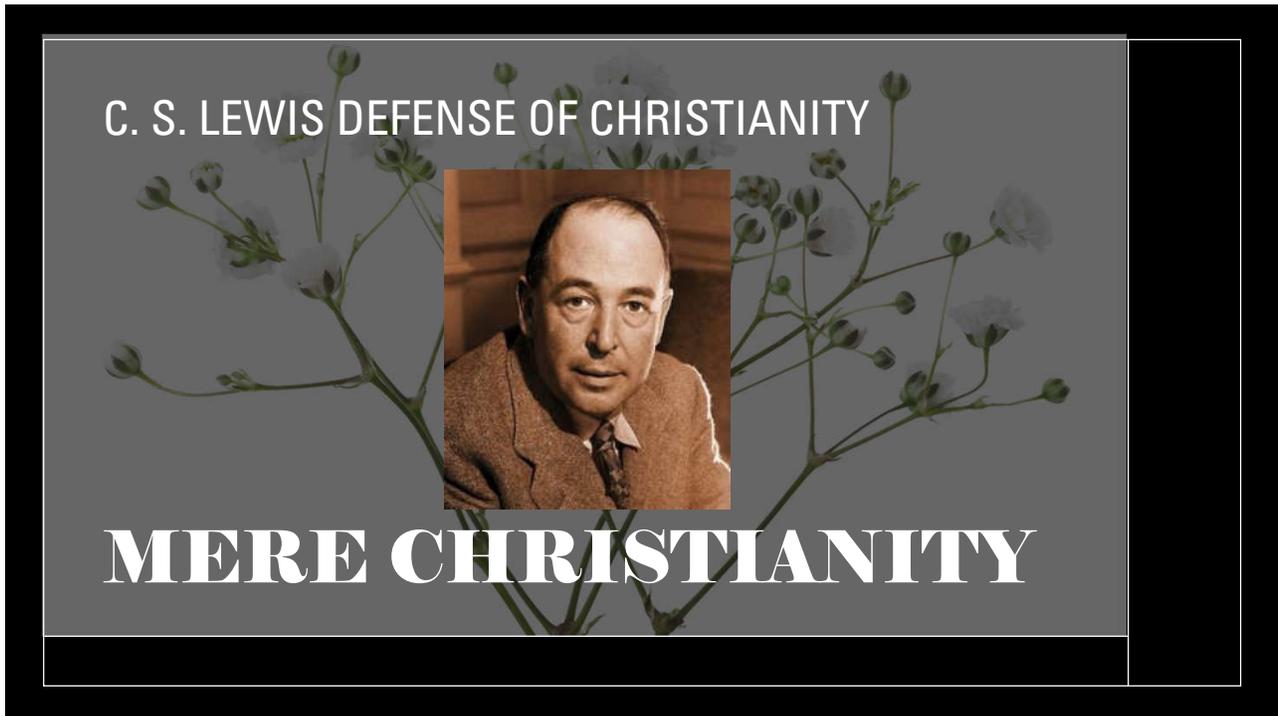
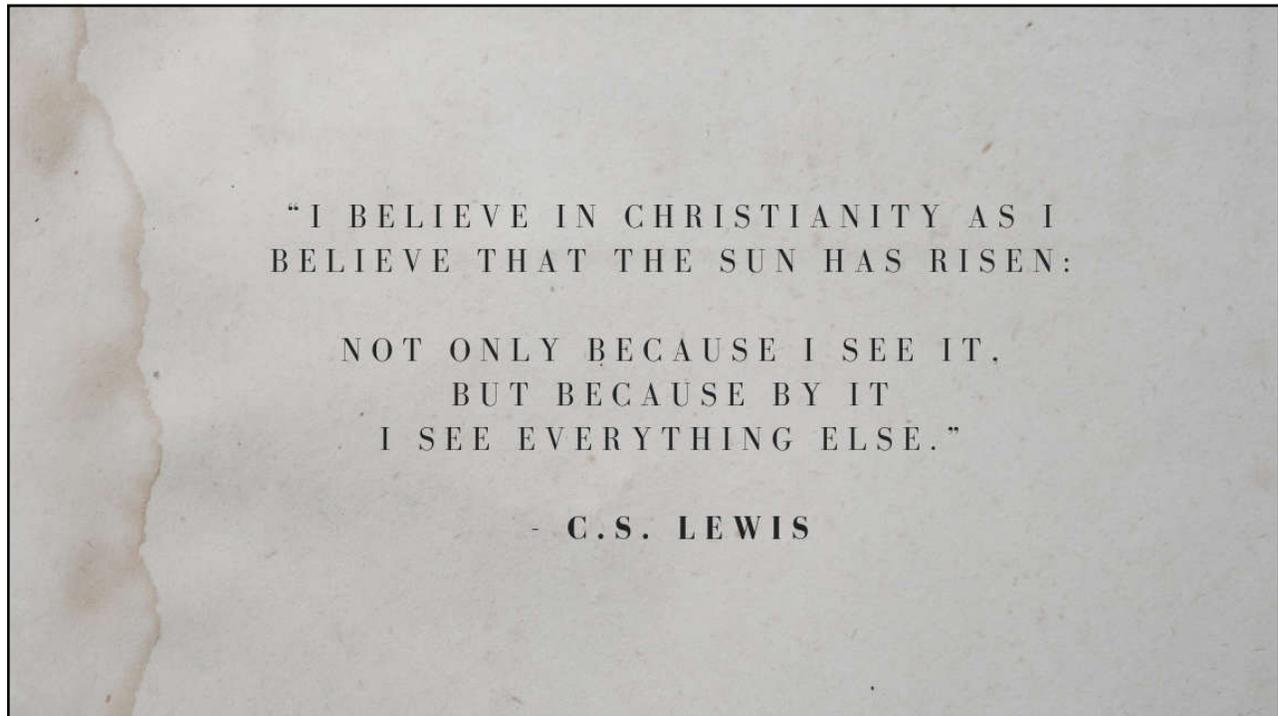


1



2



3

<p><i>Mere Christianity</i> by C.S. Lewis Published in 1951.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Originally a series of fifteen-minute talks given by Lewis and broadcast on the BBC during WW2. • <i>Mere Christianity</i> is a defense of Christian beliefs. • Lewis, an Oxford professor, converted from atheism to Christianity after spending time with his friend, J.R.R. Tolkien, a devout Catholic and spent time discussing arguments for the Christian faith with Lewis. • After converting, Lewis spent a lot of time thinking, writing, and speaking about Christianity, becoming the most widely read Christian apologist of the twentieth century. <p style="text-align: center; color: red;">TOLKIEN AUTHORED THE LORD OF THE RINGS AND THE HOBBIT</p>	BACKGROUND
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4

What does CS Lewis say about faith?

- Lewis claims that there are two parts to the Christian faith.
- The first comes when a person uses reason **to decide** whether or not the claims of Christianity are true.
- The second part of faith comes when a person realizes that it is impossible to meet God's standard of morality, even one that the person agrees with.
- The result is the person comes to rely on God for goodness.

BACKGROUND

LAW AND GOSPEL

5

Summary of Mere Christianity

- Lewis' title *Mere Christianity* indicates that he believes it contains the essentials of orthodox Christianity.
- It is more than a mere summary, it includes all the things one needs to agree with to be a Christian.
- He purposefully avoided getting into matters of denomination but attempted to put together the beliefs that the vast majority of Christian denominations could agree upon.
- He begins the book by first making an argument for God's existence. He then goes on to enumerate Christian doctrinal beliefs, Christian behavioral standards, and finally, the doctrine of the Trinity.

BACKGROUND

ORTHODOX CHRISTIANITY: RIGHT BELIEVING - IN CHRISTIANITY IT REQUIRES BEING TRINITARIAN

6

The Law of Human Nature

- Lewis begins *Mere Christianity* by arguing against atheism. He posits that the vast majority of human beings, as well as human societies, each have a sense of right and wrong.
- He says that while there might be some differences from culture to culture and person to person, the differences are minor across the globe. All societies have a sense of fairness and goodness.
- All societies have a set of rules that dictate what constitutes "good" behavior.

For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him... Rom 1:21

MORALITY

7

- For example, he writes, "Men have differed as to whether you should have one wife or four. But they have always agreed that you must not simply have any woman you liked."
- This points to the fact there is a sense of limits, or rules, to which humans ought to adhere. He further argues that most people never quite live up to the standard, but they know it is there.
- And, in fact, some societies can even get the idea of goodness quite wrong, yet they still have a sense that there *is* a standard. He calls this sense of "right and wrong" the Law of Human Nature.

"... the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness..." Romans 2:15

MORALITY

8

<p>Humans beings are born with this law inside them but can choose to disregard it. Lewis writes, "My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of <i>just</i> and <i>unjust</i>? What was I comparing the universe to when I called it unjust?" He furthers this argument by stating "In fact, of course, we all do believe that some moralities are better than others."</p>	MORALITY
<p>NAZI MORALITY BELIEVED THAT KILLING THE JEWS WAS MORAL</p>	

9

<p>"These, then, are the two points I wanted to make.</p> <p>First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it.</p> <p>Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it.</p> <p>These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in."</p>	MORALITY
<p>... for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God... Rom 3:23</p>	

10

<p>Lewis points out that most people would be able to agree that Christian morality would be preferable to Nazi morality. By the very fact that all human societies recognize that there is a standard and that some standards are better than others, Lewis claims this points to an ultimate standard and an ultimate standard-maker, in other words, God. He does not yet make an argument for the Christian God, but simply that logic points to some sort of intelligence behind the universe.</p>	MORALITY
IS THERE AN OBJECTIVE TRUTH OR IS EVERYTHING SUBJECTIVE?	

11

<p>“Quarrelling means trying to show that the other man is in the wrong. And there would be no sense in trying to do that unless you and he had some sort of agreement as to what Right and Wrong are; just as there would be no sense in saying that a footballer had committed a foul unless there was some agreement about the rules of football.”</p> <p>“We all fail to practice the behaviors we expect from other people towards us.”</p>	MORALITY
“All societies have rules of right and wrong.”	

12

<p>Chastity is a Christian Universal</p> <p>“Chastity is the most unpopular of the Christian virtues. There is no getting away from it: the old Christian rule is, “Either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence.” Now this is so difficult and so contrary to our instincts, that obviously either Christianity is wrong or our sexual instinct, as it now is, has gone wrong. One or the other. Of course, being a Christian, I think it is the instinct which has gone wrong.</p>	<p>MORALITY</p>
<p>THE PROBLEM WITH SEXUAL MORALITY</p>	

13

<p>Chastity is a Christian Universal (Cont'd)</p> <p>Modesty and Proprietary vary from culture to culture and from time to time. (Do you remember mini skirts?)</p> <p>“Propriety lays down how much of the human body should be displayed and what subjects can be referred to, and in what words, according to the customs of a given social circle.”</p> <p>“A girl in the Pacific islands wearing hardly any clothes and a Victorian lady completely covered in clothes might both be equally “modest,” proper, or decent, according to the standards of their own societies...”</p> <p>Lewis proposed that intent is the critical factor in determining sin: ignorance, intent to shock, to embarrass or incite lust.</p>	<p>MORALITY</p>
<p>THE PROBLEM WITH SEXUAL MORALITY</p>	

14

IS SEX EVIL?

They tell you sex has become a mess because it was hushed up. But for the last twenty years (this is written in 1952) it has not been hushed up. It has been chattered about all day long. Yet it is still in a mess. **If hushing up had been the cause of the trouble, ventilation would have set it right.** But it has not. I think it is the other way round.

MORALITY

If anyone says that sex, in itself, is bad, Christianity contradicts him...

15

The Problem of Forgiveness

I said in a previous chapter that chastity was the most unpopular of the Christian virtues. But I am not sure I was right

Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive, as we had during the war. And then, to mention the subject at all is to be greeted with howls of anger. **It is not that people think this too high and difficult a virtue: it is that they think it hateful and contemptible.** "That sort of talk makes them sick," they say. And half of you already want to ask me, "I wonder how you'd feel about forgiving the Gestapo if you were a Pole or a Jew?"

MORALITY

"I wonder how you'd feel about forgiving the Gestapo if you were a Pole or a Jew?"

16

WHY FORGIVE?

I am telling you what Christianity is. I did not invent it. And there, right in the middle of it, I find "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those that sin against us." **There is no slightest suggestion that we are offered forgiveness on any other terms. It is made perfectly dear that if we do not forgive, we shall not be forgiven.** There are no two ways about it.

In the same way, if we really want (but all depends on really wanting) to learn how to forgive, perhaps we had better start with something easier than the Gestapo. **One might start with forgiving one's husband or wife, or parents or children, or the nearest NCO, for something they have done or said in the last week.**

Can I learn to hate the sin and love the sinner? Oh wait, I do that about myself all the time.

MORALITY

17

When My Moral Efforts Fail –

"We may, indeed, be sure that perfect chastity-like perfect charity-will not be attained by any merely human efforts. You must ask for God's help. Even when you have done so, it may seem to you for a long time that no help, or less help than you need, is being given. Never mind. **After each failure, ask forgiveness, pick yourself up, and try again.** Very often what God first helps us towards is not the virtue itself but just this power of always trying again."

The Christian Life is a Life of Daily Repentance - Luther

MORALITY

18

Theism and Pantheism

It is at this point that Lewis begins to draw a distinction between views of God. He categorizes religious views of God as being either **pantheistic** or **theistic**. Pantheism views God as neither good nor bad. Often, the concept of the divine is that whatever "it" is, it is one with nature, almost a part of the natural world. **Theism, on the other hand, views God as a separate being from creation and as good. This, he says, is how Christians view God.**

Christians believe that there is a God who created the universe, that humans are created in the image of that God, and that **due to human free will, the universe has "gone wrong."**

EXAMPLE: HINDUISM IS PANTHEISTIC – Worshipping thousands of Gods

TRINITY

19

The Christian Way is Different: Harder and Easier.

Christ says "Give me All. I don't want so much of your time and so much of your money and so much of your work: I want You. I have not come to torment your natural self, but to kill it. No half-measures are any good. I don't want to cut off a branch here and a branch there, I want to have the whole tree down. I don't want to drill the tooth, or crown it, or stop it, but to have it out. Hand over the whole natural self, all the desires which you think innocent as well as the ones you think wicked-the whole outfit. I will give you a new self instead. In fact, I will give you Myself: my own will shall become yours.

If I want to produce wheat, the change must go deeper than the surface. I must be ploughed up and re-sown

TRINITY

20

BEGOTTEN NOT MADE

We don't use the words begetting or begotten much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of: to create is to make. And the difference is this.

When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself.

A man begets human babies, a beaver begets little beavers and a bird begets eggs which turn into little birds. But when you make, you make something of a different kind from yourself. A bird makes a nest, a beaver builds a dam, a man makes a wireless set-or he may make something more like himself than a wireless set: say, a statue.

What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man.

TRINITY

21

Lunatic, Liar, Lord

Lewis drives home his argument for Christianity being the ultimate source of truth compared to other religions. He points out that **Jesus did not leave us with the choice to simply think of him as a good man or moral teacher.** Christ, in claiming to *be* God could only be one of three things: insane, deceptive, or telling the truth. Being either an insane man or a liar precludes him from being a good, moral teacher. According to Lewis, if we do not take Jesus as a liar or a lunatic, we then must take him as Lord. Lewis writes, **"A man who was merely a man and said the sorts of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher."**

A lunatic is someone who is either clinically insane or just acting really crazy.

TRINITY

22

Lunatic, Liar, Lord

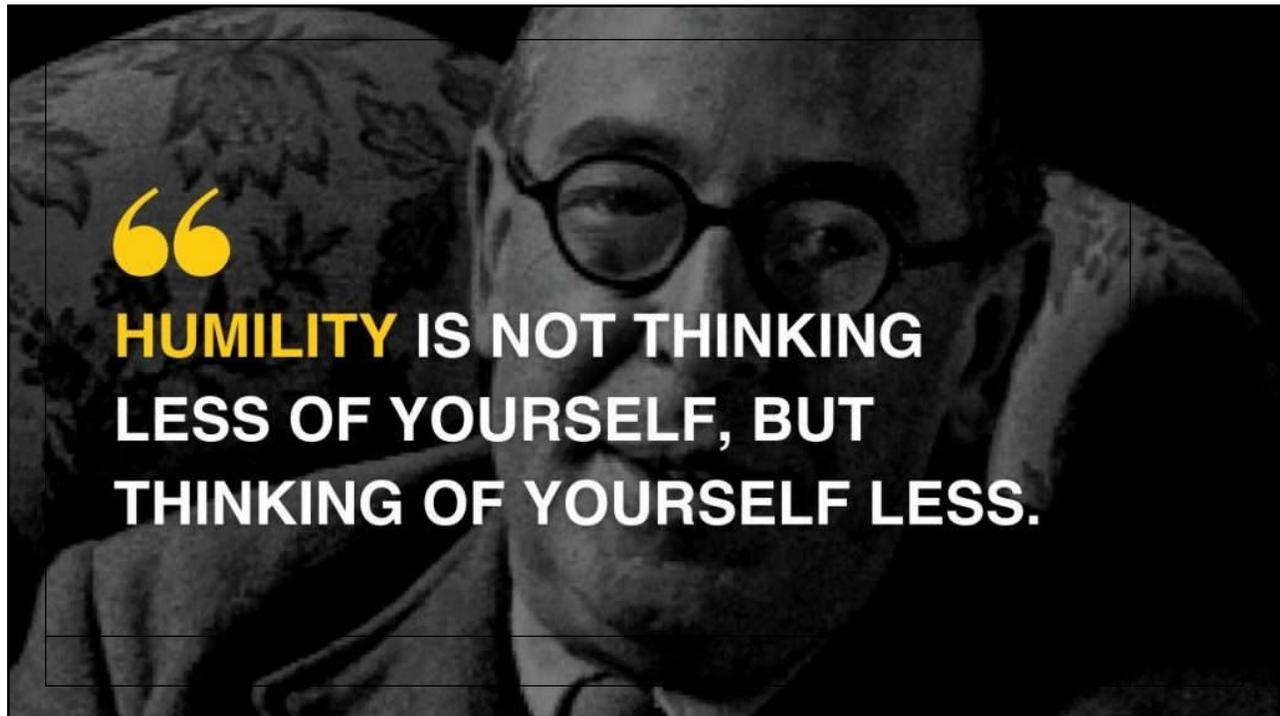
He would either be a lunatic- on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg- or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse."

Lewis writes, "A man who was merely a man and said the sorts of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic- on the level with the man who says he is a poached egg- or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse."

TRINITY

YOU MUST MAKE A CHOICE

23



24

C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien



25

- ◆ Met in 1926 at Merton College at Oxford University
- ◆ Discovered their shared passions for myth, poetry, and storytelling
 - ◆ Stories of painful childhoods and WW1
- ◆ Mythology invigorated them
- ◆ Tolkien invited Lewis to join The Inklings
 - ◆ Met Tuesdays at a pub for peer review
 - ◆ “Lewis was for long my only audience.”



26



- ◇ Lewis encouraged, Tolkien shared faith
- ◇ Shared faith in fellowship, intellect, and love of myth.
- ◇ Tolkien “spearheaded” Lewis’ conversion from being a staunch atheist to one of the most famous Christian writers.
- ◇ Tolkien claimed that Lewis was his dearest friend from 1927-1940
- ◇ Called Lewis’ death (1963) “an axe-blow near the roots.”

27

LETTERS THAT CHANGED CS LEWIS’ LIFE

Lewis struggled with the “Christ myth.” Tolkien responded with a letter containing the following poem he wrote to show that myth was not just lies but contained deep truths:

*You look at trees and label them just so,
 (for trees are ‘trees’, and growing is ‘to grow’);
 you walk the earth and tread with solemn pace
 one of the many minor globes of Space:
 a star’s a star, some matter in a ball
 compelled to courses mathematical
 amid the regimented, cold, inane,
 where destined atoms are each moment slain.*

28

LETTERS THAT CHANGED CS LEWIS' LIFE

Now what Dyson and Tolkien showed me was this: that if I met the idea of sacrifice in a Pagan story I didn't mind it at all: again, that if I met the idea of a god sacrificing himself to himself ... I liked it very much and was mysteriously moved by it: again, that the idea of the dying and reviving god (Balder, Adonis, Bacchus) similarly moved me provided I met it anywhere except in the Gospels. The reason was that in Pagan stories I was prepared to feel the myth as profound and suggestive of meanings beyond my grasp even tho' I could not say in c old prose 'what it meant'. Now the story of Christ is simply a true myth: a myth working on us in the same way as the others, but with this tremendous difference that it really happened"

- CS Lewis (Oct 18, 1931 to Arthur Greeves)

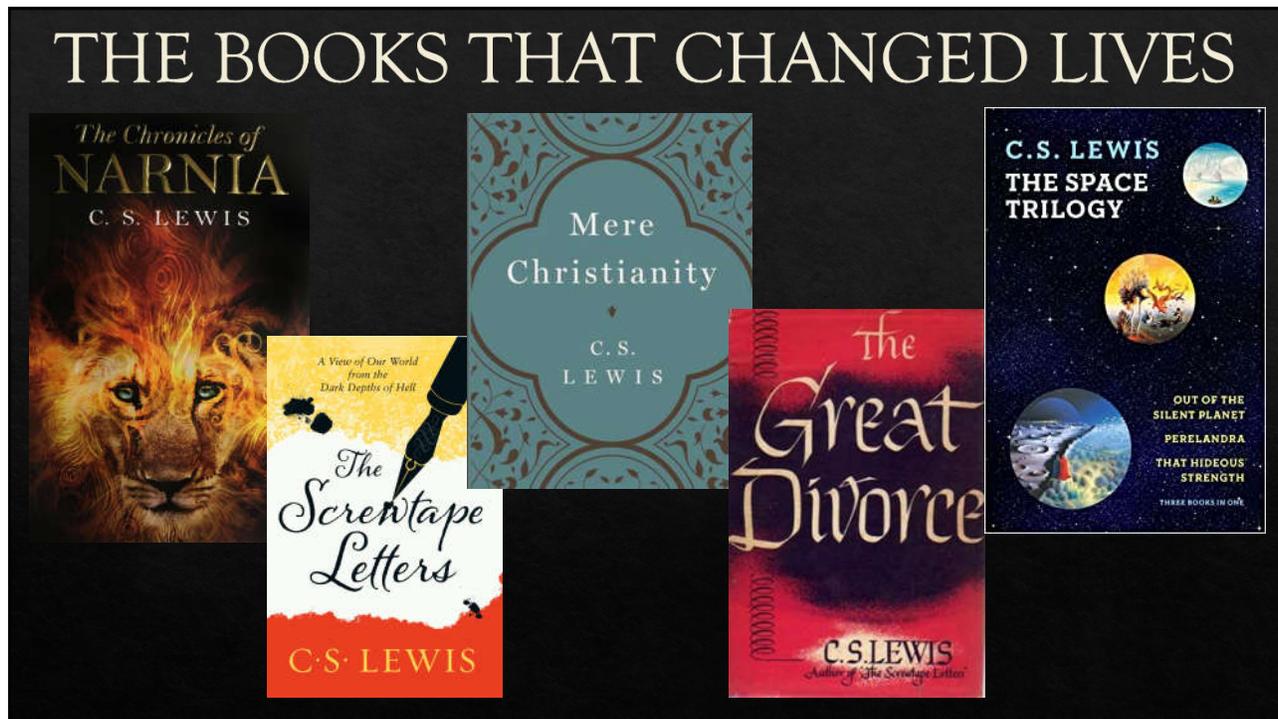
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LETTERS THAT CHANGED CS LEWIS' LIFE

"I should have said that the story had for the more intelligent reader a great number of philosophical and mythical implications that enormously enhanced without detracting from the surface 'adventure'. I found the blend of vera historia with mythos irresistible."

- JRR Tolkien gives praise to Out of the Silent Planet (Space Trilogy), leading to it being published in 1938

30



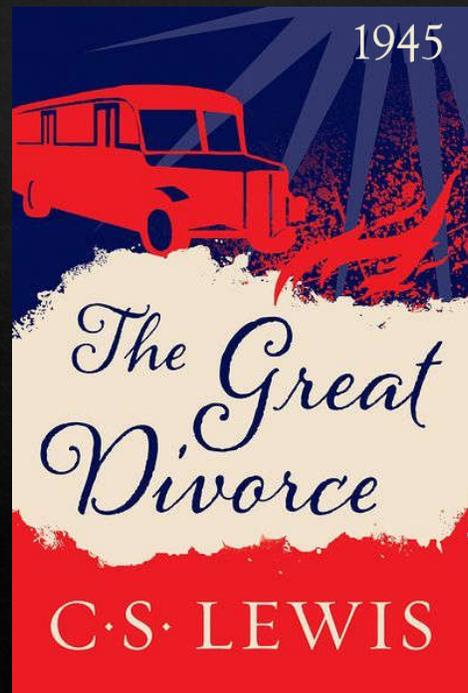
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THE SPACE TRILOGY

1. Out of the Silent Planet (1938)
2. Perelandra (1943)
3. That Hideous Strength (1945)

<p>Out of the Silent Planet – Arthur Ransom kidnapped by physicist Weston, and Divine, a sleazy businessman, & is taken to Mars.</p> <p>He escapes to a Martian village learns the language. Discovers each planet has its own spirit (angel or archangel) called an Oyarsa, who rules under the authority of God.</p> <p>Earth is the central battleground between good and evil and is ruled by a dark Oyarsa (WW1)</p>	<p>Perelandra – name given to Venus</p> <p>Most biblical of the trilogy. Retells the story of Adam and Eve.</p> <p>Weston plays the role of the serpent, who tempts the woman who is to become the mother of the world into rejecting God's will.</p> <p>Ransom is sent by the Oyarsa to challenge the evil one and save Venus from the fate of Earth.</p>	<p>That Hideous Strength – not much about space but good and evil.</p> <p>Combines university politics with Arthurian legend, and spiritual combat.</p> <p>National Institute of Coordinated Experiments is secretly controlled by a pair of initiates who plan to revive Merlin for malevolent purposes.</p> <p>Jane (the seer) and Mark Studdock. Ransom leads a team of friends with the aid of the Oyarsa to defeat them.</p>
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32



1945

Based on a dream vision in which he reflects on Heaven and Hell

Working title was “Who Goes Home?” but changed to *The Great Divorce* in contrast to William Blake’s poem “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell.”

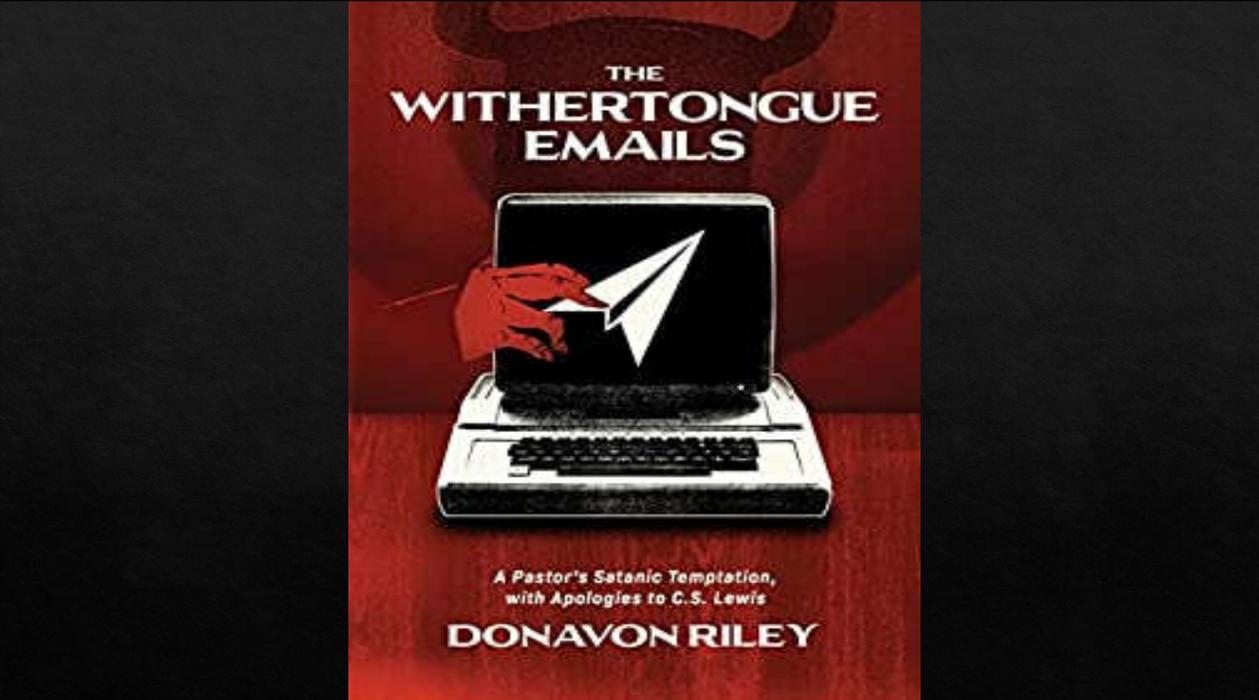
Narrator is in a grim and joyless city, “the grey town”, where it always rains even indoors. It’s hell or purgatory depending on weather you stay or not. There is a bus stop for those who desire an excursion to some other place (Heaven). He waits in line and listens to arguments surrounding them. Some do not get on.

As the bus ascends, it is revealed the bodies are ghosts. The landscape they see they cannot enjoy. Other figures (shining figures, men and women they met on earth, urge them to repent and walk into Heaven. Almost all the ghosts choose to go back to hell. The refuse to abandon their excuses.

Hell is not much different from their experience on earth.

“The choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words, ‘Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.’”

33

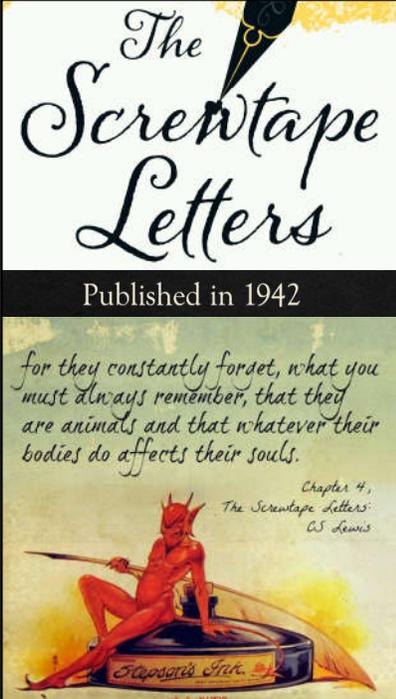


THE
WITHER TONGUE
EMAILS

A Pastor's Satanic Temptation,
with Apologies to C.S. Lewis

DONAVON RILEY

34



31 letters written by Screwtape (senior demon) to his nephew Wormwood (Revelation 8) who is a younger demon. His task is to guide “the Patient” toward Satan (“our father below) and away from God (the enemy)

Notably is Screwtape’s approach to temptation; subtle. *“The safest road to hell is the gradual one – the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.”* (Letter 12)

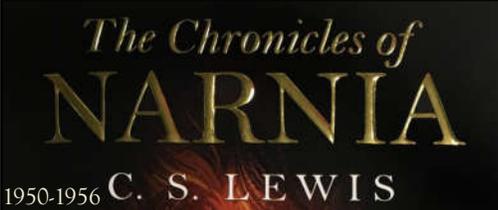
Screwtape explains the differences that God and the devils have for the human race. Screwtape wants Wormwood to promote passivity and irresponsibility (Isn’t this still relevant today?).

Discussions continue in sex, love, pride, gluttony, and war.

In Letter 22, The Patient falls in love with a Christian girl and adopts a Christian lifestyle. Screwtape tells Wormwood to keep The Patient safe, hoping they can compromise his faith over a period of time.

In the last letter, the Patient is killed in the Blitz and has gone to heaven. Wormwood is doomed to suffer because he failed to lead the Patient to hell.

35



1. The Magician’s Nephew
2. The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe
3. The Horse and His Boy
4. Prince Caspian
5. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader
6. The Silver Chair
7. The Last Battle

Animals talk, trees dance, mythological creatures (centaurs, giants, dwarfs, ogres, witches, gnomes)

Narnia spoken into existence. Creatures strive to live good lives and fight the battles of good and evil.

Sons of Adam and daughters of Eve rule the Narnian world.

Fueled imagination of readers for decades. 100 million copies sold in dozens of languages. Adapted for television, stage, radio, and film (\$1.6 billion worldwide.)

While its a fantasy world, the children must deal with real life issues that all humanity faces; violence, greed, morality, personal fulfilment. There is great loss, fear, & anger that is all dealt with as well.

But perhaps, among the church, it extends even further...

36



37

So... What about today?



38

“Don’t let your happiness depend on something you may lose.”

“There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, “Thy will be done,” and those to whom God says, in the end, “Thy will be done.”

“To love at all is to be vulnerable. Love anything and your heart will be wrung and possibly broken. If you want to make sure of keeping it intact you must give it to no one, not even an animal. Wrap it carefully round with hobbies and little luxuries; avoid all entanglements. Lock it up safe in the casket or coffin of your selfishness. But in that casket, safe, dark, motionless, airless, it will change. It will not be broken; it will become unbreakable, impenetrable, irredeemable. To love is to be vulnerable.”

39

“Pride is spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, contentment, or even common sense...As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you.”

“Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea...until he (or she) has something to forgive.”

“A children’s story that can only be enjoyed by children is not a good children’s story.”

40