

# THE MARRIAGE *of* FAITH

DABUNDO

Near its heart, English Romanticism—across many writers—acknowledges and celebrates a community that is not just secular but that derives meaning from a religious association and, in fact, a particularly defined religion, that is, Anglican Christianity.

William Wordsworth and Jane Austen, premier English Romantic poet and novelist, were baptized, confirmed, and buried (and for Wordsworth, married) in conformity with the Church of England. Of course, Wordsworth's commitment flagged in his twenties, but with marriage and responsibility came respectability and parishioner status. However, most twentieth-century critics interpret these writers' works outside the Christian realities with which their lives were much imbued, except for late Wordsworthian poems from his purported decline into conservative politics and religion and evident poetic senility.

Jane Austen did not live long enough to have a late decline, but critics have nonetheless overlooked her faith. It is not necessarily the surface of her writing, but Christianity is unquestionably the sea out of which her characters arise, her plots bubble up, and her themes unfold. It was her and their reality.

Notwithstanding this negative or blind critical precedent, Laura Dabundo highlights what most readers are conditioned to disregard, the ways in which the church saturates the writing of Wordsworth and Austen.

The Church of England's liturgy has traditionally been based on Scripture, which these writers would have known. This book, then, links their faith to their works.

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*Christianity in*  
JANE AUSTEN  
*and*  
WILLIAM WORDSWORTH



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On the cover: (l) Engraving of William Wordsworth ca. 1800 / Yay Images; (r) Engraving of Jane Austen, 1873 / Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin



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