

***GEORGE
MACDONALD***



***THE SEABOARD
PARISH, COMPLETE***

George MacDonald

The Seaboard Parish, Complete

Enriched edition.

Introduction, Studies and Commentaries by Cara Whitlock

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Introduction

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Between the restless sea and the restless soul, *The Seaboard Parish* traces how ordinary life tests and tends a living faith. George MacDonald sets devotion alongside doubt, habit beside awakening, and community next to solitude, letting the shoreline's ceaseless motion mirror an inner moral tide. The novel invites readers to watch patience, forgiveness, and imagination do their quiet work, not through spectacle but through daily encounters. Its promise is neither quick certainty nor tidy solutions; rather, it offers a sustained, compassionate gaze at people learning to love well, think honestly, and act justly under the wide sky and wider responsibilities of conscience.

A Victorian novel blending domestic realism with spiritual reflection, *The Seaboard Parish* was first published in the late 1860s and continues the narrative begun in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*. Written by the Scottish author and minister George MacDonald, it relocates the same first-person clergyman to an English seaside parish, shifting the social and natural backdrop while preserving the intimate scale of parish life. In this setting of dunes, waves, and village lanes, MacDonald tests the reach of pastoral care and the resilience of faith lived among neighbors. The result sits between novel and homily, yet remains firmly storytelling rather than sermon.

The premise is simple and hospitable: a pastor, accompanied by his family, takes up life and work in a

coastal parish, where he meets parishioners carrying ordinary burdens and unspoken questions. What follows is a sequence of visits, conversations, and shared labors, punctuated by walks along the shore and household scenes. The narrative remains spoiler-safe because it is less about incident than about attention—how listening, presence, and small duties gather weight. Readers encounter situations familiar to any community—misunderstandings, estrangements, shy hopes—and watch the narrator respond with steady care, guiding without coercing and seeking growth rather than quick victories.

MacDonald's voice is reflective and companionable, delivered through a first-person narrator whose candor fosters trust. The prose favors patient description and leisurely dialogue, allowing moral insight to emerge from the rhythms of talk, work, and weather. The tone is earnest but not grim, warmed by gentle humor and a willingness to question easy pieties. Scenes of the sea and sky are not mere ornaments; they become interpretive lenses through which characters perceive themselves and one another. The style is digressive in the best sense, pausing to consider art, education, and prayer, then returning to the next visit or task with renewed clarity.

Key themes interlace with tidal persistence: the interplay of faith and doubt; the practice of charity as action more than assertion; the education of children and the formation of conscience; the reconciling power of forgiveness; and the role of imagination—through story, music, and art—in moral healing. Nature functions as a kind of lived metaphor, a daily teacher whose lessons arrive in wind, light, and

horizon. Pastoral authority is refigured as service and companionship, measured by patience and steadiness rather than control. Throughout, MacDonald insists that genuine belief must become hospitality to the wounded and courage for the wavering.

For contemporary readers, the novel matters as a model of hopeful seriousness in an age of quick judgments and brittle certainties. Its pastor does not argue people into agreement but walks with them toward health, showing how conversation, time, and truthful kindness can mend what dogmatism often breaks. Its attentiveness to inner conflict resonates with present concerns about mental and spiritual well-being. Its respect for nature offers a quiet ecological humility. And its depiction of community—flawed, ordinary, redeemable—suggests that renewal begins not in grand programs but in faithful presence within the places we actually inhabit.

Approached in its complete form, the book rewards an unhurried reading. The episodic structure allows pauses without loss, yet accumulates meaning as scenes echo one another. Knowledge of the earlier novel enriches the experience but is not required; the narrator reintroduces his world with tact and sufficiency. MacDonald's aim is not to display theological intricacies so much as to trace how truth becomes gentleness, courage, and fidelity. Readers willing to settle into the pace will find a companionable guide who does not flinch from hard questions, and a story that discovers, by degrees, the steady strength of ordinary grace.

Synopsis

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The Seaboard Parish, Complete, by George MacDonald, continues the first-person chronicle begun in *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood*. A Victorian work of pastoral fiction, it follows the minister-narrator who, mindful of his wife's fragile health and the family's need of change, removes for a season to a parish upon the coast, where he serves and observes. The narrative keeps his reflective, practical voice, attentive to ordinary speech, household affairs, and the sea's constant presence. Without haste, he records how landscape, weather, and work shape the people he meets, and how visiting, reading, and prayer frame his charge: to foster truthfulness, courage, and charity.

Arrival brings an adjustment of habits: the household settles near the shore, children drawn to sands and rock pools, their elders to study and watchfulness. The minister introduces himself to the mixed community of fishermen, tradespeople, and gentler residents who summer by the sea, discovering temperaments formed by toil, loss, and reserve. He chooses to begin not with denunciation but with companionship, visiting kitchens, lofts, and boats, and allowing conversations to grow out of shared tasks. Early encounters reveal grievances long nursed and timid kindness long withheld, suggesting that patience will be his chief instrument, and that learning the place is part of healing it.

Gradually the narrative concentrates on several lives that crystallize the parish's questions. A young person, burdened by secrecy and self-reproach, seeks counsel yet recoils from exposure. An older parishioner, articulate and skeptical, presses the minister on the coherence of faith with suffering, demanding reasons rather than pieties. An artist drawn to the coast for its changing light wrestles with craft, conscience, and the uses of beauty. Through visits, walks, and hours at the water's edge, the minister tries to join insight to sympathy, encouraging confession where necessary and restraint where mercy serves better, while letting the sea's grandeur widen the horizon of their fears.

At home the book attends to family life, not as retreat but as the ground of character. The wife's health, delicate yet resilient, becomes a measure of how tenderness disciplines strength; the children's questions spur the minister to make his doctrine livable, not merely credible. Domestic scenes—meals, readings, simple music, and quiet Sabbaths—are shaped by the coast, where storms teach caution and clear mornings invite gratitude. The narrative insists that reverence grows through practice: courtesy, truthful speech, and attention to creation's detail. In this sphere, faith is shown less as assent to propositions than as a way of inhabiting ordinary duties.

Community pressures bring conflict to a head. Social distinctions prove stubborn, and rumor quickly swells where privacy is scarce. A moral failing emerges that touches reputations across classes, forcing the minister to weigh candor against protection and to ask what restitution can mean without cruelty. The coast's hazards—sudden squalls,

treacherous paths, and the exposed commons—supply moments of risk that concentrate motives and reveal loyalties. In these trials the book explores how repentance differs from mere remorse, and how forgiveness has conditions that restore rather than excuse, setting a pattern for relationships that must endure beyond the immediate crisis.

As the season advances, certain paths open while others quietly close. Some characters accept tasks that fit their gifts; others relinquish cherished self-images to regain integrity. Promises are tentatively made, reconciliations commenced, and a few bonds, once strained, are made serviceable again. The minister recognizes the limits of exhortation and the necessity of waiting, letting time and truth do work that arguments cannot. The sea remains a pervasive tutor: its margins shift, its depths hide, yet its tide keeps faith. Without declaring final outcomes, the narrative gathers toward a steadier hope, grounded in practiced kindness and tested resolve.

Within MacDonald's body of work, *The Seaboard Parish* stands as a patient study of spiritual formation within ordinary society. It extends the earlier chronicle by viewing doubt, duty, and desire against a harsher, more luminous backdrop, joining domestic narrative to natural theology and practical ethics. Its endurance lies in the seriousness with which it treats conversation, imagination, and the slow repair of trust, inviting readers to weigh liberty and obedience without melodrama. While avoiding dramatic revelations for their own sake, it suggests that steadfast

attention to truth and neighbor can alter a whole community's weather, leaving a temperate clarity behind.

Historical Context

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George MacDonald's *The Seaboard Parish* appeared in 1868, in the high Victorian period, as the middle work in a trilogy that began with *Annals of a Quiet Neighbourhood* and continued in *The Vicar's Daughter*. Its narrator is an Anglican clergyman who, with his family, relocates temporarily to England's coast, bringing the routines of parish life into a seaside setting. The novel unfolds within the institutions of the Church of England's parish system, the rectory, and a community shaped by maritime labor and health resorts. Its milieu reflects mid-century Britain's expanding rail links, coastal towns, and domestic ideals centered on household, worship, and moral education.

MacDonald wrote amid intense theological and intellectual debate in Britain. The Oxford Movement had earlier reawakened interest in sacrament and tradition within Anglicanism, while Broad Church thinkers such as F. D. Maurice urged a generous, socially engaged faith. In 1859 Charles Darwin's *On the Origin of Species* and, in 1860, *Essays and Reviews* unsettled many readers and clergy, fueling disputes over biblical interpretation, science, and doctrine. *The Seaboard Parish* addresses these currents indirectly, presenting pastoral conversation, conscience, and lived charity as responses to doubt. Its clergy-centered setting allows the novel to model patient guidance rather than polemics within the Church of England.

Victorian publishing favored serial forms and the three-decker novel, encouraging writers to engage family readerships through domestic realism and moral themes. MacDonald often wrote for popular periodicals aimed at a broad, respectable audience, and his fiction balanced accessibility with theological reflection. He was a trusted literary adviser to Charles L. Dodgson (Lewis Carroll), whose *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* appeared in 1865 after MacDonald's family praised the manuscript. That climate of family-centered, imaginative literature informs *The Seaboard Parish*, which combines scenes of everyday life with ethical counsel, reflective dialogue, and episodes suitable for magazine or volume publication without sensationalism.

The novel's coastal milieu resonates with Victorian beliefs in sea air and bathing as therapies. Railways had opened many English resorts by the 1840s and 1850s, and convalescent homes multiplied as urban disease and tuberculosis worried physicians. Institutions such as the Royal Sea-Bathing Hospital at Margate, founded in the eighteenth century and flourishing in the nineteenth, symbolized medical confidence in the shore. Coastal communities also faced maritime risks that prompted voluntary action; the Royal National Lifeboat Institution, established in 1824, embodied organized neighborliness. *The Seaboard Parish* uses this environment to explore rest, recovery, and duty without relying on melodramatic catastrophe.

Mid-Victorian Britain balanced industrial expansion with persistent local hierarchies, and the parish remained a

framework for moral oversight and social aid. The 1834 Poor Law had centralized relief, but voluntary charities, visiting societies, and clergy-led initiatives still shaped community support, especially outside large cities. Anglican incumbents mediated among landowners, tradespeople, servants, and laborers, exemplifying paternal ideals even as reform debates widened with the Second Reform Act of 1867. Within that world, *The Seaboard Parish* presents pastoral contact across class lines—domestic service, artisanal work, and seafaring labor—emphasizing personal responsibility, education, and tactful generosity rather than party polemics or electoral agitation.

MacDonald's fiction grew from Romantic and Victorian conversations about imagination and morality. Influenced by writers such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and by German idealist and Romantic thought, he lectured in 1867 on the theme *The Imagination: Its Function and Its Culture*, and published *Unspoken Sermons* the same year. *The Seaboard Parish* reflects this milieu by treating poetry, painting, music, and nature not as distractions but as means to apprehend truth. Its clerical narrator champions disciplined creativity and attentiveness to beauty as spiritually formative, echoing contemporaries like John Ruskin who linked aesthetic perception to ethical life in mid-nineteenth-century Britain.

George MacDonald was a Scottish author born in 1824 who trained for the ministry and served a Congregational congregation in Arundel before turning primarily to writing after doctrinal disagreements and financial strain. His preaching and essays emphasized the fatherhood of God,

moral growth, and the purifying purpose of divine love, positions that placed him at odds with stricter Calvinist teachings. Although *The Seaboard Parish* employs an Anglican vicar as narrator, its tolerant, dialogic tone reflects MacDonald's broader ecumenical sympathies. The novel's pastoral problem-solving—through patience, confession, forgiveness, and practical kindness—draws on his lived experience of ministry and lay instruction.

Composed in a Britain negotiating industrial modernity, scientific controversy, and widening political participation, *The Seaboard Parish* offers an intentionally modest critique of its moment. It affirms parish institutions while resisting sectarian rancor; it treats illness and anxiety without morbid sensationalism; it finds in art and the natural world resources for moral steadiness. The sea's edge—made accessible by rail and celebrated by physicians—becomes a testing ground for neighborliness, conscience, and hope. By presenting charity, candor, and imagination as faithful responses to change, MacDonald's novel mirrors mid-Victorian aspirations and gently questions dogmatism, class complacency, and impatience with the slow work of grace.

THE SEABOARD PARISH, COMPLETE

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VOLUME I.

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CHAPTER I. HOMILETIC.

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Dear Friends,—I am beginning a new book like an old sermon; but, as you know, I have been so accustomed to preach all my life, that whatever I say or write will more or less take the shape of a sermon; and if you had not by this time learned at least to bear with my oddities, you would not have wanted any more of my teaching. And, indeed, I did not think you would want any more. I thought I had bidden you farewell. But I am seated once again at my writing-table, to write for you—with a strange feeling, however, that I am in the heart of some curious, rather awful acoustic contrivance, by means of which the words which I have a habit of whispering over to myself as I write them, are heard aloud by multitudes of people whom I cannot see or hear. I will favour the fancy, that, by a sense of your presence, I may speak the more truly, as man to man.

But let me, for a moment, suppose that I am your grandfather, and that you have all come to beg for a story; and that, therefore, as usually happens in such cases, I am sitting with a puzzled face, indicating a more puzzled mind. I know that there are a great many stories in the holes and corners of my brain; indeed, here is one, there is one, peeping out at me like a rabbit; but alas, like a rabbit, showing me almost at the same instant the tail-end of it, and vanishing with a contemptuous *thud* of its hind feet on the ground. For I must have suitable regard to the desires of my children. It is a fine thing to be able to give people what

they want, if at the same time you can give them what you want. To give people what they want, would sometimes be to give them only dirt and poison. To give them what you want, might be to set before them something of which they could not eat a mouthful. What both you and I want, I am willing to think, is a dish of good wholesome venison. Now I suppose my children around me are neither young enough nor old enough to care about a fairy tale, go that will not do. What they want is, I believe, something that I know about—that has happened to myself. Well, I confess, that is the kind of thing I like best to hear anybody talk to me about. Let anyone tell me something that has happened to himself, especially if he will give me a peep into how his heart took it, as it sat in its own little room with the closed door, and that person will, so telling, absorb my attention: he has something true and genuine and valuable to communicate. They are mostly old people that can do so. Not that young people have nothing happen to them; but that only when they grow old, are they able to see things right, to disentangle confusions, and judge righteous judgment. Things which at the time appeared insignificant or wearisome, then give out the light that was in them, show their own truth, interest, and influence: they are far enough off to be seen. It is not when we are nearest to anything that we know best what it is. How I should like to write a story for old people! The young are always having stories written for them. Why should not the old people come in for a share? A story without a young person in it at all! Nobody under fifty admitted! It could hardly be a fairy tale, could it? Or a love story either? I am not so sure about that. The worst of it

would be, however, that hardly a young person would read it. Now, we old people would not like that. We can read young people's books and enjoy them: they would not try to read old men's books or old women's books; they would be so sure of their being dry. My dear old brothers and sisters, we know better, do we not? We have nice old jokes, with no end of fun in them; only they cannot see the fun. We have strange tales, that we know to be true, and which look more and more marvellous every time we turn them over again; only somehow they do not belong to the ways of this year—I was going to say *week*,—and so the young people generally do not care to hear them. I have had one pale-faced boy, to be sure, who will sit at his mother's feet, and listen for hours to what took place before he was born. To him his mother's wedding-gown was as old as Eve's coat of skins. But then he was young enough not yet to have had a chance of losing the childhood common to the young and the old. Ah! I should like to write for you, old men, old women, to help you to read the past, to help you to look for the future. Now is your salvation nearer than when you believed; for, however your souls may be at peace, however your quietness and confidence may give you strength, in the decay of your earthly tabernacle, in the shortening of its cords, in the weakening of its stakes, in the rents through which you see the stars, you have yet your share in the cry of the creation after the sonship. But the one thing I should keep saying to you, my companions in old age, would be, "Friends, let us not grow old[1q]." Old age is but a mask; let us not call the mask the face. Is the acorn old, because its cup dries and drops it from its hold—because its skin has grown brown and

cracks in the earth? Then only is a man growing old when he ceases to have sympathy with the young. That is a sign that his heart has begun to wither. And that is a dreadful kind of old age. The heart needs never be old. Indeed it should always be growing younger. Some of us feel younger, do we not, than when we were nine or ten? It is not necessary to be able to play at leapfrog to enjoy the game. There are young creatures whose turn it is, and perhaps whose duty it would be, to play at leap-frog if there was any necessity for putting the matter in that light; and for us, we have the privilege, or if we will not accept the privilege, then I say we have the duty, of enjoying their leap-frog. But if we must withdraw in a measure from sociable relations with our fellows, let it be as the wise creatures that creep aside and wrap themselves up and lay themselves by that their wings may grow and put on the lovely hues of their coming resurrection. Such a withdrawing is in the name of youth. And while it is pleasant—no one knows how pleasant except him who experiences it—to sit apart and see the drama of life going on around him, while his feelings are calm and free, his vision clear, and his judgment righteous, the old man must ever be ready, should the sweep of action catch him in its skirts, to get on his tottering old legs, and go with brave heart to do the work of a true man, none the less true that his hands tremble, and that he would gladly return to his chimney-corner. If he is never thus called out, let him examine himself, lest he should be falling into the number of those that say, “I go, sir,” and go not; who are content with thinking beautiful things in an Atlantis, Oceana, Arcadia, or what it may be, but put not forth one of their

fingers to work a salvation in the earth. Better than such is the man who, using just weights and a true balance, sells good flour, and never has a thought of his own.

I have been talking—to my reader is it? or to my supposed group of grandchildren? I remember—to my companions in old age. It is time I returned to the company who are hearing my whispers at the other side of the great thundering gallery. I take leave of my old friends with one word: We have yet a work to do, my friends; but a work we shall never do aright after ceasing to understand the new generation. We are not the men, neither shall wisdom die with us. The Lord hath not forsaken his people because the young ones do not think just as the old ones choose. The Lord has something fresh to tell them, and is getting them ready to receive his message. When we are out of sympathy with the young, then I think our work in this world is over. It might end more honourably.

Now, readers in general, I have had time to consider what to tell you about, and how to begin. My story will be rather about my family than myself now. I was as it were a little withdrawn, even by the time of which I am about to write. I had settled into a gray-haired, quite elderly, yet active man—young still, in fact, to what I am now. But even then, though my faith had grown stronger, life had grown sadder, and needed all my stronger faith; for the vanishing of beloved faces, and the trials of them that are dear, will make even those that look for a better country both for themselves and their friends, sad, though it will be with a preponderance of the first meaning of the word *sad*, which was *settled, thoughtful*.

I am again seated in the little octagonal room, which I have made my study because I like it best. It is rather a shame, for my books cover over every foot of the old oak panelling. But they make the room all the pleasanter to the eye, and after I am gone, there is the old oak, none the worse, for anyone who prefers it to books.

I intend to use as the central portion of my present narrative the history of a year during part of which I took charge of a friend's parish, while my brother-in-law, Thomas Weir, who was and is still my curate, took the entire charge of Marshmallows. What led to this will soon appear. I will try to be minute enough in my narrative to make my story interesting, although it will cost me suffering to recall some of the incidents I have to narrate.

CHAPTER II. CONSTANCE'S BIRTHDAY.

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Was it from observation of nature in its association with human nature, or from artistic feeling alone, that Shakspeare[1] so often represents Nature's mood as in harmony with the mood of the principal actors in his drama? I know I have so often found Nature's mood in harmony with my own, even when she had nothing to do with forming mine, that in looking back I have wondered at the fact. There may, however, be some self-deception about it. At all events, on the morning of my Constance's eighteenth birthday, a lovely October day with a golden east, clouds of golden foliage about the ways, and an air that seemed filled with the ether of an *aurum potabile*[2], there came yet an occasional blast of wind, which, without being absolutely cold, smelt of winter, and made one draw one's shoulders together with the sense of an unfriendly presence. I do not think Constance felt it at all, however, as she stood on the steps in her riding-habit, waiting till the horses made their appearance. It had somehow grown into a custom with us that each of the children, as his or her birthday came round, should be king or queen for that day, and, subject to the veto of father and mother, should have everything his or her own way. Let me say for them, however, that in the matter of choosing the dinner, which of course was included in the royal prerogative, I came to see that it was almost invariably the favourite dishes of others of the family that were chosen, and not those especially agreeable to the royal palate. Members of families where children have not been

taught from their earliest years that the great privilege of possession is the right to bestow, may regard this as an improbable assertion; but others will know that it might well enough be true, even if I did not say that so it was. But there was always the choice of some individual treat, which was determined solely by the preference of the individual in authority. Constance had chosen “a long ride with papa.”

I suppose a parent may sometimes be right when he speaks with admiration of his own children. The probability of his being correct is to be determined by the amount of capacity he has for admiring other people’s children. However this may be in my own case, I venture to assert that Constance did look very lovely that morning. She was fresh as the young day: we were early people—breakfast and prayers were over, and it was nine o’clock as she stood on the steps and I approached her from the lawn.

“O, papa! isn’t it jolly?” she said merrily.

“Very jolly indeed, my dear,” I answered, delighted to hear the word from the lips of my gentle daughter. She very seldom used a slang word, and when she did, she used it like a lady. Shall I tell you what she was like? Ah! you could not see her as I saw her that morning if I did. I will, however, try to give you a general idea, just in order that you and I should not be picturing to ourselves two very different persons while I speak of her.

She was rather little, and so slight that she looked tall. I have often observed that the impression of height is an affair of proportion, and has nothing to do with feet and inches. She was rather fair in complexion, with her mother’s blue eyes, and her mother’s long dark wavy hair. She was

and documents to indicate that plans are subject to divine will.

59 The Recorder of London is a historic senior legal official and judge in the City of London, traditionally responsible for hearing serious criminal trials (the office dates back many centuries and was well established by the 19th century).

60 A reference to Psalm 100 in the Bible, often sung as a metrical hymn in Protestant worship; the metrical setting commonly used since the 16th century is known as the 'Old Hundredth' in English and Scottish psalters.

61 The opening line of a well-known English metrical paraphrase of Psalm 100 (commonly called the 'Old Hundredth'), traditionally attributed to William Kethe and widely used in Anglican and Presbyterian hymnody.

62 A prominent 17th-century Anglican bishop and writer (1613–1667), remembered for influential devotional works and sermons such as *Holy Living* and *Holy Dying*.

63 Alludes to Exodus 34:29–35, where Moses' face is described as shining after encountering God and he covers it with a veil when speaking to the Israelites.

64 A Greek word and mythological name that in classical usage can mean both 'soul' and 'butterfly'; ancient writers sometimes used the same term for the insect and for the soul.

65 Refers to the protagonist of Friedrich Schiller's narrative poem "Der Taucher" ("The Diver"), a late-18th-century German poem in which a daring swimmer plunges into a dangerous whirlpool and encounters uncanny sea phenomena.

66 Molch is the German word for 'newt' or 'salamander'; here it is used in a literary/poetic sense to indicate an uncanny or monstrous amphibian encountered in Schiller's poem.

67 Diana is the Roman goddess of the hunt and the moon; the epithet 'of the silver bow' alludes to her role as a huntress (often depicted with a bow) and her association with the moon.

68 Cordelia is a character in Shakespeare's King Lear, traditionally portrayed as the faithful, virtuous daughter who exemplifies filial love and integrity.

69 Iago is a character in Shakespeare's Othello, the play's principal antagonist known for manipulation, deceit, and instigating the tragedy.

70 A traditional British expression for an unseasonal warm spell in late autumn around St Martin's Day (celebrated Nov 11), similar to what is also called 'Indian summer'; timing and intensity can vary by region and year.

71 Tidal terms: spring tides are the larger tidal ranges occurring near full and new moons, while neap tides are the smaller ranges occurring near the moon's first and last quarters.

72 Refers to Isaac Watts (1674–1748), an influential English hymn-writer whose many hymns (including ones intended for children) were widely used but sometimes criticized for theological or moral reasons.

73 A citation of a Pauline maxim (Romans 14:23) meaning actions done without faith or conviction are morally wrong; wording and interpretation can vary with translation and context.

74 A Latin phrase meaning 'by itself' or 'in itself,' used in English to indicate that something is considered on its own merits rather than in relation to other factors.

75 An Italian musical direction (more commonly spelled 'rallentando') meaning to slow down; here used metaphorically to describe the intermittent sound of rain between gusts of wind.

76 A 17th-century English poet and Anglican priest (1593–1633) known for devotional poetry; the narrator quotes lines from his work.

77 A local coastal place-name in the text where the coastguard are reported to have gone; likely a bay, shoal or headland near the village rather than a general nautical term.

78 A cart carrying shore-based rescue rockets and equipment used in the 18th–19th centuries to fire a line from shore to a stranded ship so a breeches-buoy or similar apparatus could be rigged.

79 A bugle or trumpet call (from French) traditionally used to wake military personnel; the narrator uses it figuratively as an urgent alarm sounded by the church bells.

80 A heavy projecting timber on a ship's bow used historically to support and hoist the anchor; men could move along or descend from it when working aloft.

81 A schooner is a type of sailing vessel common in the 18th–19th centuries, typically fore-and-aft rigged with two or more masts, used for coastal trade and fishing.

82 Barnstaple is a real market town in North Devon, England, historically served by coaching routes and regional

transport in the 19th century; here it is the origin of visitors who came by coach.

83 A surplice is a loose white liturgical garment worn over the cassock by Anglican and other clergy or choir members during services.

84 A Latin alchemical term meaning 'dead head' that denotes the inert or worthless residue left after a chemical operation; MacDonald uses it metaphorically to describe printed sermons as lifeless remains.

85 Marshmallows is the name of the family country house to which the narrator proposes to return; in the novel it functions as the family home rather than referring to the confection.

86 Drugget is a coarse woollen or worsted fabric commonly used in the 18th–19th centuries for cheap rugs, floor-coverings, or rough curtains, here mentioned as a makeshift window hanging in the studio.

87 A lay-figure is an artist's life-size articulated mannequin used to pose and study human proportions and drapery when painting or sculpting.

88 The Hebrides are an island group off the west coast of Scotland; nineteenth-century writers often evoke them as wild, stormy sea-lands, as MacDonald does here.

89 The Vale (or Isle) of Avalon is a legendary place from Arthurian tradition, associated with King Arthur's last resting-place and a poetic image of otherworldly peace and homecoming.

90 The Middle Temple is one of the four Inns of Court in London, historic professional societies for barristers; saying