



## The Baron's Apprenticeship

*George MacDonald*

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**The Baron's Apprenticeship** George MacDonald  
Sequel to Curate's Awakening and Lady's Confession.

## **The Baron's Apprenticeship Details**

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Author : George MacDonald

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## **From Reader Review The Baron's Apprenticeship for online ebook**

### **Jaclynn says**

Another great book by the author, this one was a bit confusing in the beginning but was revealed all later, one of the lessons it taught was that circumstances of birth did not dictate one's lot in life or their value to the Father.

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### **Kirk says**

Most of the dialogue ends in exclamation points! I guess that everyone felt very strongly about their words. I very much enjoyed Richards mental struggle with the concept of God, and Thomas Wingfold was a strong character. Here's hoping that his book (*Thomas Wingfold, Curate*), is even better.

Thomas Wingfold: "The man who makes a thing exist that did not exist, or who sets anything right that had gone wrong, must be more worthy than he who only consumes what exists, or helps things to remain wrong!"

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### **Joel Bridges says**

#### **I will look for another George McDonald**

A big plus for me was this MacDonald book does not contain Gaelic. I read sir gibbie ,a lovely story but there were passages that I did not understand at all. I discovered Gaelic English dictionary indexed. After I read the final words of the story. MacDonald tells a story to facilitate his sermon so read him if you want to take a look at the creator the characters journey is a journey of faith.

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### **writer... says**

Heavy going - lengthy theorizing combined with the fiction.

Not a favourite for a George MacDonald. A lot of revealing information on attitudes toward classes and the differences in what was and wasn't acceptable in their lifestyles. I enjoyed learning of insights of book conserving of the era.

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### **Jason Shuttlesworth says**

This is almost the perfect story. The difficult thing about it is working your way through all the 19th century words that nobody except an English professor would use.

(spoiler alert) I was quite glad to see Richard and Barbara get married at the end which had to upset the good

ol' English 'caste' system.

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### **Lotzastitches says**

A little alchemy:

"The men stood lost in the swift changes of his attendant colours--from red to gold, from the human to the divine--as he ran to the horizon from beneath, and came up with a rush, eternally silent.

A little Gene Veith (God at Work):

"He believed in Jesus Christ as the everyday life of the world, whose presence is just as needful in bank, or shop, or house of lords, as at what so many of the clergy call the altar."

and

"what is the love of child, or mother, or dog, but the love of God, shining through another being"

A little C.S. Lewis (Shadowland) or Plato's cave allegory:

"how different the moonlit shadow-land of those people from the sunny realm of the radiant Christ! Jesus rose again because he was true, and death had no part in him. This world's day is but the moonlight of his world. The shadow-man, who knows neither whence he came nor whither he is going, calls the upper world the house of the dead, being himself a ghost that wanders in its caves, and knows neither the blowing of its wind, the dashing of its waters, the shining of its sun, nor the glad laughter of its inhabitants."

A little Tolkien with the title:

There & Back

A little J.K. Rowling (sorry, I can't read this and not think of dementors):

(Note: This is the main character's lowest point. He's depressed. He's walking through a fog, damp, chill of the grave, no interest in life.)

"No cloak of insanest belief, of dullest mistake, would henceforth hide any more the dreary nakedness of the skeleton, life! The world lay in clearest, barest, coldest light, its hopeless deceit and its misery all revealed!" and "Oh this devilish thing, existence!--a mask with no face behind it? a look with no soul that looked!"

(Now I need a little chocolate.)

And one more miscellaneous note (I love highlighting on my kindle!) . . .

"Then he thought how wise must be a God who, to work out his intent, would take all the conduct, good and bad, all the endeavours of all his children, in all their contrarieties, and out of them bring the right thing."

I wished the end would have been a bit different. Although I'm not sure how exactly.

This is my fourth or fifth MacDonald book. It was definitely worth reading.

Can't resist one more quote:

"you need books to make a world inside you--to take you away, as by the spell of a magician or on the wings of an eagle, from the walls and the nothingness, into a world where one either finds everything or wants nothing. She had yet to learn that books themselves are but weak ministers, that the spirit dwelling in them must lead back to him who gave it or die; that they are but windows, which, if they look not out on the eternal spaces, will themselves be blotted out by the darkness."

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### **Lara Lleverino says**

I love the George MacDonald books that have been edited by Michael Phillips and this is one of my favorites. This book could be considered "preachy" by some but I find it covers great discussion topics while telling a great story at the same time.

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### **Luke says**

MacDonald writes the most thought-provoking fiction (or non-fiction now that I think of it) that I have ever read. I love reading his books.

This one has quite a lot of suspense. The wording can be difficult, so if you are not fond of dictionaries, I would recommend the updated version (retitled The Baron's Apprenticeship). But the depth of thought is amazing in the old version--I don't know if the updated version is the same, but I have heard that it retains the same thought while making it easier to read.

Also, if you are an evangelical Christian, you may notice that MacDonald has some tendencies that some would call unorthodox; however, for constantly pointing the reader to obedience, doing the will of God, and the goodness of God, I could not name a better writer of fiction or non-fiction.

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### **Lydia Thomas says**

Written in the late nineteenth century, I stumbled across this gem called There and Back by George MacDonald while re-reading The Princess and the Goblin and At the Back of the North Wind for a new blog series I'm rolling out next week, "10 Allegories Worth Reading."

Until this week, Charles Dickens was my absolute favorite author (followed very closely by J.R.R. Tolkien). I love the mournful atmosphere of a Dickens novel, born of social consciousness. I love his characters, and how he connects them all. I wouldn't have thought it was possible to connect with another author's work the way I have with Dickens'.

I should have known.

You see, there's a level below social consciousness and connectedness in me that longs to be fed, and that's spiritual consciousness and connectedness.

In *There and Back*, George MacDonald did for me what Dickens never could: he went to that deepest level and he lived there with the story and characters. The story takes place in nineteenth-century England, and follows the aristocratic Lestrange family and those who cross their paths, from other aristocrats to tradesmen to clergy. MacDonald explores the social, emotional, and spiritual standing and evolution of every character he introduces. It's a complex look at how people's philosophies shape how they relate to God and one another. No less important is the gritty look at why a good God allows bad things to happen – an age old question, I think.

"Father, it would take the life out of me to believe there was no God; but the God I hope in is a very different person from the God my mother's clergy have taught her to believe in. Father, do you know Jesus Christ?"

"I know the person you mean, my boy."

"I know what kind of person he is, and he said God was just like him, and in the God like him, if I can find him, I will believe with all my heart and soul—and so would you, father, if you knew him."

Also unlike a Dickens novel, there are no absolute saints or caricatured sinners in *There and Back*. Everyone is flawed, but none are portrayed as ridiculous in their shortcomings; instead, they are met with grace and empathy from their author, even when they are dead wrong. Beyond that, there's not a dull character in the cast. Of course, Richard and Barbara shine the brightest in their search for God, being the protagonist and his love interest, but I think Wingfold was my favorite. The sage parson met people where they were at and conversed on their level, a quality I long to better develop.

"He gave her strong hopeful things to read—and in the search after such was driven to remark how little of the hopeful there is in the English, or in any other language. The song of hope is indeed written in men's hearts, but few sing it. Yet it is of all songs the sorest-needed of struggling men."

Here's where Dickens and MacDonald are very similar: creating atmosphere. I was in the library as the nurse presented the baron with his infant son; I was with Richard and Wingfold on the road just before dawn; I was with Alice in chilly London; I felt the moments of majesty as presented over a literary work, or a concert, or a moonlit night. As in *Bleak House*, I was immersed in *There and Back* – not just in the world, but how the characters responded to it.

"When she saw her spread out her arms as if to embrace the wind that flowed to meet them, then too she wondered, but presently began to feel what a thing the wind was—how full of something strange and sweet. She began to learn that nothing is dead, that there cannot be a physical abstraction, that nothing exists for the sake of the laws of its phenomena. She did not put it so to herself, I need hardly say; but she was, in a word, learning to feel that the world was alive."

And the romantic element...Can MacDonald ever do romance! There's this independence and mutuality and growth between Richard and Barbara that I can't begin to explain. It just struck me as healthy and wholesome (which is not to say they didn't have problems, it was more how they dealt with them), especially in a culture where dysfunctional is normal and even expected.

"He saw her far away like the moon she spoke of. She was growing to him a marvel and a mystery. Something strange seemed befalling him. Was she weaving a spell about his soul? Was she fettering him for her slave? Was she one of the wild, bewildering creatures of ancient lonely belief, that are the souls of the loveliest things, but can detach themselves from them, and wander out in garments more immediately their own? Was she salamander or sylph, naiad or undine, oread or dryad?—But then she had such a head, and they were all rather silly!"

And, to make my joy complete, there was this lovely metaphor presented in Richard's trade – bookbinding and restoration. Oh my heart. It's this whole idea of making something – not new, but the way it was intended to be. Again, I say, oh my heart.

"I shan't be master of my trade till I know all that can be done now to stop such a book from crumbling into dust!"

This book reached me on all of my levels, and yes, I shed a few tears reading the last paragraph, not just because it was beautiful, but because I really didn't want it to end.

"My tears were flowing now with the old earth-pain in them, with keenest disappointment and longing. To have been there and to have come back, was the misery. But it did not last long. The glad thought awoke that I had the dream—a precious thing never to be lost while memory lasted; a thing which nothing but its realization could ever equal in preciousness. I rose glad and strong, to serve with newer love, with quicker hand and readier foot, the hearts around me."

There's a public domain version free on Amazon for Kindle. I warn you, though: it's not an easy read. It's slowly distilled and meant to be savored.

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### **Thomas Sauder says**

#### **Wonderful**

I enjoyed the plot, but more than that the deep truths found in this book. What is a true gentleman? What is a true lady? Why is there pain and sorrow in this world? This is a book that makes you think about more than just the plot.

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### **Heather says**

This is a beautiful story of a "good" man discovering that his honesty, which has been keeping him from his idea of a wrathful God, cannot help but be drawn to the one true God. Romance? Check. Intrigue? Of course! A book that's such a pleasure to read, it feels like wrapping yourself up in a cozy blanket by a fire? You bet!

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### **Sophia says**

My favorite line:

"Opinion is all that can result from argument, and opinion concerning God -even right opinion- is of little

value when it comes to knowing God."

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### **Gretchen says**

Richard's journey from skeptical, socialist atheist to believer in Jesus; rejection of false notions of God=rejecting a God who cannot be that way and be believed in; journey from tradesman bookbinder to baronet; Wingfold rocks, as usual

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### **Renee Wolcott says**

I am a book conservator--or what is still known in England and Europe in general as a book restorer. My goal is often to retain as much original material as possible while stabilizing an old volume and making it safe to handle and read. Imagine my surprise when MacDonald describes his character, Richard Lestrange, doing the same thing! A 19th-century book restorer! That brought some extra enjoyment to this tale of a man who regains his lost birthright in two senses: the worldly and the spiritual.

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### **Tony Paulson says**

This was a great book that every Christian young person should read in the early teen years as he or she prepares for adulthood. MacDonald uses a wide variety of complex characters to represent many different struggles people have in life as God lovingly pursues each one with His grace and mercy. The main character sets an excellent example of manhood for young people to emulate in his self-sacrificial love for his fellow human-beings and moral fortitude.

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