

Digressio Express

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Highlights from the Classical World

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WELCOME TO *Digressio Express*, the quarterly newspaper of Roman Roads Press, and part of the Digressio family of periodical publications, which include Digressio Magazine, Digressio Podcast, and this new publication. This little newspaper will include articles for families and educators on classical education, homeschooling, pedagogy, worthy commonplace quotes and poetry, new book releases, and even a crossword puzzle. The mission of Roman Roads Press is to provide Christian families with tools to “inherit the Humanities.” May this publication be a delightful help to you and your family as you pursue that goal.

~ Daniel Foucachon,
CEO of Roman Roads Press

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THEMA

RECOVERING *the* DISCARDED IMAGE

Why Study the Ransom Trilogy?

by Christiana Hale

In 1936, two of the greatest authors of the twentieth century agreed to take on a challenge. This challenge remained incomplete, but it nevertheless led to the creation of one of the most complex and enchanting stories ever written. C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien, both scholars of the highest caliber and each a genius in his own right, were dissatisfied with the lack of the kinds of stories they both loved.¹ Lewis suggested that he take on the task of writing a “space-travel story” while Tolkien created a “time-travel story.” Tolkien never completed his end of the bargain and abandoned “The Lost Road,” a time-travel story intended to link his Middle-earth with our world.² Lewis, on the other hand, went beyond the call of duty. Between 1938 and 1945 Lewis completed not just one but three space-travel stories. The Ransom Trilogy, commonly and erroneously called the Space Trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, and *That Hideous Strength*), has both captivated and bewildered readers and critics alike since its publication.

Lewis is one of the most popular authors of the twentieth century. Read and beloved by Christians and non-Christians alike, his writings span an impressive range of subjects and genres, and even those who do not share his faith recognize his genius. His Narnia



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books have a place on the list of best-selling children’s novels to date and will, no doubt, continue to remain there for generations to come. There could be, and have been, hundreds of books written about Lewis, his life, and his writings. And yet there are surprisingly very few about this trilogy, which is arguably one of Lewis’s most complex works and the one that presents most clearly his love for a particular imaginative idea.

Among Lewis’s works the Ransom Trilogy lies somewhat hidden. Like a treasure mine lurking beneath a familiar backyard, many who love Lewis’s works are either unaware that it exists or number it among the unapproachables—a

story that is simply too strange and fantastical and, well, *weird* to really like. As someone who loves this series deeply, I still relate to those people. On a surface level, the trilogy bears the marks of a sci-fi adventure. But then there’s all those more philosophical passages, and there’s an awful lot of time spent just *talking* on *Perelandra*, and then Merlin (of all people!) shows up, and let us not get started on Mr. Bultitude . . . The Ransom Trilogy is a much-neglected and yet critically important part of the Lewis corpus. It is a distillation in novel form of one of his favorite subjects, a subject whose melody is woven into almost every other thing that Lewis ever wrote: the medieval conception of the cosmos.

1 J. R. R. Tolkien to Dora Marshal, March 3, 1955, in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1981), 209

2 Tolkien to Stanley Unwin, Oxford, February 18, 1938, in *The Letters of J.R.R. Tolkien*, 29.

Lewis's love for medieval literature and culture is no great secret. It was part of his job description. He held the position of chair of Medieval and Renaissance Literature at Magdalene College in Cambridge University from 1954 until 1963, just a few months before his death. Yet the presence of his love and passion for medieval literature throughout his nonacademic writings goes virtually unnoticed. But unless we understand the love that Lewis had for the medieval world and his efforts to reawaken respect and admiration for the medieval model of the cosmos in the modern mind, much of his writings will be misinterpreted and passed over as strange and unintelligible. And no work of Lewis's suffers more from this misinterpretation than his Ransom Trilogy. Where many people stumble through the trilogy feeling lost in a fog of disconnected themes and characters that have little meaning, there is, in fact, a deep underlying unity in the books that can be fully understood only through the lens of medieval thought and literature.

The Ransom Trilogy's importance in the canon of Lewis's writings is, I believe, difficult to overstate. It is a synthesis of Lewis's ongoing project of exploring the imaginative and emotional effects of the medieval cosmology and the different ways they can be utilized in literature. We need to read and study this trilogy because it is Lewis's first foray into demonstrating how the medieval model can be effective. In the wake of the Copernican revolution, we have been far more affected by the Enlightenment than we may realize. Science is idolized, and empiricism is still the reigning epistemology despite its slow mummification in our postmodern age where truth is whatever you want it to be. Our question when confronted with medieval cosmology is still *Why should we care?* And until we answer

that question, we can't really understand the importance of the Ransom Trilogy.

In *The Discarded Image*, Lewis's book-length nonfiction treatment of the medieval model of the cosmos, he says that the purpose of literature is "to teach what is useful, to honour what deserves honour, to appreciate what is delightful."³ The medieval cosmology, while not true in the sense of being scientifically accurate, is yet true in a deeper sense, and Lewis shows its power throughout his writings. It is useful and honorable and delightful, and Lewis's project demonstrates the great potential that it has in the literary realm. The Ransom Trilogy is this project incarnated.

The medieval model of the cosmos presents to us an old way of seeing the universe. It introduces ideas to us that have become so out of date as to be completely foreign. We see ourselves as a modern, enlightened people, and when we say the word *medieval*, people frequently interpret this to mean *backward, old-fashioned, unenlightened, or dark*. But in Lewis's study of the medieval worldview, we see him look back into the "dark ages" and find something surprising. Rather than the gloom and midnight darkness that we expected, we stumble into a grand hall blazing with light and life and dance—a world of golden edges and scarlet banners, a world full to the brim with music and living creatures. A world where monks and scribes cannot write anything down without decorating the margins with birds and beasts and flowers and swirls of gold. There is no space uninhabited, no spot without some creature that has been made to sing the praises of its Creator. This picture of the cosmos is actually much, much nearer to the one presented in the Bible than the majority of our "enlightened" scientific explanations and diagrams. What are we to do with how

the Bible speaks of the heavens? Of angels and archangels? Of principalities and powers? Of dragons and unicorns and Leviathan and armies of flame? Is it all metaphorical? The gymnastics and contortions we have to perform around the text in order to take all of these passages metaphorically are sometimes more than we can manage.

And then we have a baby in a manger. The God of all creation, born of a woman under Heaven and placed in a manger. How do the wise men come to the place? A star led the way. Every modern astronomer will tell you that this is impossible. How could a star in the heavens lead the wise men to a specific part of the country, let alone a specific house in a specific city? It seems impossible. And yet it happened. Because, as Lewis has said in another of his great works of fiction, "Even in your world, my son, that is not what a star is but only what it is made of."⁴ The stars are more than atoms bouncing around in the dead expanse of space. The Bible tells us this at every turn. Why do we let modern science inform our metaphysics? Why reject what the Bible clearly teaches in favor of a materialistic, reductionistic science? Scientific accuracy will be cold comfort in a world devoid of all awe, wonder, mystery, life, and soul. A thing is much more than what it is made of.

We need to read and study the Ransom Trilogy because it gives us a deeper understanding of the world we live in, the world God created. These books may seem daunting—the waves are high and the ocean looks dark and deep—but if we will dive in, the jeweled realm of the coral reef waits for us, teeming with shimmering fish and twisting shapes and colors, dazzling in its diversity and yet harmonious and interwoven. It is waiting to be explored, and each time you take the plunge, even more magic awaits.

³ C. S. Lewis, *The Discarded Image* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1964), 214.

⁴ C. S. Lewis, *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* (New York: HarperCollins, 1952), 209.

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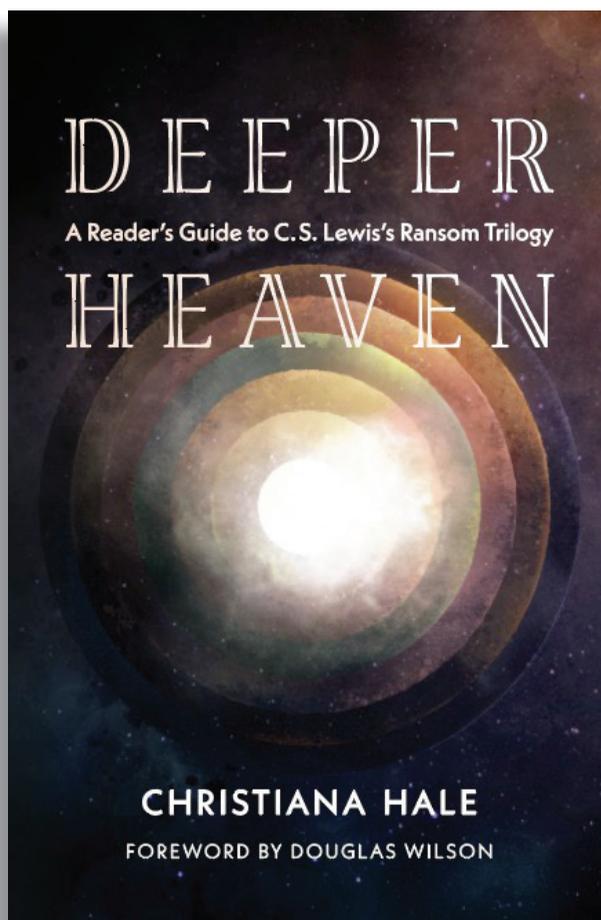
CHRISTIANA HALE (New Saint Andrews College, BA '15, MA'17) spends her days teaching Latin and English to over a hundred energetic junior high students at Logos School in Moscow, Idaho, a classical Christian school seeking to train students with the kind of education that produced such minds as Lewis and Tolkien. When not teaching or writing works of fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, Christiana spends time with her parents and siblings, and enjoys the rolling hills of the Palouse and the deep woods of North Idaho. Sometimes, she even goes stargazing. *Deeper Heaven* is her first published book.

Deeper Heaven is available for purchase at Roman Roads Press (deeperheaven.com) and on Amazon.



Planet Illustration and Field of Arbol map (facing page) were designed by Joey Nance Design, and taken from *Deeper Heaven*.

THE NEWEST BOOK FROM ROMAN ROADS PRESS!



Published by ©Roman Roads Press 2020

C. S. LEWIS'S RANSOM TRILOGY, better known as "the Space Trilogy", is a much-neglected and yet critically important part of Lewis' works. It has captivated and bewildered readers since its publication, and though hundreds of books about Lewis have been written, few seek to navigate the maze that is Lewis's "space-travel story."

Deeper Heaven is a guide and companion through the magical web of medieval cosmology, ancient myth, and critique of modern philosophies that makes up the oft-maligned "Space Trilogy." A student and teacher of literature and history herself, Christiana Hale will walk you through the Trilogy one step at a time, with eyes fixed where Lewis himself fixed his: on Deep Heaven and beyond. In the process, many questions will be answered: What does Christ have to do with Jupiter? Why does Lewis care so much about the medieval conception of the heavens? Why should we? And, perhaps the most puzzling question of all: why is Merlin in *That Hideous Strength*?

PRAISE FOR *DEEPER HEAVEN*

Book Review

by Alf Cengia (Zeteo316.com)

Some Background

Like many other C. S. Lewis readers, I began with the Chronicles of Narnia. I then read the science fiction series: "Out of the Silent Planet"; "Voyage to Perelandra" and "That Hideous Strength." The first two books were enjoyable, but I had difficulty maintaining interest in "That Hideous Strength." To me it was strange and out of place, full of ad hoc characters, and ideas. For example, what was this talk of King Arthur? And what was Merlin the magician doing in it?

I discovered Michael Ward's "The Narnia Code: C. S. Lewis and the Secret of the Seven Heavens." See also his "Planet Narnia." Ward's premise was that there was a structure relating to Medieval Cosmology running through the Chronicles, and that Lewis kept it a secret. At first reading, I remained skeptical. But Ward was right!

Deeper Heaven

Enter Christiana Hale's book "Deeper Heaven." Providentially I'd begun re-reading

Lewis' so-called "Space Trilogy" about the time I stumbled onto Doug Wilson's lectures on the better-named "Ransom Trilogy" and his lecture on Lewis' "Discarded Image." There's a connection. Wilson also talked about a new book called "Deeper Heaven" which he had written a Foreword to.

"Deeper Heaven" does for the "Ransom Trilogy" what Ward did for the Chronicles of Narnia, and even more! Not only does Christiana Hale explore Lewis' love of medieval cosmology and ancient myth and the reasons why he wove these ideas into his work, she carefully analyzes each book of the trilogy. In the process she uncovers a myriad of gold nuggets and secrets which will delight those who enjoyed reading the trilogy.

If you liked the trilogy, you'll love reading Christiana Hale's "Deeper Heaven." After you've read it, you'll likely want to re-read the trilogy with fresh eyes. The book is well written, engaging and insightful. The final chapter really resonated with me. Hale invites the reader to,

"Christiana Hale has done C.S. Lewis's readers a great service with this very well-written and carefully researched guide to the Ransom Trilogy. It is a thoughtful and helpful study of three novels that are often misunderstood but which, as the years go by, are increasingly showing their value and importance. Warmly recommended."

~ Michael Ward, Fellow of Blackfriars Hall, University of Oxford, Professor of Apologetics, Houston Baptist University, and author of *Planet Narnia: The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis.*

Go outside on a clear night. Whatever constellations dance over your head in your sky, take the time to learn their names. They are creatures, like us. They have the same God. They sing with voices and move in praise and love for their creator and ours. (Page 282)

You can see the contents and get a sense of the territory of the book at Roman Roads Media, from where it can also be purchased. "Deeper Heaven" is a feast. I highly recommend it.

IN MEDIA RES

THE *AENEID* as the QUINTESSENTIAL CLASSIC

by Scott Postma



There is a certain pleasure that is derived from reading the classics that cannot be experienced by reading contemporary literature. That is not to assert a kind of inverse chronological snobbery that says older literature is automatically better literature; there is plenty of older literature that has been forgotten or ignored because it lacked the qualities of a classic. Likewise, it is also true there is some promising contemporary literature that does possess those qualities inherent in classic literature. The problem is that contemporary literature, by virtue of its novelty, has not been tried by the fires of time. By what standard can we judge a work to see if it is a classic? What are the marks of a classic? And what is an example of a work that manifests these marks? The poet T. S. Eliot argues that a classic work is one that is marked by maturity, and he suggests that Vergil's *Aeneid* is perhaps the quintessential classic, a model by which other potential classics might be judged.

In Eliot's essay "What Is a Classic?" he asserts, "Whatever the definition we arrive at, it cannot be one which excludes Vergil—we may say confidently that it must be one which

will expressly reckon with him."¹ Although Eliot dissuades his readers from assuming he means Vergil is the "greatest poet who ever wrote," his conviction is there is a standard possessed of all classics of which Vergil's poetry is exemplary. Whatever definition he is able to derive must reconcile with Vergil, and not the other way around. Eliot summarizes this standard as *maturity*. He writes, "A classic can only occur when a civilization is mature; when a language and a literature are mature; and it must be the work of a mature mind."² It would be hard to disagree with his assessment, not because of Eliot's credibility as a poet and literary critic, but because the hallmarks of said maturity abound in the *Aeneid*. That is not to say the reader can expect to find mature ideas and episodes littered across the pages of the epic like coins scattered along the bottom of a public fountain; rather, Vergil's maturity as a poet emerges out of the very fabric of his time, his language, and his mind the same way gemstones and gold nuggets, being part of the earth, reveal themselves to the experienced miner as something other, something pleasant and desirable, something worthy of possession and contemplation.

As an example of Vergil's maturity of mind and manner of writing, Eliot cites the episode in Book VI where Aeneas interacts with the

shade of Dido in Hades. He asserts that the meeting of the two former lovers is "not only one of the most poignant, but one of the most civilized passages in poetry. It is complex in meaning and economical in expression, for it not only tells us about the attitude of Dido—still more important is what it tells us about the attitude of Aeneas."³ That he weeps and speaks to her in "tender love" while she snubs him suggests to Eliot that Aeneas is unable to forgive himself though his actions were performed, not of his own free will, but on orders from the gods. In this scene, Vergil effectively captures and conveys one of the paradoxes of the human condition—the conflict between love and duty, and the consequences each must live with in light of the choices made.

This naturally leads to a second example of the maturity of Vergil's epic—its universality, the fact that the characters transcend *provincialis*. To say it another way, Vergil's characters, though Trojan, Carthaginian, Italian, etc., consistently represent human nature in all times, all ethnicities, all languages, and all conditions. For example, in contrast to Turnus, a flat character with no future, Aeneas is a man with a destiny. In contrast to Dido, a queen deceived, distracted, and overwhelmed to death by love, Aeneas is a man who leads well and exhibits *pietas* despite hardship, suffering and loss.⁴ In

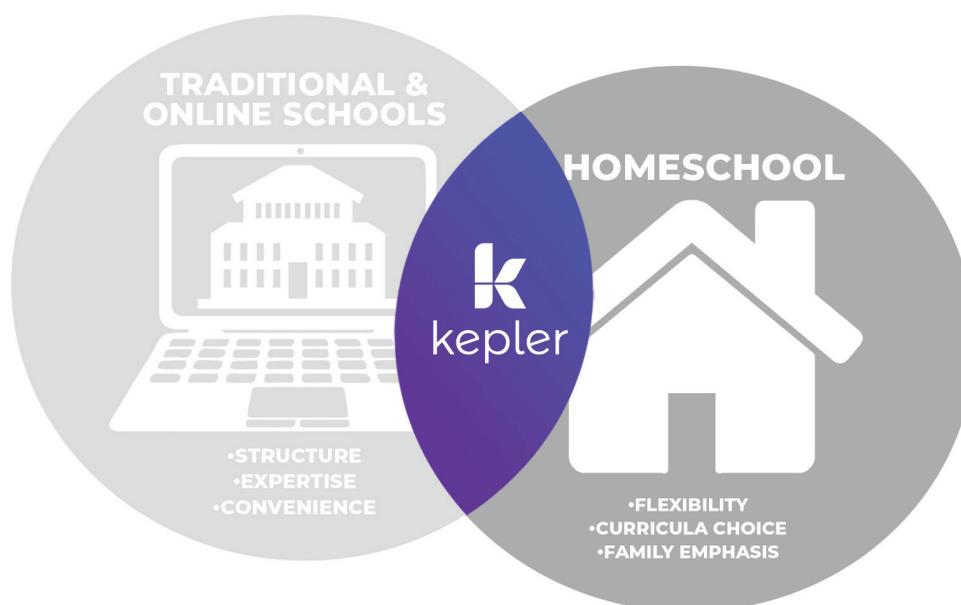
1 T. S. Eliot and Frank Kermode, *Selected Prose of T.S. Eliot* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1975), 115.

2 Ibid., 116.

3 Ibid., 123.

4 Vergil and Sarah Ruden, *The Aeneid* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), IV.85-88.

FINALLY.



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contrast to the cruel Greeks who sacked his home for glory, Aeneas submits to the gods and sacrificially conquers Italy for a more significant purpose than his own happiness or success, that of a civilization whose “rule will have no end.”⁵ In essence, Vergil presents Aeneas as the *romanitas exemplar*. He is Rome as far as Rome is the embodiment of the nobility, *pietas*, social order, and just civilization which all humanity desires.

A third and final example of Vergil’s poetic maturity relates to his poetic style. Vergil builds on his exceptional knowledge of Homeric and Latin literature. Because a body of exceptional literature already existed, he was able to borrow expressions, ideas, and devices and then improve upon them. It is only natural that in the first six books of the *Aeneid*, Vergil reflects and builds upon Homer’s *Odyssey*, a story of a man and his homecoming from the Trojan War; and in the last six books, he reflects on Homer’s *Iliad*, a story about the battles of the Trojan War. The very opening lines of the *Aeneid* alert the reader to this: “Arms and a man I sing, the first from Troy, A fated exile to Lavinian shores in Italy,” writes Vergil.⁶ Yet, in reflecting on and building on Homer’s work, Vergil presents his own style.

5 Ibid., I.279.

6 Ibid., I.1-3.

D.O. Ross, Professor Emeritus of Latin and Greek at University of Michigan, notes Vergil’s difference in style in his preface to *C.S. Lewis’s Lost Aeneid*. He writes,

In his essay *On Translating Homer*, Matthew Arnold famously characterized Homer’s verse as rapid, plain, and direct in both language and thought, and noble. It is tempting to think of a mountain stream, flowing with the eagerness and confidence of youth, with smooth shoots between the rocks and boulders and quieter eddies at its margins, seldom pausing, rapid, plain and certainly direct. Virgil’s flow is very different: still a stream (by no means a river), still confident in its passages, but growing wider, deeper, unhurried, and fuller from its gathering of other waters along the way. We would not call it rapid, or plain and direct, but noble (to use Arnold’s somewhat antique term) it certainly is, owing much of its nobility to the depths of the shaded pools that have formed along its course, in which we can see, with clarity, reflections and shadowy forms. Virgil’s poetry is above all reflective.⁷

There it is in summary. Vergil’s poetry is reflective, and it calls for the reflection, or contemplation, of the reader because it is mature.

7 A. T. Reyes, Walter Hooper, and David O. Ross, *C.S. Lewis’s Lost Aeneid: Arms and the Exile* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2011), xvii.

The maturity of Vergil’s *Aeneid* is ultimately realized in the longevity of its widespread appeal “among all classes and conditions of men,” but its longevity exists, ultimately, because it is mature. And because it is mature, it can invite readers to reflect not only on its themes and motifs or its characters and ideas, but on itself as a whole. Because Vergil’s poetry is the work of a mature mind, written in a mature language in the context of a civilization and language that were already mature, it stands as the quintessential classic, a work that all other works must reconcile themselves to, and a work that continues to reveal itself as something pleasant and desirable, something worthy of possession and contemplation.

SCOTT POSTMA is the President of Kepler Education, a Classical Christian Education platform that combines homeschooling with private tutoring. He has served as a minister for 20 years and a Christian educator for 25 years; and has degrees in the humanities, classical studies, religion and English literature, and creative writing.

Scott runs a podcast with co-host Joffre Swait the Academic Advisor for Kepler Education.

PORTICOS

Featured Great Books Author

VERGIL

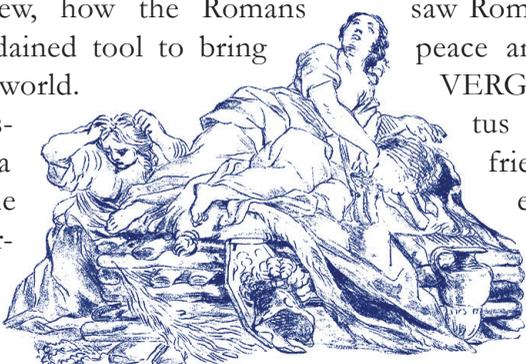


This issue’s Taste of the Great Books author highlight is Publius Vergilius Maro, most commonly known as Vergil. He is one of the most influential authors of Western Culture, second only perhaps to Homer.

After Homer, VERGIL is the next great epic writer, famous for his AENEID which describes the mythic founding of Rome. VERGIL imitates Homer. His writing style even includes Homeric tropes such as stock epithets, epic similes, and jumping into a scene ‘in medias res’. The story structure is also Homeric, imitating the wandering Odyssey in the first half and the warring Iliad in the second half.

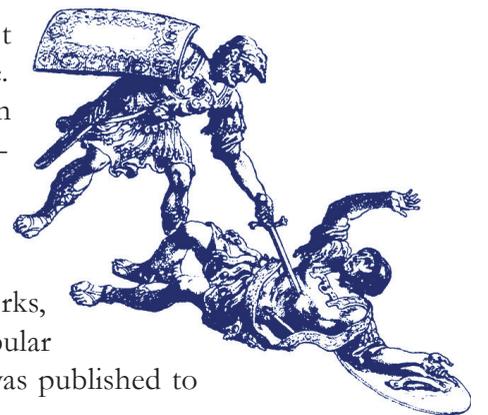
But VERGIL is also important for expressing the Roman worldview, how the Romans saw Rome as a divinely ordained tool to bring peace and order to a chaotic world.

VERGIL casts Caesar Augustus (the current ruler and a friend of his) as a prime example of a Roman order-bringer and though moderns write this off as mere



propaganda, it must be noted that Augustus really did usher in an era of peace and stability after Rome had endured a hundred years of civil war.

THE AENEID had a truly vast impact on Western literature. It immediately changed Roman poetry and style and the subsequent study of Latin, it influenced poets like Dante and TS Elliot, and unlike Homer’s works, it remained in popular use from the day it was published to the present day.



AENEID, Published 19 BC

SUMMARY: Aeneas is taken in by Dido of Carthage and tells her how he fled the fall of Troy and is wandering on a quest to establish the Roman people. After leaving Dido he eventually finds the region he is destined to settle, but must war with the local Latins for his place.

CHARACTERS: Aeneas, Dido, Hera, King Latinus, Turnus, Lavinia

MAJOR THEMES: The Purpose of Roma, Fate, Duty to Family, Piety

SETTING: Aegean Sea, Carthage, Mediterranean Sea, Latium

THE *MASS EXTINCTION* NOBODY TALKS ABOUT

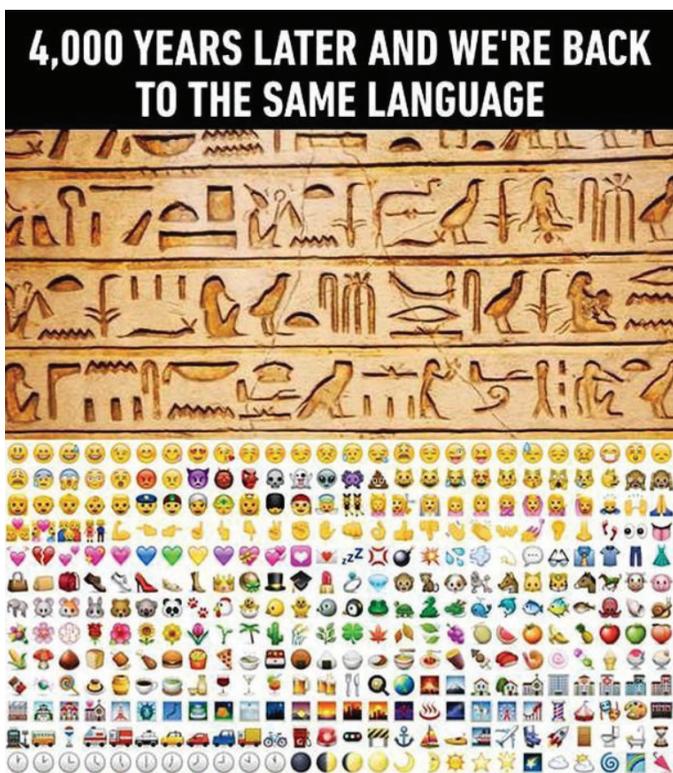
by Tim Griffith

B iologists have theorized that the earth has witnessed several mass extinction events—apocalyptic events in which as many as ninety percent of the earth’s animal species suddenly died off as a result of some abrupt change in climate. Some alarmists warn that another such mass extinction is going on even now. Whether there is any truth to this I cannot say, but I will take a page from their book with an alarmist claim of my own: we are in the middle of a mass extinction event of a sort—not of species, but of words and their meanings. This should be unsettling in the least to anyone. But for educators and parents who want a good education for their children, it is crucial not only to recognize this problem, but to take action.

Since the world of the twenty-first century changes around us so rapidly—decade by decade if not year by year, it is difficult to even comprehend the idea that humanity lived in basically the same way for at least four millennia—from the time of ancient Egypt, all the way until the eighteenth or nineteenth century. For example, people traveled by walking, carriage, horse, or boat. People communicated by sending written messages by messenger. Food was produced by plowing, planting, harvesting, and preserving at set times of year and was available according to those times. Clothing was produced by an arduous process of spinning fibrous plants or animal hair into thread, weaving it into cloth on a loom, dyeing it, and sewing it together with needle and thread. Wealth took the form of precious metals, precious stones, property, and livestock. The list could go on and on.

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Beginning with the Industrial Revolution and intensifying with the Technological Revolution, the experience of human life has changed drastically. The new things that have taken the place of the old may just seem to be bigger, faster, better versions of the old, but they are more than that. Sure, automated transportation existed in the past, but it always required close familiarity with either animals or the ocean. (It is remarkable that the daintiest lady of the nineteenth century had more knowledge and experience with horses than most farmers today.) Although food was grown by the same basic processes, today it happens out of sight, out of mind: our children could easily grow up believing the food grows in grocery stores. Clothing is usually manufactured on the other side of the planet in obscure factories—we are not even allowed to see what goes on there. Wealth has become increasingly abstract, and it is even shown off in different forms. Fine clothing, jewelry, and attendants have largely been displaced as indicators of class.

We know things have changed a lot, and often for the better. So, what’s the point in bringing all this up? Although this remarkable transformation has brought us countless good things (advances in medicine to name one), it is also increasingly robbing us of the ability to relate to or even comprehend our own past. Literature, philosophy, history, and ideas are inextricably bound up in the world in which they were written. For several millennia, a person could simply pick up a translation of an ancient or medieval work and (for the most part) understand what it was talking about. This could happen only because the world worked in basically the same way. This, however, has changed.

Increasingly, children of the twenty-first century do not understand the vocabulary of the past, or at best have a hazy notion of its meaning. What was a *javelin*, or a *talent*, or a *bulwark*, or a *litter*? These things are no longer in use, and even their names are quickly being forgotten. What does *petulant*, or *insolent*, or *impetuous*, or *meek* even mean? These adjectives have been replaced by the vocabulary of modern psychology. What is the difference between *covetousness*, *envy*, *spite*, and *jealousy* or between *pride*, *arrogance*, *pretention*, and *haughtiness*? We don’t know because these are not categories we think in anymore.

This complete or partial loss of comprehension of old words and concepts places a barrier between us and all the literature of the past—most dangerously, between us and the Bible itself. Just take Christ’s parables as an example. Unshrunk cloth? Wineskins? Lampstands? Fig trees? Tares? Lost Sheep?

Talents? Mustard Seeds? Although we may understand what such words mean generally, we usually do not know what the things they refer to are actually like. And that was Christ’s point! The kingdom of God is *like* these things. The parables are hardly unique in this respect. How many times do the Proverbs or the Psalms refer to the everyday realities of an ancient Israelite’s life? And how well will a young man of the twenty-first century—who has never farmed, never hunted, never built a house, never walked ten miles at once—be able to relate to what he reads there? Not so well, I’m afraid.

So then, is this mass extinction inevitable? Are the things of our past doomed to fade out of this world and be replaced by the likes of 🤔, 🤪, and 🤖? I don’t think so. Not without resistance. Not without a bitter fight to the end, at least. Many of us have joined a grand conservation effort to save all these endangered words and concepts, to make sure our kids can understand the Bible, to make sure they can read, love, and learn from old books from the likes of Homer and Vergil and Augustine and Shakespeare and even Jane Austen. We call this conservation effort Classical Christian Education. We read old books, learn old languages, and study the world as it once existed. We do not do these things because we are stuck in the past, but because we love our faith, our history, and our heritage. What better guides could we ever hope for in such a shifting present and uncertain future?

TIM GRIFFITH is a fellow of classical languages at New Saint Andrews College in Moscow, ID. He oversees the college’s Latin program, directs the national Phaedrus Latin Composition Contest, and has spent the last eighteen years improving methods for teaching ancient languages in a modern context. Most recently he has developed Picta Dicta (www.pictadicta.com), an online learning platform specifically designed to assist parents and teachers with the kind of difficult subjects studied in a Classical and Christian Education.



COPIOUSNESS *and* COMMONPLACES

by Scott Postma

Walt Disney once said something to the effect that he would rather entertain with the hope people would be educated than try to educate with the hope they were entertained. Though probably a false dilemma, technically, the sentiment deserves ponderment. Successful communicators know that if they hope to persuade on a given topic, win a legal argument, or move a person to action, in addition to arguing a reasonable point, they must also entertain their audience—more correctly, delightfully hold their attention from beginning to end. Said another way, an enlightened audience will only be so if it is also a delighted audience. Uninteresting writers and boring speakers create sleepy readers and unmotivated listeners. To be interesting a writer or speaker must possess *copiousness*. Derived from the Latin *copia*, copiousness literally means abundance. It refers to the stuff writing and speaking is made of. It is the material accumulated by the experiences of life, the fodder of failure, and the absorption of wisdom that makes the writer or speaker—and whatever he or she has to say—interesting and meaningful. Copiousness is possessing a deep, refreshing pool of ideas, truths, and anecdotes from which to draw delightful, compelling arguments.

This is where the *commonplace* is helpful. In classical rhetoric a commonplace is a pithy

maxim, a striking quote, or a delightful morsel of knowledge that is often held in common by tribes and communities. The term is derived from the Latin phrase *locis communis*, literally, common ground. One author captures this idea by defining a commonplace as “commonly-held worldview phrases circulated in every community.” Examples of familiar commonplaces are expressions like “spare the rod and spoil the child,” or “Mind your p’s and q’s.” The former is a maxim taken from the book of Proverbs (13:24), which is itself a kind of commonplace book compiled by Solomon, the ancient king of Israel. The latter is an English expression meaning to “mind one’s manners,” probably derived from the schoolhouse where children tended to mix up the *p* and the *q*, or from the pub where the patrons were reminded to watch their alcohol consumption, which came in pints and quarts.

Writers and speakers have long collected delightful poetry, clever quotations, pithy proverbs, and striking phrases, and compiled them into a *florilegium*, or what is often referred to as a commonplace book. Collecting, studying, and reflecting on commonplaces is just one effective and practical means of cultivating copiousness. But it is not the only means. As the author of *Fitting Words* aptly observes, “Developing copiousness starts with maintaining an excellent education, read-

ing the best books, and talking with wise men and women. It continues by expanding your life experiences.”

Having copiousness is more than just possessing a huge pile of random facts and trivia one can reach into and toss out at a whim; rather, it is the idea of *oneself* being full—overflowing—with nuggets of truth and words of wisdom that are easily recognizable to one’s audience. Filling oneself with “true thoughts and wise words” will not happen automatically. It must be done on purpose. Being too occupied with amusements to read books, too prideful to ask questions, or too lazy to think through difficult problems and important issues impedes the development of copiousness. As the author first quoted satirically quipped, “If you listen to stupid music, watch stupid movies, and read stupid books...well, congratulations, you’re stupid. And, being stupid, you have failed in the pursuit of effective communication at the outset.” Like a garden that must be tilled, planted, watered, and weeded, copiousness is cultivated—a work that takes time and effort. It is developed through life experience and the purposed, pleasant discipline of reading many good books, making a point of thinking about what is read, and collecting the best thoughts and ideas on a variety of topics.

A COPIOUS MIND



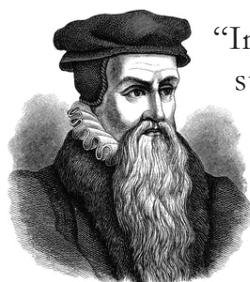
“We are giving small instructions, while professing to educate an orator. But even studies have their infancy, and as the rearing of the very strongest bodies

commenced with milk and the cradle, so he, who was to be the most eloquent of men, once uttered cries, tried to speak at first with a stuttering voice, and hesitated at the shapes of the letters. Nor, if it is impossible to learn a thing completely, is it therefore unnecessary to learn it at all.”

- Quintilian, *Institutes of Oratory*

“Free curiosity has greater power to stimulate learning than rigorous coercion. Nevertheless, the free ranging flux of curiosity is channeled by discipline under Your Law.”

- St. Augustine, *Confessions*



“In the midst of assailing adversity, steadfastness is among the greatest of the moral virtues.”

- Theodore Beza

“The very power of [textbook writers] depends on the fact

that they are dealing with a boy: a boy who thinks he is ‘doing’ his ‘English prep’ and has no notion that ethics, theology, and politics are all at stake. It is not a theory they put into his mind, but an assumption, which ten years hence, its origin forgotten and its presence unconscious, will condition him to take one side in a controversy which he has never recognized as a controversy at all.”

- C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man*



“Prayer is a refuge for those who are shaken, an anchor for those tossed by waves, a walking stick for the infirm, a treasure house for the poor, a stronghold for the rich, a destroyer of sicknesses, a preserver of health. He who can sincerely pray is richer than everyone else, even though he is the poorest of all. On the contrary, he who does not have recourse to prayer, even though he sit on a king’s throne, is the poorest of all.”

- St. John Chrysostom

See the following page for leading Lewis scholar Michael Ward’s newest book, *After Humanity*

AFTER HUMANITY is a guide to one of C.S. Lewis's most widely admired but least accessible works, *The Abolition of Man*, which originated as a series of lectures on ethics that he delivered during the Second World War.

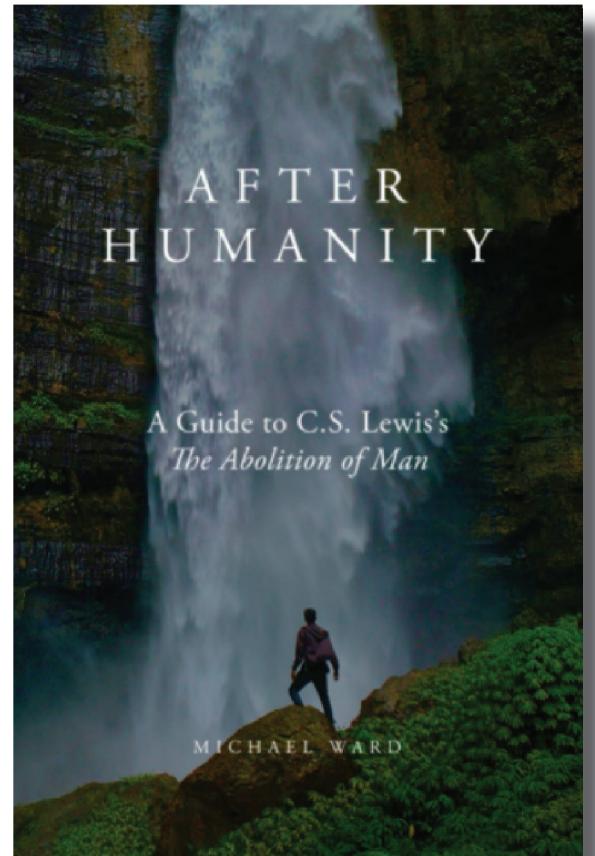
These lectures tackle the thorny question of whether moral value is objective or not. When we say something is right or wrong, are we recognizing a reality outside ourselves, or merely reporting a subjective sentiment? Lewis addresses the matter from a purely philosophical standpoint, leaving theological matters to one side. He makes a powerful case against subjectivism, issuing an intellectual warning that, in our "post-truth" twenty-first century, has even more relevance than when he originally presented it.

Lewis characterized *The Abolition of Man* as "almost my favourite among my books," and his biographer Walter Hooper has called it "an all but indispensable introduction to the entire corpus of Lewisiana." In *After Humanity*, Michael Ward sheds much-needed light on this important but difficult work, explaining both its general academic context and the particular circumstances in Lewis's life that helped give rise to it, including his front-line service in the trenches of the First World War.

"For a helpful study of 'That Hideous Strength', see Christiana Hale, 'Deeper Heaven: A Reader's Guide to C.S. Lewis's Ransom Trilogy' (Moscow, ID: Roman Roads Press, 2021). See page 34 of 'After Humanity' for what I suspect may be the first, but will certainly not be the last, reference to 'Deeper Heaven' in a volume of Lewis scholarship."

Dr. Michael Ward references *Deeper Heaven* in his new book *After Humanity*.

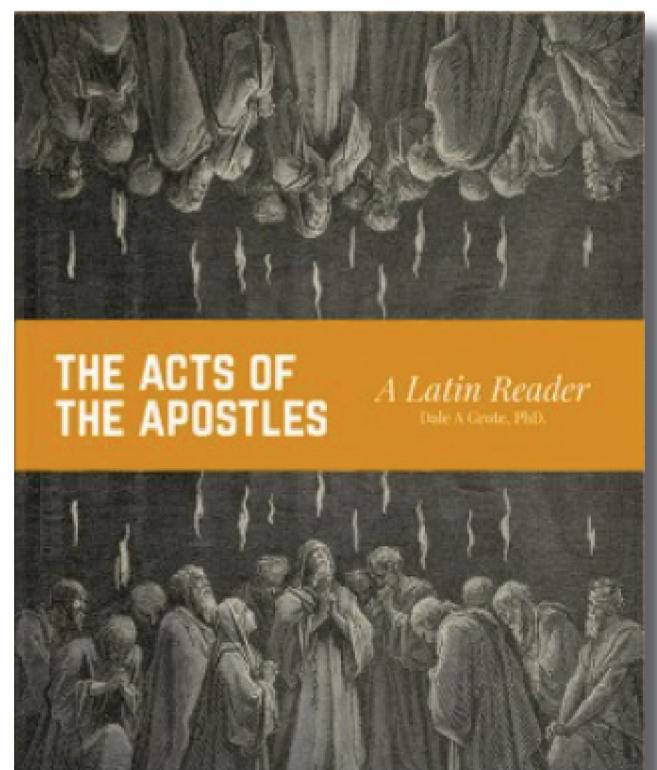
After Humanity contains a detailed commentary clarifying the many allusions and quotations scattered throughout Lewis's argument. It shows how this resolutely philosophical thesis fits in with his other, more explicitly Christian works. It also includes a full-color photo gallery, displaying images of people, places, and documents that relate to *The Abolition of Man*, among them Lewis's original "blurb" for the book, which has never before been published.



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THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES is an unjustly under-read text of the New Testament. Its story is by now old news. From its humble beginnings within Judaism, Christianity survived its first decades and emerged as the most important world religion. Yet bypassing Acts because we know the ending misses out on the unfolding drama of the time. The first apostles struggled against the Jewish authorities and even quarreled among themselves, often with acrimony that modern Christians find unsettling. We should think of the earliest decades of Christianity as a white-hot crucible of conflict rather than a flower quietly unfolding and blooming. Putting this text in the hands of intermediate Latin students allows them to build on their years of study of a difficult language with a reading that is not only well within their grasp but is also of enduring importance.

This text includes summaries of each chapter of Acts, vocabulary lists, historical and contextual notes, informative notes and maps, a scholarly introduction to the context in which Acts was written, and multiple appendices.



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DISCOVER CHRIST THROUGH ANCIENT MYTHS!



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Join renowned author Dr. Louis Markos on an unparalleled adventure for the modern Christian! In the spirit of C.S. Lewis, whose own acceptance of Christ hinged on his understanding that Christ is the myth become fact, *The Myth Made Fact: Reading Greek and Roman Mythology through Christian Eyes* mines wisdom of eternal value from the great storehouses of Greek and Roman mythology and traces the links that bind those myths to the Bible and the Christian life.

The Myth Made Fact takes its readers on an exploration of Greco-Roman characters, art, and stories—one that spans 50 myths and sheds new light on the legends of Hercules, Orpheus, Jason, Phaedra, Oedipus, and many more! The journey through myth unfolds through six unique parts, each pointing beyond the lustful and wrathful Olympian gods to the One Holy Creator who stands, like Aslan, at the back of all our stories.

The Myth Made Fact offers distinct insight into how the common people of pagan Greece and Rome received their myths and used them as guides to virtuous living. By doing so, Dr. Markos helps his readers receive myth in the right spirit: not as historical tales that contradict the Bible, but as testimonies to the yearnings of people who lacked clear revelation but nevertheless hungered and thirsted for Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

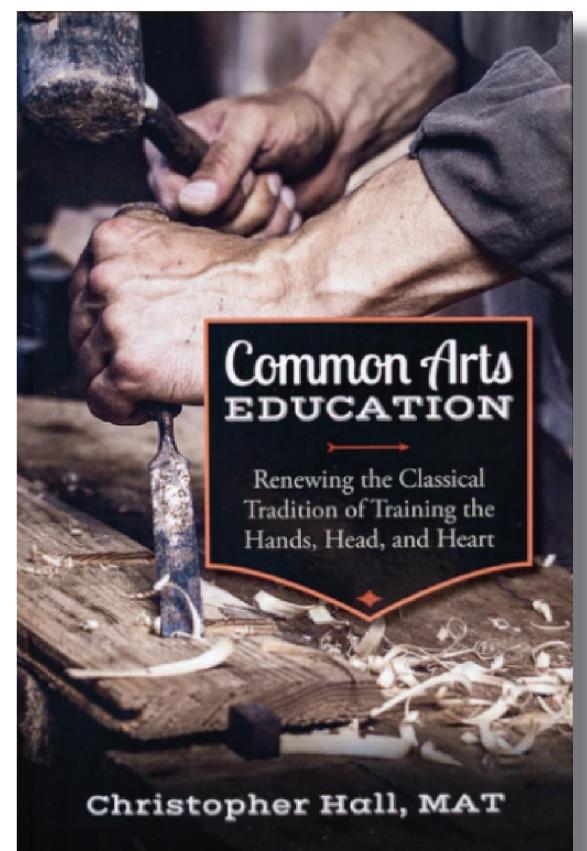
THE ACADEMIC FOUNDATIONS of classical education do not alone guarantee human flourishing. The liberal arts—the trivium and quadrivium—represent the core frameworks for cultivating virtue and practicing skills vital to our life in the world. And yet, they alone are insufficient, for we must eat, heal, defend ourselves, trade, build, find our way around, and more. It may seem evident that the common arts should be an integral part of education, and yet we see that every generation is losing skill in the common arts as we increasingly rely upon others to provide them for us. In *Common Arts Education*, author Chris Hall provides not only an argument for an integrated liberal, fine, and common arts pedagogy, but also some practical advice for crafting a robust, hands-on curriculum.

Beginning with the story of the classroom experiences that led him to explore the common arts as a vector for the liberal and fine arts, the author outlines a vision for the resonance between the arts, supplies concrete steps that teachers can take to implement a common arts curriculum, and provides a series of experiences to try in any classroom, at any grade level. As you read, you will find the liberal arts applied, the fine arts situated, and the common arts revealed as a critical element of a classical education.

The practical application chapters of *Common Arts Education* offer background information; considerations such as the space and supplies needed for teaching each common art; “plug-and-play” lists of the basic skills that students should practice for each art; and resources for further reading. The author discusses 13 common arts, including:

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Navigation
- Medicine
- Cooking
- Woodworking
- And much more!

Discover how the common arts provide the practical, artisanal elements of a holistic education and allow students to become not only fully functional in his or her knowledge, but fully charitable in the world!



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POETICS

HEAVEN

O who will show me those delights on high?
Echo. I.

Thou Echo, thou art mortall, all men know.
Echo. No.

Wert thou not born among the trees and
leaves?
Echo. Leaves.

And are there any leaves, that still abide?
Echo. Bide.

What leaves are they? impart the matter
wholly.
Echo. Holy.

Are holy leaves the Echo then of blisse?
Echo. Yes.

Then tell me, what is that supreme delight?
Echo. Light.

Light to the minde: what shall the will
enjoy?
Echo. Joy.

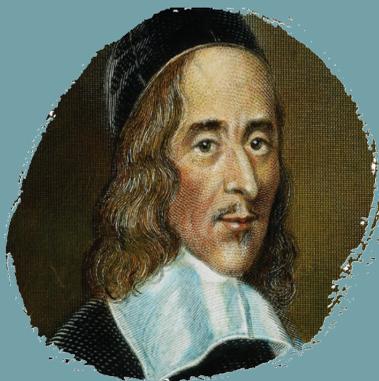
But are there cares and businesse with the
pleasure?
Echo. Leisure.

Light, joy, and leisure; but shall they
persevere?
Echo. Ever.

Featured Poet

GEORGE HERBERT

(1593-1633)



George Herbert was the fifth son of an eminent Welsh family and the seventh of ten children. He attended Westminster School at the age of ten, and was one of three to win scholarships to Trinity College, Cambridge.

He received two degrees and was elected a major fellow of Trinity. Two years after graduating, he was appointed reader in Rhetoric at Cambridge, and in 1620 he was elected public orator.

He resigned as orator in 1627, and in 1630 he took holy orders in the Church of England. He spent the remainder of his life as a rector in Bremerton near Salisbury, where he preached, wrote poetry, and helped rebuild the church.

THE ELIXIR

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see,
And what I do in anything
To do it as for Thee.

Not rudely, as a beast,
To run into an action;
But still to make Thee prepossest,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heav'n espy.

All may of Thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture—"for Thy
sake"—
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that and th' action fine.

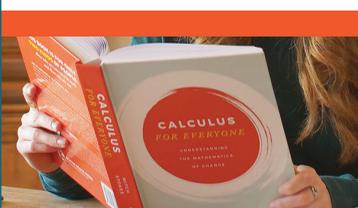
This is the famous stone
That turneth all to gold;
For that which God doth touch and own
Cannot for less be told.

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CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES

Across

- 2 Aeneas' son founded this city in Italy (two words)
- 3 Roman Roads Latin curriculum (two words)
- 5 The oracle at _____
- 7 Where Pindar lived
- 8 The last name of *The Myth Made Fact* author
- 10 The newest book by Michael Ward (two words)
- 11 Roman philosopher; "the Younger"
- 12 When the *Aeneid* was published
- 13 The father of Aeneas
- 18 "The meter of the epic" (two words)
- 21 Student of Socrates
- 22 This poet suggests that Vergil's *Aeneid* is the quintessential classic
- 23 "The blind poet"

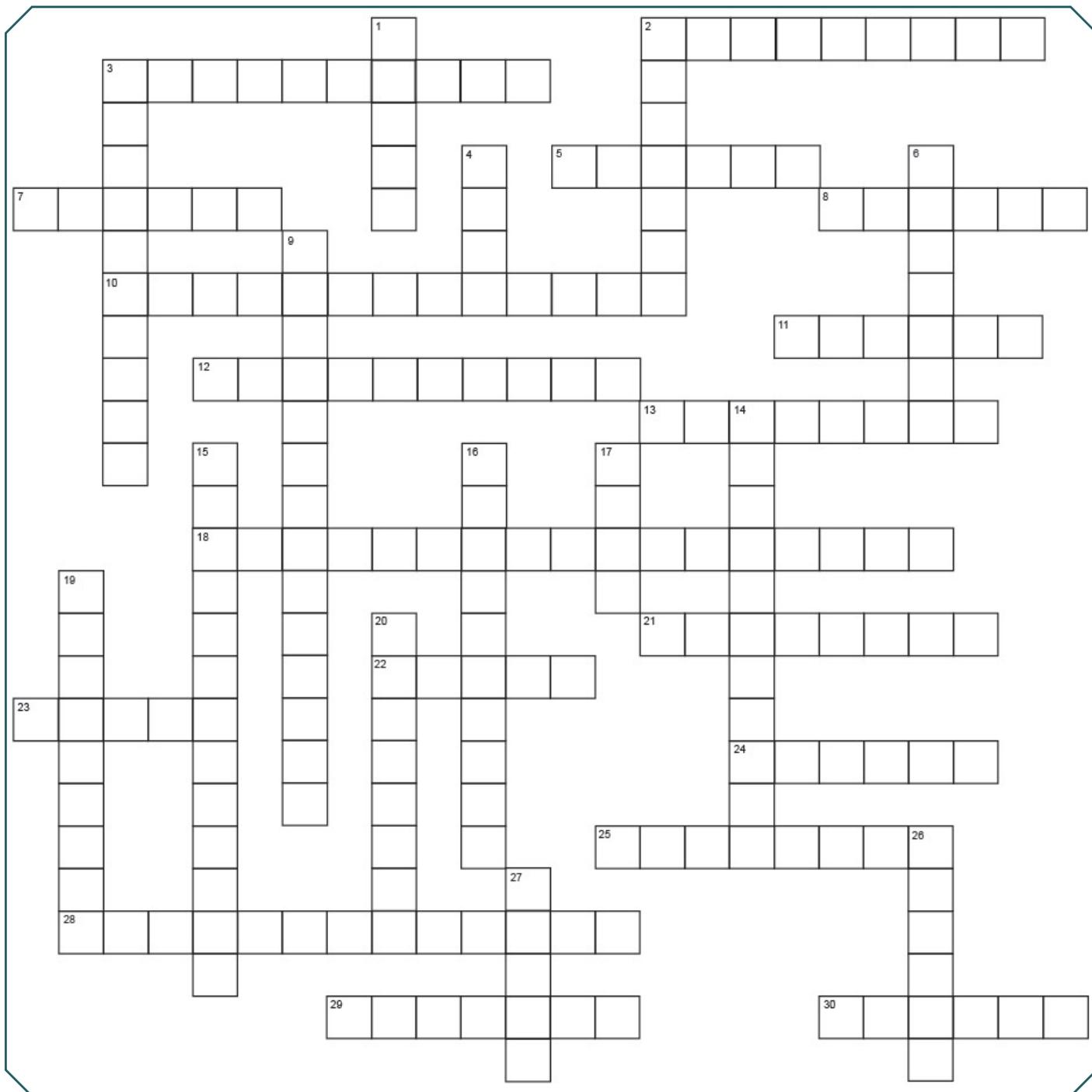
24 Greek goddess of wisdom

25 The king of Sparta during the Trojan War

28 "In the midst of assailing adversity, _____ is among the greatest of the moral virtues." - Theodore Beza

29 "Sing, goddess, the _____ wrath of Achilles."

30 Odysseus was the king of this place



Down

1 River in Italy

2 A public defense

3 The second book of C.S. Lewis' Ransom Trilogy

4 The wife of Zeus

6 A Greek ship

9 Poet George Herbert won a scholarship to this Cambridge university (two words)

14 A pithy maxim

15 The Romans called this the "middle of the earth"

16 The author of *Institutes of Oratory*

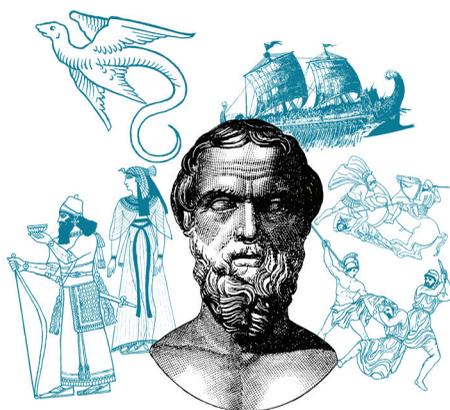
17 The Greek god of war

19 "The Father of History"

20 Another name for the Greeks

26 Female Greek poet

27 The greatest Greek storyteller



Additional clue for 19 Down



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10th
ANNIVERSARY

SUMMER SALE