

The Truth about C.S. Lewis

A PAGAN WHO PRETENDED TO BE A CHRISTIAN, WHILE NEVER UNDERSTANDING IT

*For over half a century, the British writer, C.S. Lewis (1898-1963), has been remarkably influential among Protestants. They read his novels and want their children to read his fairy stories. Books such as *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *That Hideous Strength* (part of his *Space Trilogy*) are considered to be among his finest books for Christian children to read. But parents do not realize the danger they are subjecting their children to.*

*In his book, *C.S. Lewis: A Biography* (Harcourt Inc., 1974), Roger Lancelyn Green, a researcher on the life and writings of Lewis, said Lewis believed that “Christianity fulfilled paganism” and “paganism prefigured Christianity” (pp. 274, 30).*

Collected below are a number of passages from his writings which reveal his overmastering fascination with fantasy and the occult.

Upon reading his writings, people search for hidden meanings; and, if they think they have found something, they flatter themselves that they have come upon a deep truth. **Yet, considering the source, how could Lewis, who smoked a pipe all his life and considered all religions to be a source of truth, produce anything worthwhile for Christians?**

One of Lewis’ books was *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955), which was actually an autobiography of Lewis’ own life, desires, and imaginings. The book was dedicated to his friend Dom Bede Griffiths, O.S.B (a Benedictine monk). Griffiths was influenced by a theosophist at an early age, and founded a “Christian ashram” in India and viewed all men (Hindu, Buddhist or Muslim) as brothers in Christ. His writings were a confused mixture of Catholicism and other world religions.

Lewis wrote this about his childhood:

“At the age of seven, and eight, I was living almost entirely in my imagination; or at least that the imaginative experience of those years now seems to me more important than anything else.”—*Surprised by Joy* [SBJ], p. 15.

In this book, Lewis frequently refers to a mysterious, strong emotion which would sometimes overwhelm him. He called it “Joy,” with a capital “J.” **He would experience this deep feeling whenever he turned his attention to fairy tales, magic, ancient pagan gods, or the occult.**

“The third glimpse [of Joy] came through poetry . . . I idly turned the pages of the book and found the unrhymed translation of Tegner’s *Drapa* and read, ‘I heard a voice that cried, *Balder the beautiful is*

dead, is dead.’ . . . I knew nothing about Balder, but **instantly I was uplifted . . . I desired with almost sickening intensity something never to be described.**”—SBJ, p. 17.

Balder is the name of an ancient Germanic pagan god. You may recall that, in my books on the Bible Sabbath, I quote a passage about the Catholic Church’s adoption of ancient paganism; one source of which was Balder, another name for the Sun god who was worshiped on Sunday.

“The reader who finds these early episodes [in Lewis’ life] of no interest need read this book no further, **for in a sense the central story of my life is about nothing else . . . I will only underline the quality common to these experiences; it is that of an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction.** I call it Joy, which is here a technical term and must be sharply distinguished both from Happiness and from Pleasure. Joy (in my sense) has indeed one characteristic . . . in common with them; the fact that anyone who has experienced it will want it again.”—SBJ, pp. 17-18.

Lewis wrote that, while in boarding school, he discovered still more fictitious stories about ancient times.

“I also developed a great taste for all the fiction I could get about the ancient world: *Quo Vadis*, *Darkness and Dawn*, *The Gladiators*, *Ben Hur* . . . Early Christians came into many of these stories, **but they were not what I was after.** I simply wanted sandals, temples, togas, slaves, emperors, galleys, amphitheatres; the attraction, as I now see, was erotic, and erotic in rather a morbid way . . .

“What has worn better . . . is . . . the “scientifiction” of H.G. Wells . . . ‘Joy’ (in my technical sense) never darted from Mars or the Moon. This was something coarser and stronger. **The interest, when the fit was upon me, was ravenous, like a lust.**”—SBJ, p. 35.

“But there [at that boarding school], too, **something far more important happened to me: I ceased to be a Christian.**”—SBJ, p. 58.

Then C.S. Lewis went still deeper—as he discovered the world of the occult. He was being introduced into witchcraft.

“No school ever had a better Matron, more skilled and comforting to boys in sickness, or more cheery . . . She was floundering in the mazes of Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Spiritualism; the whole Anglo-American Occultist tradition . . . I had never heard of such things before; never, except in a nightmare or a fairy tale, conceived of spirits other than God and men. **I had loved to read of strange sights and other worlds** and unknown modes of being, but never with

the slightest belief.”—*SBJ*, p. 59.

“For the first time, there burst upon me the idea that there might be real marvels all about us, that **the visible world might be only a curtain to conceal huge realms** uncharted by my very simple theology. And that started in me something with which, on and off, I have had plenty of trouble since—the desire for the preternatural, simply as such, **the passion for the Occult**. Not everyone has this disease; those who have will know what I mean . . .

“**It is a spiritual lust**; and like the lust of the body **it has the fatal power of making everything else in the world seem uninteresting** while it lasts. It is probably this passion, more even than the desire for power, which makes magicians . . .

“**The vagueness, the merely speculative character, of all this Occultism began to spread—yes, and to spread deliciously**—to the stern truths of the [Anglican Church] creed. The whole thing [Christianity] became a matter of speculation: I was soon (in the famous words) **altering ‘I believe’ to ‘one does feel.’** [Feelings are better than facts.]”

“And oh, the relief of it! . . . From the tyrannous noon of [Bible] revelation, I passed into the cool evening of Higher Thought, **where there was nothing to be obeyed, and nothing to be believed except what was either comforting or exciting.**”—*SBJ*, p. 60.

Thrilled at the possibility of getting away from the obligations imposed by Christianity and the Bible, Lewis craved instead to let his imagination run riot.

“Without knowing it, **I was already desperately anxious to get rid of my religion** . . . I [had] set myself a standard. No clause of my prayer was to be allowed to pass muster unless it was accompanied by what I called a ‘realization,’ by which I meant **a certain vividness of the imagination and the affections.**”—*SBJ*, p. 61.

“Night after night, dizzy with desire for sleep and often in a kind of despair, I endeavored to pump up my ‘realizations.’ . . . **This ludicrous burden of false duties in prayer provided, of course, an unconscious motive for wishing to shuffle off the Christian faith** . . . No one ever attempted to show in what sense **Christianity fulfilled Paganism or Paganism prefigured Christianity.**”—*SBJ*, p. 62.

Whatever helped him despise Christianity, and gave him excuse to flee from it, was what Lewis wanted.

“You might ask how I combined this directly Atheistical thought . . . with my Occultist fancies . . . **They . . . had only this in common, that both made against Christianity. And so, little by little . . . I became an apostate, dropping my faith** . . .

“My stay at Chartres [boarding school] lasted from the spring term of 1911 till the end of the summer term 1913 . . . Dear Miss C. had been the occasion of much good to me as well as of evil . . . Nor would I deny that in all her ‘Higher Thought,’ disastrous though its main effect on me was, there were elements of real and disinterested spirituality by which I benefited.”—*SBJ*, pp. 65-66.

“We are taught in the [Anglican] *Prayer Book* to

‘give thanks to God for His great glory.’ . . . **I came far nearer to feeling this about the Norse gods** whom I disbelieved in than I had ever done about the true God while I believed. **Sometimes I can almost think that I was sent back to the false gods, there to acquire some capacity for worship.**”—*SBJ*, p. 77.

“**I was at this time as nearly non-moral on that subject as a human creature can be.**”—*SBJ*, p. 170.

“After years I plunged into Maeterlinck [a different author] . . . In Maeterlinck **I came up against [discovered] Spiritualism, Theosophy, and Pantheism.** Here once more was a responsible adult [myself] (and not a Christian) who believed in a world behind, or around, the material world . . .

“Two things hitherto widely separated in my mind rushed together: the imaginative longing for Joy [emotional satisfaction], or rather the longing which *was* Joy, and **the ravenous, quasi-prurient desire for the Occult.**”—*SBJ*, p. 175.

“**The idea that if there were Occult knowledge it was known to very few and scorned by the many became an added attraction . . . That the means should be Magic . . . appealed to the rebel in me.**”—*SBJ*, p. 176.

“**The question was no longer to find the one simply true religion** among a thousand religions simply false. It was rather, **‘Where has religion reached its true maturity? Where, if anywhere, have the hints of all Paganism been fulfilled?’**

“**The intellect and the conscience, as well as the orgy and the ritual, must be our guide . . . Paganism had been only the childhood of religion.** Where was the thing fully grown? . . . **There were really only two answers possible: either in Hinduism or in Christianity.**”—*SBJ*, p. 235.

“But Hinduism seemed to have two disqualifications. For one thing, it appeared to be not so much a moralized and philosophical **maturity of Paganism** as a mere oil-and-water coexistence . . . with Paganism . . . And secondly, there was **no such historical claim** as in Christianity. I was by now too experienced in literary criticism to regard the Gospels as myths. They had not the mythical taste . . .

“And no person was like the Person [Christ] it depicted; as real . . . yet also numinous, lit by a light from beyond the world, a god . . . This is not ‘a religion,’ nor ‘a philosophy.’ It is the **summing up and actuality of them all.**”—*SBJ*, p. 236.

Eventually, C.S. Lewis “converted” to Christianity, with little evidence of a changed heart. His love for paganism never faded, but he became an expert in logical explanations of the Scriptures; many of which he disagreed with. He says he was mysteriously “converted” to Christianity one day without thinking about it, while driving to the zoo.

“I know very well when, but hardly how, the final step was taken. I was driven [*by Warnie, his brother*] to Whipsnade [Zoo] one sunny morning. When we set out I did not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and when we reached the zoo I did. Yet I had not exactly spent the journey in thought . . . It was

more like when a man, after long sleep . . . becomes aware that he is now awake.”—*SBJ*, p. 238.

Satan recognized that C.S. Lewis, with his talent for writing and a background in the imaginative love for occultism, would be an excellent tool if he could bring him back into nominal acceptance of Christianity.

The following note was included at the end of one of the chapters in Lewis’ book on *Surprised by Joy*:

“Note: *Higher Thought* [a theoretical mysticism which Lewis learned from the teacher back at the boarding school] includes **faith in the power of Self to control circumstances by a mystical power within each person. No need for faith in a heavenly God or a Source outside our being, since we can learn to manage ‘the Infinite source of our own inherent power.’**”

Lewis dedicated his autobiography (*Surprised by Joy*) to Bede Griffiths, a former student of his who became a long-time friend. **Griffiths, who founded a “Christian ashram” in India, said that Hindu temples are a “sacrament” and “no one can say in the proper sense that the Hindu, the Buddhist, or the Muslim is an ‘unbeliever.’** I would say rather that we have to recognize him as our brother in Christ” (*Bede Griffiths, quoted by Randy England in his book, The Unicorn in the Sanctuary: The Impact of the New Age on the Catholic Church, pp. 70-72; TAN Books and Publishers, Inc., 1991*).

Lewis also said that he was strongly influenced by George MacDonald, who was a universalist. **MacDonald’s book, *Lilith*, is based on an occult teaching that Adam was married to a demon named Lilith before he married Eve. By the end of MacDonald’s book, *Lilith* is redeemed; and, in the book, Adam is said to declare that even the devil will eventually be redeemed.**

Lilith shows up in “*The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.” Mr. Beaver tells the children that the White Witch is descended from Lilith, who is the “first wife” of Adam. **Children reading this will decide that Adam in the Bible had a two wives, one of whom was a witch.**

Lewis spoke very highly of Charles Williams and his books. His novels are a mixture of darkness and occultism, with some Christianity added in. In *The Greater Trumps*, the hero is a saintly woman who saves the day by doing magic with Tarot [demonic] cards.

Williams believed theosophy and other occult teachings, and he joined the Golden Dawn, a group that practices “sex magick,” which is ritual sex that is done for the purpose of getting occult power. (The notorious satanist, Aleister Crowley, was a member of the Golden Dawn.) Williams left the Golden Dawn and joined the Anglican Church, but he retained his theosophical beliefs.

Lewis also had a close friend named Owen Barfield. He dedicated the Narnia books to him and named his daughter Lucy after Barfield’s daughter.

Barfield was a philosopher who started out with theosophy and developed his own version of it. 3

According to theosophy, the God of the Bible is a tyrant, and Lucifer (the devil) came to rescue mankind from him. This blasphemous view of God shows up in C.S. Lewis’ writings.

As mentioned earlier, in his autobiography (*Surprised by Joy*), Lewis tells how at age 13 he abandoned his Anglican faith due to the influence of a school mistress who was involved with, what he described as “Theosophy, Rosicrucianism, Spiritualism; the whole Anglo-American Occultist tradition.” **From that experience, Lewis developed, what he called, a “lust” for the occult that remained with him even after he returned to Anglicanism.** He wrote:

“And that started in me something with which, on and off, I have had plenty of trouble since—the desire for the preternatural, simply as such, the passion for the Occult. Not everyone has this disease; those who have will know what I mean. I once tried to describe it in a novel. It is a spiritual lust; and like the lust of the body it has the fatal power of making everything else in the world seem uninteresting while it lasts” (“*Surprised by Joy*,” *Harcourt Brace, 1955, pp. 58-60*).

Lewis said that he described that lust for the occult in his books. For example, it occurs in the third book of his science fiction trilogy, entitled *That Hideous Strength*. **In this book, a man is in the process of being initiated into an inner ring of scientists who are occultists. They worship demons, which they call “macrobes” (huge, powerful invisible things, as opposed to microbes, which are tiny invisible things).**

“Here, here surely at last (so his desire whispered to him) was the true inner circle of all, the circle whose centre was outside the human race—the **ultimate secret, the supreme power, the last initiation. The fact that it was almost completely horrible** did not in the least diminish its attraction.”—*That Hideous Strength [THS]: A Modern Fairy Tale for Grown Ups*, pp. 259-260 (*Collier Books, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1946*).

“These creatures [demons] . . . breathed death on the human race and on all joy. Not despite this but because of this, the terrible gravitation sucked and tugged and fascinated him towards them. Never before had he known the fruitful strength of the movement opposite to Nature which now had him in its grip; the impulse to reverse all reluctances and to draw every circle anti-clockwise.”—*THS*, p. 269.

Lewis said that he had trouble with that “lust for the occult” ever since his encounter with the school matron in his boys’ school. He wrote that statement decades later in 1955. By then, he had written all of his fairy tale books which are so praised today by Christian leaders.

Ancient Greek myths tell us that the Olympic games were founded by the mighty Heracles (Heracles to the Romans), son of Zeus, the reigning god of Olympus.

4 Liking this pagan theme of Greek gods, C.S. Lewis used them in some of his books. For example, he presents the Roman gods, Mars and Venus, as visible angelic deities on Planet Venus in his book, *Perelandra*, the second book in his *Space Trilogy*. Ransom, the main hero, was transported to that planet by some friendly *elvila* (angelic messengers visible only by the light they emanate).

On Planet Venus, the nude Ransom befriends an innocent Eve and protects her from an earthly, demon-possessed tempter. The ensuing battle crushes the villain but bruises Ransom's heel, which continues to bleed until the end of the story—as if a fulfillment of Genesis 3:15. In this way, Lewis attracts many to read his books as being somehow “Christian.”

The third book in the series, *That Hideous Strength*, is set in England. Ransom must now stop a team of evil, totalitarian conspirators determined to rule the world through modern behavior strategies and ancient magical powers. But stronger forces stand by Ransom. Having traveled to both Mars and Venus, he has continuing contact with the friendly *elvila*. Working with Ransom and Merlin (the same Druid magician featured in ancient Arthurian tales of 1,500 years ago), they summon the mighty powers of the planetary gods.

The first god to arrive is **Mercury** (called **Hermes** by the Greeks), the “messenger” god who works “Hermetic magic.” Lewis described the mind-altering scene:

“The doubling, splitting, and recombining of thoughts which now went on in them would have been unendurable for one who was not already instructed in the **counterpoint of the mind**, the mastery of doubled and trebled vision . . . All **fact** was broken, splashed into cataracts, caught, turned inside out, kneaded, slain, and reborn as meaning. For the **Lord of Meaning** himself, the herald . . . was with them . . . whom men call **Mercury** [or **Hermes**].”—*THS*, p. 322.

Moments later, Venus, the familiar goddess of love, arrives. **Mars** follows close behind.

“Suddenly a greater spirit came . . . Upstairs his mighty beam turned the Blue Room into a blaze of lights . . . **Kingship and power and festal pomp** and courtesy shot from him as sparks fly from an anvil . . . **For this was great Glund-Oyarsa, King of Kings** . . . known to men in old times as **Jove** [also called **Jupiter** by Romans, **Zeus** by the Greeks] . . . Then . . . **Merlin** received the power into him.”—*THS*, pp. 326-267.

Those who have read all of C.S. Lewis' books, declare that they do not recall any place where he treated Scripture as being authoritative.

***The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is the third book in the Narnia series. It directly promotes spells and magic.**

In chapter 10, titled “*The Magician's Book*,” a book of spells is on an island inhabited by invisible creatures called Dufflepuds. Lucy works a spell to make the Dufflepuds visible. She goes through a spell book, which seems so inviting and beautiful to the reader. Then she finds the right spell and says the words. Immediately, the Dufflepuds—and Aslan—become visible. He is pleased with what she did.

Having read that book, children will be encouraged to go to the bookstore and purchase spell books of modern witches.

Many Christians declare that the Narnia books are an allegory, with Aslan representing Jesus and the children representing Christians. But if you do this with *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, then you portray Jesus as being pleased when Christians do magic and work spells. And you endorse the idea that there are “good” spells and “good” magic. However, the Bible clearly forbids any form of witchcraft:

Here is a quotation from C.S. Lewis' book, *Mere Christianity*. To him it was only “mere,” merely one religion among the many he had studied.

“There are **people in other religions who are being led by God's secret influence to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity**, and who thus **belong to Christ without knowing it**. For example, **a Buddhist of good will may be led to concentrate more and more on the Buddhist teaching about mercy** and to leave in the background (though he might still say he believed) the Buddhist teaching on certain other points. **Many of the good Pagans long before Christ's birth may have been in this position**. And always, of course, there are a great many people who are just confused in mind and have a lot of inconsistent beliefs all jumbled up together. Consequently, it is not much use trying to make judgments about Christians and non-Christians in the mass.”—*Mere Christianity*, p. 209.

Lewis wrote that the Tao contained the highest morality of all religions. He did not think that baptism amounted to much, and he believed there were errors in the Bible. He also believed in purgatory; for he believed that many who died unsaved would later be taken to heaven. Having joined the Anglican Church, he was thought to be an author of Protestant fairy tales, but in his writings for adults he praised pagan concepts and gods. He regularly went to Catholic confessionals to receive absolution for his sins; and he smoked tobacco all his life.

Books like these cause the mind to prefer an unreal world of fantasy. They make it all the more difficult for a person to properly deal with the hard, stern realities of life, and to successfully resist Satan's temptations—when they are suddenly presented to them.

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