

George MacDonald

GEORGE MacDONALD, Scottish novelist, poet, and clergyman, was born on his family's farm in Aberdeenshire in 1824. After completing his education at King's College, he went to London as a tutor. There he met Louisa Powell, with whom he had a long and happy marriage and eleven children.

MacDonald was ordained a Congregationalist minister but resigned because his parishioners complained about his free-thinking sermons. His claim to immortality rests on his allegorical fairy stories, tales he told to his children, which first appeared in the 1870s in the magazine *Good Words for the Young*. Such enchanting classics as *At the Back of the North Wind*, *The Princess and the Goblin* and its sequel, *The Princess and Curdie*, *The Golden Key*, and *The Light Princess* stand out for their dreamlike, spiritual quality.

George MacDonald's many admirers included Tennyson, Mark Twain, and Emerson. Lewis Carroll showed the first version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* to the MacDonald family to see if they thought it worth publishing. And the goblins in J.R.R. Tolkien's famed *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* are much like those in *The Princess and the Goblin*, a childhood favorite of Tolkien's.

MacDonald died in England in 1905. The poet W. H. Auden once said that MacDonald's ". . . most extraordinary, and precious, gift is his ability, in all his stories, to create an atmosphere of goodness about which there is nothing phony or moralistic. Nothing is rarer in literature."