

I recently went down a deep rabbit hole in search of more intellectual and literary treasure among Christian writers such as C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, and G.K. Chesterton, and have been reading quite a bit on George MacDonald, who influenced all three of them; whom we have to thank for igniting Lewis' spiritual and fictional imagination; and without whose books the Narnia series probably would not exist. I've also been reading about his book 'Phantastes' (which I still have yet to actually read - only summaries at this point), which seems to have directly influenced C.S. Lewis and has some elements similar to his friend Lewis Carroll's "Alice in Wonderland" - except with more Christian symbolism/focus. A brief summary on MacDonald and his writings [can be found here](#) . In turn it appears MacDonald was influenced by a Scottish theologian and minister named Alexander John Scott who wrote an influential book called "Discourses" that sounds interesting. [Reviews of that book](#) that I found say this about A.J. Scott and his book:

*"George MacDonald regarded A. J. Scott as the greatest man he had ever known.... Scott's belief that creation is a sacred expression of the divine and his conviction that what is deepest in every human being is the image of God stood in stark contrast to the reigning Calvinism of 19th-century Scotland. 'Creation,' he said, 'is a transparency through which the light of God can be seen.'"*

Another writes:

*"Of the three discourses, I enjoyed "On Revelation" the most, I think. If you want to read an excellent, brief exposition on the variety of ways God reveals Himself to humanity -- you should look here. The man makes a mountain of sense, and you can definitely see hints of some of the things in him which impacted George MacDonald's thinking so greatly. I think, even, we can see in these discourses, especially "On Revelation", the philosophical foundation upon which MacDonald's meaning-rich fantasy -- and that of others after him -- was built. There is a pedagogical relation between Scott, MacDonald, G.K. Chesterton, J.R.R. Tolkien, and C.S. Lewis on the "mythopoeic" (a term coined by Tolkien and Lewis) method of conveying truth through the imagination, which makes a prototheoretical appearance in Scott's written teachings...*

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*In other words, I would consider "On Revelation" by A.J. Scott to be a sort of prequel to a chain of related essays by some of the fantasy genre's founding influences: MacDonald's "The Fantastic Imagination", Chesterton's "The Ethics of Elfland", Tolkien's "On Fairy-Stories", and Lewis's "Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What's To Be Said". Lewis was influenced in this regard by Tolkien, Chesterton, and MacDonald. Tolkien was influenced by Lewis,*

*Chesterton, and MacDonald. Chesterton (preceding both Lewis and Tolkien) was influenced by MacDonald. And MacDonald was influenced by A.J. Scott's teaching on ways of communicating truth: "revelation".*

I love discovering such a rich cornucopia of Christian writing (and the history of "who influenced who") that not only is theologically rich but is also creative, poetic, literate, sparks the imagination, and applies the God-given faculties of the mind to spark a deeper search and appreciation of God's truths in the readers' minds. I think that is why people like MacDonald, Chesterton, Tolkien, and Lewis are as influential and interesting to read as they are, because they combine erudition and a heart to share the truth of Jesus Christ with creative expression and a full engagement of hearts and minds through writing; whether through fictional device or no-nonsense examination of various topics (like Lewis' *Mere Christianity* or Chesterton's *Orthodoxy*).

So here's to discovering more rich literary treasures that profit the mind, spirit, and soul!

Soli Deo Gloria