusively Oxford academics, the group included professional people such as Lewis's brother, Warren, a retired British Army officer. (With Lewis, second from the right above, are James Dundas-Grant, Colin Hardie, Robert "Humphrey" Havard, and Peter Havard.)

Lewis described members as Christians with a "tendency to write." Their diversity was epitomized in friendly opposition between Lewis and Barfield, called by Lewis a "perpetual dog-fight," but they also criticized and encouraged each other's work (see Timeline, pp. 26–27). Tolkien, who made no secret of the fact that he would never have completed *The Lord of the Rings* without Lewis's encouragement, acknowledged his debt to the Inklings in a heart-felt dedication.

The group met from the 1930s through the 1950s. Much of the mutual influence through conversation was informal even as it was influential. Sparse accounts of more "literary-minded" meetings have come down to us in letters, diaries, and memories, giving us tantalizing glimpses of what it must have been like to spend an evening fireside with the Inklings.
—*Colin Duriez*

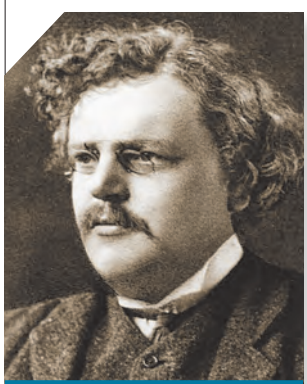
So great a cloud of witnesses

Some connections and influences among the seven sages

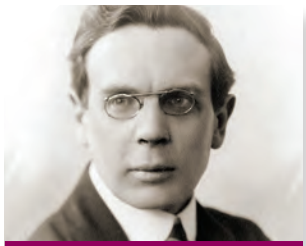
George MacDonald
1824–1905

- CHESTERTON read MACDONALD at a young age and said he counted him as one of the three or four greatest literary men of the nineteenth century. He served as chairman of events at MACDONALD's 100th birthday celebration in 1924.
- LEWIS recommended MACDONALD's "Unspoken Sermons" to a number of correspondents and said MACDONALD was "consistently closer to the Spirit of Christ" than anyone else he knew of. He used him as a guide character in his *Great Divorce*. Reading MACDONALD's *Phantastes* was highly influential in LEWIS's conversion.
- WILLIAMS included one of MACDONALD's poems in an anthology for Oxford University Press.
- BARFIELD praised MACDONALD's writing, and TOLKIEN enjoyed his stories.

- LEWIS read CHESTERTON's *The Everlasting Man* and some of GKC's essays on his road to conversion; he said that MACDONALD baptized his imagination while CHESTERTON baptized his intellect. He quoted or referred to him in several later letters and books.
- SAYERS and CHESTERTON helped found the Detection Club in 1929, a group of mystery writers of which CHESTERTON was the first president. She once wrote: "G. K.'s books have become more a part of my mental make-up than those of any writer you could name."
- CHESTERTON wrote to WILLIAMS in 1935 of his admiration for WILLIAMS's poetry.



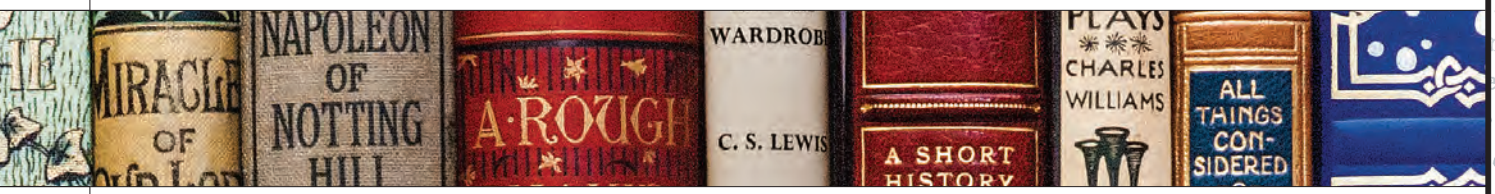
G. K. Chesterton
1874–1936



Charles Williams
1886–1945

- LEWIS invited WILLIAMS to a meeting of the Inklings (see p. 25) in 1936 after reading his *The Place of the Lion*. WILLIAMS met regularly with the group, including TOLKIEN and BARFIELD, from his relocation to Oxford in 1939 until his death.
- Members of the Inklings, especially LEWIS and TOLKIEN, promoted WILLIAMS's works and speaking skills to their colleagues and friends. LEWIS's *That Hideous Strength* is, among other things, an homage to WILLIAMS's writings.
- SAYERS was inspired to translate Dante by reading WILLIAMS, and later wrote the famous essay "Dante and Charles Williams." WILLIAMS reviewed her novel *The Nine Tailors* with great praise.

By Jennifer Woodruff Tait and Marjorie Lamp Mead



J. R. R. Tolkien
1892–1973

- TOLKIEN became friends with LEWIS at Oxford in 1926. A long conversation on Addison's Walk in 1931 with TOLKIEN and Hugo Dyson was crucial in LEWIS's conversion to Christianity. In 1936 the two made a pact to write books on space travel (LEWIS) and time travel (TOLKIEN) that resulted in LEWIS writing his *Space Trilogy*. TOLKIEN never finished his book, *The Lost Road*.
- TOLKIEN joined the Inklings, who began meeting in 1929. He interacted regularly with LEWIS—and, in later years, with WILLIAMS and BARFIELD.
- TOLKIEN read SAYERS's mysteries, although he did not care for the later ones.
- TOLKIEN and LEWIS arranged for WILLIAMS to give lectures at Oxford and to obtain an honorary Oxford M.A. (which made WILLIAMS eligible for election to the Oxford Dante Society). TOLKIEN contributed to *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*, published after WILLIAMS's death.

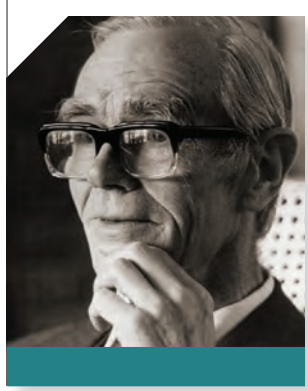
- CHESTERTON influenced SAYERS's spiritual life and writing. In fact she attributed her decision to fully embrace Christianity to his books.
- SAYERS corresponded with both LEWIS and WILLIAMS and joined LEWIS sometimes at meetings of the Oxford Socratic Club. WILLIAMS's positive review of *The Nine Tailors* began their friendship. His request that she be given the commission to write *The Zeal of Thy House* for the 1937 Canterbury Festival helped redirect her into playwriting and into exploring themes of creativity and work. Reading his *The Figure of Beatrice* influenced her to translate Dante.
- SAYERS did not meet with the all-male Inklings.
- SAYERS contributed (along with TOLKIEN, LEWIS, and BARFIELD) to *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*.

Dorothy L. Sayers
1893–1957

C. S. Lewis
1898–1963

- Writings of MACDONALD and CHESTERTON and friendships with TOLKIEN and BARFIELD were all instrumental in LEWIS's conversion. He was a member of the Inklings. LEWIS became friends with WILLIAMS in 1936 after reading his *The Place of the Lion* and he steadfastly promoted WILLIAMS's writings. LEWIS encouraged TOLKIEN to finish *The Lord of the Rings* and wrote enthusiastic reviews of both *The Hobbit* and *LOTR*.
- BARFIELD was one of LEWIS's favorite conversation partners and also served as his solicitor. They were friends from 1919 until LEWIS's death.
- LEWIS corresponded with SAYERS and offered critiques (solicited) on her works. He read her play cycle, *The Man Born to Be King*, every year in Holy Week for decades and wrote a eulogy for her memorial service.
- LEWIS contributed to *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*.

- BARFIELD met with the Inklings, although infrequently since he practiced law in London after 1929.
- BARFIELD influenced the thought of both LEWIS and TOLKIEN, giving LEWIS an abiding respect for the past and changing the way TOLKIEN understood and taught the history of language (for more see "The forgotten Inkling," pp. 46–49).
- LEWIS was godfather to BARFIELD's daughter, Lucy, and dedicated *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to her and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* to BARFIELD's foster son, Jeffrey. Lucy Pevensie may be based on Lucy Barfield. BARFIELD's writings on his friend have been collected into *Owen Barfield on C. S. Lewis.*
- BARFIELD contributed (along with TOLKIEN, SAYERS, and LEWIS) to *Essays Presented to Charles Williams.*



Owen Barfield
1898–1997

Dorothy L. Sayers

READERS familiar with the golden age of detective fiction (1920s–1930s) rank Sayers's urbane protagonist, Lord Peter Wimsey, among the era's great fictional sleuths. Sayers wrote 11 Wimsey books, beginning with *Whose Body?*, but her literary output extended past well-crafted whodunits.

One of the first women to be awarded a degree from Oxford, Dorothy Leigh Sayers began her adult life writing poetry and teaching, until she found her way to advertising copywriting in 1922. She is still remembered for jingles for brewer Guinness (including "Guinness is good for you") and for coining the phrase, "It pays to advertise!"

Sayers helped found the Detection Club, a group of mystery writers who discussed the ins and outs of the craft; G. K. Chesterton was its first president. In the 1930s Sayers turned to playwriting and was commissioned to write a groundbreaking series of plays on the life of Christ for BBC Radio. A lifelong Anglican, she reluctantly also took up lay apologetics, penning calls to authentic Christianity like *Creed or Chaos?* (1940). She considered her translation of Dante's *Divine Comedy*, with commentary highlighting Christian themes, one of her greatest accomplishments, but died before finishing *Paradise*, the third volume.

- **Born** June 13, 1893, Oxford, England
- **Died** December 17, 1957, Witham, England
- **Married** Oswald Atherton "Mac" Fleming (m. 1926)
- **Children**: John Anthony (from a relationship Sayers had in the early 1920s)
- **Selected Works**
  - Peter Wimsey novels from *Whose Body?* to *Busman's Honeymoon* (1921–1931)
  - *The Mind of the Maker* (1941)
  - *The Man Born to Be King* (1941)
  - Dante's *Divine Comedy* (trans. 1949–1962, completed by Barbara Reynolds)

C. S. Lewis

CLIVE STAPLES LEWIS (known as "Jack" to his friends) was born in Ireland in 1898. He fought in the World War I trenches and was wounded. At Oxford he studied Greek and Latin literature, philosophy, ancient history, and English. In 1925 he became a fellow and tutor in English literature at Oxford's Magdalen College.

Though raised in a Christian home, as a young boy Lewis embraced atheism. But, as he described in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, God's pursuit of him eventually led to his acceptance of theism in 1929 and Christianity in 1931. Books such as Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man* and MacDonald's *Phantastes*, and conversations with friends such as Tolkien, Barfield, and H. V. D. Dyson (all of whom would one day be members of the Inklings) helped him rediscover faith. He returned to his childhood Anglicanism.

Lewis's academic work revolved around his scholarly interest in the late Middle Ages, but his prolific output was hardly limited to the subjects he taught at Oxford. His first published work of fiction was *The Pilgrim's Regress*, a Christian allegory. This was followed by the "Space Trilogy," *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Great Divorce*, and the *Chronicles of Narnia*—all with undeniably Christian themes. During World War II, he gave a series of BBC radio addresses on the essentials of the Christian faith, later adapted into a classic of Christian apologetics, *Mere Christianity*.

Late in life Lewis met Joy Davidman, an American divorcee with two sons. As friends, they married in a civil ceremony so that Davidman could continue to live in England when denied a visa. But the relationship deepened, and after Joy developed bone cancer, they obtained a Christian marriage. When Joy died Lewis chronicled his experience of bereavement in *A Grief Observed*.

Lewis died on November 22, 1963, his passing overshadowed by the assassination of John F. Kennedy on the same day.

- **Born** November 29, 1898, Belfast, Ireland
- **Died** November 22, 1963, Oxford, England
- **Married** Joy Davidman (m. 1956)
- **Children**: Stepfather to David and Douglas Gresham
- **Selected Works**
  - *The Pilgrim's Regress* (1933)
  - *The Allegory of Love* (1936)
  - *Out of the Silent Planet* (1938)
  - *Perelandra* (1943)
  - *That Hideous Strength* (1945)
  - *The Problem of Pain* (1940)
  - *The Screwtape Letters* (1942)
  - *The Chronicles of Narnia* (1950–1956)
  - *Mere Christianity* (1952)
  - *Surprised by Joy* (1955)
  - *The Discarded Image* (1964)

Charles Williams

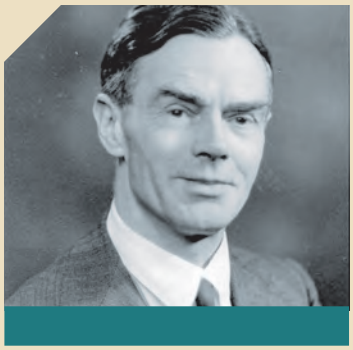
EDUCATED for a time at University College London, Charles Walter Stansby Williams left school for financial reasons before obtaining a degree. From this inauspicious start, he eventually found himself as a proofreading assistant for Oxford University Press. He took the position in 1908 and for nearly four decades continued to rise through the ranks, his remarkable tenure ending only on the occasion of his early death in 1945.

Williams's literary output was impressively diverse: poetry on Arthurian themes, numerous plays, literary criticism (especially *The Figure of Beatrice*, a study of Dante), biographies, and theology. He is perhaps best known for his fiction—a collection of supernatural fantasy thrillers set in the contemporary world. His works are filled with ghosts, demons, magic-wielding relics such as a pack of Tarot cards and the Holy Grail, and Platonic archetypes. Like Sayers, Williams was a lifelong Anglican. His works of Christian theology include *He Came Down from Heaven* and *The Descent of the Dove*.

Mutual admiration between Williams and C. S. Lewis, along with the relocation of Oxford University Press offices to Oxford during World War II, led to Williams's participation in the Inklings. On his death, Warren Lewis (C. S. Lewis's brother) wrote: "There will be no more pints with Charles: no more 'Bird and Baby' [their favorite pub]: the blackout has fallen, and the Inklings can never be the same again."

- **Born** September 20, 1886, London, England
- **Died** May 15, 1945, Oxford, England
- **Married** Florence "Michal" Conway (m. 1917)
- **Children**: Michael
- **Selected Works**
  - *War in Heaven* (1930)
  - *Many Dimensions* (1930)
  - *The Place of the Lion* (1931)
  - *The Greater Trumps* (1932)
  - *Shadows of Ecstasy* (1933)
  - *Descent into Hell* (1937)
  - *He Came Down from Heaven* (1938)
  - *The Descent of the Dove* (1939)
  - *The Figure of Beatrice* (1943)
  - *All Hallows' Eve* (1945)

Owen Barfield



FOR MORE THAN four decades, C. S. Lewis and Owen Barfield argued and debated as friends. Barfield graduated from Wadham College, Oxford, with a degree in English literature in 1920 and became a poet and author. During this period he heard a lecture by Rudolf Steiner and became an anthroposophist (see definition in "The forgotten Inkling," pp. 46–49). Though baptized as an Anglican in middle age, he also maintained anthroposophical beliefs until his death. Many of his books blend history and philosophy. His most famous, *Saving the Appearances,* details his idea of the evolution of consciousness. His novel *Worlds Apart* depicts a fictional dialogue about belief between a physicist, a biologist, a theologian, a philosopher, a psychiatrist, a teacher, a rocket scientist, and a lawyer. Several appear to be based on members of the Inklings.

Barfield continued writing throughout his life, but in 1934 began a 25-year career in law, working as a solicitor in London. He was Lewis's solicitor and trustee, managing his friend's sizable gifts to charity.

- **Born** November 9, 1898, London, England
- **Died** December 14, 1997, Forest Row, England
- **Married** Maud Douie (m. 1923)
- **Children**: Alexander and Lucy; fostered Jeffrey (Corbett) Barfield
- **Selected Works**
  - *History in English Words* (1926)
  - *Poetic Diction* (1928)
  - *Romanticism Comes of Age* (1944)
  - *Saving the Appearances* (1957)
  - *Worlds Apart* (1963)
  - *Owen Barfield on C. S. Lewis* (1989)

Learning what no one meant to teach

C. S. Lewis's educational experiences

MICHAEL WARD

"**I WAS AT FOUR** schools and learnt nothing at three of them."

Thus Lewis spoke of his education during the period 1908 to 1914, between the ages of 9 (when he ceased being homeschooled) and 15 (when he began to be privately tutored). Even if we allow for hyperbole, it was still a damning verdict on the education he received during some of his most formative years. Much has been written about Lewis's time studying under his tutor, retired school headmaster William T. Kirkpatrick (the famed "Great Knock" of *Surprised by Joy*). But Lewis had much to say about his education prior to Kirkpatrick as well.

Lewis attended four schools as a boy: Wynyard School, Campbell College, Cherbourg House, and Malvern College. The worst was Wynyard, presided over by madman Robert Capron. Campbell College had Lewis on its roll for only a single term. He detested Malvern College for its emphasis on athletics and for its "fagging" system, where junior boys were little better than slaves to their seniors. Cherbourg House was the only institution that Lewis remembered warmly. Enrolled there from 1911 to 1913, he flourished under the excellent guidance of its headmaster, Arthur C. Allen. But this positive experience was the exception: the rest of Lewis's formal schooling was evidently dismal, as opposed to the hours he spent in breaks and summers browsing his family's well-stocked bookshelves.

READING, WRITING, AND SOLIDARITY

Lewis was an unusually clever boy, and clever boys are apt to kick against the constraints of large educational systems geared to the needs and reach of the average. Perhaps the three schools he condemned would not have seemed quite so dreadful to a student of more regular abilities. And perhaps we might also assume that, because Lewis's abilities were so astonishingly advanced, he would have intellectually survived almost any pedagogical sausage-factory, however terrible.

This was not his own view, though. Of Wynyard School he wrote in *Surprised by Joy*: "If the school had not died, and if I had been left there two years more, it would probably have sealed my fate as a scholar for good." Indeed, even the most brilliant mind cannot escape all the negative effects of a hopelessly bad education. For Lewis schools needed to be held to the highest standard conceivable.

Wynyard School was the polar opposite of the ideal of good schooling. It closed because of a lawsuit brought against the headmaster, Robert Capron.

LEWIS AT WRITING DESK—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

ANSWERING FAN MAIL? *Left:* Lewis works at his desk at home in Oxford. His home was called "The Kilns" because it was built on the site of a brickworks.

THE BOY WHO IMAGINED A WORLD *Right:* Lewis (pictured below as a young boy) spent hours creating the world of Boxen with his brother, Warnie, in an attic room at their childhood home, re-created here in the Kilns's attic, complete with wardrobe.

ROOM UNDER THE RAFTERS—TRICIA PORTER, WITH PERMISSION FROM THE C. S. LEWIS FOUNDATION
YOUNG LEWIS 1904—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

A cruel man who flogged the boys mercilessly, he was eventually put under restraint, certified insane, and lived out his remaining days in a lunatic asylum. Lewis, though never personally the target of Capron's brutality, struggled for years to forgive him.

But one good thing came out of Lewis's time at Wynyard: Capron's rule was so vile that all the boys stood solidly against it. There were no sneaks or tattle-tales. Lewis wrote later that Capron was "against his will, a teacher of honour and a bulwark of freedom." The boys would not have so successfully understood the importance of resisting tyranny if it had been Capron's intention to teach that lesson. Truly the lesson learned was an accidental by-product of "a wicked old man's desire to make as much as he could out of deluded parents and to give as little as he could in return."

Lewis wished to emphasize that teachers teach without knowing it, and one can never predict the effects with total accuracy. While we are making our schools as excellent as possible, he would argue, we also need to remember our ignorance on this point, and maintain a proper humility about our role in raising the next generation. There is a modern tendency among parents, teachers, and governments to try to devise a fool-proof pedagogy, the perfect "educational machine," as Lewis calls it in "Lilies That Fester."

And this machine, though meant as a way of avoiding certain risks, can itself be very dangerous. It can easily squelch those whom it would instruct. Lewis wrote:

> The educational machine seizes [the pupil] very early and organizes his whole life, to the exclusion of all unsuperintended solitude or leisure. The hours of unsponsored, uninspected, perhaps even forbidden, reading, the ramblings, and the "long, long thoughts" in which those of luckier generations first discovered literature and nature and themselves are a thing of the past. If a Traherne or a Wordsworth were born to-day he would be "cured" before he was twelve.

The child who engages in forbidden reading may actually be teaching himself something of great value, Lewis suggested—a lesson he had learned well from his own unsupervised reading in childhood. The burnt hand teaches best, he argued: parents and teachers must not over-protect their charges. Though it seems like a kindness to wrap a child in cotton-wool, it is in the end unwise, for the child must learn to stand on his or her own feet one day. The longer that day is needlessly delayed, the likelier it is that the child will be overwhelmed when it finally comes.

SEEKING THE TRUTH

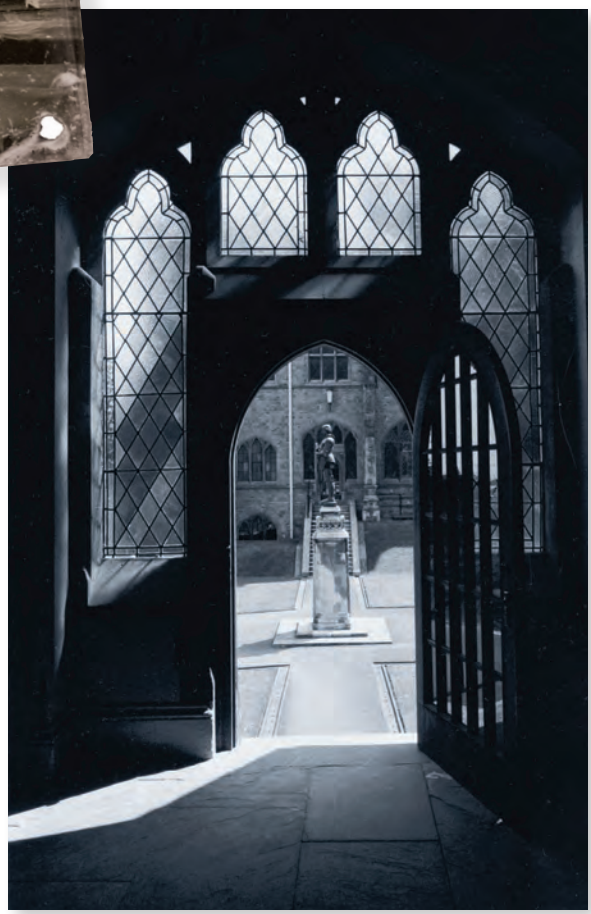
The convent schoolgirl who goes off the rails as soon as she has her liberty is all too familiar a figure. A "fugitive and cloistered virtue," as Milton observed, is really no virtue at all. Lewis put it this way in a letter to his former pupil Dom Bede Griffiths:

> The process of living seems to consist in coming to realise truths so ancient and simple that, if stated, they sound like barren platitudes. They cannot sound otherwise to those who have not had the relevant experience: that is why there is no real teaching of such truths possible and every generation starts from scratch.

By "no real teaching," Lewis meant no direct, immediate, inescapable teaching. Since the pupil is a live and independent human being, not a machine, you cannot teach him or her exactly what you would like; students learn in their own way and in their own time. We all know that you can lead a horse to water and not

A DORM OR A PRISON? *Left:* At Malvern College Lewis hated the "fagging" system where older boys treated younger ones as their servants.

A DOOR IN OR OUT? *Below:* Lewis wrote of his time at Malvern, "In some boys' lives everything was calculated to the great end of advancement. For this games were played; for this clothes, friends, amusements, and vices were chosen."



make it drink; but even horses that do drink, drink as deeply as they choose and in muddy parts of the river as well as in clear.

Like seventeenth-century poet Traherne and nineteenth-century poet Wordsworth to whom he referred in "Lilies That Fester," Lewis counted himself one of the lucky ones given space to breathe and grow in his educational upbringing. For the first nine years of his life, he was taught at home, untrammelled by the impersonal "educational machine." And for the six years of his schooling, he had considerable independence during vacations. During these times he had free rein of his parents' bookshelves. They contained

> . . . books of all kinds reflecting every transient stage of my parents' interests, books readable and unreadable, books suitable for a child and books most emphatically not. Nothing was forbidden me. In the seemingly endless rainy afternoons I took volume after volume from the shelves. I had always the same certainty of finding a book that was new to me as a man who walks into a field has of finding a new blade of grass.

Lewis was free to make his own mistakes and to bear the honorable burden of suffering their consequences, a freedom that Lewis thought could easily be curtailed in a risk-averse modern culture.

He was especially alive to the fact that freedom could be curtailed most damagingly by elites: smart people's pretensions to wisdom are always the highest, putting too much stock in educational systems they created or endorsed. When it comes to bringing up a child, Lewis opined in one letter, "Perhaps the uneducated do it best." The reason? "They don't attempt to replace Providence" in shaping their destinies. Instead of thinking they can work out a plan that will infallibly secure their children's educational futures, less ambitious parents "just carry on from day to day on ordinary principles of affection, justice, veracity, and humour."

In a letter to Mary Willis Shelburne, who was complaining about insufficient religious education (without Shelburne's side of the correspondence we do not know the full context), Lewis wrote this refreshingly relaxed advice:

> About the lack of religious education: of course you must be grieved, but remember how much religious education has exactly the opposite effect to that which was intended, how many hard atheists come from pious homes.…Parents are not Providence: their bad intentions may be frustrated as their good ones. Perhaps prayers as a secret indulgence which Father disapproves may have a charm they lacked in houses where they were commanded.

Just as Capron unwittingly taught Lewis and his confreres to be "solid" and not to tell tales, so the

GOD CAME IN *Right:* Lewis wrote this poem about Addison's Walk at Magdalen College, Oxford, where he had learned many things, including some that led to his conversion.

enemies of religion might teach a child the allure of prayer.

In correspondence with his American friend Vera Gebbert, Lewis's skepticism about the extent of human control came fully to the forefront. He talked of "the educational gamble," admitting that "very few of us get a really good education, whether in England or America," and expressing a surety that "if fate had sent you to one of our 'good' girl's schools, you would have found quite a few holes in your stock of learning when you had finished." And then he made the statement we began with: "I was at four schools, and learnt nothing at three of them." He went on: "But on the other hand I was lucky in having a first class tutor after my father had given up the school experiment in despair."

And yet this first-class tutor, William Kirkpatrick, was a confirmed and rigorous atheist! That Lewis should not have become permanently an atheist himself due to his otherwise hugely influential relationship with Kirkpatrick reinforces yet again his point: parents are not Providence, and teachers are not fate:

> While we are planning the education of the future we can be rid of the illusion that we shall ever replace destiny. Make the plans as good as you can, of course. But be sure that the deep and final effect on every single [child] will be something you never envisaged and will spring from little free movements in your machine which neither your blueprint nor your working model gave any hint of.

Dr. Michael Ward is Senior Research Fellow at Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford, and professor of apologetics at Houston Baptist University, Texas. He is the author of Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C. S. Lewis *and co-editor of* The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis.

LEWIS PLAQUE ADDISON'S WALK—TRICIA PORTER

Dorothy Sayers's surprise educational legacy

In 1947, as Britain was still rebuilding after World War II, Dorothy Sayers gave a talk at Oxford University titled "The Lost Tools of Learning." She argued in that talk that the educational system was failing at what should be its primary goal: teaching children to learn. She called for a return to a model of teaching found in medieval universities, the "Trivium."

Derived from ancient Greek philosophers, the Trivium focused on three areas—grammar, dialectic, and rhetoric. These subjects involved learning a language, learning how to construct an argument, and learning how to express one's self in that language. It was on this foundation, she argued, that all other learning must be built.

The talk may have been a bit radical, though her Oxford-educated audience was likely agreeable to her ideas. But few in attendance could have anticipated the effect the speech would have on Christian education in the United States.

The idea of reviving classical education was not the sole property of Sayers, but her name became explicitly tied to the American homeschool movement when Douglas Wilson—controversial writer and pastor from Moscow, Idaho—published *Recovering the Lost Tools of Learning* based on her ideas in 1991. The book came out just as homeschooling hit the mainstream. With many parents exploring new ways to teach their children, the promise of classical education from a Christian perspective was very appealing.

In subsequent years Sayers's ideas have evolved into a full-blown Christian classical education movement. It emphasizes reading great works of Western literature, learning Greek and Latin, and peering into every subject through a Christian lens.

Any number of books espouse the model today; more than a few associations and organizations have been formed to advocate it; and across the country private schools have been established to offer parents a way for their children to receive a "classical" education.

Parents who homeschool have their choice of fully articulated classical curricula from many publishers. When they are ready for classical college coursework, schools such as Patrick Henry College in Purcellville, Virginia, and St. John's College in Annapolis, Maryland, are waiting to review their applications.

—*Matt Forster*

Transcending ourselves

C. S. Lewis on learning

DAVID C. DOWNING

WHEN AN AMERICAN TEENAGER explained to C. S. Lewis in a fan letter the American system of education—accumulating course credits—Lewis's letter in response expressed amazement at measuring a student's education by hours spent in the classroom:

> What a droll idea in Florida, to give credits not for what you know but for hours spent in a classroom! Rather like judging the condition of an animal not by its weight or shape but by the amount of food that had been offered it!

He viewed education primarily in terms of what was happening in the minds and lives of the students, not in terms of what is now referred to as "seat time." In fact, he continued by giving the teenager advice about her own creative writing endeavors: "A story about Caesar in Gaul sounds very promising."

While Lewis's letters are full of such gems, his fullest discussion of education comes in his essay "Our English Syllabus" in *Rehabilitations* (1939). There he made a three-tiered distinction between *training*, *education*, and *learning*. *Training* is vocational; it prepares the student for work. It is not intended to produce "a good man," but simply "a good banker [or] a good electrician."

Education has much broader goals, defined by John Milton as preparing the student "to perform justly, skillfully, and magnanimously all the offices both public and private, of peace and war." This is a much more ambitious undertaking, trying to engender in students "good taste and good feeling," to cultivate their aesthetic and moral sensibilities, and to fit them for public service.

A WELL-READ MAN Lewis's desk at the Kilns is intended to look as it did in the 1940s as he composed works like *The Screwtape Letters* and *The Great Divorce*.

Lewis thought a truly educated person should have some facility with logic and reasoning, with social behavior and civil discourse, as well as an acquaintance with the literature, both sacred and secular, which forms a culture's legacy and its sense of community. This view of education explicitly includes a moral component.

MEN AND WOMEN WITH CHESTS

As Lewis explained more fully in *The Abolition of Man*, humans cannot make sound value judgments based either upon their needs alone or their reasoning alone.

According to the classical model, humans have a head (reason) and a belly (appetites)—but in between is the chest, the seat of "magnaminity "or "emotions organized by trained habits into stable sentiments," where fairness, generosity, and high-mindedness grow.

Lewis called these "the indispensable liaison officers between cerebral [head] and visceral [belly] man." He called that "chest" a defining trait of humans, for by intellect humans are mere spirit and by appetites

KILNS'S COMMON ROOM—TRICIA PORTER, WITH PERMISSION FROM THE C. S. LEWIS FOUNDATION

"I HEARD A BIRD SING CLEAR" *Left:* Addison's Walk is still a place of peace and contemplation.

"WHAT DO I MOST WANT TO KNOW?" *Right:* The Radcliffe Camera, a reading room at the Bodleian Library, Oxford, symbolized learning to several of our sages.

they are mere animal. A part of every education, then, should be to instruct students in the proper "stock responses," to teach them to admire courage and selflessness, to value life, and to keep watch on their own natural penchant for dishonesty or pride.

Lewis added that a well-rounded citizen should be both "interesting and interested," not a mere receptacle of facts, but someone with an active intellectual curiosity who can enter into discussion and make meaningful contributions.

This last trait led to what Lewis actually called *learning*, which he saw as far beyond education as education is beyond training. If training prepares one for work, and education prepares one to be a well-rounded human being, learning is simply a desire to know, to expand the frontiers of one's own understanding.

For Lewis, the ultimate natural end of human life was not work, but rather "the leisured activities of thought, art, literature, [and] conversation." He added that he called this the *natural* end of human life because life's ultimate purpose must be sought in the supernatural source of our being.

Lewis considered the thirst for knowledge, like the possession of a "chest," to be a uniquely human trait: "Man is the only amateur animal; all the others are professionals." That is, humans can pursue learning for the mere love of knowledge, while lower animals stick to the business of survival and propagation. As Lewis whimsically concluded: "When God made the beasts dumb He saved the world from infinite boredom, for if they could speak, they would all of them, all day, talk nothing but shop."

Though most of us use the terms *education* and *learning* interchangeably, Lewis insisted on maintaining a clear distinction. In his essay "Our English Syllabus," he went so far as to say, "A school without pupils would cease to be a school; a college without undergraduates would be as much a college as ever, would perhaps be more a college." (That is, faculty and alumni would still pursue scholarship for its own sake.)

A COLLEGE WITH NO STUDENTS?

To those familiar with American higher education, the idea of a college without undergraduates might produce a shudder, a sign of an institution shuttered and in ruin. We associate learning for its own sake with graduate study at large research universities—usually those with government grants in the natural sciences. But Lewis insisted that for *every* first-year student entering college, the proper question should not be "What will do me the most good?" but rather "What do I most want to know?"

Some have argued that Lewis's emphasis upon the pursuit of knowledge instead of job training, or even general education, is elitist or obsolete—that it simply doesn't apply to today's world of daunting college tuitions and dwindling career opportunities. But Lewis would counter that learning always has the important by-product of education. In seeking to expand our knowledge, we learn how to learn, developing the skills we will need both for careers and for the wider demands of family and community.

Just as those who participate in sports to win will get vigorous exercise and improved health, those who

ADDISON'S WALK—TRICIA PORTER
RADCLIFFE CAMERA—TRICIA PORTER

TEACHER OF THOUSANDS *Above:* Americans came to know Lewis through Screwtape and the Narnian books. *Above left:* This famous cover of *TIME* profiled him in an article titled "Don vs. Devil."

learn for the love of knowledge will gain other skills and benefits. In the same way, those who pursue such ends for their own sake may soon lose their motivation.

ON THE READING OF OLD BOOKS

Another by-product of the pursuit of learning, Lewis thought, is overcoming the limits we place on ourselves.

Few students will tackle a thick book simply because they want to "broaden their minds." But by taking interest in a variety of subjects, cultivating and satisfying intellectual curiosity, they will find that wide reading in the end has just that effect. In his essay "On the Reading of Old Books" (in *God in the Dock*), Lewis argued that every generation is parochial, with prejudices and blind spots that earlier generations would have deplored and later ones expose.

Reading only contemporary books, perhaps in preparation for a career or knowledge of current events, will leave one prisoner to the "Zeitgeist," the spirit of the age that dominates one's own generation. Partly because of his own wide reading in books both ancient and modern, Lewis correctly predicted that two of the most dominant thinkers of his age—Freud and Marx—would greatly recede in influence in later generations. (His critiques of both are in *The Pilgrim's Regress* [1933].)

Christians should also not be reluctant to meet their fellow believers from the past: "This mistaken preference for the modern books and this shyness of the old ones is nowhere more rampant than in theology. Wherever you find a little study circle of Christian laity you can be almost certain that they are studying not St. Luke or St. Paul or St. Augustine or Thomas Aquinas or Hooker or Butler, but M. Berdyaev or M. Maritain or M. Niebuhr or Miss Sayers or even myself."

Lewis argued that, at the very least, one should read one old book for every new one. He added that "Great Books" are usually more accessible in the original texts than in contemporary summaries or commentaries. Part of the greatness of Plato or Augustine is that they could express their seminal ideas more clearly and eloquently in their own words than can their myriads of interpreters. (The same, incidentally, is true of Lewis himself!)

Finally, apart from escaping the limited mindset of one's own era, the pursuit of learning for its own sake contributes more broadly to what Lewis calls "an enlargement of our being." In *An Experiment in Criticism,* Lewis described the study of great works of literature, but his observation applies to a wide variety of texts:

> We want to see with other eyes, to imagine with other imaginations, to feel with other hearts, as well as our own. . . .This process can be described either as an enlargement or as a temporary annihilation of the self. But that is an old paradox; "he that loseth his life shall save it."

As he concludes the same book:

> In reading great literature I become a thousand men and yet remain myself. . . . Here, as in worship, in moral action, and in knowing, I transcend myself; and am never more myself than when I do.

David C. Downing is R. W. Schlosser Professor of English, Elizabethtown College (PA), and author of many books on Lewis including Looking for the King: An Inklings Novel.

ZEAL OF THY HOUSE 1937 PRODUCTION—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

A Christian revolutionary?

Dorothy L. Sayers wanted to see Christ as Lord over everything from theater to economics

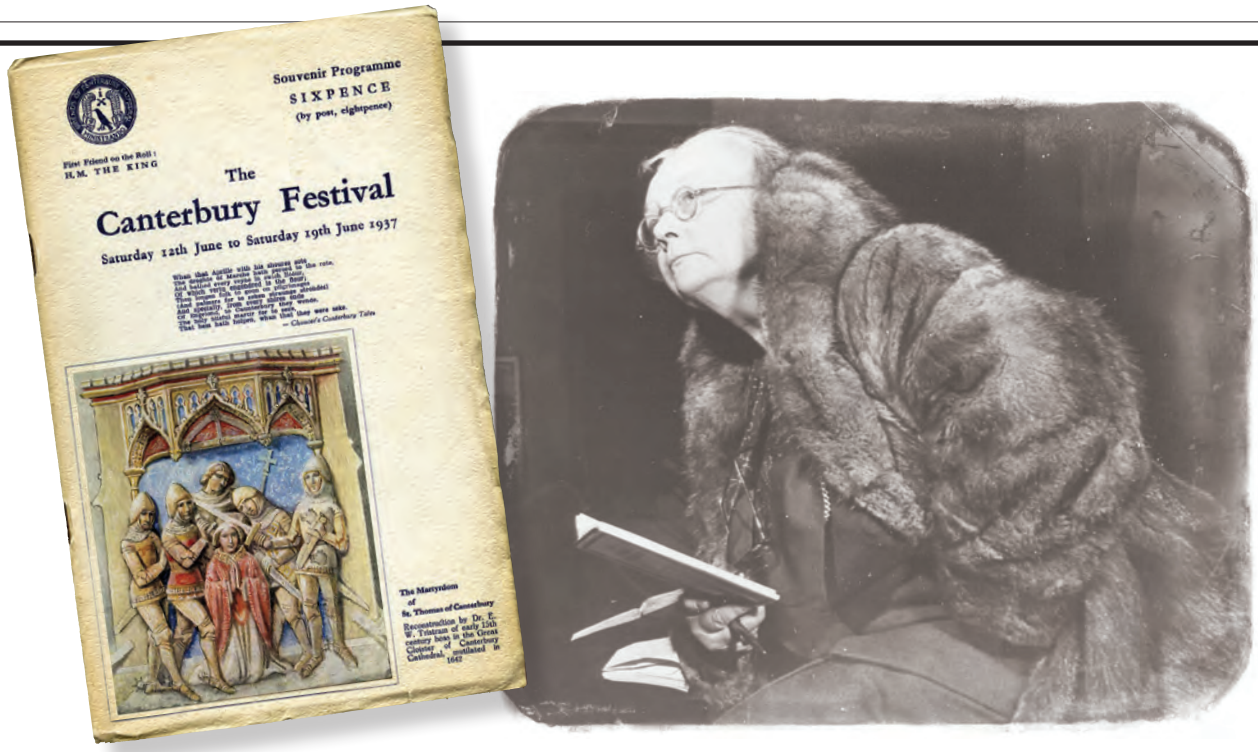
SUZANNE BRAY

IN THE EARLY to mid-twentieth century, the world was in crisis. The consequences of World War I had been economically disastrous. Politically the unsatisfactory peace settlement in 1919 led to the emergence of totalitarian regimes in Italy, Spain, and Germany, led by men whose names have echoed through the decades: Franco, Mussolini, Hitler. By 1939 the arrival of new conflict was hardly a surprise.

Meanwhile the church in Western Europe stood firmly on the defensive. Although several revival movements had brought new enthusiasm, in general Christianity felt its influence over mainstream intellectual life, government, and the arts slipping away. C. S. Lewis summed up the dominant religious belief of the time as being not genuine Christianity, but "a vague theism with a strong and virile ethical code."

THE DIVINE ABSENCE In Sayers's play *The Zeal of Thy House* (1937), God could not appear on stage: four angels spoke his messages.

This lack of influence was partly the church's own fault. Christianity and the arts often seemed at odds. W. E. Yeats, born in 1865, noted that when he was young, "there were as many religious poets as love poets," but that by the turn of the century, poets were no longer interested in religion. Lord David Cecil (Oxford professor and a member of the Inklings), when trying to find poems for *The Oxford Book of Christian Verse*, concluded that Christians were no longer writing poetry. You wouldn't find them in the theater either, especially since it had been illegal in Britian since the early seventeenth century to represent any of the three persons of the Trinity on stage. The bishop of Oxford in the late nineteenth century forbade all priests in his diocese,



including Dorothy L. Sayers's father, Henry, to attend theatrical performances. (Lewis Carroll, a colleague of Henry's, resisted becoming a priest for this very reason.)

Many believers thought, as Sayers explained in 1941, that "the Church of Christ should live within the world as a self-contained community . . . offering neither particular approval of, nor opposition to, those departments of human activity … summed up in the words 'civilisation' and 'the state.' Christians who *were* both in the world and of it had, she said, become "involved in the state machinery," identifying themselves with fallible and sinful regimes and coming under the same judgment. Both of these were defensive postures. Sayers was ready to go on the offensive.

DETECTING CHRIST

William Temple, future archbishop of Canterbury, and George Bell, bishop of Chichester, played their parts in this midcentury recovery of Christian relevance, but lay Christian writers involved in the fallen world on a daily basis proved even more capable of thinking outside the ecclesiastical box. Perhaps the most surprising of these was Sayers, the daughter of a clergyman and a writer of best-selling detective novels.

Not only was she the only high-profile woman in a church completely dominated by men, but she was also eccentric, was married to a divorced man, and had borne a child out of wedlock. Yet she played a leading role in the renewal of Christian drama and applied her knowledge of the Bible and the creeds to the problems of her generation. In so doing she proclaimed a genuine Christian approach to art and voiced a powerful theology of work.

FROM DETECTION TO THEOLOGY *Left:* The invitation to write *The Zeal of Thy House* for the 1937 Canterbury Festival changed Sayers's vocational direction.

DOING WORK WELL *Above:* Sayers watches a rehearsal of *Christ's Emperor* (1952) intently.

When Sayers was a child, the discovery that Cyrus the Persian and King Ahasuerus could be found both in her history books and in the Old Testament convinced her that "history was all of a piece and the Bible was part of it." During the economic and political crises of the late 1930s, according to her biographer Barbara Reynolds, Sayers "experienced a return of the vision she had had as a child, of the relatedness and wholeness of things.…Her mind focused on the central belief of Christianity—the Incarnation—and she saw how all else flowed from it." In fact, three principal doctrines of Christianity—Creation, Incarnation, and the Trinity—came together in her mind to throw light on her world and the problems of her age.

Sayers had not published anything with a religious theme since some early poems, but was recommended by Charles Williams to the organizers of the Canterbury Festival as a potential author for their 1937 festival play (see "So great a cloud of witnesses," pp. 26–27). She accepted the commission, as well as the suggestion to write about William of Sens, an architect who rebuilt the choir section of Canterbury Cathedral after a twelfth-century fire.

The play, *The Zeal of Thy House*, continued Sayers's reflections on vocation and professional integrity from her novel *Gaudy Night* (1935), but in a specifically Christian context. At its end Archangel Michael invited

LOOK, I'M ACTING *Above:* Dorothy Sayers as a college student (dressed in shirt and tie on the left) imitates Hugh P. Allen, director of the Bach Choir at Oxford.

the audience to praise God the Creator, declaring that every work made by human creation is "threefold, an earthly trinity to match the heavenly." The "Creative Idea" existed from the beginning in the maker's mind; the "Creative Energy," through work, enabled the idea to become incarnate in the material world; and the "Creative Power" transformed and inspired those who encountered the work.

This ambitious theme launched Sayers into the world of theology. Articles on Christian doctrine she wrote for the *Sunday Times* as publicity for the play attracted the attention of church leaders. For the next few years, Sayers's work took her in three directions: presenting the Incarnation of Christ to the general public through drama; exploring a Christian understanding of the arts; and applying Christian doctrines to economic and employment issues, advancing a specifically Christian view of society.

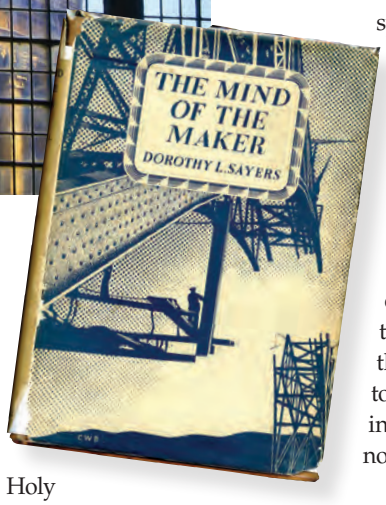
PUTTING JESUS ON STAGE

Although the Canterbury play succeeded with critics and the public, the ban on putting God on the stage forced the divine element to be portrayed by four huge angels. Sayers was unhappy, feeling that "the device of indicating Christ's presence by a 'voice off', or by a shaft of light, or a shadow . . . tends to suggest to people that he was never a real person at all."

Radio broadcasts were exempt from the regulations governing the stage, and in 1938 Sayers was given the opportunity to write a nativity play for the BBC. *He That Should Come* included the sound of the baby Jesus crying and struck people by its realism. As a result the BBC asked Sayers for a series of 12 plays on the life of Christ. She agreed on the condition that she could use contemporary language and that Jesus would be played realistically by an actor.

No actor had played the role of Christ in Britain for nearly 400 years, and people only knew his words in the archaic English of the King James Bible. But in spite of vigorous opposition, the plays became an overwhelming success. The BBC's director of religious broadcasting admitted they "revealed the poverty and incompleteness of [his] own belief in the Incarnation." Many others credited Sayers with helping them believe for the first time that the Gospel stories really happened.

Sayers also sought to explain the reasons why the church and the arts were at odds. She wrote that the church had "no Christian philosophy of the Arts" and no coherent attitude toward art: it "puritanically denounced the Arts as irreligious and mischievous" or tried to manipulate them as a means of propaganda, but never approached them theologically.



FAITH AND LEARNING *Left:* Oxford always remained central to Sayers's imagination. Her novel *Gaudy Night* climaxes atop the Radcliffe Camera, seen here through the windows of the University Church of St. Mary the Virgin.

THINKING GOD'S THOUGHTS *Right:* Tolkien's imagination took flight in art, as seen in his vivid rendering of "Moonlight on a Wood."

Sayers set a new course in her most original book, *The Mind of the Maker*, where art is seen as a form of creation by humans created in the image of the Creator God, exploring her trinitarian analogy of the nature of artistic creation (Idea, Energy, and Power). The work of art, like the Holy Spirit, goes out into the world with the power to inspire and transform.

She applied this understanding of humanity's God-given creativity not only to the arts but also to all secular work, saying, "man is most godlike and most himself when he is occupied in creation," and, "every man should do the work for which he is fitted by nature" to find satisfaction in the work done and not just work because he needs money to live.

TALKING ABOUT A REVOLUTION

The church tended to imply that clergy and other religious workers had a vocation while everyone else just "worked." Sayers recognized and preached that humans could be called to serve God in their secular work. In December 1940 the leaders of the British churches included in a set of "ten points for peace" the idea that "the sense of Divine vocation must be restored to man's daily work." This emphasis came explicitly from the 1937 Oxford World Conference on Life and Work, but it was Sayers, not official clergymen, who churches often called on to explain this point.

Yet Sayers was of the opinion that this change in attitude to work would be difficult in the economic system as it was. She thought both capitalism and socialism were profoundly flawed, allowing the nature and needs of human beings to be submitted to financial considerations. She suggested changes she called "so revolutionary . . . as to make all political revolutions look like conformity" and "a radical change from top to bottom—a new system; not a mere adjustment of the old system to favour a different set of people."

In this system the quality and usefulness of what was made would be more important than whether it made a profit. The nature of the work done and its suitability for each worker's talents would take precedence over time-saving and salary levels. The Christian economist would act believing that if we seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness, all other things will be added unto us (Matt. 6:33), and the church would no longer have to struggle to persuade the working person to "remain interested in a religion which seems to have no concern with nine-tenths of his life."

Whether in art, politics, or economics, Sayers's principle remained the same: "not to try and shut out the Lord Immanuel from any sphere of truth or activity." If we truly believe in him, she wrote, then whether we are involved in scientific research, or the arts, or medicine, or industrial manufacturing, "Christ is precisely the truth we are discovering, the beauty we are expressing, the life we are restoring," and the source of all the "energy and skill we put into these things."

Today she would be glad to see that God may now appear on the British stage and that Christian drama is no longer considered shocking. At the same time, she would be sad but not surprised to find that attitudes toward vocation have not greatly changed since her day. She would, if she were with us, find work at hand yet to do.

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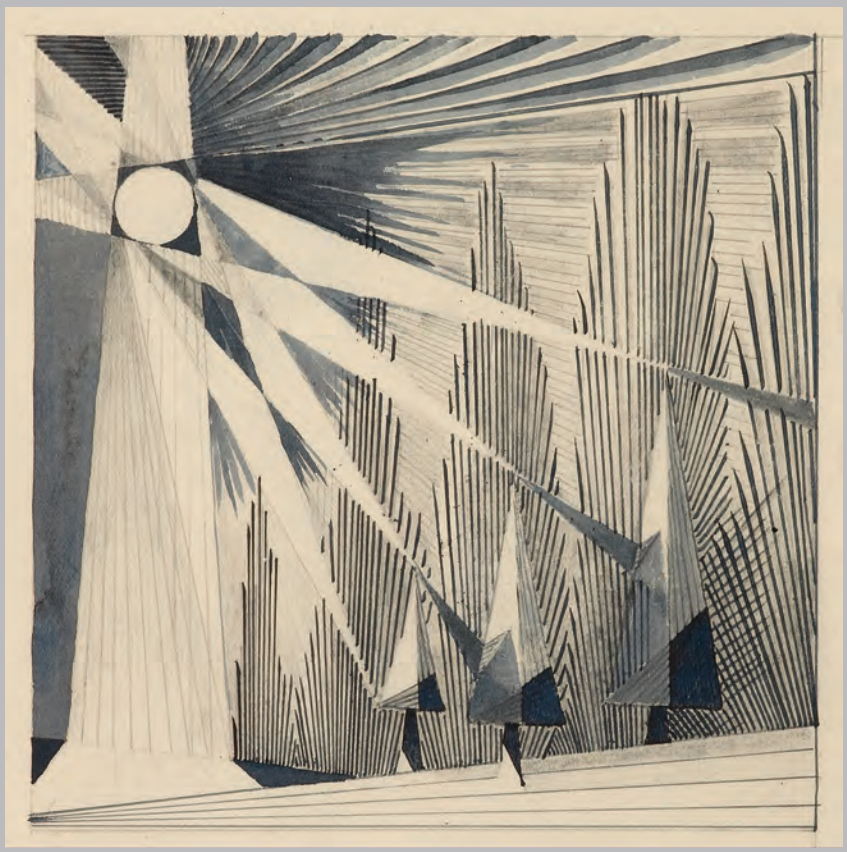
ST. MARY WINDOW—JENNIFER WOODRUFF TAIT
MIND OF THE MAKER—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL



TOLKIEN *MOONLIGHT ON A WOOD*—USED BY PERMISSION OF THE MARION E. WADE CENTER, WHEATON COLLEGE, WHEATON, IL

"We make still by the law in which we're made"

Sayers was not the only one of the seven sages to turn her attention to the making of things. Tolkien famously invented the distinctive term "subcreation" for the making of a secondary, fictional world through active human imagination. Such secondary worlds are creatively taken from a primary reality made by God, whose image we bear, and was thoroughly consistent and plausible on their own inner terms.

Tolkien thought that subcreation is at the heart of what he defined as "fairy story," and fairy story, he believed, represents the ultimate pattern of storytelling. For him the highest function of art is its creation of convincing secondary worlds. In such subcreation the human maker imagines God's world after him, just as the early scientist Johannes Kepler believed he was thinking God's thoughts after him.

In one poem (addressed to C. S. Lewis while Lewis was on the road to conversion), Tolkien wrote of the human power to imagine both good and evil:

Though all the crannies of the world
we filled
with Elves and Goblins, though we dared
to build
Gods and their houses out of dark
and light
and sowed the seed of dragons, 'twas
our right
(used or misused). The right has
not decayed.
We make still by the law in which
we're made.

Inspired by his friend's invention of Middle-Earth with its complex geography, history, and languages, eventually Lewis eagerly exercised his own "right to subcreate" the land of Narnia. Lewis, like Tolkien, became convinced that, through story, the real world becomes a more magical place, full of meaning. We see its real pattern and color in a fresh way—a renewed view of reality in all its dimensions. This applies to individual realities like hills, rivers, and stones, as well as to the cosmic—the depths of space and time itself. The successful creator of fairy story, Tolkien wrote, "makes a Secondary World which your mind can enter. Inside it, what he relates is 'true': it accords with the laws of that world."

In subcreating, the imagination employs both subconscious and conscious resources of the mind. Tolkien thought this especially true with regard to language, which seemed to him (as it did to Barfield) intimately connected to the whole person, not just to the mind. Subcreation allows powerful archetypes and universal themes to become part of artwork; something abstract in thought becomes particular and definite in the invented world.

Universal truths, especially, take form as myths while retaining truths. Successful fairy story also offers consolation, leading to joy, as grace given from beyond the world is tasted. Tolkien characteristically wrote that "all tales may come true" because of the subcreative link between human and divine making.

Not only did Tolkien see the craft of the storyteller as a gift and a blessing, but also all skilled "making" when used for good, whether the skillful hands and eyes are those of humans, dwarves, or elves. Tolkien thus celebrated the Hobbit Sam Gamgee's ability as a gardener and a forester as well as a storyteller.

As Frodo tells Sam in *The Lord of the Rings*' concluding chapter: "Your hands and your wits will be needed everywhere. You will be the Mayor, of course, as long as you want to be, and the most famous gardener in history; and you will read things out of the Red Book, and keep alive the memory of the age that is gone, so that people will remember the Great Danger and so love their beloved land all the more. And that will keep you as busy and as happy as anyone can be, as long as your part of the Story goes on."
—*Colin Duriez*

DOVE OF HOLY SPIRIT, ST. PETER'S BASILICA—LISA JOHNSTON

The poetic vision of a connected world

Charles Williams's difficult works tell of self-giving love and mystical union

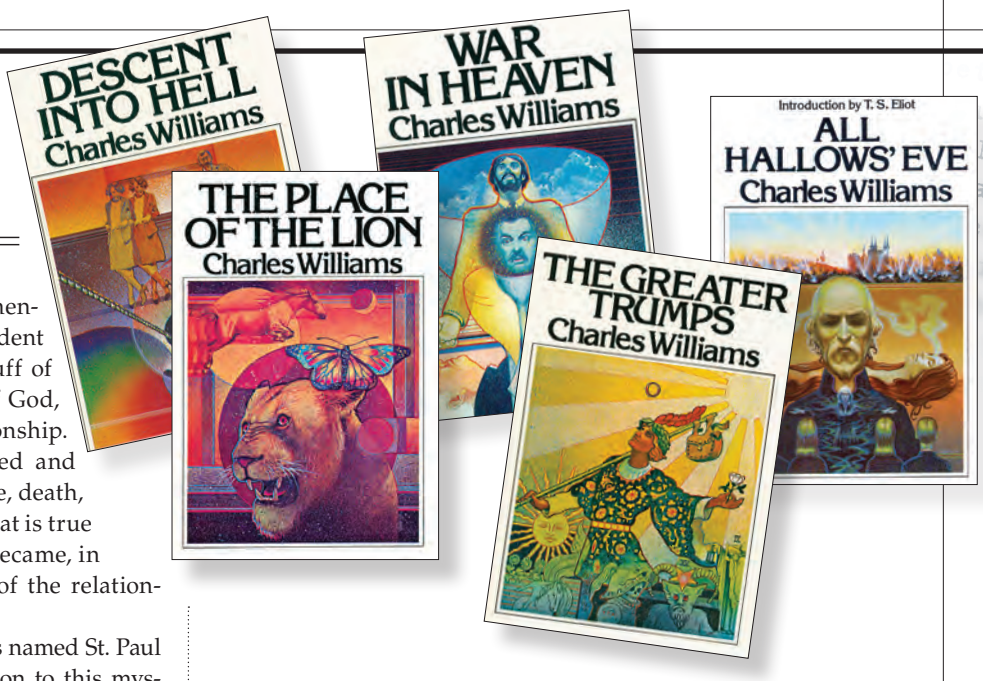
BRIAN HORNE

IN 1939 a book appeared under the title *The Descent of the Dove*. It was by Charles Williams, and it was a history of the Christian Church. But it was a history like no other history. Dedicated to "The Companions of the Co-inherence," it began with the cryptic motto "This also is Thou; neither is this Thou." Williams claimed to be ignorant of its source but commented provocatively: "As a maxim for living it is indispensable and it—or its reversal—summarizes the history of the Christian Church."

The Descent of the Dove offers a unique perspective, not simply because of its mysterious motto but also because it was written by a poet. Poetry was Charles Williams's first and greatest love, a compelling and defining presence throughout his life in whatever genre he expressed himself: fiction, drama, biography, theology, history. The headstone of his grave in Oxford bears the simple inscription "Charles Walter Stansby Williams 1886–1945 Poet Under the Mercy." To readers not alert to poetry's demands of special attentiveness and imaginative alertness, his writing often seems opaque and even puzzling.

Williams was not a scholar like his friends C. S. Lewis and Dorothy L. Sayers. He was most decidedly a man of ideas and profound intellectual convictions, but he expressed his ideas very differently than they did. In Lewis and Sayers we find nonfiction that presents clear, direct philosophical or theological argument. Williams's prose strikes us as dense, paradoxical, full of allusions and elusive ideas.

One of the most central of those ideas is what he called "co-inherence" a profound interdependence



THE DESCENT OF THE SPIRIT From novels (*right*) to poetry to plays, Williams explored human and divine relationships and the descent of the Spirit (*left*)..

that Williams thought was a fundamental fact of existence. Our interdependent life forms the reality behind the stuff of creation and is a defining quality of God, who as a Trinity exists in relationship. But it was most gloriously displayed and brought to perfection in the birth, life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is true of the inner life of the Holy Trinity became, in the Incarnation, the ultimate form of the relationship between God and humanity.

In *The Descent of the Dove,* Williams named St. Paul as the first Christian to give expression to this mystery, fastening on the statement "Bear ye one another's burdens" (Gal. 6:2). Williams commented, "In such words there was defined a new state of being. A state of redemption, of co-inherence, made by divine substitution, 'He in us and we in Him.'"

"ANOTHER WILL BE IN ME"

Over and over again throughout the book, Williams gave intense and delighted scrutiny to events which demonstrate the truth of "He in us and we in Him," whether they form part of more traditional church histories or not. An apparently obscure, unimportant person or occurrence opens up a window on deep mysteries of our being.

For example, as he surveyed Christianity's second and third centuries—a time of huge personalities, spectacular martyrdoms, and the production of some of the greatest works of Christian literature—Williams focused on the relatively unknown figure of Felicitas, an African slave-girl imprisoned in Carthage for her faith. Felicitas is most often remembered as the slave of Perpetua, her more famous mistress and fellow martyr (for more on Perpetua and Felicitas, see issues 105 and 109 of *Christian History*).

Yet Williams saw Felicitas's death as one of the most significant events in the history of the church because of one single utterance. As she faced death she cried out: "Another will be in me who will suffer for me as I shall suffer for him."

This, for Williams, epitomized what is meant by Christian co-inherence and reached deeply into the mystery of creation and redemption. The retort of the slave-girl to her jailers' mockery told of mystical union and exchange with Christ and of the corporate community felt by so many martyrs in the early church—which led them to believe their own suffering and death had value and reconciling power in the lives of others.

These motifs appear over and over again in different guises from the beginning to the end of Williams's creative life, in poems, essays, plays, theological studies, biographies—all products of an extraordinarily unified sensibility, a creative imagination with a strikingly original vision of the meaning of life and death, the world, and God.

Dorothy Sayers made this very point about her friend's writings: "[Something] which in one of the novels or the plays may seem merely entertaining, romantic, or fantastical" turns out to be, underneath, "some profound and challenging verity, which in [Williams's] theological books is submitted to the analysis of the intellect." The opposite is true as well. Theological truths from his denser works take form and action even in those books readers are most likely to treat as entertainment: his novels.

In the last two decades of his life, Williams wrote seven novels, now the most popular of all his creations despite the fact that he personally did not regard them as his most important achievement. They have been called "supernatural thrillers," but the description hardly does justice to their profound thought and imaginative range.

Williams always maintained that ordinary, mundane lives and actions are connected to and directed toward supernatural ends. He saw the eternal in the everyday, and in most of his novels dramatically portrayed moments when the familiar existence of the material world dissolves—revealing another kind of experience that assumes shapes of both wonder and horror. The events are dramatic, the pace is fast, the mysteries are intriguing, and the purpose is serious.

But in his last two novels, *Descent Into Hell* and *All Hallows Eve*, the supernatural is no longer represented by startling, theatrical interventions, but is woven much more unobtrusively into ordinary, natural life. Loving

DRAWING ON THE STRENGTH OF ANOTHER *Right:* Felicitas's declaration of co-inherence with Christ profoundly influenced Williams's thought.

POET IN A THREE-PIECE SUIT *Below:* Williams's friends described him as having a magnetic, compelling personality.

exchange and substitution now assume center stage as the means by which co-inherence is manifested and becomes real.

The English poet John Heath-Stubbs once called Williams's last works "dark and difficult books, in which the sense of evil has become oppressive, and the characters pass across frontiers which separate the living and the dead." It is true that they are dark and difficult and that the sense of evil is real; also that the characters pass through space and time. But they are realistic portrayals both of the human capacity for self-delusion and destruction and its capacity for acts of redemptive love.

Descent Into Hell contains one of literature's most convincing—and terrifying—descriptions of the collapse into damnation (in the figure of the historian Lawrence Wentworth). But it also contains a sublime example of the courage of substituted love, Pauline Anstruther. Anstruther, a bewildered, rather frightened young woman, accomplishes the redemption of another by the offering of herself and in so doing finds her own release from fear and pain. Astonishingly, the one she releases is a long-dead ancestor; the force of love moves down time, and the pattern of co-inherent love knows no boundaries.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Boundaries, their presence and absence, also form the heart of Williams's last novel. On the first page of *All Hallows Eve*, we discover that the central character is dead—the young wife Lester Furnival, who has just been killed in an air raid on London. This audacious move gives Williams the means of exploring boundaries between the living and the dead, the natural and the supernatural, the physical and the metaphysical. In this novel two of the four central characters are living, two are dead. Three persons attain—by a process of painful, but ultimately joyful,

purification—to a state of redemption; one refuses the offered grace.

Lester Furnival, like Pauline Anstruther, offers herself in an act of love and finds that in her own agony she is sustained by another—here quite explicitly by Christ. She has to learn another lesson too: the meaning of "This also is Thou; neither is this Thou." At the border of earth and heaven, she learns that her love for her husband, Richard, deep and real though it has been, is not sufficient. The horizon of heaven places that love in a new perspective. At the close of the novel, rain falls, the quiet, cleansing rain of purgation; symbolizing both loss and gain: the repossession of the beloved "other" (Richard) in a new way. It is the paradox at the heart of the Christian Gospel (Matt. 10:39).

Such a paradox motivated the Companions of the Co-inherence to whom Williams dedicated *The Descent of the Dove*. He was always reluctant to set up

any kind of society or order dedicated to his views, but under pressure from his friends, he agreed to do so just as the dark clouds of World War II were gathering. It was never a formally constituted society with office holders or meetings. In formulating its principles, he began by stating: "The Order has no constitution except in its members." It consisted entirely of persons (the Companions), often unknown to one another, who discovered in his writings certain guides for living out the Christian life.

The Companions' principles were each paired with a quotation from the Bible or Christian literature. One read: "[The Order] recommends therefore the study, on the contemplative side, of the Co-inherence of the Holy and Blessed Trinity, of the Two natures in the single person, of the Mother and Son, of the communicated Eucharist, and of the whole catholic Church. As it was said: *figlia et tuo figlio* ['daughter of your son,' a phrase from Dante about the Virgin Mary]. And on the active side, of methods of exchange, in the State, in all forms of love, and in all natural things, such as child-birth. As it was said: *Bear ye one another's burdens*."

CITY OF GOD Williams often described Christianity through images of friendship and exchange in human cities. In his final novel, characters both living and dead relate to one another in the streets of London.

These principles encapsulated what Williams believed: co-inherence expressed in the practice of a love that was a process of substitution and exchange; a gospel brought to life by the gifts and vision of a man for whom the poetic imagination was the surest way of laying hold on the truth.

Brian Horne is chairman and librarian of the Charles Williams Society and author of Charles Williams: A Celebration.

Was the oddest Inkling the key Inkling?

Surely not. That palm must go to Lewis or Tolkien. But in an odd sense, it was often his agitated intellect, wildly fecund imagination, and sheer physical energy that moved things along. It was Williams, for instance, who rushed in and out of the room at The Eagle and Child fetching ale for everyone. His electric mind kept things humming, though often when he read from his works, he left the assembled company scratching their heads.

Tolkien was not especially fond of Williams. He maintained that he never knew what Williams was "on" about. But when Williams died suddenly, Tolkien had a Mass said for him, and himself acted as server to the priest, a noble tribute.

When he lectured, Williams would pop about, sitting on the edge of the desk with legs all tangled up, then jumping off, jingling coins in his pocket, and generally keeping things stirred up. He did not have much in the way of looks, but women were magnetically attracted to him, and he had some more-than-peculiar associations (see his *Letters to Lalage*). However, after almost 50 years of reading Williams and everything about him, I am convinced he went to his grave faithful in all senses to his wife, Florence, whom he had (typically) named "Michal"—after Saul's daughter. Why? Because he was Williams.

Williams never stopped scribbling. He wrote feverishly, on the backs of envelopes, on tickets, and on any odd slips of paper he could put his hands on. W. H. Auden said that, when he first tried to read Williams's poetry, he couldn't make head or tail of it, but he read Williams's quirky history of the church [*The Descent of the Dove*] once every year.

Williams flitted about the edges of the Roman Catholic Church like a moth, at least in his writings; but he lived and died an Anglican. He loved to draw on the sumptuousness of Catholicism for his imagery: terms like Our Blessed Lord, Our Lady, and the Mass. He may have had early associations with the Rosicrucians and certainly used arcane and mystical objects frequently. He never called Jesus Jesus: it is Messias, usually. And God comes on stage as "The Mercy" or "The Omnipotence."

Williams's whole theme, in all of his work, is courtesy—that is, the courtesies fitting for citizens of the City of God. *Caritas*. My life for yours. Exchange and Substitution that pours down from the mysteries of the Most Holy Trinity, through the cross, to you lending me a hand with my grocery bags—or refusing to do so. Heaven vs. hell, really.

Thomas Howard is the author of The Novels of Charles Williams. *This article is adapted from* CH *78.*

LONDON SKYLINE—BIG STOCK PHOTOS

The forgotten Inkling

Owen Barfield's insistence on the imagination as a road to truth profoundly changed his friends—and through them, us

EDWIN WOODRUFF TAIT

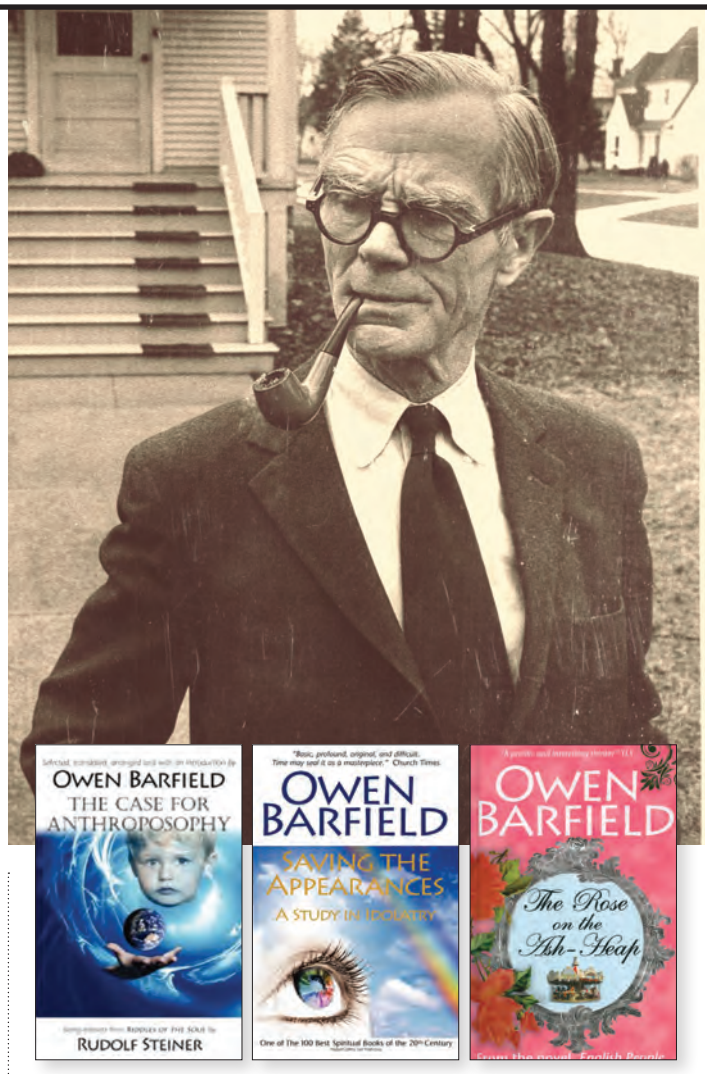
THE GRACIOUS ENGLISH BOOKSTORE clerk had not heard of Owen Barfield. His early, groundbreaking work of literary criticism, *Poetic Diction*, didn't ring any bells. Nor did his masterpiece, *Saving the Appearances*. I didn't mention his children's fantasy, *The Silver Trumpet,* or his whimsical autobiographical novel, *This Ever Diverse Pair,* dividing the two sides of his life into two separate individuals—stolid lawyer Burden and creative dreamer Burgeon. Instead I hazarded: "He was a friend of C. S. Lewis." Her face lit up. "Oh! Was he an Inkling?"

SECOND FRIEND AND MAKER OF MYTH

Barfield was not only *an* Inkling, but arguably one of the Inklings who most formed Lewis's thought. For years before his conversion, Lewis had prided himself on his rationality, his resistance to the lure of myth and the supernatural. Such things were nice in poetry, and poetry was one of his greatest pleasures, but he thought they were, as he remarked to Tolkien early in their friendship, "lies breathed through silver." But in a fateful conversation on Addison's Walk, Tolkien convinced Lewis that myth connected human beings to divine truth—a memory, however corrupted, of the union with God that we had before the fall.

But Tolkien was not alone in pushing Lewis toward a more robust understanding of the imagination. Lewis met Owen Barfield in 1919 while they were fellow undergraduates at Oxford. He later wrote of him in *Surprised by Joy*: "The Second Friend is the man who disagrees with you about everything. . . . Of course he shares your interests; otherwise he would not become your friend at all. But he has approached them all at a different angle. He has read all the right books but has got the wrong thing out of every one. . . . You go at it, hammer and tongs, far into the night . . . or walking through fine country that neither gives a glance to, each learning the weight of the other's punches, and often more like mutually respectful enemies than friends."

During most of the 1920s, while living near Oxford, Barfield worked on *Poetic Diction* (1928), his first major book. There he argued that poetry recalls an earlier stage in human linguistic development when ideas were bound up with the words that conveyed them. For instance, in ancient Hebrew the word *ruach* could mean "breath," "wind," or "spirit." Barfield believed that ancient people would not have distinguished these as different possible meanings, but would have experienced them as one unified thing. Words used in poetry



FOUR FRIENDS Barfield (*far left*) with C. S. Lewis and Cecil and Daphne Harwood (*left to right*). Despite his dislike of anthroposophy, Lewis thought adopting it had made Daphne a nicer person.

DEEP IN THOUGHT *Right:* Barfield's writings ranged from novels to philosophy and literary criticism.

unite the levels of meaning that we normally keep apart in "prosaic" modern speech.

In the early 1920s, Barfield also encountered the thought of Austrian philosopher and mystic Rudolf Steiner, founder of a movement known as "anthroposophy" which believes that humans had once intuitively known the spiritual world. By 1924 he was a full-fledged member of the Anthroposophical Society. (This was one of the things he and Lewis fought about as they walked over English hills and dales.) Barfield came to see a connection between Steiner's concepts and his own conclusions about the unity between literal and metaphorical language in ancient poetry. Fellow friend and former Oxford classmate Cecil Harwood embraced the movement as well.

"SILLY MEDIEVALS"

Lewis was, at the time, still an atheist and horrified by the fact that two good friends believed what he regarded as a silly "medieval" superstition, with "gods, spirits, afterlife and pre-existence, initiates, occult knowledge, meditation."

But Lewis also respected Barfield's and Harwood's intellects and moral characters. Furthermore, he respected Barfield as an intellectual foil. During the 1920s they engaged in what Lewis called the "Great War"—a philosophical debate wherein Lewis defended "absolute idealism," a philosophy popular at that period in Britain although shortly to fall out of favor. According to it, one absolute Reality consists of all experience. Our limited experience of ourselves as separate is illusory. We are, objectively, part of the one Reality, but we don't have direct access to it: no personal relationships, with God or anyone else.

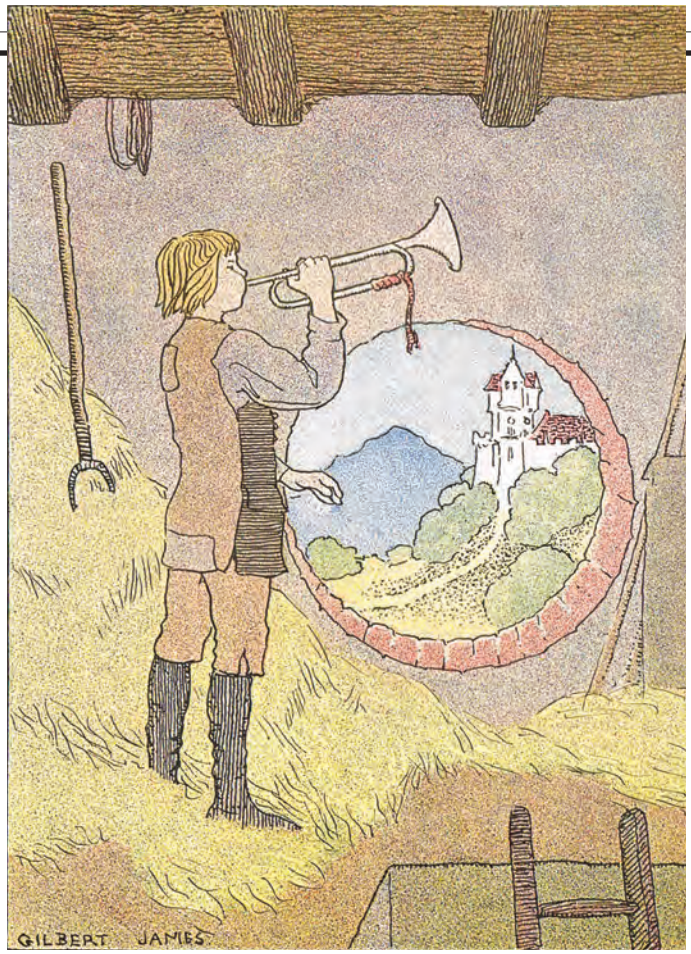
Lewis was terrified by the possibility of delusion and insanity inherent in a claim to have had direct supernatural experiences. He did not object to the idea that the imagination catches a glimpse of ultimate Reality, but he insisted that this glimpse can't be expressed in words. On the one hand, Lewis saw the Absolute, which can only be perceived briefly through mystical experience. On the other he saw everyday material reality. The terms of the one can never be used to describe the other.

But Barfield rejected this dichotomy—and indeed all dichotomies. He believed that imagination not only *perceives* truth but actually *creates* it: our very experiences of the physical world results from the mind's interaction with spiritual reality. Thus we do not give "meaning" to an objective outside world. Meaning *is* truth.

In addition to arguing for the imagination, Barfield also argued for the past's wisdom. Lewis noted after his conversion that he began the "Great War" under the influence of "chronological snobbery," regarding past ages as inferior. Barfield, according to Lewis, cured him of this superior attitude.

Barfield later wondered if he had done the job too thoroughly, criticizing Lewis's often uncritical praise of the past in his mature work. Barfield believed that truth is an interaction between our minds and whatever is "outside" or "beyond" our minds; thus he believed it changes and grows.

One of Lewis's later works, *The Discarded Image*, a loving and detailed examination of the medieval model of the universe, bears witness to what Lewis had learned from Barfield. Yet at the end, Lewis qualified his admiration by saying that, no matter how much the medieval model might delight us as it delighted our ancestors, "it was not true." The dichotomy Barfield had sought to overcome in the Great War was still there: delight is one thing, truth another.



TOOT! *Left:* Tolkien's children loved Barfield's *The Silver Trumpet*, loaned to them by Lewis.

THE LAST INKLING *Below:* Barfield (with Clyde Kilby, *right*) visited the Wade Center at Wheaton College several times; it holds many of his unpublished writings.

How far Lewis's orthodox Christianity led him to remain cold to some of Barfield's odder ideas is not clear. Lewis, in one of his relatively rare comments on anthroposophy after his conversion, said that his primary concern was that anthroposophists do not really believe in "God the Father Almighty." Barfield, for his part, accused Lewis of stressing the Father over the Son. Barfield believed in the Trinity, but he interpreted it in terms that often sounded more like impersonal forces than a traditional Christian understanding.

WHO CHANGED WHOM?

After his conversion, Lewis refused to continue his debate with Barfield about the nature of knowledge, much to Barfield's frustration. But Lewis's later writings show an appreciation of Barfield's insights on what is wrong with treating the physical world as a "dead thing." *The Abolition of Man* (Barfield's favorite among Lewis's writings) takes aim at the division between "objective" and "subjective" that leads people to say that only physical things are real, while beauty and truth and moral values are purely "subjective." Lewis even, in that book, expressed a good word for Steiner. And in *Surprised by Joy* he said of his lifelong Second Friend: "I think he changed me a good deal more than I him."

Lewis's later fiction is often seen as evidence that he gave the imagination a greater role: the magnificent Narnian Chronicles as well as the Space Trilogy and *Till We Have Faces*. But in Barfield's opinion, there always remained a fundamental difference between them. He characterized Lewis's position as being like a Victorian man who put women on a pedestal of idealized romantic love, not wanting them "sullied" by contact with mundane reality. "Lewis was in love with the imagination," Barfield said. "But I wanted to marry it."

Deeply influenced by Romantic poetry of the early nineteenth century, Barfield embraced anthroposophy because it seemed, in his words, "Romanticism come of age." In particular he identified with Samuel Taylor Coleridge's belief that true imagination is creative—bringing new meaning into existence.

In *Saving the Appearances* (1957) Barfield argued that everything we know, including physical objects such as trees, comes from a collaboration between our senses and external reality. Color, shape, size, texture—all of these things depend on our senses. There is no "green" apart from eyes that can perceive color. Scientists describe physical reality in terms of atoms and particles. But this isn't what we experience when we see or hear or touch a tree.

According to Barfield ancient people lived in a state of "original participation," conscious that the things they perceived have a life of their own—something "on the other side" of the tree communicating with them. In the modern world, however, people experience the world outside themselves as a world of dead "things." Both Greek philosophy and the Old Testament encouraged this, but the real turn to separation, for Barfield, began with the Protestant Reformation and the scientific revolution. Together they created a material world no longer filled with spiritual forces, but rather with things that can be understood, quantified, and controlled.

A DELIGHTFUL MODEL *Right:* Did medieval people create their model of the universe by believing in it?

"TWO SOULS, ALAS, ARE DWELLING IN MY BREAST" *Below:* Barfield's bookplate expresses his own struggles through this quote from Goethe.

But it was also a world where the divine Logos had become incarnate in Jesus of Nazareth, profoundly changing the nature of human history and beginning a new kind of participation. Through Jesus, human beings can participate in reality in a more conscious, individual way. As Barfield saw it, we now face the task of growing into the new kind of participation made possible by Jesus—one in which the heart and mind are fired by the light of Christ. This requires not only moral transformation but also a new way of looking at the world; one in which the imagination plays a central role.

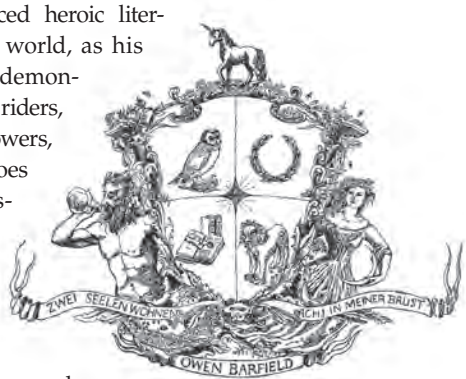
LAWYER AND PHILOSOPHER

Saving the Appearances was one of the few books Barfield managed to write during the three decades when he worked as a lawyer in his family's London firm. After his 1960s retirement, he became more active as a writer and enjoyed increasing fame (particularly in the United States) and a growing reputation as a philosopher who challenged modern materialism and offered creative answers.

In many ways Tolkien, though never personally as close to Barfield as Lewis, reflected Barfield's insights most fully. Barfield *theorized* about the imagination a great deal, but his own fiction was often stilted and didactic.

As a philologist (scholar of language), Tolkien took an interest in Barfield's theories in *Poetic Diction*. He once told Lewis that Barfield's ideas had permanently altered how he taught the history of language. And the sense so many have that Tolkien's imagined world is real gives substance to Barfield's claims about the imagination's creative role.

Much of Tolkien's writing works from hints, usually linguistic, creating some kind of puzzle requiring explanation. For instance, Anglo-Saxon has a lot of words implying horse-centered culture, even though historical Anglo-Saxons fought mostly on foot. From these hints came the entire culture of Rohan in *The Lord of the Rings*. Using precisely the kind of complex metaphors that Barfield studied in *Poetic Diction*, Tolkien created a world often seeming more real than the "real world." Even the archaic language for which Tolkien was criticized serves, according to Barfield's theories, to create a "gap" between the story and the prosaic associations modern readers bring to the text.



Tolkien reintroduced heroic literature to the modern world, as his legion of imitators demonstrates. Hooded black riders, dark lords in dark towers, cheerful and naive heroes of small stature, mysterious elves who live in forests—these things have passed into the consciousness of the modern world. To some degree Tolkien changed how we see the world, and by doing so changed the world; insofar as Barfield helped to shape Tolkien's work, this may be Barfield's most lasting legacy. But if Barfield's understanding of our challenges has any validity, we need a legion of Tolkiens and Lewises to reshape reality by the fire of their imaginations.

So Lewis recognized when he dedicated *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* to Barfield's daughter, Lucy: "I wrote this story for you, but when I began it I had not realized that girls grow quicker than books. As a result you are already too old for fairy tales, and by the time it is printed and bound you will be older still. But some day you will be old enough to start reading fairy tales again." All seven sages would have agreed that when the world grows old enough, the fairy tales need to be waiting.

Edwin Woodruff Tait is a contributing editor at Christian History. *Portions of this article appeared in* CH *issue 78.*

FLAMMARION—*WIKIPEDIA*
BOOKPLATE—WITH PERMISSION OF THE OWEN BARFIELD LITERARY ESTATE

Recommended resources

With seven influential authors and scores of books by and about them, where should one begin? Here are suggestions compiled by our editors, contributors, and the Wade Center. Visit the Wade Center's website (www.wheaton.edu/wadecenter) for a complete list and check out its journal, SEVEN: An Anglo-American Literary Review, *for further resources.*

GEORGE MACDONALD

• **Begin with:** *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872); *The Princess and Curdie* (1883); *The Wise Woman* (1875); *Phantastes* (1858); *Sir Gibbie* (1879); *Diary of an Old Soul* (1897); *Malcolm* (1875); *George MacDonald: An Anthology* (ed. C. S. Lewis)

• **You might also like:** *The Light Princess and Other Stories* (1890); *At The Back of the North Wind* (1871); *What's Mine's Mine* (1886); *Lilith* (1895); *Poetical Works of George MacDonald* (1893); *George MacDonald in the Pulpit* (ed. Joseph Flynn and David Edwards)

• **Selected studies:** Greville MacDonald, *George MacDonald and His Wife* (introduction by G. K. Chesterton); Rolland Hein, *George MacDonald, Victorian Mythmaker*; William Raeper, *George MacDonald*; Kirstin Jeffrey Johnson, *Storykeeper;* Kerry Dearborn, *The Baptized Imagination*

• **Journals:** *North Wind, Wingfold*

• **Web:** The Golden Key; George MacDonald Informational Web; Father of the Inklings; North Wind

G. K. CHESTERTON

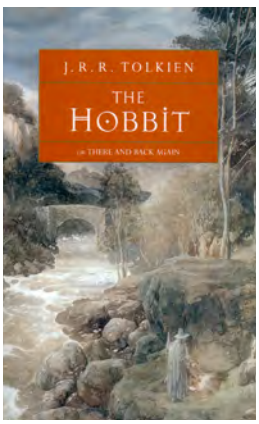
• **Begin with:** *Orthodoxy* (1908); *The Everlasting Man* (1925); the Father Brown mystery series, and *Autobiography* (1936); *The Man Who Was Thursday* (1908); *Collected Poems of G. K. Chesterton* (1933)

• **You might also like:** *The Napoleon of Notting Hill* (1904); *The Club of Queer Trades* (1905); *What's Wrong with the World* (1910); *Heretics* (1905); *The Ball and the Cross* (1909); *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1922); *St. Francis of Assisi* (1924)

• **Selected studies:** Maisie Ward, *G. K. Chesterton*; Ian Ker, *G. K. Chesterton*; Ralph Wood, *Chesterton: The Nightmare Goodness of God;* Dale Ahlquist, *G. K. Chesterton, Apostle of Common Sense*

• **Journals:** *Gilbert, The Chesterton Review*

• **Web:** American Chesterton Society; GKC Institute for Faith and Culture; G.K. Chesterton Library



J. R. R. TOLKIEN

• **Begin with:** *The Hobbit* (1937); *The Lord of the Rings* (1954–55); *Tree and Leaf* (1964); *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays* (1983); *The Adventures of Tom Bombadil* (1962); *Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien* (1981); *The Father Christmas Letters* (1976)

• **You might also like:** *Farmer Giles of Ham* (1949); *Smith of Wootton Major* (1967); *The Silmarillion* (1977); *Pictures by J. R. R. Tolkien* (1992); *Unfinished Tales* (1980); and the History of Middle-earth series (1983–1986)

• **Selected studies:** Humphrey Carpenter, *Tolkien;* Wayne Hammond and Christina Scull, *J. R. R. Tolkien, Artist and Illustrator* and the LOTR *Reader's Companion*; T. A. Shippey, *The Road to Middle-earth* and *J. R. R. Tolkien, Author of the Century*; Matthew Dickerson and Jonathan Evans, *Ents, Elves, and Eriador*; Neil Isaacs and Rose Zimbardo, *Understanding The Lord of the Rings*; Ralph Wood, *The Gospel According to Tolkien*

• **Journals:** *Amon Hen, Mallorn, Tolkien Studies, Mythlore, Journal of Inklings Studies*

• **Web:** The Tolkien Society; Tolkien Estate; Encyclopedia of Arda; The One Ring; Tolkien Gateway

C. S. LEWIS

• **Begin with:** The Chronicles of Narnia (1950–1956); *The Screwtape Letters* (1942); *The Great Divorce* (1945); *Mere Christianity* (1952); *Surprised by Joy* (1955); *The Abolition of Man* (1943); *A Grief Observed* (1961)

• **You might also like:** The Space Trilogy (1938–1945); *Miracles* (1960); *Till We Have Faces* (1956); *Letters to Malcolm* (1963); *The Discarded Image* (1964); essay collections *God in the Dock, The Weight of Glory,* and *The World's Last Night*; *Collected Letters* vols. 1–3

• **Selected studies:** James Como, *Remembering C. S. Lewis*; Peter Schakel, *The Way into Narnia*; Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Complete Guide to His Life and Works*; George Sayer, *Jack*; Alan Jacobs, *The Narnian*; Alister

McGrath, *C. S. Lewis*; Michael Ward, *Planet Narnia* and *The Cambridge Companion to C. S. Lewis*; Matthew Dickerson and David O'Hara, *Narnia and the Fields of Arbol*; Lyle Dorsett, *Seeking the Secret Place*; David Downing, *Into the Wardrobe*, *Into the Region of Awe*, and *Planets in Peril*; Crystal Downing, *How Postmodernism Serves (My) Faith*

• **Journals**: *Bulletin of the New York CSL Society*; *The Lamp-Post*; *Mythlore*; *Journal of Inklings Studies*

• **Videos from Vision Video**: *Shadowlands*

• **Web:** CSLewis.com, maintained by HarperCollins (which also runs Narnia .com); Into the Wardrobe; C. S. Lewis Web; C. S. Lewis Foundation; C.S. Lewis Institute

DOROTHY L. SAYERS

• **Begin with**: Lord Peter Wimsey mysteries (1923–1937); *Creed or Chaos?* (1940); *The Mind of the Maker* (1941); *The Man Born to Be King* (1943)

• **You might also like:** Sayers's translation of the *Divine Comedy* by Dante (1949–1962); *Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers* (vols. 1–5)

• **Selected studies**: Christopher Dean, ed., *Studies in Sayers* and *Further Studies in Sayers*; Crystal Downing, *Writing Performances*; Barbara Reynolds, *Dorothy L. Sayers* and *The Passionate Intellect*; James Brabazon, *Dorothy L. Sayers*

• **Journals**: *Sidelights on Sayers*

• **Web:** Dorothy L. Sayers Society

CHARLES WILLIAMS

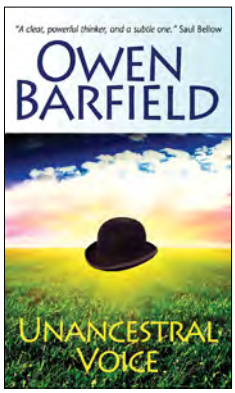
• **Begin with:** *War in Heaven* (1933); *Many Dimensions* (1931); *The Place of the Lion* (1931); *The Greater Trumps* (1932); *The Descent of the Dove* (1931); *He Came Down from Heaven* (1931); *Collected Plays* (1945); *The Forgiveness of Sins* (1942)

• **You might also like:** *Descent Into Hell* (1937); *All Hallows' Eve* (1945); *The Figure of Beatrice* (1931); *The Image of the City* (1945); *Taliessin through Logres, The Region of the Summer Stars,* and *Arthurian Torso* (1945, ed. by C. S. Lewis); *Outlines of Romantic Theology* (1930)

• **Selected studies**: Thomas Howard, *The Novels of Charles Williams*; Anne Ridler, ed., *The Taliessin Poems of Charles Williams*; Glen Cavaliero, *Charles Williams, Poet of Theology*; Alice Mary Hadfield, *Charles Williams;* Brian Horne, *Charles Williams: A Celebration*

• **Journals**: *The Charles Williams Quarterly*; *Mythlore*; *Journal of Inklings Studies*

• **Web:** The Charles Williams Society, The Oddest Inkling



OWEN BARFIELD

• **Begin with:** *Worlds Apart* (1963); *Unancestral Voice* (1965); *Saving the Appearances* (1957); *A Barfield Reader*

• **You might also like:** *The Silver Trumpet* (1925); *History in English Words* (1926); *Poetic Diction* (1928); *Romanticism Comes of Age* (1944); *This Ever Diverse Pair* (1950); *The Rediscovery of Meaning and Other Essays* (1977)

• **Selected studies**: Astrid Diener, *The Role of Imagination in Culture and Society*; Jacob Sherman, *An Ever Diverse Pair* (on Barfield and Teilhard de Chardin); G. B. Tennyson, *Man and Meaning* (video documentary)

• **Journals**: *Mythlore*; *Journal of Inklings Studies*

• **Web:** Owen Barfield Literary Estate; Owen Barfield World Wide Web; Owen Barfield Society

SEVEN SAGES IN COMMUNITY

• Owen Barfield, *Owen Barfield on C. S. Lewis*

• Humphrey Carpenter, *The Inklings*

• Colin Duriez, *C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien: The Gift of Friendship* and *The Inklings Handbook*

• Verlyn Flieger, *Splintered Light*

• Diana Pavlac Glyer, *The Company They Keep: C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien as Writers in Community*

• Rolland Hein, *Christian Mythmakers: C. S. Lewis, Madeleine L'Engle, J. R. R. Tolkien, G. K. Chesterton, and Others*

• Mark Hillegas, *Shadows of Imagination: The Fantasies of C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, and Charles Williams*

• Clyde S. Kilby and Marjorie Lamp Mead, *Brothers and Friends* (Warren Lewis's diary)

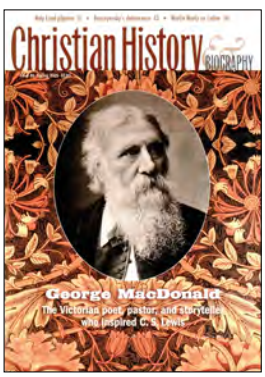
• C. S. Lewis, ed., *Essays Presented to Charles Williams,* (includes essays by Sayers, Tolkien, and Barfield in addition to a memoir of Williams by Lewis)

• Michael MacDonald, *G. K. Chesterton and C. S. Lewis: The Riddle of Joy*

• Jeff McGinnis, *Shadows and Chivalry: C. S. Lewis and George MacDonald on Suffering, Evil and Goodness*

• Joseph Pearce, *Literary Converts*

• Carol and Philip Zaleski, *The Fellowship: The Literary Lives of the Inklings: J. R. R. Tolkien, C. S. Lewis, Owen Barfield, Charles Williams*



CHRISTIAN HISTORY MAGAZINES

The sages have been covered in these past issues of *CH* magazine: 7, 65, 75, 78, 86, and 88. Several of these issues are available to purchase and all are available to read at www.christianhistorymagazine.org.

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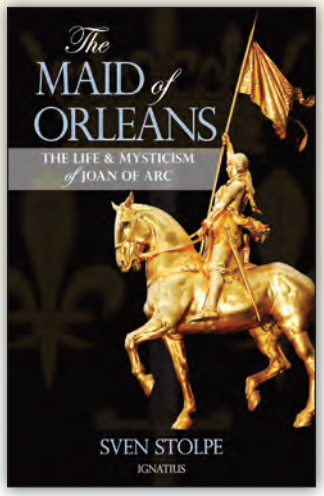
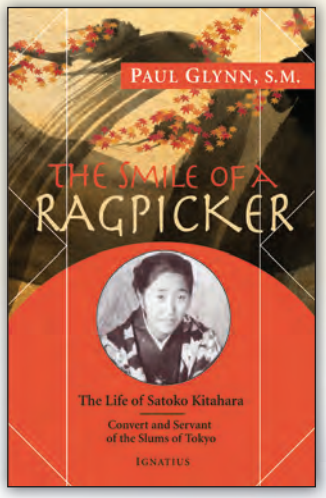
Spiritual & Literary Giants





♦ The Maid of Orleans

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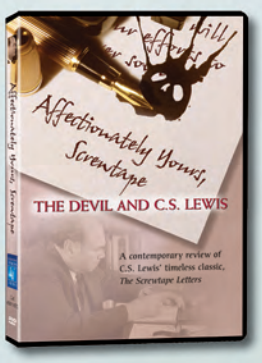

The Screwtape Letters, a thin volume of imaginative letters between two devils, has given millions of readers insight into conquering everyday spiritual struggles. Join us as we explore the biblical, historical, and cultural depictions of Satan and hell, and gain a deeper understanding of the nature of temptation and redemption. Whether you're a devoted C.S. Lewis fan or just reading his work for the first time, you're sure to develop a new appreciation for *The Screwtape Letters* through this modern look at his timeless classic. This DVD can be viewed as a documentary or as a five-part study for small groups. Documentary, 52 minutes.

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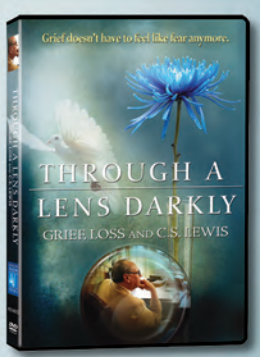

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