



THE FEAST OF DOROTHY L. SAYERS
APOLOGIST AND SPIRITUAL WRITER, 1957
THE LITURGY OF THE WORD
WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16TH, 2020 | 10:00 AM

ORDER OF SERVICE

OPENING ACCLAMATION

Celebrant Bless the Lord who forgives all our sins;

People *His mercy endures for ever.*

Celebrant

Jesus said, "The first commandment is this: Hear, O Israel: The Lord your God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself. There is no commandment greater than these." *Mark 12:29-31*

CONFESSION OF SIN

Celebrant

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Celebrant and People say together

Most merciful God,

we confess that we have sinned against you

in thought, word, and deed,

by what we have done,

and by what we have left undone.

We have not loved you with our whole heart;

we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves.

We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.

For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ,

have mercy on us and forgive us;

that we may delight in your will,

and walk in your ways,

to the glory of your Name. Amen

ABSOLUTION

Please stand as you are able.

Celebrant continues

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life. **Amen.**

THE TRISAGION

Repeat three times.

Celebrant Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy Immortal One,

People *Have mercy upon us.*

COLLECT OF THE DAY

Celebrant The Lord be with you.

People *And also with you.*

Celebrant Let us pray.

Almighty God, who strengthened your servant Dorothy Sayers with eloquence to defend Christian teaching: Keep us, we pray, steadfast in your true religion, that in constancy and peace we may always teach right doctrine, and teach doctrine rightly; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. **Amen.**

LESSON

Please be seated.

Reader A Reading from the Book of Judges.

Judges 3:15–30

¹⁵But when the Israelites cried out to the Lord, the Lord raised up for them a deliverer, Ehud son of Gera, the Benjaminite, a left-handed man. The Israelites sent tribute by him to King Eglon of Moab. ¹⁶Ehud made for himself a sword with two edges, a cubit in length; and he fastened it on his right thigh under his clothes. ¹⁷Then he presented the tribute to King Eglon of Moab. Now Eglon was a very fat man. ¹⁸When Ehud had finished presenting the tribute, he sent the people who carried the tribute on their way. ¹⁹But he himself turned back at the sculptured stones near Gilgal, and said, 'I have a secret message for you, O king.' So the king said, 'Silence!' and all his attendants went out from his presence. ²⁰Ehud came to him, while he was sitting alone in his cool roof-chamber, and said, 'I have a message from God for you.' So he rose from his seat. ²¹Then Ehud reached with his left hand, took the sword from his right thigh, and thrust it into Eglon's belly; ²²the hilt also went in after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out of his belly; and the dirt came out. ²³Then Ehud went out into the vestibule, and closed the doors of the roof-chamber on him, and locked them.

²⁴After he had gone, the servants came. When they saw that the doors of the roof-chamber were locked, they thought, 'He must be relieving himself in the cool chamber.' ²⁵So they waited until they were embarrassed. When he still did not open the doors of the roof-chamber, they took the key and opened them. There was their lord lying dead on the floor. ²⁶Ehud escaped while they delayed, and passed beyond the sculptured stones, and escaped to Seirah. ²⁷When he arrived, he sounded the trumpet in the hill country of Ephraim; and the Israelites went down with him from the hill country, having him at their head. ²⁸He said to them, 'Follow after me; for the Lord has given your enemies the Moabites into your hand.' So they went down after him, and seized the fords of the Jordan against the Moabites, and allowed no one to cross over. ²⁹At that time they killed about ten thousand of the Moabites, all strong, able-bodied men; no one escaped. ³⁰So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest for eighty years.

Reader The Word of the Lord.
People *Thanks be to God.*

GOSPEL

Please stand as you are able.

Gospeller The Holy Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ according to John.
People *Glory to you, Lord Christ.*

John 21:1–9

¹ After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. ² Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. ³ Simon Peter said to them, 'I am going fishing.' They said to him, 'We will go with you.' They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

⁴ Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. ⁵ Jesus said to them, 'Children, you have no fish, have you?' They answered him, 'No.' ⁶ He said to them, 'Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.' So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. ⁷ That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, 'It is the Lord!' When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the lake. ⁸ But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

⁹ When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread.

Gospeller The Gospel of the Lord.
People *Praise to you, Lord Christ.*

SERMON THE REVEREND JOHN CAMPBELL, CURATE

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Reader The Lord be with you.

People *And also with you.*

Reader Let us pray.

I ask your prayers for God's people throughout the world; for our Bishop(s); for this gathering; and for all ministers and people. Pray for the Church. *Silence*

I ask your prayers for peace; for goodwill among nations; and for the well-being of all people, especially those suffering from COVID-19, those caring for them, and those working on treatments. Pray for justice and peace. *Silence*

I ask your prayers for the poor, the sick, the hungry, the oppressed, those on the prayer list of our parish, and those in prison. Pray for those in any need or trouble, especially victims of Gulf Coast hurricanes and Western wildfires. *Silence*

I ask your prayers for all who seek God, or a deeper knowledge of him. Pray that they may find and be found by him. *Silence*

I ask your prayers for the departed. Pray for those who have died, especially Kay Prothro, aunt of Barbara Frazell; Russ Peterson, friend of Deborah O'Neil; and Maggie Straub, friend of Phyllis Day. *Silence*

Praise God for those in every generation in whom Christ has been honored. Pray that we may have grace to glorify Christ in our own day. *Silence*

O Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of your people; in the multitude of your mercies, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help; for you are gracious, O lover of souls, and to you we give glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and for ever. **Amen.**

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

OFFERTORY

Celebrant

Walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us, an offering and sacrifice to God.

We are grateful for your tax-deductible contributions, which enable us to continue our work.
Click [here](#) to give on-line; or text a dollar amount followed by the word "pledge" to 833-948-2161;
or mail a check to: St. Luke's on the Lake Episcopal Church | 5600 RR 620 N | Austin, TX 78732

OFFERTORY SONG

DOXOLOGY

The gifts are presented and placed on the Altar.

Celebrant And now as our Savior Christ has taught us, we are bold to say,

Celebrant and People say together

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy Name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses,**

*as we forgive those
who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
for ever and ever. Amen.*

A GENERAL THANKSGIVING

Celebrant and People say together

Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love.

We thank you for the blessing of family and friends, and for the loving care which surrounds us on every side.

We thank you for setting us at tasks which demand our best efforts, and for leading us to accomplishments which satisfy and delight us.

We thank you also for those disappointments and failures that lead us to acknowledge our dependence on you alone.

Above all, we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ; for the truth of his Word and the example of his life; for his steadfast obedience, by which he overcame temptation; for his dying, through which he overcame death; and for his rising to life again, in which we are raised to the life of your kingdom.

Grant us the gift of your Spirit, that we may know him and make him known; and through him, at all times and in all places, may give thanks to you in all things. Amen.

BLESSING

Celebrant

The blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be among you this day and remain with you for ever. ***Amen.***

DISMISSAL

Celebrant Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

People ***Thanks be to God.***

WORSHIP MINISTERS

Preacher & Celebrant: *The Reverend John Campbell, Curate* | Reader: *Kelsey Cooper* | Technology Support: *Brad Powell*

PARISH PRAYER LIST

Contact office@stlukesonthelake.org to add yourself or a loved one to this list.

Names remain on this list for four weeks unless otherwise requested.

Names of those who have died are read during Prayers of the People for two weeks.

Comfort and heal all those who suffer in body, mind, or spirit; give them courage and hope in their troubles, and bring them the joy of your salvation, especially:

These Members and Loved Ones Serving Our Country: Amos, Brian, Christine F., Christine M., Christopher, Isabelle, Jacob, Jason, Mark, Marshall, Phillip, Raymond, Russell, Scott, Travis, Weston.

These Members and Loved Ones Who Are COVID-19 Heroes: Anna, April, Aurelia, Bethany, Beau, Brenda, Brett, Christine, Daryl, Dennis, Dustin, Elizabeth, Jason, Jenny, Jim, Laura, Lucia, Michelle, Niki, Noël, Pito, Rick & Wendy, Riley, Ryan, Sherry, Sterling, Tamara.

Those Whose Needs Have Been Made Known to Us: Allen, Becky, Beverly, Breese, Caitlin, Carol, Carol & Ross, Cathy, Chris G., Chris M., Christy and David, Corinne, Craig, Dana, Deborah, Donnie, Eleanor, Elle & Jared, George, Hester, Joan, JoAnne, John F., John H., John & Suzy, Karen, Kay, Julia & Jack, Kristi, Marilyn, Mark, Mary, Mary Alice, Nelle, Pat, Rachel, the Family of Lauren Hinton Kirk, the Clement Family, the Labit Family, the Roberts Family, the Watson Family, the Yawn Family.

Those Who Have Died: Kay Prothro, aunt of Barbara Frazell; Russ Peterson, friend of Deborah O'Neil; Maggie Straub, friend of Phyllis Day.

All St. Luke's Ministry and Mission Partners, including our St. Luke's workers in the field: K & K & children, V.B..

The Staff of Dell Children's Hospital, especially those serving patients in PICU, Mental Health, and 3-Central.

DOROTHY L. SAYERS

APOLOGIST AND SPIRITUAL WRITER, 1957

Dorothy Leigh Sayers was an English writer and scholar, born at Oxford in 1893, the only child of an Anglican clergyman. She studied medieval literature at Oxford (Somerville College), being one of the first women to graduate (1915) from that university. Her first published writings were two volumes of verse,

- 1916 *Op. 1*
[**Note:** "*Opus*" is Latin for a work, especially an artistic production.]
- 1919 [*Catholic Tales and Christian Songs*](#)

Here (from memory) is the start of a poem from the former volume:

Christ walks the world again, his lute upon his back,
his red robe worn to tatters, his riches gone to rack.
The wind that wakes the morning blows his hair about his face,
and his arms and legs are ragged with the thorny briar's embrace,
for the hunt is up behind him, and his sword is at his side.
Christ the bonny outlaw walks the whole world wide,
singing: "Lady, lady, will you come away with me,
to lie among the bracken, and eat the barley bread?
We shall see new suns arise, in golden far-off skies,
for the son of God and woman has not where to lay his head."

She worked for several years writing advertising copy, until she was able to support herself by the sale of her books and stories.

In the following (selective) list of her works, I have made **bold** the ones that I think to be particularly good.

Detective Fiction:

Miss Sayers's first commercially successful writings were detective fiction, and she eventually rose to the very top of that field. In Howard Haycraft's *The Art of The Mystery Story*, a collection of every notable essay on the detective story written before 1948, her name is mentioned more frequently than that of anyone except Sherlock Holmes. She wrote mostly about Lord Peter Wimsey, a wealthy gentleman and scholar, lover of rare books and fine wines, who solved detective cases because he enjoyed it, and was good at it, and because it was a job worth doing.

In case anyone is wondering what a writer of detective fiction is doing on a list of memorable Christian writers, I reply that a detective story can present the thoughtful reader with many observations and questions about the nature of good and evil, about difficult moral choices, and about ways of dealing with others. Detective stories, like books of any other kind, vary in quality. When you open a novel by Sayers, and find that the first words are

Thou blind man's mark, thou fool's self-chosen snare,
Fond fancy's scum, and dregs of scattered thought,
Band of all evils, cradle of causeless care,
Thou web of will, whose end is never wrought,



Desire, desire! I have too dearly bought,
With price of mangled mind, thy worthless ware.

you know that you are not reading a run-of-the-mill whodunit.

Her Wimsey books include:

- 1923 *Whose Body?* In this book Sayers is in the process of creating the character of Lord Peter, and accordingly she tells us that he is witty, instead of simply recording his conversation and leaving us to think, "How witty he is!" (The reader will have noticed the same approach in *A Study in Scarlet*, the first of the Sherlock Holmes stories.) The story begins as a respectable architect walks into his bathroom in the morning and finds there the body of a complete stranger, naked except for a pair of pince-nez.
- 1926 *Clouds of Witness* Lord Peter's brother, the Duke of Denver, is tried for murder in the House of Lords.
- **1927 *Unnatural Death (or The Dawson Pedigree)*** An elderly cancer patient dies suddenly, her death not explained by her illness. However, no means and no motive suggest themselves. Lord Peter is assisted by the elderly Miss Climpson, a devout Christian.
- 1928 *The Unpleasantness at The Bellona Club* A retired general is found dead in his armchair at his club. The inheritance of a considerable fortune depends on the time of his death. Lord Peter is asked to investigate.
- 1928 *Lord Peter Views The Body* Here we have a collection of twelve short stories. By and large, I prefer Miss Sayers's novels to her short stories, but some of the stories are good, and I know of none that I begrudge the time reading.
- **1930 *Strong Poison*** The poet Philip Boyes is dead of arsenic. Circumstances point to the detective novelist Harriet Vane, his ex-lover, who has just rejected him, since it seems impossible that he could have ingested the arsenic anywhere but at a brief meeting with her. Lord Peter sees her at her trial, falls in love at first sight, is convinced of her innocence, finds the real murderer, and the book ends. Harriet (unlike the fair maiden whom the knight has just rescued from the jaws of the dragon) is not prepared to fall into his arms in a frenzy of love and gratitude, and their working out of their personal relationships forms the sub-plot for some subsequent books.
- 1931 *Five Red Herrings (or Suspicious Characters)* Lord Peter is vacationing in Scotland at Kirkcudbright, a haven for fishermen and painters. A painter, the most unpopular man in town, is found murdered, and six other painters are logical suspects. Five are red herrings (i.e. distractions or misleading possibilities), and the sixth is guilty. Kirkcudbright is a real locality (a favorite vacation spot of the author), and the story conforms to local geography.
- **1932 *Have His Carcase*** Harriet Vane, on holiday, is walking the seacoast, takes a nap on the beach, and wakes to find herself near a corpse with its throat cut and the blood still fresh, but no murderer in sight. The plot is full of timetables and a cryptogram, as Peter and Harriet work together to find the murderer, and in the process explore their own feelings for one another.
- 1933 *Hangman's Holiday* Here we have another collection of short stories: four with Lord Peter Wimsey; six with another detective, Montague Egg, a traveling salesman for a company selling wines and spirits; and two other stories.
- 1933 *Murder Must Advertise* A copy-writer dies under curious circumstances, and Lord Peter takes his job under an assumed name in order to investigate. He is thrust into the unreal world of the drug culture, and the differently but equally unreal world of advertising, but manages to keep his head in both.
- **1934 *The Nine Tailors*** Lord Peter's auto breaks down in the fen country of East Anglia, and he is offered the hospitality of the local parsonage. He ends up helping to ring in the New Year with a full peal on the 8 tower bells of the parish church, Fenchurch St Paul's. Each bell was rung about 15000 times -- nine hours of continuous ringing! (Change ringing, an old English tradition, involves ringing bells in a mathematical pattern. See "change ringing" in an encyclopedia.)

The year is that of the influenza epidemic, and the parish is hit hard. At the death of anyone in the parish, the lowest (tenor) bell tolls his passing. (The words "toll," "tail", and "tell" come from the same root and have related meanings, referring either to a narrative or to the numbering of something. Compare the similarly

ambiguous meanings of "count", "account", "recount", "number", "score", etc.) First, nine strokes for a man or six for a woman (hence the expression "Nine tailors make a man," which is often misunderstood to mean something like "the apparel oft proclaims the man"), then N rapid strokes for the age of the dead person, and then single strokes at half-minute intervals for half an hour.

The corpse of a stranger is found hastily buried in the churchyard, and Lord Peter is asked to identify the victim, and the murderer. The background of the novel includes bellringing and parish life in the fen country of East Anglia, where the author herself spent her childhood as the daughter of a clergyman. This is one of my favorites.

- **1935 *Gaudy Night*** The background for this novel is Oxford. Harriet Vane returns to her old college for a reunion, and finds that someone in the college is writing anonymous hate mail to various residents, and committing acts of vandalism on a minor but steadily escalating level. Harriet is asked to help identify the perpetrator. The novel reflects Sayers's love of Oxford, and her commitment to scholarship and the life of the intellect. Lord Peter joins her part way through, and their presence in a place where intellectual honesty is honored and valued helps Harriet to an honest and unflinching look at herself and at Peter.
- **1937 *Busman's Honeymoon*** In this novel, Peter and Harriet are married, go off to spend their honeymoon in a quiet cottage, and find there the corpse of the previous occupant. The author celebrates the glory of love between husband and wife, and explores the notion of commitment to another person and what it implies. This is the last of the Peter Wimsey novels, although a few short stories follow.
- **1939 *In The Teeth of The Evidence*** This is a collection of short stories. My favorite is "Dilemma", which does not involve Wimsey or Egg, and is not exactly a detective story.

That concludes the Peter Wimsey books and stories.

- **1930 *The Documents in The Case*** (with Robert Eustace). This murder mystery is presented in the form of letters and other documents written by members of a troubled family and a few persons close to them. The novel explores personal relationships, and the question of whether the phenomenon of life is reducible to chemical terms.

Plays:

- **1936 *Busman's Honeymoon*** (with Muriel St. Clare Byrne). This was the original form of the novel of the same name described above. It became a film starring Robert Montgomery and Constance Cummings. Co-writing it seems to have interested Miss Sayers in the challenge of writing plays.
- **1937 *The Zeal of Thy House*** Canterbury Cathedral commissioned a play each year to be performed at the cathedral. (T.S.Eliot's *Murder in The Cathedral*, a play about the martyrdom of Thomas a Becket, had been a play in this series.) Miss Sayers wrote two plays for Canterbury. *The Zeal of Thy House* deals with the architect who rebuilt the central portion (the choir) of Canterbury Cathedral after the fire of 1176. The play deals with pride of workmanship, pride of possession, the creative imagination, the nature of the creative act, the doctrine of the Incarnation, and the doctrine of the Trinity. For a further discussion of the Trinity, see her book *The Mind of The Maker*, listed below.
- **1939 *The Devil to Pay*** is Miss Sayers's second Canterbury play. It retells the story of Doctor Faustus, who sold his soul to the devil, and how God dealt with him at the last. The moral is: evil cannot be undone, but only purged and redeemed.
- **1940 *He That Should Come*** This is a Nativity play, originally for radio production, although it has been adapted for the stage. While most Nativity plays take what may be called a devotional approach, Sayers gives us the story of the birth of Jesus in (except for a prologue and an epilogue) a straightforwardly naturalistic setting, in the bustle of a crowded inn, where most of those present have no idea that anything particularly significant is going on.
- **1942 *The Man Born to Be King*** After the success of *He That Should Come*, the BBC invited Miss Sayers to write a series of twelve radio plays on the life of Jesus. She did so, and roused some protests from those who

thought it irreverent to make Biblical characters speak ordinary (as opposed to King James) English, and in general behave like real people. She replies that her point is precisely that the Incarnation really happened -- that God took human nature upon him, and lived as a real man surrounded by real people who spoke the ordinary language of their day. Each of the twelve plays is preceded by Sayers's comments, often dealing with the historical background of the incidents, and the theological issues raised by them. These are, in my judgement, outstandingly insightful and thought-provoking.

- **1946 *The Just Vengeance*** This play was commissioned for the 750th anniversary of Lichfield Cathedral. It is a play about the Atonement, not in the sense of being a Passion Play, but in that it discusses the theology of the Atonement, borrowing heavily from the ideas of Dante.
- **1951 *The Emperor Constantine*** This pageant was commissioned to celebrate the 2000'th anniversary of the city of Colchester, the presumed birthplace of Helena, the mother of the Emperor Constantine. It covers Constantine's rise to power, his conversion to Christianity, the Council of Nicea, Constantine's family troubles, and the end of his life. It deals in dramatic form with the theological issues of Nicea (whether Jesus was truly God or just a very important agent of God). As a play, with battle scenes, and council scenes, it can, if desired, be performed with "a cast of thousands", and presumably enabled anyone in Colchester who wanted to be in the pageant an opportunity to carry a spear. All in all, it is good history, and good theology, and a thoughtful discussion of the dilemmas facing a Christian in a position of power.

Non-Fiction:

- **1941 *The Mind of The Maker*** In this seminal work, Sayers discusses the psychology of the creative mind at work in producing a novel or sculpture or other work, as an aid to understanding the theological doctrine of the Trinity, and the latter as an aid to understanding the former.
- **1946 *Unpopular Opinions: Twenty-One Essays*** Here we have provocative essays on theology, literature, and other subjects. It is now, unfortunately, out of print, but worth searching for. Many of the essays were subsequently reprinted in a collection called *The Whimsical Christian* (see below).
- **1971 *Are Women Human?*** This is a small book consisting of just two essays, reprinted from the preceding work. The publisher is Eerdmans. The essays take a very different tack from that of most feminist tracts, and Sayers herself explicitly dissociates herself from "feminism," but I have known several feminists to say, "This is the work that really succeeds in saying what feminism is all about. This puts into words what I have been trying to formulate for years." Sayers begins by quoting a writer's observation that bus seats on the side next the curb are always filled first, "because men find them more comfortable on account of the slant of the roadbed, and women find that they can get a better view of the shop-windows." She notes that men are given a "human" reason for their preference, while women are given a "female" reason for theirs. She argues that every human ought to be accepted first as a person in his/her own right, with sex considered only when relevant. She does not say that it is never relevant, or that there can never be any rational disagreement about when it is relevant. She does deny the frequent assumption that when one is considering a woman it is always relevant.
- **1947 *Creed or Chaos*** A collection of seven essays. All but the second and sixth are also found in *The Whimsical Christian*, listed below. There is considerable overlap among the essays (originally published separately).
 - "The Greatest Drama Ever Staged."
 - "The Triumph Of Easter."
 - "The Dogma Is The Drama."
 - "Creed Or Chaos."
 - "Strong Meat."
 - "Why Work?"
 - "The Other Six Deadly Sins."

Perhaps most notable is the 1938 essay, "The Dogma is the Drama," in which she states that Christian dogma is often thought dull because people have no idea what it affirms. If they understood the teachings found in the Creeds, they might eagerly embrace them, or indignantly reject them as too far-fetched to be considered, or wistfully reject them as too good to be true, but they would not be bored. (She gives a satirical account of what the average moderately educated non-Christian thinks that the Church teaches.)

- **1954 *Introductory Papers on Dante*** The title explains the contents. I add only that they are marvelous papers, a superb exposition of Dante as poet, theologian, and lover, by a first-rate scholar who knows what she is talking about.
- **1957 *Further Papers on Dante*** More of the same.
- **1963 *The Poetry of Search and The Poetry of Statement*** (Gollanz). This I had not heard of until a few weeks ago (Dec 1995), when I saw a copy in a private library. I had not, alas, the opportunity to do more than glance at it. The title essay concerns poets who ask, "What is the meaning of life?" and poets who proclaim, "This is the meaning of life!" and critics who wish to exclude one class or the other from the ranks of true poets. Another essay concerns the Vision of Glory, the fading of the Vision, and the return of the Vision, as seen in Wordsworth, Dante, and other poets.
- **1987 *The Whimsical Christian***. This is a collection (made after her death) of 18 of her essays, mostly reprinted from earlier collections. It was earlier published as *Christian Letters to a Post-Christian World*. The present title marks it as part of a series of books containing short selections from various Christian authors, such as:
 - *The Joyful Christian* (C.S. Lewis)
 - *The Visionary Christian* (more C.S. Lewis)
 - *The Martyred Christian* (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
 - *The Newborn Christian* (J B Phillips).

The essays in *The Whimsical Christian* include the following:

- "Selections from the Pantheon Papers." A parody written for *PUNCH*.
- "The Greatest Drama Ever Staged." On the Incarnation.
- "Strong Meat."
- "The Dogma is the Drama." Most non-Christians, and most Christians, do not realize how exciting the official Christian creed really is.
- "What Do We Believe?"
- "Creed or Chaos?"
- "A Vote of Thanks to Cyrus." Sayers remembers realizing as a child that the Cyrus mentioned in the Bible is the same Cyrus found in her history books, and that the Bible is about things that actually happened in this world, not a tale off in some other dimension. (Along the same lines, a teacher in the New York schools reports the electric effect on his students when he was telling them how the early American settlers sailed across the Atlantic, and then pointed out to them that the Atlantic was the same body of salt water that they could see from the harbor a short distance away. It had never occurred to most of them that there was any connection between their history books and reality.)
- "The Dates in *The Red-Headed League*." This is one of many essays, in a tradition begun by Ronald Knox, analyzing the Sherlock Holmes stories using the techniques applied by many scholars to the analysis of the Scriptures.
- "Toward a Christian Esthetic."
- "Creative Mind."
- "The Image of God."
- "Problem Picture."
- "Christian Morality."
- "The Other Six Deadly Sins." The traditional list of Seven Capital Sins, reading from most serious to least serious, is: Pride, Envy, Anger, Sloth, Avarice, Gluttony, and Lust. However, many persons have gotten the impression that the Church is concerned only with the last of these. Sayers undertakes to remind her readers of the other six.
- "Dante and Charles Williams." Charles Williams, poet, novelist, critic, historian, theologian, and mystic of the Affirmative Way, first got Sayers interested in Dante. She here writes about Williams's interpretation of Dante.
- "The Writing and Reading of Allegory."
- "Oedipus Simplex: Freedom and Fate in Folklore and Fiction."
- "The Faust Legend and the Idea of the Devil."

Translations:

- 1929 *Tristan in Brittany*, from Old French.
- **1957 *The Song of Roland***, from Old French. This is the story of Charlemagne's invasion of Spain and his battles against the Saracens, and in particular of how his elite guard, headed by his nephew Roland, was killed in battle as the result of treachery, and how Charlemagne avenged their deaths. It is an epic poem about the struggle between Christians and their pagan enemies. It is historically inaccurate, and inaccurate in its portrayal of Islamic theology (errors by the original medieval poet, not by Sayers), but sound in its treatment of Christian issues.
- **1949, 1957, 1962 *The (Divine) Comedy of Dante Alighieri***. This translation from the Italian of one of the world's greatest works of literature and of theology is far and away my favorite English version of Dante. Even those who prefer another translation (or who read the poem in Italian) will find the notes invaluable. For details, see the biographical sketch of Dante, listed at 15 September.

Dorothy L. Sayers died 17 December 1957, leaving her translation of the *Comedy* unfinished. The last thirteen cantos and the notes and commentary to the *Paradiso* were supplied by her friend and fellow Dante scholar, Dr. Barbara Reynolds.

by James Kiefer

http://www.satucket.com/lectionary/Dorothy_Sayers.html