

PRODUCER'S NOTE

In 1950, C.S. Lewis received a letter from a young American writer expressing his struggle to believe Christianity because he thought it “too good to be true.” Lewis responded, “My own position at the threshold of Christianity was exactly the opposite of yours. You wish it were true; I strongly hoped it was not...Do you think people like Stalin, Hitler, Haldane, Stapledon (a corking good writer, by the way) would be pleased on waking up one morning to find that they were not their own masters...that there was nothing even in the deepest recesses of their thoughts about which they could say to Him, ‘Keep out! Private. This is my business? Do you? Rats!... Their first reaction would be (as mine was) rage and terror.”

This was Lewis’ mindset before he “gave in” as he put it. Lewis embraced materialism, a worldview also known as “atheism,” “naturalism,” “determinism” or “reductionism”. What they all hold in common is the view that all of life, every action, emotion or perception, can be reduced to pre-existing physical causes all the way back to the Big Bang. There is no need to appeal to a supernatural source. God is not required to explain or define origin, meaning, ethics or destiny.

For many years, Lewis was a defender of this view. And given his rhetorical gifts and love of debate one could see

him fit into the “New Atheist” camp with the likes of the late Christopher Hitchens or Sam Harris.

This play is an exploration of Lewis’ dramatic conversion from this position to Christianity. It is my view that his vibrancy and resonance as a Christian apologist is rooted in this experience.

The primary sources for this play were Lewis’ autobiography *Surprised by Joy* as well as his *Collected Letters*. I also relied on several of his books and essay collections including *The Problem of Pain*, *The Weight of Glory*, *Mere Christianity*, *God in the Dock*, *Present Concerns* and *Christian Reflections*. Last, I was greatly helped by the many biographies and critical insights by Douglas Gresham, Walter Hooper, Devin Brown, Tim Keller, Alan Jacobs, Jerry Root, Andrew Lazo, George Sayer, David Downing, Alister McGrath, Armand Nicholi, Sheldon Vanauken, Kenneth Tynan and A.N. Wilson to name a few.

This play takes place prior to the publication of Lewis’ first Narnia story and well before he met his wife, Joy Davidman. That may beg the question “will there be a sequel”? We shall see.



Max McLean