

**NON-
FICTION**

RELIGION



The New Testament

Selections from

The Bible

(The Authorized Version)

Read by

**The Very Rev.
Hugh Dickinson**

**Edward de Souza
Dermot Kerrigan
Heathcote Williams**

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MATTHEW *

1	Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise (Chapter 1)	3:30
2	Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem (Chapter 2)	3:45
3	In those days came John the Baptist (Chapter 3)	2:33
4	Then was Jesus led up of the Spirit (Chapter 4)	4:24
5	And seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain (Chapter 5)	6:51
6	Take heed that ye do not your alms before me (Chapter 6)	5:19
7	Judge not, that ye be not judged. (Chapter 7)	4:40
8	When he was come down from the mountain (Chapter 8)	5:01
9	And he entered into a ship and passed over (Chapter 9)	5:08
10	And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples (Chapter 10)	5:26
11	And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples (Chapter 11)	3:54
12	At that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn (Chapter 12)	5:30
13	The same day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the seaside (Chapter 13)	8:39
14	At that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus (Chapter 14)	5:30
15	Then Jesus went thence and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon (Chapter 15)	1:55
16	When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, (Chapter 16)	2:59
17	And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James and John his brother (Chapter 17)	4:04

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST MATTHEW (cont.) *

18	At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus saying (Chapter 18)	4:15
19	And it came to pass that when Jesus had finished these sayings (Chapter 19)	4:42
20	For the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man (Chapter 20)	3:19
21	And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem (Chapter 21)	6:59
22	Then went the Pharisees and took counsel (Chapter 22)	4:25
23	Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away (Chapter 24)	3:36
24	Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins (Chapter 25)	7:44
25	And it came to pass, when Jesus had finished (Chapter 26)	12:22
26	When the morning was come... (Chapter 27)	11:17
27	In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn (Chapter 28)	4:01

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST LUKE *

28	John the Baptist's birth is foretold (Chapter 1)	4:05
29	The Annunciation (Chapter 1)	7:47
30	The Birth of Christ (Chapter 2)	3:14
31	– The Birth of Christ (cont.)	5:21
32	The Good Samaritan	2:33
33	Mary and Martha	0:56
34	The Parable of the Prodigal Son	3:58
35	The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus	2:34
36	The Resurrection of Christ	7:48

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST JOHN *

37	– The Incarnation	5:37
38	The Marriage in Cana	1:49
39	God's Love for the World	3:45
40	The Woman Taken in Adultery	1:51
41	The Resurrection of Lazarus	5:15
42	The Way, The Truth and the Life	10:29
43	The Passion, Death and Resurrection of Christ	7:10
44	Then Pilate therefore took Jesus	6:30
45	And after this Joseph of Arimathaea	3:58
46	Then the same day at evening	2:27
47	After these things Jesus shewed himself again.	6:07

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES •

48	Christ's Ascension into Heaven	5:21
49	The Descent of the Holy Ghost	1:52
50	Peter's Sermon	5:38
51	The Apostles are Imprisoned	5:00
52	The Martyrdom of Stephen	4:57
53	Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch	3:22
54	The Conversion of Saul	5:30
55	Peter Heals Aeneas and Raises Tabitha	2:04
56	Peter Defends the Conversion of the Gentiles	4:14
57	Herod Persecutes the Apostles	4:51
58	Peter Preaches at Athens	4:04
59	Paul in Ephesus	4:54
60	Paul Bids Farewell to the Elders of Ephesus	3:55
61	Paul comes to Jerusalem	4:50
62	Paul is Assaulted in the Temple and Arrested	5:15
63	Paul Appeals to Caesar	6:39

THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES •

64	– Faith Without Works is Dead	4:28
65	Patience and Prayer	3:48

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF PETER •

66	– An Exhortation to Unity and Love	2:05
67	Be Sober, Be Vigilant	2:26

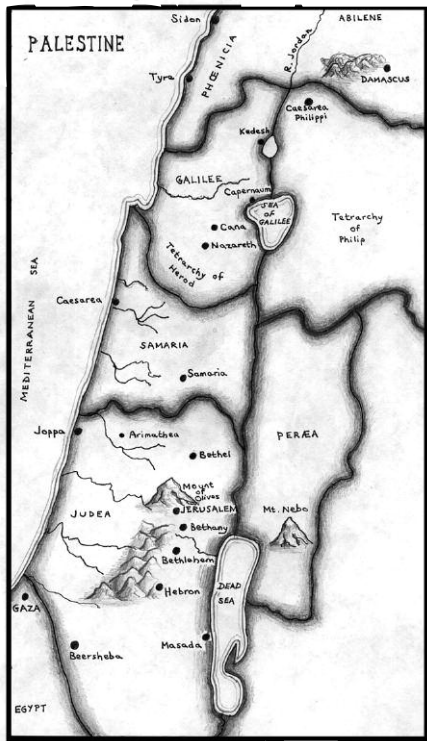
	THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN *	
68	– Fellowship One with Another	2:01
69	God's Singular Love for Us	4:11
70	God Is Love	4:50
	THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE ROMANS +	
71	– The Gift of God is Eternal Life	8:26
72	An Exhortation to Holiness	3:29
73	Love is the Fulfilling of the Law	3:27
	THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS +	
74	– The Gifts of the Spirit	2:46
75	Faith, Hope and Charity	2:23
76	Resurrection	9:07
	THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE EPHESIANS +	
77	– Be Ye Kind One to Another	2:24
78	The Whole Armour of God	2:12
	THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE PHILIPPIANS +	
79	– Paul Blesses the Brethren	2:19
	THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE THESSALONIANS +	
80		5:50
	THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE TO THE HEBREWS	
81		2:27
82	Why Christ assumed human nature	4:02

THE REVELATION OF ST JOHN THE DIVINE

83	What John was Commanded to Write to the Seven Churches	5:13
84	John's Vision: The Book Sealed with Seven Seals	9:39
85	The Opening of the Seventh Seal	12:07
86	War in Heaven	12:33
87	The Hour of God's Judgement is Come	7:11
88	Babylon the Great is Fallen	5:53
89	King of Kings and Lord of Lords	8:42
90	The Book of Life	4:20
91	The New Jerusalem	2:46
		10:45

Total time: 7:34:16

- * Read by Hugh Dickinson + Read by Edward de Souza
• Read by Dermot Kerrigan # Read by Heathcote Williams



Map by Alex Keenlyside.

The New Testament

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(The Authorized Version)

The New Testament

The New Testament is a collection of writings dating mainly from the second half of the first century AD. Each book is in some way concerned with the life, teaching and significance of Jesus Christ, a Jew who was born some time during the period 7–4 BC, died around AD 30, and is regarded by millions of Christians worldwide as the founder of their religion. *The New Testament* forms the second part of the Christian Bible and, for Christians, develops and fulfils the Jewish narratives and doctrine of the *Old Testament*, itself a very much longer and more comprehensive set of documents.

Who was Jesus?

Setting aside for the moment the question of religious faith, there can be no reasonable doubt that a powerfully influential Jewish religious teacher called Jesus lived and taught during the time in question, and that he was crucified by the Romans. At least three historians make

reference to Jesus, although it is true that they are all writing very much later, somewhere around AD 100. Tacitus mentions that Christ was executed by Pontius Pilate; Suetonius lays the blame for a Jewish rebellion in Rome on Christ's teachings; and Josephus, himself a Jewish historian, provides the most detailed early account by a non-Christian, although some scholars believe that this section may have been inserted by a Christian copyist. Beyond these references, we must rely on what non-Christians would clearly regard as prejudiced evidence: the *New Testament* itself. According to this, certain common factors emerge: Jesus came from Galilee, an area of Palestine then regarded as somewhat 'beyond the pale' in that it followed Jewish law and custom less rigorously than elsewhere; his foster-father Joseph was a carpenter, and Jesus himself may have been apprenticed to the trade; Jesus' ministry seems to have been confined to, at most, the last three years of his life, by which time he was based in Jerusalem

and had acquired a group of disciples; pressurised by disapproving Jewish traditionalists (notably the Pharisees), Pontius Pilate allowed Jesus to be put to death by crucifixion. Three days after his death, Christ rose from the grave, and over the next month or so appeared to his disciples on more than one occasion before his ascension into heaven. The single event which perhaps holds most meaning for conventional Christian believers is the Resurrection: upon this are founded doctrines of salvation and eternal life. Clearly we have now entered an area where faith rather than factual proof is required, although it is also fair to say that many modern Christians do not feel compelled to take such miraculous events at face value and are prepared to interpret them symbolically or metaphorically.

The Form and History of the New Testament

The New Testament is conventionally divided into five sections: The Gospels, The Acts of the Apostles, The Epistles of St Paul, Other Epistles, and The Revelation of St John. These sections contain all the canonical books (i.e. officially accepted as 'holy writ'), but it should be pointed out that this canon only finally took shape as late as the tenth century, when Revelation's

place within it was still being disputed. The oldest surviving manuscripts are in Greek, and the most important of these are held to be the Codex Vaticanus and the Codex Sinaiticus which date from the fourth century and are written in uncial (i.e. non-cursive) style. The Gospels are probably not in fact the earliest of the books: that distinction almost certainly belongs to the letters ('epistles') of Paul, the oldest of which (1 Thessalonians) was most likely written some time in AD 50–52. Dating of the Gospels is difficult and controversial, but most scholars now assume that they were first set down in the years between AD 70 and 100. This means that they were susceptible to the influence of Paul's ideas, rather than the other way around, and indeed the characteristic emphasis on taking the faith to the Gentile world appears to confirm this. These late dates also suggest that the Gospels were not actually composed by the men to whom they are attributed, but equally there is no reason why earlier and perhaps eye-witness accounts may not have been incorporated. It must be borne in mind that a Gospel narrative cannot be read as straightforward history in the modern sense: the Gospel writers were only following the conventions of antiquity when they consciously shaped their material to fit the message they were

trying to convey – for instance, the need to show that the words of the *Old Testament* prophets are fulfilled in the life of Jesus. An example would be Matthew placing the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem (very unlikely for a Galilean) because the prophet Micah declared that the Messiah would be born in that town.

The first three Gospels are normally grouped together as the ‘synoptic’ Gospels: in other words, they share a good deal of common material and lend themselves to detailed comparison. Mark’s Gospel is generally regarded as the earliest, while Matthew and Luke are thought to have had access not only to Mark but also to an unknown written source called ‘Q’ (‘Quelle’ = German ‘source’) which accounts for the extra material which they both include, often in virtually identical wording but sometimes rearranged (Matthew, for example, puts a number of sayings together in the Sermon on the Mount, whereas in Luke they are scattered). John’s Gospel lies a little apart from the others, being notable for an almost mystical intensity of tone and an emphasis on personal testimony.

The Acts of the Apostles was written by the same Luke who composed the Gospel of that name, and carries on the story beyond the death and resurrection of Jesus to the foundation of the Church by (mainly)

Peter and Paul. The Epistles of Paul show how the most influential of Christ’s early followers begins to shape and formulate many of the doctrines which have come to be seen as crucial to Christian belief. Not all of these letters are in fact by Paul himself – some are attributed to him by a convention of that time which would allow a follower of Paul to speak or write in his name. The authorship of the other Epistles is not always clear, either: for instance, the letter attributed to James can hardly be by Jesus’ brother, although it may express a version of early Christian thought seen as belonging to a ‘Jamesian’ school. The Revelation of St John is equally clearly not by the same writer as the eponymous Gospel, although it may well be of similar date: the style and content are quite different, and it is easy to see why, with its strange and visionary approach, it took so long to be accepted as canonical.

The Cultural Influence of the New Testament

The narrative power and stylistic beauty of the *New Testament* will be familiar to all devout Christians, but few agnostic readers, or indeed readers of other faiths (remembering here the acknowledgment of Christ’s significance by Muslims) can fail to be moved and fascinated by the way in

which these texts speak with such humanity and intelligence to all: paradoxically, what non-believers might see as errors or inconsistencies can have the effect of emphasising even more strongly the uncanny directness of communication so often evident. One tiny example must suffice: when Jesus has been led away to Caiaphas by night, Peter remains outside, warming himself by a fire. Challenged three times to admit that he is a follower of Jesus, three times he denies the association – and then ‘Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly’ (Matthew 26, v75). The story is in all four Gospels, and thus might seem formulaic or contrived, yet it reads as a heart-rendingly real and concrete example of the kind of human frailty with which we surely must all identify.

We can hardly be surprised if documents which combine strong narrative, an undoubted element of historical truth, and extraordinary originality of thought should prove to have been the theological and intellectual basis of much of Western civilization. This inevitably means in turn that our artistic (and indeed our built) environment everywhere reminds us of the faith which has been dominant in Europe for two thousand years, from the plainest

parish church to the most overwhelming cathedral, from the pictures in our art galleries to the books on our shelves and the musical tradition of which we are inheritors. Since the Church was for many centuries effectively the repository of almost all learning and culture, creative endeavour was equally almost entirely focused on Christian themes and subject matter, certainly until the Renaissance and to some extent beyond. Painting, whether in fresco or on wood or canvas, is in the Middle Ages and afterwards largely dominated by Christian subjects, which were often treated in ways which became hallowed by tradition: pictures of, say, the Deposition would tend to conform to certain patterns of symbol, form and colour, while chancel arches in even the humblest village church would depict the Last Judgment as a grim warning to the sinner – in that sense, Michelangelo’s Sistine Chapel is but the culmination of such a tradition. The Church was the great patron of the arts, or itself the creator – as for instance in the development of plainchant. Music in the Church was a vital daily ingredient in worship right into the eighteenth century, when indeed it reached, arguably, a peak of achievement in the profoundly moving Passion settings of J.S. Bach.

Literature was equally in its thrall: until

the late medieval period, most writing was inevitably religious in its context, at least in part: the Arthurian romances, for example, may be full of adventure and even sexual intrigue, but all is framed by the higher purpose of the quest for the Holy Grail, and it is Lancelot and Guinevere's adultery which will destroy the fellowship of Camelot. Specifically religious and indeed mystical writing was fostered by the self-denying life of the monasteries and convents, and even when humanism begins to challenge orthodoxy, the latter will generally prevail: Faustus may have fascinated us, even commanded our sympathy, but ultimately hell and damnation await him. In English literature, there is (for example) a great outpouring of magnificent religious writing in the seventeenth century: Donne's sermons, George Herbert's poems, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, even Marvell's *The Garden* – all are suffused with a rare combination of powerful feeling and equally powerful intelligence. In our own supposedly rational and scientific century, our need to look beyond the material world is amply demonstrated in works by writers like Charles Williams, C.S. Lewis and Tolkien who often use allegorical forms – perhaps because they are aware that to speak too directly or didactically might alienate a generation taught to see the world in terms of

substance, not spirit.

This Selection

In order to provide a continuous narrative I have chosen to give Matthew's Gospel almost in its entirety, and to provide substantial extracts from Luke and John. Mark is not included because he is in a sense contained within the more comprehensive telling found in Matthew; Luke is used primarily where he does not overlap with Matthew (see, for example, the appearance of the resurrected Christ on the journey to Emmaus), and the different approach offered by John demanded space also. The story of the Passion is represented by the full versions in Matthew and John, and by the Resurrection section of Luke'.

1. The Gospel According to St Matthew

The author incorporates Mark almost completely, but adds (for instance) a full account of Christ's nativity. Matthew was probably a Jewish Christian. He places a strong emphasis on the rejection by his countrymen of Jesus, and particularly the attitude of the Pharisees. Matthew is careful to frame and organise his material – the Sermon on the Mount appears as a continuous series of sayings. He also stresses the founding role of Peter in the new religion.

2. The Gospel According to St Luke

Like Matthew, Luke knows Mark and ‘Q’, and probably wrote in the eighties AD. As the accepted author of Acts, we know he is not the same Luke as the companion of Paul since the content of Acts quite often differs from what is given in Paul’s letters. Rather than seeing him as the Physician, it might be better to regard him as more of an historian than the other Gospel writers: he consciously articulates his desire to write ‘in order’ and to record the testimony of eyewitnesses.

John the Baptist’s Birth is Foretold
(Chapter 1)

The Annunciation (Chapter 1)

The Birth of Christ (Chapter 2)

A Woman Anoints Christ’s Feet
(Chapter 7)

The Story of the Good Samaritan
(Chapter 10)

Mary and Martha (Chapter 10)

The Parable of the Prodigal Son
(Chapter 15)

The Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus
(Chapter 16)

The Resurrection of Christ (Chapter 24)

3. The Gospel According to St John

John seems not to have known the other Gospels. The author is probably not the disciple himself but rather one who belongs

to a distinctive ‘Johannine’ tradition. The very different style and nature of John’s Gospel is apparent from the very beginning, in the famous opening meditation on ‘the Word’. This Gospel has an ‘interior’, personal, mystical quality; instead of parables, short sayings and multiple descriptions of miracles, we find lengthy discourses – Jesus’ farewell speech to his disciples takes up three chapters. In his ‘I am’ speeches, Jesus explains his identity and meaning to his followers, often with the aid of various images – he identifies himself (for instance) with bread, water and light. In the process it becomes clear in a way not found in the other Gospels that Jesus’ nature is unambiguously divine.

The Incarnation (Chapter 1)

The Marriage in Cana (Chapter 2)

Christ Purges the Temple (Chapter 2)

Christ’s Love for the World (Chapter 3)

The Woman of Samaria (Chapter 4)

A Healing on the Sabbath (Chapter 5)

The Bread of Life (Chapter 6)

Christ Teaches in the Temple (Chapter 7)

The Woman Taken in Adultery
(Chapter 8)

The Light of the World (Chapter 8)

The Resurrection of Lazarus (Chapter 11)

I am Come a Light into the World
(Chapter 12)

The Way, the Truth and the Life

(Chapter 14)
Christ Comforts his Disciples
(Chapters 15 and 16)
Christ Prays for his Apostles, and all
Believers (Chapter 17)
The Passion, Death and Resurrection of
Christ (Chapters 18–21)

The Acts of the Apostles

The author is nowadays taken to be the same who wrote the Gospel of Luke, and its date may well be similar. The book describes the beginnings of the Christian Church, and indeed takes up the narrative directly after the Resurrection. The seminal event is Pentecost – the descent of the Holy Ghost, the speaking in tongues, the start of large-scale conversions and the prospect at least of a religion which is not for Jews only. Although in places confused, Acts does give us a vivid sense of the early mission work of Christianity: Peter features prominently, but in the later stages of the book it is Paul who takes centre stage, tirelessly travelling, enduring imprisonment, but utterly determined to achieve his ends. Thus we begin to see a picture of Paul as the shaping founder of Christ's Church, an impression which can only be increased when we come to Paul's own letters.

Christ's Ascension into Heaven
(Chapter 1)

The Descent of the Holy Ghost
(Chapter 2)
Peter's Sermon (Chapter 2)
The Apostles are Imprisoned (Chapter 5)
The Martyrdom of Stephen
(Chapters 6, 7 and 8)
Philip and the Ethiopian Eunuch
(Chapter 8)
The Conversion of Saul (Chapter 9)
Peter Heals Aeneas and Raises Tabitha
(Chapter 9)
Paul Defends the Conversion of the
Gentiles (Chapter 11)
Herod Persecutes the Apostles
(Chapter 12)
Paul Preaches at Athens
(Chapters 15 and 17)
Paul in Ephesus (Chapter 19)
Paul Bids Farewell to the Elders of
Ephesus (Chapter 20)
Paul Comes to Jerusalem (Chapter 21)
Paul is Assaulted in the Temple and
Arrested (Chapters 21–24)
Paul Appeals to Caesar
(Chapters 25, 27 and 28)

The Epistles of Paul

Paul was born and grew up in Tarsus. He studied as a Pharisee under Gamaliel in Jerusalem. As a young man he was a ferocious persecutor of Christians but was famously converted on the road to

Damascus and became from then on the equally passionate promoter of the new religion. Highly intelligent and strongly emotional as he was, his letters are designed to exhort, move, provoke and correct: they range from passages of extraordinary beauty and affection to dogmatic and censorious reproaches. I have selected only from letters now thought to be genuine.

1. Romans

The Gift of God is Eternal Life
(Chapters 6 and 8)

An Exhortation to Holiness (Chapter 12)
Love is the Fulfilling of the Law
(Chapter 13)

2. Corinthians 1

The Gifts of the Spirit (Chapter 12)
Faith, Hope and Charity (Chapter 13)
Resurrection (Chapter 15)

3. Ephesians

Be Ye Kind One to Another (Chapter 4)
The Whole Armour of God (Chapter 6)

4. Philippians

Paul Blesses the Brethren (Chapter 4)

5. Thessalonians 1

Christ's Second Coming (Chapters 4 and 5)

6. Hebrews

Christ is Set Above the Angels (Chapter 1)
Why Christ Assumed Human Nature
(Chapter 2)

Other Epistles

1. The General Epistle of James

Faith Without Works is Dead (Chapter 2)
Patience and Prayer (Chapter 5)

2. The First Epistle General of Peter

An Exhortation to Unity and Love
(Chapter 3)
Be Sober, Be Vigilant (Chapter 5)

3. The First Epistle General of John

Fellowship One with Another (Chapter 1)
God's Singular Love for Us (Chapter 3)
God Is Love (Chapter 4)

The Revelation of St John the Divine

The author is not the John who wrote the Gospel. The theme of Revelation is apocalypse: the end of the world and the coming of Christ in judgment. The style and imagery have been unkindly described as 'deranged' (A.N. Wilson), and they are certainly entirely unlike anything else in the *New Testament*. It should be remembered, however, that for the earliest Christians the Second Coming was expected at any time and in any case in the very near future: Revelation is the work of a prophet, uniquely in the *New Testament*. It bears vivid witness to this sense of an apocalyptic atmosphere and undoubtedly possesses a terrible beauty. The author is on the island of Patmos and addresses the seven churches of Asia Minor. The date of composition is likely to be some time in the nineties AD.

John's Salutation to the Seven Churches
(Chapter 1)

What John was Commanded to Write to the Seven Churches (Chapters 2 and 3)

John's Vision: The Book Sealed with Seven Seals (Chapters 4–7)

The Opening of the Seventh Seal
(Chapters 8–11)

War in Heaven (Chapters 12 and 13)

The Hour of God's Judgment is Come
(Chapters 14–16)

Babylon the Great is Fallen
(Chapters 17–18)

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords
(Chapter 19)

The Book of Life (Chapter 20)

The New Jerusalem (Chapters 21 and 22)

Notes by Perry Keenlyside



The Very Reverend Hugh Dickinson, Dean Emeritus of Salisbury graduated from Trinity College, Oxford in Classics, Ancient History and Philosophy. He was successively Chaplain of Trinity College, Cambridge, Chaplain of Winchester College and Bishop's Advisor on Adult Education at Coventry Cathedral. In 1978 he became Vicar of St. Michaels' Church in St. Albans. He was appointed Dean of Salisbury in 1986. He has been a lifelong student of the New Testament and has taken a particular interest in training lay men and women to read the Scriptures in public.



Edward de Souza is a familiar figure on the London stage, being one of the country's leading classical actors and working many seasons for the RSC, Royal National Theatre and Old Vic. His film credits include *The Thirty Nine Steps* and *The Spy Who Loved Me*. He also reads *Don Quixote*, *The Island Race* and *The Canterbury Tales* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Dermot Kerrigan trained at LAMDA and has since appeared in much Shakespearean theatre including *Richard II* at the Royal Exchange, *Romeo and Juliet* (TV); with the RSC at Stratford, as well as modern plays at The Royal Court and extensive touring with Shared Experience. He also reads *Dracula*, *Classic Chilling Tales* and *The Turn of the Screw* for Naxos AudioBooks.



Heathcote Williams, poet, playwright and actor, is best known for his extended poems on environmental subjects: *Whale Nation*, *Falling for a Dolphin*, *Sacred Elephant* and *Autogeddon*. His plays have also won acclaim, notably *AC/DC* and *Hancock's Last Half Hour*. As an actor he has been equally versatile – taking memorable roles in *Orlando*, *Wish You Were Here*, *The Odyssey* and Derek Jarman's *The Tempest*, in which he played Prospero. *Dracula*, Dante's *The Divine Comedy* and *Oedipus* are also available on Naxos AudioBooks read by Heathcote Williams.

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The New Testament

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The New Testament tells the extraordinary and moving story of the life of Christ and the founding of his Church. This generous selection from the texts which lie at the root of two thousand years of European civilization ranges between the powerful sincerity of the Evangelists and the ecstatic vision of John's New Jerusalem.

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