



# **The Third Spring: G.K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, Christopher Dawson, and David Jones**

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For most of modern history, Roman Catholics in Britain were a "rejected minority," facing hostility and estrangement from a culture increasingly at odds with traditional Christianity. Yet British Catholicism underwent a remarkable intellectual and literary renewal, especially in the twentieth century, drawing a disproportionate number of the age's leading minds into its ranks. *The Third Spring* unravels this paradox of a renescent Catholic culture within a post-Christian society. It does so through detailed profiles of the spiritual journeys and religious and cultural beliefs of four seminal members of that twentieth-century revival: G. K. Chesterton, Graham Greene, Christopher Dawson, and David Jones.

Although these four authors came from different backgrounds and wrote primarily in different genres, each converted to Roman Catholicism as an adult and made his new faith the foundation of his intellectual and artistic work. All of them judged the Church to be the last corporate voice of orthodox Christianity in a hitherto unmatched irreligious climate of opinion; and they concluded that the Roman Catholic vision of human nature, thought, history, and art was truer and richer than proposed by prevailing secularism. They thus built on the nineteenth-century "Second Spring" of British Catholicism proclaimed by John Henry Newman to create a fresh assertion of Roman Catholicism, one suited to an era of unprecedented unbelief: a Third Spring.

This book is the first detailed examination of these four authors as part of a Roman Catholic, counter-modern community of discourse. It is informed by extensive research in the writers' works, scholarship on them, and their personal papers. This study is also distinguished by its careful attention to the authors' cultural and religious contexts, and to the psychology and theology of conversion. It will therefore deepen understanding, and correct some misconceptions, of each man's spiritual development and his thought, while revealing the twentieth-century Catholic literary revival to be a distinct movement in both British and Roman Catholic thought.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

**Adam Schwartz** is Assistant Professor of History at Christendom College and author of numerous reviews and articles in several scholarly journals. Schwartz serves on the Board of Directors of the American Chesterton Society.

## PRAISE FOR THE BOOK

"The work is a monumental achievement of research and sensitive literary criticism, combined with an acute awareness of the uniqueness of the individual conversion story. This book sheds new light on the subject and brings achievements, and failures, of the Third Spring into sharp relief."?Gerald J. Russello, *Crisis*

"[A]n inviting introduction to figures of continuing interest."? *First Things*

"Part biography and part literary criticism, the book is at its best when exploring how the conversion experiences of its subjects influenced their critiques of the spirit of their age. . . . Schwartz urges that the challenge these men mounted should inspire us all to follow suit. His case is compelling."?Steve Weatherbe, *National Catholic Register*

"*The Third Spring* is an elegantly written, carefully researched, and erudite exposition of some of the most seminal voices in British Catholic thought."?Jay P. Corrin, *Catholic Historical Review*

"Schwartz's case is lucid, well-researched, and convincing. . . . *The Third Spring* should find broad appeal and is worthy of serious attention."?Clark M. Brittain, *Church History*

"The pleasure of this book is that in addition to all that it adds to our knowledge of these writers (which for most of us will be monumental) it both deepens and propels our own understanding of the faith and tacitly challenges us about what role we will play in a post-Christia

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