

Articles and Sermons :: C.S. Lewis in his own words

C.S. Lewis in his own words - posted by repentcanada, on: 2009/6/4 12:00

Today C.S. Lewis is revered by many "Christians" as a master of Christian apologetics. He was the author of 40+ books which included poems, novels, children's books, science fiction, theology, literary criticisms, educational philosophy and an autobiography. In his book "Mere Christianity" pp. 176-177 he wrote: '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 ...Many of the good Pagans long before Christ's birth may have been in this position'. In a previous issue of Christianity Today (6/15/98, p.30) Millet, dean of Brigham Young University, is quoted as saying that C.S. Lewis 'is so well received by Latter-day Saints because of his broad and inclusive vision of Christianity' In Letters to Malcolm (p. 107), Lewis indicates that shortly before his death he termed himself 'very Catholic' -- his prayers for the dead, belief in purgatory, and rejection of the literal resurrection of the body are serious deviations from Biblical Christianity (C.S. Lewis: A Biography, p. 234); he even went to a priest for regular confession (p. 198), and received the sacrament of extreme unction on 7/16/63 (p. 301). His contention that 'Christ fulfills both Paganism and Judaism ...' is extremely unscriptural. (Reflections on the Psalms, p.129). He also believed the Book of Job is 'unhistorical' (pp. 110), and that the Bible contained 'error' (pp.110, 112) and is not divinely inspired (The Inklings, p. 175). Lewis used profanities, told bawdy stories, and frequently got drunk with his students(5/19/90, World magazine).

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?SID=331081744503>

Those of you who revere CS Lewis and stand behind his words, need to rebuke this teaching on Lewis if it is off. We all talk about discernment - well where is the discernment concerning Lewis and his teachings?

Re: C.S. Lewis in his own words - posted by theopenlife, on: 2009/6/4 12:44

This topic has been discussed before, but I suppose new people may not have considered it.

While we should not be needlessly critical, there is yet a duty to warn others in cases of grave error, especially when it is widespread. I am amongst those who hold such concerns regarding Lewis' teachings, not because I believed hearsay but because I have personally read a number of his books and comments on these issues.

Here is a copy/paste from the last round of "Lewis Enlightening."

Dear reader, I ask for your patience with this delicate subject. I trust you will accept I have no affections for needless controversy; with earnestness my desire is for the glory of God and the good of the Church. I believe by God's grace, I have sustained over the years a reputation for cordiality, regardless of differences of view on certain subjects, and entreat you to consider this post in good faith of my intentions and sobriety.

It is not without deliberation that I raise these issues, and, lest someone assume I am fond of 'hunting heretics', it is the sheer ubiquity of Lewis' influence which compels me to raise this flag. My hope is that godly men and women acquainted with the writing of C. S. Lewis, or with others who are, would lend judgment to some concerns presented below.

Was the theology of Lewis questionable? Should his works be recommended to new believers as 'mere' Christianity?

Before beginning, I would ask that others refrain from joining this discussion until they have read the entirety of the first post. This is to prevent redundancy, prejudice, and confusion. Thank you very much for using your freedoms considerately.

* * *

The Theology of C. S. Lewis. Questionable?

I rarely meet a professing believer who has not read something by C. S. Lewis, and few others who have not at least

heard of him. My first encounter came at age 7, by reading the Chronicles of Narnia. Those books were like childhood companions to me. By late teens I had read many of his other books and considered Lewis the 'foundation of my thinking' and certainly my favorite author. Following my conversion at age 21, I gravitated to 'older paths', mostly to the works of the Puritans, Spurgeon, Pink, etc. However, I still take interest in understanding a man who has left such far reaching influences, especially upon mainstream Western Christianity. Lewis' works are required reading at many schools, including my Alma Mater, where students were encouraged to 'begin at Lewis'. Recently in a visit to Walden Bookstore I found the Theology section underpopulated with little more than some Roman Catholic books, two volumes of Augustine, and yet an entire shelf of Lewis. This has prompted a fresh consideration of his beliefs and impact.

Having returned to some excerpts from his books I have been deeply troubled at the discoveries made. To state them bluntly might invoke disbelief or charges of cruel misinterpretation. I need not battle, but will let his own voice speak for itself. A small selection of quotes will demonstrate a sample of what I speak of, but the bulk is contained in an article published by John Robbins, pastor and founder of the Trinity Foundation, and Evangelical Theological Society, Atlanta, GA. Whether or not Robbins had "an axe to grind", I care little for his opinions as for the statements of Lewis himself, which are presented in abundance.

Consider Robbins' article a part of this post, and necessary reading for entering this discussion in an informed manner:

(<http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/205a-DidCS.LewisGotoHeaven.pdf>) <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/205a-DiCS.LewisGotoHeaven.pdf>

But first, here is a sample taken from the final book in Lewis' aforementioned childrens series, The Chronicles of Narnia. For those unfamiliar, Aslan the Lion represents Christ, and in this chapter Aslan is pronouncing final and eternal judgment upon all creatures. Some are entering to the right, others sentenced to the left. Before him is brought a Calormene man, something like an Arab or Hindu, who has all his life served Tash, a false deity, such as Christians consider the Islamic Allah.

Quote:

"Then I fell at his feet and thought, Surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion (who is worthy of all honour) will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him. ... But the Glorious One bent down his golden head ... and said, Son, thou art welcome. But I said, Alas, Lord, I am no son of thine but the servant of Tash. He answered, Child, all the service thou hast done to Tash, I account as service done to me.

"... I overcame my fear and questioned the Glorious One and said, Lord, is it then true, as the Ape said, that thou and Tash are one? The Lion growled so that the earth shook (but his wrath was not against me) and said, It is false. Not because he and I are one, but because we are opposites, I take to me the services which thou hast done to him. For I and he are of such different kinds that no service which is vile can be done to me, and none which is not vile can be done to him. Therefore if any man swear by Tash and keep his oath for the oath's sake, it is by me that he has truly sworn, though he know it not, and it is I who reward him. And if any man do a cruelty in my name, then, though he says the name Aslan, it is Tash whom he serves and by Tash his deed is accepted. ...

But I said also (for the truth constrained me), Yet I have been seeking Tash all my days. Beloved, said the Glorious One, unless thy desire had been for me thou shouldst not have sought so long and so truly. For all find what they truly seek."

-The Last Battle, Volume VII of The Chronicles of Narnia

So, to review the essence of this passage, Lewis presents Aslan, the Christ figure, as crediting the good works and sincere devotion of this idol worshiper as sufficing for his entry into eternal paradise. Though the man served a false God, yet he served his idol in morally devout ways, and so his service is considered acceptable, even to the extent that he is welcomed into the Kingdom and is promised rewards.

Now I ask regarding Lewis, is he, or is he not presenting universal salvation for "morally good" people, by sincerity of conscience rather than grace through faith in the atoning work of Christ? Does he not contradict a host of passages which proclaim that "by the works of the law, no man shall be justified in God's sight", and that "they are condemned already, because they have not believed on Him whom God sent", and that "the wrath of God abides presently on them." Most of all, that the "salvation which is by grace through faith", "comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God", which requires preaching and receiving of the gospel.

Did Paul write in vain that, "Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?"

And if being found so erroneous at the heart of basic Christian orthodoxy, what may Lewis' writings add to the message of the Gospel "by grace alone through faith alone"? Undeniably his writings contain certain valuable insights, but do not also the works of Aquinas and Aristotle? Should we commend their volumes to new converts? And this seems only the beginning of apparent violent departures that have somehow been ignored by the mass of shepherds who are charged to defend the flock.

Again, the article which has the wealth of excerpts is here:

(<http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/205a-DidCS.LewisGotoHeaven.pdf>) <http://www.trinityfoundation.org/PDF/205a-DidCS.LewisGotoHeaven.pdf>

Your thoughts are appreciated.

Re: - posted by rainydaygirl, on: 2009/6/4 13:58

I appreciate what you shared here concerning Lewis writings. As was mentioned reading some of Lewis works was apart of schooling and as such I enjoyed reading his Narnia series. It was a good story, Lewis was a talented writer and for me that is where it all ends. I think the trouble that can come is if a person begins to hold the story or the author of the story in some kind of special regard. C.S. Lewis was just a man and as such he, like the rest of us was prone to being deceived and living for self. I enjoyed his fictional story for what it was but I do not agree or hold to any of his comments that he made as truth. In our walk we are daily called to test things to the Word and to walk in what the Lord has for us not mans opinions. I read a quote not to long ago from Nee that I think applies and so for me reading a book like Narnia is not so much a matter of of is this thing good vs evil, but rather how does reading this book affect my relationship with the Father? IF anything in the book or story would cause me to have a negative attitude towards others or in my walk with the Lord, if it might cause me to stumble or sin then I do not want to read it or have it before me.

Thank you for sharing the links. I will check them out later today.
rdg

Re: - posted by repentcanada, on: 2009/6/4 19:52

brothers and sisters, please listen to the two part teachings above on Lewis by Scott Johnson.....

Re: C.S. Lewis in his own words - posted by anonymity, on: 2009/6/4 20:46

Repentcanada,

I listened to the sermon. The short article you posted pretty much covered most of it I think.

I have also heard some stuff about Lewis here and there before. I haven't really read his books even though I was given them to read in bible college just never interested enough for some reason. I did read one short one but was so disinterested that I cant remember a word of it nor am I sure I did at the time. I did see the Narnia film though. Some of that Catholic stuff was weird.

I also started listening to the Tolkien sermons. It is pretty long though. I heard he was a devout Catholic and that is even worse I think then what was said of Lewis.

It would seem that Tolkien was a bit more off then Lewis especially as you compare there books.

I am not quite sure what to make all of this stuff at this point. It reminds me of they sold theirs souls for rock & roll, new world order conspiracies, westcott and hort kjv only satanic book, harry potter is evil, and other stuff. I have found that all these things have some truth to them but not all. If one is being debased upon enjoying fiction that happens to be based on some historical evil things like greek mythology or something then I am not sure it is so fatal if they are not actually taking these things seriously though it would be better just to leave it all alone.

Also, I will note that I have heard some pretty bad stuff from Billy Graham, but would not be totally confident to say he is not Christian.