

Cartographer of the Divine:



C. S. Lewis as *Doctor Ecclesiae*

Donald T. Williams, PhD
Toccoa Falls College

Introduction



☞ “Use your specimens while you can. There aren’t going to be many more dinosaurs.” -- C. S. Lewis, *“De Descriptione Temporum”*



Tolkien on Lewis:

“Interesting? He’s certainly that. You’ll never get to the bottom of him.”



Theology as Translation

“If the real theologians had tackled this laborious work of translation about a hundred years ago, when they began to lose touch with the people (for whom Christ died), there would have been no place for me.”

Life



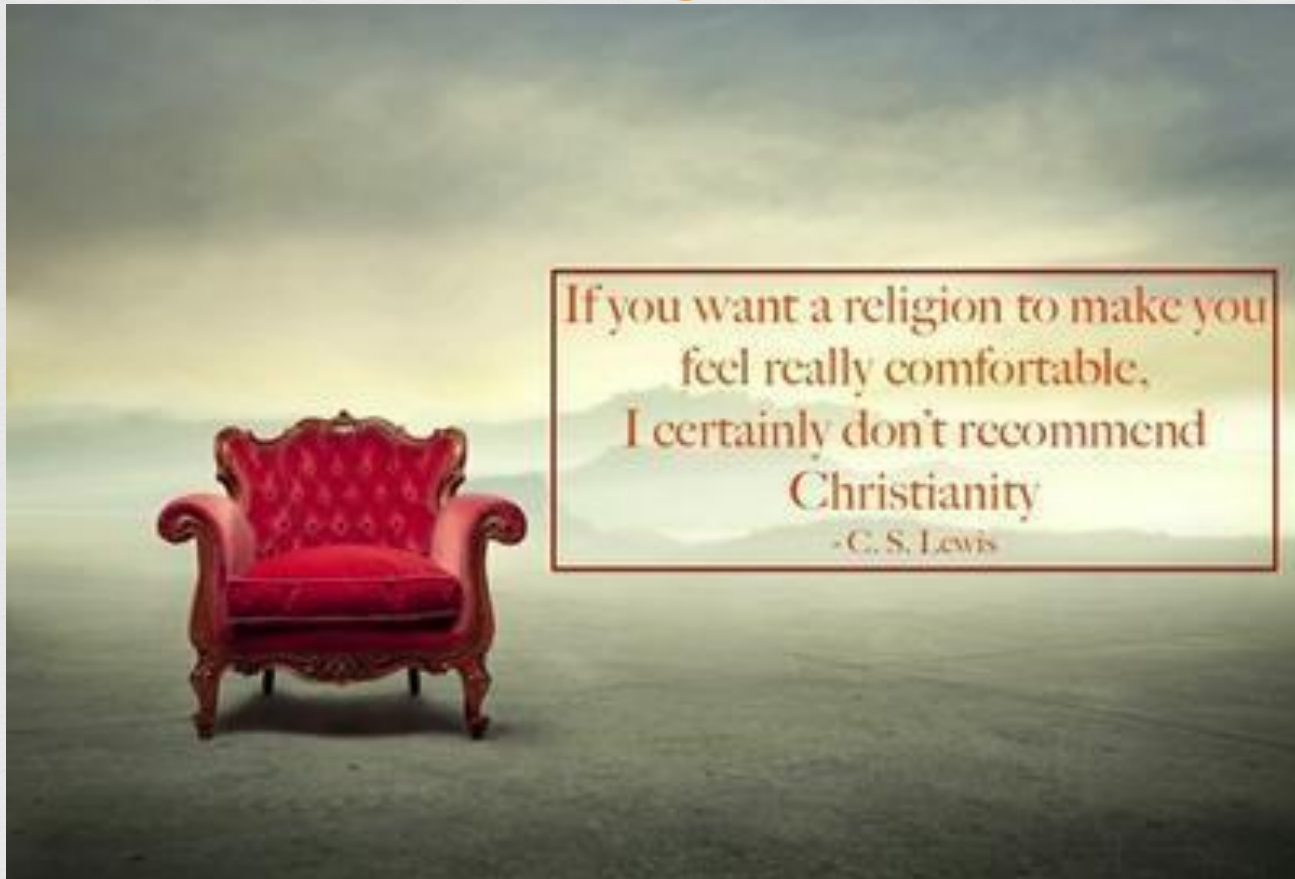
Fairies must be in the woods
Or the satyr's merry broods,
Tritons in the summer sea,
Else how could the dead things be
Half so lovely as they are? . . .
Atoms dead could never thus
Move the human heart of us,
Unless the beauty that we see
Part of endless beauty be.

Difficulties



- ❧ A. Polarization
- ❧ B. Fiction
- ❧ C. “Mere” Christianity?
- ❧ D. Volume

Problem: Polarization



Problem: Fiction



☞ “You are mistaken if you think that everything in the book ‘represents’ something in this world. Things do that in *Pilgrim’s Progress*, but I am not writing in that way. I did not say to myself, ‘Let’s represent Jesus as He really is in our world by a lion in Narnia.’ I said, ‘Let’s suppose that there were a land like Narnia and that the son of God . . . became a lion there, and then imagine what would happen.”

Problem: Fiction



“Why did I find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or the sufferings of Christ? I thought the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. . . . But suppose by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday-school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could one not thus steal past these watchful dragons?”

Problem: Fiction



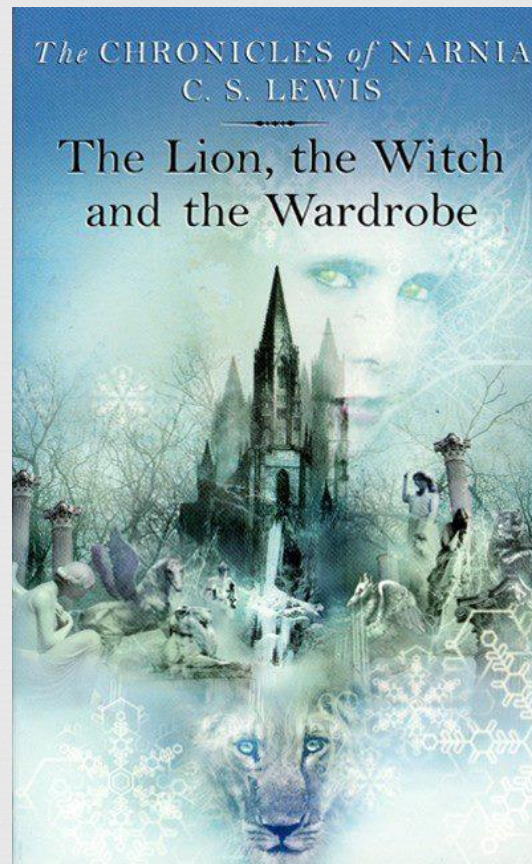
- ❧ “There I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name.”
- ❧ “The only moral [or doctrinal] lesson that is of any value is that which arises inevitably from the whole cast of the author’s mind.”

Problem: “Mere” Christianity?



- ☞ “A great deal of my utility has depended on my having kept out of all dog-fights between professing schools of Christian thought.”
- ☞ Asset and liability
- ☞ Opens space for speculation

Problem: Volume



Conclusion: *Amateur*



☞ Love for God, love for God's truth, love for God's people: Apart from these loves, no one should presume to handle sacred things. In this sense all the laity should be theologians and all the clergy amateurs.



What is at Stake:



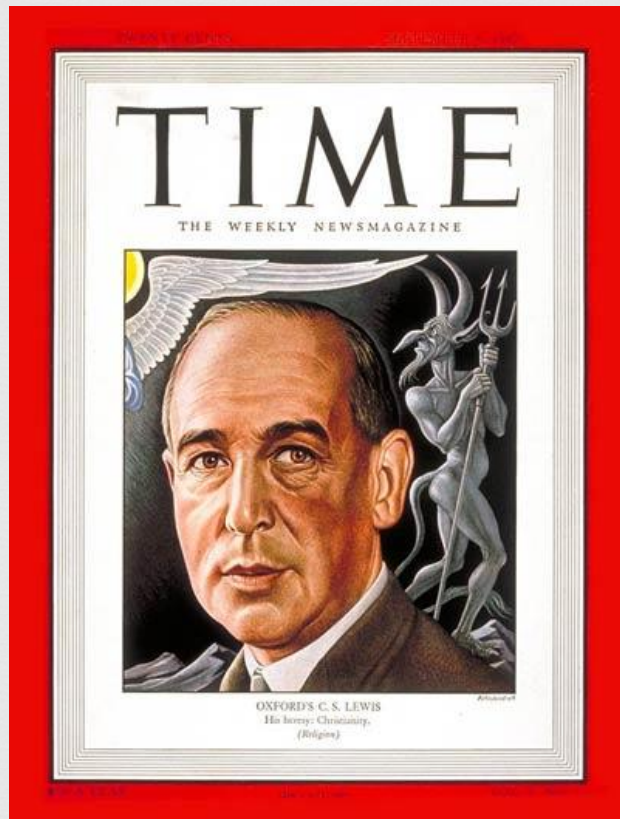
“Here is a door, behind which, according to some people, the secret of the universe is waiting for you. Either that’s true, or it isn’t. And if it isn’t, then what that door really conceals is simply the greatest fraud, the most colossal ‘sell’ on record.”

What is at Stake:



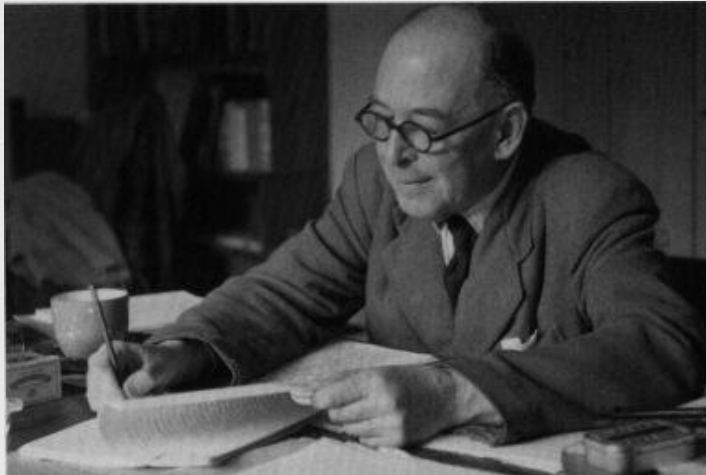
“Isn't it obviously the job of every man (that is a man and not a rabbit) to try to find out which, and then to devote his full energies either to serving this tremendous secret or to exposing and destroying this gigantic humbug?”

Conclusion



“We are summoned not to hear what one man thought about the Fall, but to take part, under his leadership, in a great mimetic dance . . . ”

Deeper Magic



- ❧ *Deeper Magic: The Theology Behind the Writings of C. S. Lewis*
- ❧ Baltimore: Square Halo Books, 2016
- ❧ Tries to keep the promises made by the lecture!