
THE LITERARY
LEGACY
of
C. S. LEWIS

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CHAD WALSH

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for
Walter Hooper

Series Foreword

C. S. Lewis (1898—1963) taught Medieval and Renaissance Language and Literature at Oxford and Cambridge Universities for almost four decades.

He wrote much for publication: literary criticism, poetry, theology, spirituality, science fiction, juvenile literature, novels, autobiography, but alas no plays. Over and above that, he kept up a fierce correspondence for decades; 3,228 letters of his compiled and edited by Walter Hooper have been published in three volumes (2000-2006).

Hooper, long the literary adviser to the Estate of C. S. Lewis, has done much of the primal research on Lewis, editing and seeing to publication perhaps a dozen collections of Lewis's shorter writings (essays, articles, addresses; literary criticism; diaries).

Most Lewis books are still in print in one way or another. But various studies of and commentaries on Lewisiana by others have not had the same longevity. Many are now out of print, but there is much research and review yet to be done.

To aid present and future scholars, Wipf & Stock Publishers has established a series devoted to worthy books on or about Lewis. Perhaps because I have done four books on or about Lewis, Wipf & Stock has asked me to be the general editor of the series.

William Griffin

Series Editor for C. S. Lewis Studies

2007

PREFACE

In 1949 I published *C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics*, the first book devoted wholly to Lewis. As the years went by, I was content to leave to others any further book-length exploration of Lewis's achievement.

Gradually the lacks in my book became clearer in my mind, and I began to think of a new and larger book with a different focus. So early a book obviously said nothing about the large number of works by Lewis published after mine had been frozen into print. The Chronicles of Narnia, for example, were a picture in Lewis's mind but little or nothing on paper when *Apostle to the Skeptics* was published.

Also, I came to suspect that my early book had exercised a baleful influence on many other scholars. While I had some things to say about him simply as an important writer, I had concentrated on his religious odyssey and the way this found expression in a variety of literary genres. Lewis scholarship has sometimes seemed a branch of hermeneutics rather than literary criticism. Only in recent years has much attention been given to him not as a religious writer but as a writer—one whose work is well worth reading and studying simply as literature.¹

¹ A particularly rewarding attempt to apply normal approaches of literary criticism to Lewis's fiction is now available in a multi-author book, *The Longing for a Form: Essays on the Fiction of C. S. Lewis*, edited by Peter J. Schakel (Kent, Ohio: Kent State University Press, 1977).

My old delight in Lewis never left me, and gradually I began to think, How would it be if I wrote a book in which I examined all his major works from the middle distance of a half-generation after his death?

It seemed better to start from scratch, rather than revise and expand the old book. I have no intention of neglecting the religious significance of Lewis's books; after all, one would not write about Dante and say nothing of Heaven and Hell. But this time I wish to pay Lewis the just compliment of assuming that he was an unusual and significant writer, and that his work can be studied like that of any other author.

What I have done by way of preparation is simply to reread all of Lewis's published works (and some unpublished ones) together with almost all the books about him, and many of the articles. The result is really one long essay on the achievement of C. S. Lewis. I am sure that many of my insights came from books and essays I have read, and where I can recall specific influences, I have gratefully acknowledged them in footnotes. My apologies to any scholars whose ideas I may have echoed without recalling their source—but such negligence, I trust, is the sincerest flattery.

One other reason for this book. Soon after Lewis's death, I wrote an essay in which I predicted that his reputation would suffer a sharp decline, to be followed by a partial revival. I am glad to report that I was a poor prophet. There was little or no decline in Lewis's readership, and at the moment it is steadily rising. One of his American editors happily assured me, "The sale of his books is going through the roof." His work seems to have staying power.

The danger is that Lewis may become a cult figure and the study of his life and work turn into hagiography. Already at least two evangelical campuses boast of possessing *the* wardrobe through which one enters the magic land of Narnia. This curious cult of relics, so contrary to historical Protestantism, is an indication of the hold that Lewis and his works have on one of the largest and most rapidly growing expressions of American Christianity. Meanwhile, C. S. Lewis soci-

eties have sprung up, much like the Browning societies of earlier times, to present regular programs and publish their debates. A professional actor offers Lewis impersonations for \$1,000 an evening.

Lewis, however—and this is why I wrote this book—is not a writer for one season or one public. His Roman Catholic readership has been large from the beginning, and many Jewish boys and girls, or children of no religious background, have responded to all seven Narnia tales, sometimes aware of the Christian symbols and sometimes not, but in any case reading the books because they are very readable. That is the right approach. Literature first.

Many have helped me along the way; the list would be intolerably long. I wish to express particular thanks to Professor Clyde S. Kilby and the Reverend Walter Hooper. The former opened to me the magnificent Marion E. Wade Collection at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, and the latter introduced me to the rich resources of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, and has been infinitely helpful throughout.

Beloit College has always been supportive of my research and writing; I am especially grateful for a sabbatical leave when I was at the early stages of this book. While finishing it, I held the J. Omar Good visiting professorship at Juniata College, and this carried with it a reduced teaching load and adequate secretarial assistance, two priceless boons for any writer. Therefore my thanks to Juniata, and in particular to the reference librarian, Sally Barnett, and to the three secretaries who labored so faithfully to meet my deadline—Kaylene Corbin, Verna Horne, and Cheryl L. Curfman.

Chad Walsh

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THE SHAPE OF HIS SENSIBILITY

It was Lewis's good fortune that he and his older brother, Warren ("Warnie") were left alone a good deal. After their father, a successful solicitor, moved the family in 1905 to a roomy house on the far outskirts of Belfast, and before school closed in upon them, the two boys (aged six and nine) took possession of the huge and mysterious attic. They made it their world, where they exercised their imaginations. Here Lewis wrote his first (and still unpublished) books, dealing with the adventures of talking animals. A mile or so in the distance they could see, often through a drizzling Irish rain, the mysterious Castlereagh Hills, which were to reappear in *The Pilgrim's Regress* as a symbol of the heart's unknown desire.¹

After the move to the new house, Little Lea, young Lewis had his first experience of "Joy" or "Romance," to use his terms. As he describes it in *Surprised by Joy*, he was standing by a flowering currant bush when suddenly he re-

¹ For a complete biography of Lewis, see Roger Lancelyn Green and Walter Hooper, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography*. Lewis's account of his early life is contained in *Surprised by Joy*. Some biographical portions of this present book are taken, in modified form, from the Afterword I wrote for the 1976 Bantam edition of Lewis's *A Grief Observed*.

membered the toy garden in a cookie tin that his brother had once created:

. . . there suddenly rose in me without warning, as if from a depth not of years but of centuries, the memory of that earlier morning at the Old House when my brother had brought his toy garden into the nursery. It is difficult to find words strong enough for the sensation which came over me; Milton's "enormous bliss" of Eden . . . comes somewhere near it. It was a sensation, of course, of desire; but desire for what? Not, certainly, for a biscuit tin filled with moss, nor even (though that came into it) for my own past.²

This baptism by "Joy" was to be repeated throughout his life at irregular intervals. Sometimes the trigger was literary, as when he read Longfellow's *Saga of King Olaf* and came to the lines, "I heard a voice that cried, / Balder the beautiful / Is dead, is dead."³ The effect was overpowering:

I knew nothing about Balder; but instantly I was uplifted into huge regions of northern sky, I desired with almost sickening intensity something never to be described (except that it is cold, spacious, severe, pale, and remote) and then, as in the other examples, found myself at the very same moment already falling out of that desire and wishing I were back in it.

The attic paradise came to an end. First Warnie, then Jack (as Clive insisted on being called) went forth to boarding school. In the case of the younger brother, there was a succession of them, all of which he detested with varying degrees of intensity. Meanwhile, his mother had died of lingering cancer, deepening his already dark doubts about the goodness and omnipotence of God.

It seemed that no school was right for Lewis. His father finally turned to an Ulster Scottish schoolmaster at Great

² *Surprised by Joy* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1955), p. 16.

³ P. 17.

Bookham, Surrey. W. T. Kirkpatrick, then retired, had tutored Warnie and got him to the point where he received prize cadetships at Sandhurst. Was it not possible, Mr. Lewis wondered, that the "Great Knock," as he was called, could perform a similar miracle with the intransigent Jack?

Anyone wishing a loving character sketch of the Scottish schoolmaster—modified of course by Lewis's creative imagination—will find it in the person of MacPhee in *That Hideous Strength*. Kirkpatrick was an atheist of the stern and moral nineteenth-century type, a secular puritan. He was also a relentless logician. If young Lewis committed the most trifling offense against the canons of logic, he would be sternly rebuked and shown the errors of his reasoning. Lewis loved it, and those who find a bit too much logic-chopping in his books say he never recovered from it.

Though he did not know it yet, the outlines of the adult Lewis were beginning to emerge: the ruthless logician combined with the quester for the source of the mysterious "Joy" that he intermittently experienced.

Residence at Kirkpatrick's home was more than a continuous seminar in logic. Lewis had to learn Greek, among other things. The experiment was successful. He competed for a scholarship and won one at University College, Oxford. Meanwhile, World War I had broken out. The Irish were exempt from conscription, but Lewis seems never to have seriously considered taking advantage of this dispensation. Perhaps having a brother in the professional army discouraged any pacifist thoughts, though there is little reason to think Lewis would have inclined that way in any case. He decided to make a bargain with himself. He would offer himself for training as a reserve officer, but until he was called up, he would let the war take care of itself. He refrained from newspapers and went about his academic days as though they would never be interrupted.

The army, of course, did not forget. Lewis was soon in training; then, as a second lieutenant, he was sent to that part of the French front where the Germans made their final, all-

out attack. Wounded by a British shell that fell short, he was moved from one hospital and rest home to another, and eventually demobilized. He returned to Oxford, almost as though nothing had happened. Except for a few short poems, his writing shows little trace of the war experience.

From 1919 to 1924 he was a student at University College. In effect—to use the American term—he was doing a “double major” (Latin and Greek literature and philosophy and ancient history; plus English literature). It was his hope that this combined background would aid him in securing an academic position, as it eventually did when in 1925 he was appointed fellow in English language and literature at Magdalen College.

Lewis’s early years as an Oxford don coincide with the period when his religious quest was coming to its climax. The unmerited and painful death of his mother destroyed any easy confidence in a God who was both good and all-powerful. The matron at one of his schools was a religious dabbler, flirting with spiritualism and theosophy, and Lewis found her ideas liberating; he felt one could play around with them without being asked to affirm them literally. The influence of Kirkpatrick was obviously another factor, strengthening the atheistic position that Lewis had already reached. Even the study of the classics led Lewis into deeper skepticism. He noticed that the editors of texts always assumed that the classical divinities were products of human imagination; was there any reason to put Jehovah in a different category?

The story of Lewis’s return to Christianity is told in great detail by Lewis himself in *Surprised by Joy*. Briefly, he took two paths finally leading to the same destination. On the first path, he pursued the clues offered by moments of “Joy” and found he could make sense of them only by assuming a fourth dimension to existence; this turned out to be another name for God. The second path was that of logic and reason. Ironically, the very intellectual tools that the atheistic Great Knock had taught him eventually turned him in the other direction. He found that belief in God made more sense, was

better logic, than disbelief. During the year that he taught philosophy (before securing a permanent appointment in English) he reached the point of believing in "the God of the philosophers," which he still insisted was not "the God of popular religion." When he tried to distinguish between these two Gods in lectures and tutorial sessions, he ran into increasing difficulties, and found himself moving—almost in spite of himself—toward an explicitly Christian concept of God. He still did not know what to make of Christ, but finally, in a letter to his boyhood friend Arthur Greeves (October 18, 1931), he describes his formal capitulation:

. . . the idea of the dying and reviving god (Balder, Adonis, Bacchus) . . . 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 cold 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*. . . .

Lewis's return to Christianity had resounding literary consequences. It not only led him to write such outright apologetics as *Mere Christianity*, but it also, and more importantly, baptized his imagination, giving him new subject matter and themes, and most important of all, a set of symbols through which he could operate. One must remember that this was a baptism both of the head and of the heart. Had only the path called "Joy" been followed, Lewis might have been merely another George MacDonald, though a better stylist. The second path, that of reason and logic, gives an intellectual firmness to books that might otherwise be more feeling than thought.

At about the same time that he capitulated to Christ, an important change in Lewis's psychology took place; perhaps the two events are not unrelated. He turned outward, not in the sense of becoming a great extrovert and jolly good fellow, but rather in losing interest in his own subjective feelings.

He began to concentrate instead on the public world about him, which for him consisted mainly of literature, religion, and a small circle of close friends.

Owen Barfield, one of Lewis's closest and oldest friends, discusses the change in an Introduction written for *Light on C. S. Lewis*. As he sees it:

What I think is true is, that at a certain stage in his life he deliberately ceased to take any interest in himself except as a kind of spiritual alumnus taking his moral finals. I think this was part of the change to which I have referred; and I suggest that what began as deliberate choice became at length . . . an ingrained and effortless habit of soul. Self-knowledge, for him, had come to mean recognition of his own weaknesses and shortcomings and nothing more. . . . As far as I am able to judge, it was this that lay behind that distinctive combination of an almost supreme intellectual and "phantastic" maturity, laced with moral energy, on the one hand, with—I can find no other phrase for it—a certain psychic or spiritual immaturity on the other, which is detectable in some of his religious and theological writings; and occasionally elsewhere: for example, in the undergraduate humour of Weston and Devine's humiliation before Oyarsa in *Out of the Silent Planet* and the opera-bouffe climax of *That Hideous Strength* . . . is this Kathleen Raine's "a kind of boyish greatness"?⁴

These comments must be modified when considering certain of Lewis's later books, but in general they ring true to anyone who knew Lewis. He was at the same time remarkably open and remarkably shut. The world of his mind was freely available to friends and public. The world of feelings and intuitions was sparingly shared, or conveyed in such transformed style as to seem divorced from its source.

Little has been said here about Lewis's daily life. During his time as an undergraduate and his early years as a

⁴ *Light on C. S. Lewis*, Jocelyn Gibb, ed. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1965), p. xvi.

don—before he began earning significant money from his writing—he lived in a state of great financial stringency. Partly this was because in 1919 he and Mrs. Janie Moore (mother of Paddy Moore, a friend of Lewis's who was killed in the war), together with her daughter Maureen, established a combined household. This arrangement puzzled many of his friends, some of whom sought Freudian explanations. The simplest explanation may be the best: Lewis was simply keeping his promise to look after Paddy's mother if her son did not return from the war. Most, though not all, of Lewis's acquaintances describe Mrs. Moore as bigoted and bossy. They tell how she used him like an extra servant and would interrupt his tutorial sessions with phone calls on trivial matters. At any rate, he took care of her until her failing mind required a nursing home, and he visited her there almost every day until her death in 1951.

Another tormenting problem gradually emerged. Warnie became an alcoholic. Periodically he would have to enter a hospital for treatment. There might be months of abstinence, then a massive relapse. Though often drunk, Warnie was always a gentleman, and in his drier periods he wrote notable books in the field of French seventeenth-century history. Still, he was a constant anxiety to Lewis, who never knew when he would have to come to the rescue. On July 6, 1947, we find him writing to the poet Ruth Pitter:

My brother, thank God, was out of danger when I reached him on Monday morning last but one at the unearthly city of Drogheda where almost every building is a church or a tavern and what men do but pray and drink or how life is supported I can't conceive . . . you hear more wit and humor in one day of London than in a week of Drogheda. My brother was in the care of the most charming nuns.

In the midst of household confusions and anxieties about Warnie—and with a correspondence that constantly grew as his fame increased—and in the midst also of his daily chores as an Oxford tutor, Lewis somehow managed

to find the time to write more than fifty books. One advantage he had: he early developed a style that was distinctively his, and he seldom had to make extensive changes after his first draft.

The 1950's saw two major turning points in Lewis's life. One was his marriage to Joy Davidman Gresham, discussed in Chapter 9. With his wife came two stepsons. The other was his appointment to a specially created chair, "Medieval and Renaissance English Literature," at Cambridge. This gave him much more time for writing.

Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien first met in 1926, and out of their friendship evolved the Inklings. This group of personal and professional friends would meet Thursday evenings at Lewis's rooms, and often at Tuesday noon in the Eagle and the Child (commonly called the Bird and Baby), a small pub specializing in remarkable cider. The evening meetings were usually devoted to reading aloud some portion of a book in progress, followed by straightforward criticism. After the charismatic Charles Williams joined the group (the Oxford University Press, for which he worked, moved from London to Oxford during World War II) the Inklings reached their high point. At a meeting one might find Lewis reading a chapter from *Perelandra*, or Williams reading from *All Hallows' Eve*, or Tolkien from the future *Lord of the Rings*. These meetings served as a major stimulation. John Wain, a junior member of the Inklings, recalls the sessions in Lewis's college rooms:

I can see that room so clearly now, the electric fire pumping heat into the dank air, the faded screen that broke some of the keener draughts, the enamel beer-jug on the table. . . . There would be no fixed etiquette, but the rudimentary honours would be done partly by Lewis and partly by his brother, W. H. Lewis, a man who stays in my memory as the most courteous I have ever met—not with mere politeness, but with a genial, self-forgetful considerateness that was as instinctive to him as breathing. Sometimes, when the less vital members of the circle were

in a big majority, the evening would fall flat; but the best of them were as good as anything I shall live to see.⁵

A more structured and public organization was the Socratic Club, where formal papers on religious questions were presented and debated. Lewis was the principal champion of the Christian view, and with his formidable dialectic ability proved a scourge to most, if not quite all, the unbelievers who ventured into what was really a Christian lion's den.

It was a quiet life, Lewis's years at Cambridge and Oxford, and he would not have had it otherwise. His increasing fame as a writer (and briefly as a radio personality) eroded his privacy a little, but he maintained it as best he could, and remained a close friend to a few, a familiar name to many. Toward the end of his life, after the death of his wife, his own health began to fail; it was a combination of heart and kidney conditions, complicated by a calcium deficiency. He died of a heart attack the same day that Aldous Huxley departed in splendid visions from a massive dose of psychedelics, and President John Kennedy was shot in Dallas.

Looking back at Lewis's life and achievements, one is struck by their continuity. As a boy, he felt more at home in the attic where he created worlds of fantasy than downstairs where his father declaimed on politics at the dinner table. Years later, at a meeting of the Inklings, Lewis stoutly defended the primacy of imagination. John Wain recalls a time he and Lewis clashed:

Lewis considered "fine fabling" an essential part of literature, and never lost a chance to push any author, from Spenser to Rider Haggard, who could be called a romancer. Once, unable to keep silence at what seemed to me a monstrous partiality, I attacked the whole basis of his view; a writer's task, I maintained, was to lay bare the human heart, and this could not be done if he were continually taking refuge in the spinning of fanciful webs. Lewis retorted with a theory that, since the Creator had seen

⁵ *Sprightly Running* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 184.

fit to build a universe and set it in motion, it was the duty of the human artist to create as lavishly as possible in his turn. The romancer, who invents a whole world, is worshipping God more effectively than the mere realist who analyses that which lies about him. Looking back across fourteen years, I can hardly believe that Lewis said anything so manifestly absurd as this, and perhaps I misunderstood him; but that, at any rate, is how my memory reports the incident.⁶

A careful study of Lewis's letters as well as his books proves that Wain's memory was not in error. None of Lewis's narratives is straightforward realism. They may contain highly realistic elements, like the faculty meeting depicted in *That Hideous Strength*, but the mythic, supernatural, or preternatural always figures also. True, he could discipline himself to write expository books like *Mere Christianity* and *The Abolition of Man*, but these are not his central achievements. At the heart of his work are the fantasies.

The books that directly influenced Lewis are almost always those in which imagination creates new worlds. He was inspired by Bunyan in *The Pilgrim's Regress*, by Dante in *The Great Divorce*, by Milton in *Perelandra*, by Apuleius in *Till We Have Faces*. An obscure science fiction writer, David Lindsay, gave Lewis a new idea of what planets are good for in *Voyage to Arcturus* and helped prepare the way for the space trilogy. George MacDonald, whose book *Phantastes* came like a revelation of holiness to Lewis at the age of sixteen, taught him how fantasy could be the vehicle of serious visions.

The list of authors that he admired, and who may in some cases have influenced his own work, is almost endless. It is heavily loaded in favor of the "fine fablers": Edmund Spenser (perhaps his favorite author), William Blake, Walter Scott, George Meredith, William Morris, Beatrix Potter, E. Nesbit, Kenneth Grahame, E. R. Eddison (author of the

⁶ P. 182.

riotously imaginative fantasy, *The Worm Ouroboros*), Thomas Malory, the whole corpus of European mythology (especially its northern varieties), and virtually everything written in Western Europe during the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. It is true he also admired, for instance, G. K. Chesterton, whose apologetic writings may have helped teach Lewis how to turn the tables on sophisticated skeptics. But the list, taken as a whole, is strong on writers whose most obvious trait is a soaring imagination.

One particular question is to what extent he was influenced by the writers who were also his close friends. Certainly, he shows the traces of Charles Williams's presence, sometimes in a diffused way, sometimes specifically, as in his use of the Arthurian legend in *That Hideous Strength*. Williams's poetry develops the contrast between the ideal England, Logres, and the empirical Britain, and Lewis took this over. He may also have owed to Williams the insight that cosmic adventures can take place on earth as well as on Malacandra and Perelandra. Lewis's psychological and spiritual insights were deepened by Williams; for example, he learned from the latter that human beings can take upon themselves each other's burdens, spiritual and even physical. This theme is dramatized in *Till We Have Faces*.

The name of Tolkien is so linked with Lewis that one wonders whether he exerted a shaping influence. The similarities in their writing are obvious enough; both are creators of other worlds. But what different creators they are! Both men were committed Christians, but Tolkien is as stern in excluding explicit Christianity from his imagined world as Lewis is eager to admit it. Tolkien functions more in an archaic world of the sagas; Lewis proclaims a fairy tale that is also Christian truth. Doubtless the two men stimulated each other, but one sees little evidence of decisive influence in either direction.

Another living writer often mentioned in connection with Lewis is Owen Barfield. Their "great war," a long-time correspondence on philosophic questions, is fascinating in its

own right, but more relevant to Lewis the philosopher than to Lewis the storyteller. Perhaps Barfield, with his understanding of imagination as a mode of knowledge, may have loosened up Lewis and made him more willing to follow his creative mind and see where it would lead him.

Lewis's highly varied reading gave him a storehouse of mental pictures, which were reinforced by those that arose spontaneously in his supremely visual imagination—for instance, a vision of floating islands ultimately launched him on *Perelandra*. It is not the primary purpose of this book to trace his literary sources—a task big enough for another book by itself—but rather to look at the finished products. And here a paradox emerges. In his critical writings Lewis strongly deprecates the modern emphasis on originality. Take your plots and ideas where you find them, and then do something good with them, is his advice. He was as ready to borrow as were Chaucer and Shakespeare. And yet, drawing upon the common cultural storehouse of ideas and images, reinforced by his own imagination, he emerged as one of the most distinctive writers of his time. Who else could have written *Perelandra*? The Narnia stories? *Till We Have Faces*?

One naturally wonders what kind of man he was in his private life. I addressed this question to his older stepson, David Gresham, and received several letters from which he kindly permits me to quote. David was in his early teens during the years of Lewis's marriage.

David remembers especially what he sees as contradictions in Lewis's personality: ". . . a humanitarian and anti-imperialist attitude, and yet an ultra-conservative political philosophy," and adds, as an indication of Lewis's attitude toward other countries, "He used to assert that 'in French hotels, you can smell the plumbing throughout the whole building,' and he was not impressed by my arguments that his acquaintance with the most civilized country in Europe was confined to areas ravaged by the war." But David Gresham grants that, "In spite of his being bitterly anti-Socialist, he was glad of the abolition of the more blatant

forms of exploitation which he had seen come about in the course of his lifetime."

About Lewis's general background of knowledge and interest, Gresham says: "Music meant little to him, and painting and sculpture still less. He hardly ever went to the movies, to the theater, or to a concert. He was incredibly ignorant on such things as biology: he thought that a slug was a reptile!"

The picture of the serene Lewis, which often seems to emerge from his books, is contradicted by Gresham's recollections: ". . . in real life [he] was very nervous, not to say irascible—if he dropped or spilt something, he would be very upset, and as you know, he was clumsy with his hands."

Gresham pictures Lewis as completely skeptical of politicians, and in general not particularly interested in keeping up with the latest national or international news. He shunned newspapers except for the book reviews in the *Sunday Times* and the crossword puzzles in the *Daily Telegraph*.

One charming anecdote merits quotation in full:

Like many former officers in World War I, he had kept his service revolver after having been demobilized. . . . In 1940, he thought that the Germans would conquer England. He had, by the way, volunteered for active service at the outbreak of hostilities, but been turned down, on account of age, I think. He was also convinced that the fascists would murder him, so he threw the gun into the river: he wanted their crime to be without any justification. I can remember that when he told my mother about this episode, she replied: "I would have kept it, so that I could have taken some of the swine with me!" He said that when the Gestapo black list of people to be arrested as soon as the Germans arrived was published after the war, he was disappointed to find that he was not on it.

All in all, the portrait of a very private man. It is true he does briefly develop a political philosophy in *Mere Christianity* when he discusses what a Christian society would be like: