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## Review of C. S. Lewis' Top Ten Influential Books and Authors (volumes 1 & 2)

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Above all, the book's contribution toward a greater appreciation of C.S. Lewis' post-conversion life is invaluable. Readers will not be disappointed.

JENNIFER RAIMUNDO  
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Will Vaus, *C. S. Lewis' Top Ten Influential Books and Authors*, Volume 1 (Hamden, 2014). 165 pages. \$14.99. ISBN: 9781935688082.

Will Vaus, *C. S. Lewis' Top Ten Influential Books and Authors*, Volume 2 (Hamden, 2015). 253 pages. \$14.99. ISBN: 9781935688099.

Will Vaus is a gifted and energetic man. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, he has pastored churches in California, the Carolinas, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia, and he currently serves the Stowe Community Church in Vermont. His commitment to the local church notwithstanding, he has found time to write a dozen books and travel widely speaking on C. S. Lewis. In recent years Vaus has emerged as one of the leading authorities on the celebrated English author. An author of many books on Lewis, Will Vaus is probably best known for *Mere Theology: A Guide to the Thought of C. S. Lewis*. Most recently this prolific author has produced two volumes titled *C. S. Lewis' Top Ten Influential Books and Authors*. These are important books that belong in the library of every student wishing to learn more about the life and writing of Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Vaus is keenly interested in the question: what has made C. S. Lewis such a great writer with so large a following? His presupposition is that the answer lies in large part to a question asked of Professor Lewis in 1962 by a writer with *The Christian Century*: "What books did most to shape your vocational attitude and your philosophy of life?" Lewis responded by offering a list of ten books: George MacDonald's *Phantasies*, G. K. Chesterton's *The Everlasting Man*, Virgil's *The Aeneid*, George Herbert's *The Temple*, William Wordsworth's *The Prelude*, Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*, Boethius' *The Consolation of Philosophy*, James Boswell's *Life of Samuel Johnson*, Charles Williams' *Descent into Hell*, and Arthur James Balfour's *Theism and Humanism*. Vaus is convinced that these books

and authors so greatly shaped Lewis' thinking and writing that we must carefully examine them in order to understand the thinking and creativity of the celebrated Oxford scholar.

In Volume One Vaus examines the first three authors on the list—MacDonald, Chesterton, and Virgil. He then presents an overview of Professor Lewis' reading of each author, including a brief biography of each author as well as a synopsis of each book. In Volume Two, the same approach is taken with the next three on the list—Herbert, Wordsworth, and Otto.

No serious student of Mr. Lewis' life and writing is unfamiliar with this list of books or the fact that he often celebrated their impact on his thinking. But Vaus' contribution lies in the clear, concise, and readable way he has presented the first six authors on Lewis' top ten list. The cameo portraits of the authors and their books are helpful summaries. Furthermore, Vaus' most important contribution lies in each section devoted to Lewis' reading of the author. Readers of Lewis' books will not find much new in this two volume set. On the other hand, these two books are well-written, carefully organized, and quite thoughtfully interpreted. Indeed, I teach classes on Lewis, and I will certainly turn to Vaus in order to find concise summaries. Therefore, I thank Will Vaus, and I urge him to publish a third volume covering the last four authors and books on Professor Lewis' list.

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