



Chapters into Verse: Poetry in English Inspired by the Bible: Volume 2: Gospels to Revelation

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For generations, poets have turned to the Bible for insight and inspiration. What did so many creative minds find in scripture? Is the Bible still a vital source of poetic inspirations?

Chapters Into Verse is the first comprehensive collection ever made of poems written in English inspired by the Bible. A groundbreaking anthology, it introduces readers to a distinct heritage of English poetry: the scriptural tradition. Though frequently ignored and sometimes suppressed, this tradition rivals the classical and is every bit as venerable.

Drawing a unique map of the history of English poetry, the two volumes of *Chapters Into Verse* survey and define the literary legacy of the Scriptures from the fourteenth century to the present. Each volume is arranged in scriptural order, and each poem is preceded by the biblical passage that inspired it. Thus readers can conveniently witness the various ways sacred text has sparked the imagination of poets throughout the ages.

Volume II follows the Gospels (harmonized) through Revelation. The collection features verses both famous and unfamiliar, from John Donne's meditative masterpieces to D.H. Lawrence's quirky expostulations. The editors have included poems by virtually all the prominent religious poets--among them, John Milton, George Herbert, Henry Vaughan, Edward Taylor, Christopher Smart, and Gerard Manley Hopkins. Included, too, are devotional and visionary works from a wide range of vintage poets--Edmund Spenser, Alexander Pope, Robert Burns, William Blake, Walt Whitman, Emily Dickinson, Christina Rossetti, Alfred Tennyson, and Robert Browning.

Proving that the Bible is just as powerful a source of inspiration today as it was in the past, the collection assembles a mixed congregation of modern and contemporary poets, such as Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Elizabeth Bishop, Delmore Schwartz, Dylan Thomas, Robert Frost, Countee Cullen, William Butler Yeats, John Berryman, Robert Graves, Sylvia Plath, Allen Ginsberg, Lee Murray, Amy Clampitt, and Richard Wilbur.

Of enduring interest to readers of both scripture *and* literature, this anthology illuminates key passages of the New Testament. The measured speech and inspired leaps of poetry offer a spirited alternative to the textual exegesis usually

supplied by prose commentary. As such, *Chapters Into Verse* is truly a poets' Bible. In selection after selection, readers will encounter an astonishing variety of religious experiences, as a host of poets from many eras and many backgrounds respond to Holy Scripture spiritually, profoundly, and imaginatively.

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Editorial Review

Review

'The editor's range has been extremely wide ... I cannot imagine the work as a whole being better done.' Peter Levi, Catholic Herald A wealth of literature and poetry is collected by Robert Atwan in these volumes which will last the reader for many years. In common with all anthologies there is a great deal which can be found in other collections. It follows a great tradition of such books and will prove to be a valuable devotional aid, much appreciated by those with wider poetic appreciation.' John Dale, Methodist Recorder 'Every now and again an anthology appears which manages to open one's eyes to a new aspect of literature. This two-volume collection is one such, a thick, rich anthology of poetry inspired by the Bible. Imagine the difference if you gave this to your vicar. As he prepared the week's sermon, besides looking up the Hebrew or Greek meaning, he could also choose a relevant piece of poetry. Even if the sermon was rubbish, the congregation would get a bit of decent verse.' The Sign, February 1994 'Now that so many readers come to literature entirely ignorant of its Christian heritage, this collection fills an unfortunately necessary gap.' English Studies, Volume 75, Number 6, November 1994

About the Author

Robert Atwan is the founder and series editor of the annual *Best American Essays*. The editor of numerous anthologies, he has written on the ancient literature of the Near East and his critical essays and poetry reviews have appeared in many national periodicals. **Laurance Wieder** is the author of several volumes of poetry, including *The Coronet of Tours; No Harm Done; The Last Century: Selected Poems*; and *One Hundred Fifty Psalms*, a complete psalter. He has taught Bible and Ancient Authors at Cornell University.

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