

The Middle War-Years in the Writings of C. S. Lewis: 1942 and 1943
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Three wars were going on during 1942 and 1943, and these wars caused C.S. Lewis, a natural debater, to rise to the occasion and contribute to one front of each war. The major war was World War Two, and for this war Lewis' volunteering with the Oxford City Home Guard Battalion is fairly well known, as are his lectures for the Royal Air Force and his BBC broadcasts, the latter designed to raise the morale of the nation. Since the war began in 1939 and ended in 1945, these two years—1942 and 1943—are the middle years of the war. Elsewhere I have argued that "... Lewis waged two other wars at the same time, one within the larger circle of the Christian faith and one within the circle of his academic discipline of English."¹ Justin Phillips notes that his defense of the faith was especially prominent during World War Two: "But what is transparent is the parallel of Lewis writing his most convincing books dealing with evil, pain and the devil and all his works at the moment in the war when Britain was taking its biggest battering and was most at risk of enemy invasion."² George Sayer echoes Humphrey Carpenter in stating that the Inklings provided Lewis with a needed circle of friends because "he felt isolated during his early years at Magdalen and under dialectical attack during the later ones."³ That dialectical attack was largely directed against Lewis' Christian positions, but also against his teaching on objective value in literature. World War Two, the Christian faith, and English literature were the three fronts on which Lewis was engaged and which consumed much of his energy. During 1942 and 1943, he engaged the battle in many of his writings.

All of Lewis' BBC talks occurred during the war. Lewis gave five BBC talks under the title "Right and Wrong: A Clue to the Meaning of the Universe" (August-September 1941). Then the BBC series "What Christians Believe" was given in the next year (January-February 1942). These two were published together in 1942 under the title *Broadcast Talks*. His third series of talks entitled "A Further Series of Broadcast Talks" was given next (September-November 1942) and published in 1943 as *Christian Behavior*. His final series, "The Christian Idea of God," was delivered between February and April 1944 and was published separately as *Beyond Personality*.

In 1942 and 1943, several key Christian books, besides those of Lewis, showed the growing impact of Christianity on the intellectual life of the United Kingdom. Among these were Christopher Dawson's *The Judgment of the Nations*, which rejected totalitarianism, T.S. Eliot's influential religious poem *Little Gidding*, and Dorothy Sayer's series of radio dramas *The Man Born to Be King*. None of these books would become more influential than *The Screwtape Letters*, which, with *The Abolition of Man*, would carry an influence that lasts to the present and promises to be read for generations to come. These books were among the reasons that Adrian Hastings later described Lewis, T.S. Eliot, Dorothy L. Sayers, and Charles Williams, as an influential "Anglican lay literary and theological foursome," to a great extent responsible for this resurgence and showing "considerable Christian literary creativity but of a very unsectarian sort."⁴

¹ Joel D. Heck, "C. S. Lewis and Three Wars: 1941." HarperCollins website. April 2010. See booksbycslewis.blogspot.com. See also my articles on the years 1940 ("*Mere Christianity* in Embryo: 1940 in the Writings of C. S. Lewis." Accepted for publication by *The Lamp-Post*, the periodical of the Southern California C. S. Lewis Society), 1944 ("C. S. Lewis' Second Most Prolific Year: 1944." by *CSL: The Bulletin of The New York C. S. Lewis Society*. Vol. 41, No. 3, May/June 2010:8-10, 12-15), and 1945 ("C. S. Lewis' Most Prolific Year: 1945" by *CSL: The Bulletin of The New York C. S. Lewis Society*. Vol. 41, No. 2, March/April 2010:1-9).

² Justin Phillips, *C. S. Lewis at the BBC*, London: HarperCollins Publishers, 64.

³ George Sayer, *Jack*, Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994, 253.

⁴ Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity: 1920–2000*. Fourth edition. London: SCM Press, 2001, 388.

1942

In 1942 Lewis' defense of the Christian faith may have begun with his essay, "On Ethics" (undated), which probably predates, and anticipates, *The Abolition of Man* (1943). Lewis delivered this essay to an unnamed audience about the fact that ethical systems show much similarity to one another and therefore demonstrate the universal nature of ethics. Some had suggested that the Christian ethical system was built upon duty or instinct rather than divine revelation and that, therefore, it cannot have a divine origin. Lewis went on to say that Christ's offer of forgiveness would have been meaningless unless people had already known that they had broken the law, an argument also made in Lewis' first BBC series. Lewis rejected duty or instinct as the motive for behavior, for some other system of thought must determine which duty or instinct⁵ must take precedence in any given situation. The source of ethics, therefore, is not a given body of ethical injunctions, but the general human tradition. No one can escape from this human tradition, for it is a given; it is objective rather than subjective.

Lewis expressed similar thoughts about instinct in the first series of BBC talks that later became *Mere Christianity*, especially in the fifth talk⁶ given on Sept. 6, 1941. In this, he was not only responding to the Freudians; he was also responding to one of Freud's contemporaries, William McDougall (1871–1938), who was the first person to formulate a theory of instinctual behavior. McDougall was a Fellow of St. John's College, Cambridge (1898–1904), and later taught at Oxford University (1904–1920), Harvard, and Duke. He was also among those who favored a form of eugenics, wanting to encourage the fit people in society to have children by giving them government subsidies for raising their children, a plan that the Nazis later instituted.⁷ Where the instincts came from he did not say. What they did he described as follows:

The instincts are the prime movers of all human activity; by the ... force of some instinct every train of thought, however cold and passionless it may seem, is borne along towards its end . . . all the complex intellectual apparatus of the most highly developed mind is but the instrument by which these impulses seek their satisfaction. . . . Take away these instinctive dispositions with their powerful mechanisms, and the organism would become incapable of activity of any kind; it would be inert and motionless like a wonderful piece of clockwork whose mainspring had been removed.⁸



⁵ In a letter dated October 24, 1940, Lewis wrote to Sister Penelope, "The man who can dismiss 'sinned in Adam' as an 'idiom' and identify virtue with the herd instinct is no use to me, despite his very great learning" (on Norman Powell Williams, *The Ideas of the Fall and of Original Sin*, 1927, a book Lewis also mentions in *The Problem of Pain*). *Collected Letters*, II, p. 450.

⁶ It became chapter two of Book I when *Mere Christianity* was published.

⁷ William McDougall, *Is America safe for democracy?* New York: Scribner's, 1921, cited in Thomas Leahy, *A History of Psychology*, fifth edition, Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 2000, 432, 434.

⁸ Cited in Joad, *The Book of Joad*, London: Faber and Faber, 1932, 96. This quotation probably comes from McDougall's book, *An Introduction to Social Psychology*, first published in 1908. See http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_g2699/is_0005/ai_2699000543.

Lewis did not consider instinct to be the cause of our decisions, especially since instincts often resulted in opposite impulses. Having a desire to help someone in need is very different from the feeling that you ought to help. In addition, Lewis argued, that which chooses between two conflicting instincts cannot itself be an instinct. It is the Moral Law at work.⁹ Later, in his book *Miracles*, Lewis would argue that reason itself cannot be explained by Naturalism, because Naturalism admits no supernatural cause and purely random development cannot explain the origin of thought.

A significant Christian influence in Oxford came from the Socratic Club, which was founded in 1942. The first meeting was held in Somerville College, Oxford, on January 26, 1942 (the left side of the corner of the Somerville Quad, shown above, is the likely place for the first meeting). In his brief 1,000-word Preface to the first *Socratic Digest*, “The Founding of the Oxford Socratic Club,”¹⁰ Lewis spoke of the reasons for the formation of the club. The Socratic Club allowed undergraduates to explore “the pros and cons of the Christian Religion” with arguments on both sides of each question. The program committee worked hard to invite intelligent atheists with the willingness to represent their positions. “The absent are easily refuted,” wrote Lewis, but the Socratic Club attempted to allow both sides to present their views in the presence of one another. Here Lewis wrote, “no doctrine is, for the moment, dimmer to the eye of faith than that which a man has just successfully defended,” which suggests that both Christian and non-Christian arguments would face challenges at the Socratic Club. Some of Lewis’ essays were first presented at the Socratic Club.¹¹ Lewis was president of the Club from 1942 to 1954.

Lewis’ “Hamlet: The Prince or the Poem?” was read to the British Academy at Wantage on Wednesday, April 22, as the Annual Shakespeare Lecture and was published later that year in the *Proceedings of the British Academy*. Marvin Hinten calls this essay “the quintessential Lewis academic speech.”¹² Lewis asserted that the play was basically situation-centered rather than character-centered and that Hamlet was about death and dying. Lewis would later omit drama from his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, which suggests a greater interest in literature than drama. This essay did not take a combative position, but merely showed Lewis working within his academic field.

Lewis’ poem “Epitaph,” No. 11, was published on June 6 in *Time and Tide*. This five-line poem compared the beauty and delicacy of a woman to the bomb, which was also “beautifully, delicately made.” The irony is that one delicately made beauty took the other one’s life. While the poem seems to take an anti-war position, Lewis was not a pacifist. Here Lewis lamented the loss of life, roughly one year after the end of the Nazi bombing of London that was known as the London Blitz. Because of the lag time between writing a poem and the actual publishing of it, the poem may have been written during that Blitz. The poem illustrates major themes of war, death, and ultimate issues during a World War in which the future of Europe hung in the balance.

Another article, published in *Time and Tide* on June 27, questioned the policy of appeasement tangentially, while arguing a more important point and showing that he was not anti-war *per se*. In “First and Second Things,” Lewis argued that England had mistakenly adopted a second thing (preserving civilization, including peace at all costs) as a first thing. For Lewis, other things—such as the will of God, justice, personal honor, glory, or doctrinal purity—served much better as first things. And,

⁹ Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Book I, Chapter 2, New York: HarperCollins, 2001, 9. Lewis seems to have found some of this position in H. L. Mencken, whom he mentions in “The Funeral of a Great Myth,” 91, as suggesting that virtue is merely an elaboration of instinct.

¹⁰ Vol. I, Oxford: The Oxonian Press, 1942-1943.

¹¹ Specifically, the Preface to the first issue, later retitled “The Founding of the Oxford Socratic Club,” “If we have Christ’s ethics, does the rest of the Christian faith matter?” (not the entire essay, but a report on this talk), “Bulverism or, The Foundation of 20th Century Thought,” “Is Theology Poetry?,” “Religion without Dogma?,” and “Is Theism Important?”

¹² Hinten, “Hamlet: The Prince or the Poem?,” *The C.S. Lewis Readers’ Encyclopedia*, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1998, 197.

ironically, claimed Lewis, a foreign policy of appeasement was really only another road to war which underestimated the power of evil. That Lewis opposed the policy of appeasement is clear from a statement in *Mere Christianity*, originally delivered over the BBC on Aug. 27, 1941, where Lewis wrote that most people had gotten over “the pre-war wishful thinking about international politics.”¹³

Lewis’ talk “Miracles” was given after Evensong on Sunday evening, September 27, at St. Jude on the Hill Church, the parish church of Hampstead Garden. Lewis gave his talk in defense of one of the most important aspects of the Christian faith as part of a series called “The Voice of the Laity.”¹⁴ Lewis showed some understanding of physics when he wrote, “Well, in one sense, it is precisely the teaching of modern physics that the film never works backwards. For modern physics, as you have heard before, the universe is ‘running down.’ Disorganization and chance is continually increasing. There will come a time, not infinitely remote, when it will be wholly run down or wholly disorganized, and science knows of no possible return from that state.”¹⁵ Entropy is the rule in the universe. He also wrote about the Austrian physicist Arthur Schrödinger (1887-1961), “To explain even an atom Schrödinger wants seven dimensions: and give us new senses and we should find a new Nature.”¹⁶ The main purpose of this talk, however, was to defend the existence of miracles, though not everything that has been called a miracle is truly a miracle. If we grant the existence of both the stability of nature and a reality beyond nature, then miracles are possible. In fact, the entire universe is “one great miracle” which we cannot fully explain and we should hesitate to proclaim dogmatically on a topic about which we really know very little.

Lewis’ poem “To a Friend,” also known as “To G.M.,” was probably been written after the death of a friend, although we don’t know who that might be. G.M. might actually be George MacDonald (1824-1905), so the poem could actually be a forerunner to the anthology of the works of MacDonald that was edited by Lewis and published in 1946, or G.M. could be the first two initials of the poet Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-1889). The poem recalled the fertile life of the one who has died, contrasting the goodness of the one who died with the sterile selfishness of the author.¹⁷ Two other GMs, both Gervase Mathew (1905-1967), a former student of Lewis, and Gilbert Murray (1866-1957), a former teacher of Lewis, were still alive.

That fall, Lewis wrote a letter to Mr. Peter May for the Oct. 16 issue of *The Guardian*, responding to May’s letter in the previous week’s issue. The Peter May letter had contained several questions about Lewis’ talk “Miracles,” which Lewis had given at St. Jude on the Hill. In reply Lewis distinguished Christ’s miraculous birth from that of John the Baptist, and he referred to Christ’s changing of water into wine as “the natural conversion of water into wine,” since Christ merely sped up the processes that occur in nature. Therefore, that miracle was not an arbitrary or meaningless miracle.

From the original talk and these letters there followed a series of events that would eventually culminate in the publication of his book, *Miracles*, in 1947. On May 13, 1943, Dorothy L. Sayers complained in a letter to Lewis, “There aren’t any up-to-date books about Miracles.” Lewis quickly inn wrote back on May 17, saying, “I’m starting a book on Miracles.”¹⁸ Lewis’ talk, “The Grand Miracle,” given during another series of talks after Evensong on Sunday, April 15, 1945,¹⁹ also at St. Jude on the

¹³ *Mere Christianity*, 32.

¹⁴ According to an email on Nov. 24, 2009 from Rev. Alan Walker to the author, the talk was announced in the *St. Jude Gazette* in their September issue and printed in full in the October issue under the title “The Brilliant Exposition on ‘Miracles’ given by C.S. Lewis, M.A.” It was not given on Nov. 26, as *The C.S. Lewis Readers’ Encyclopedia* and Walter Hooper report, the latter in the Preface to *God in the Dock*.

¹⁵ Lewis, “Miracles,” in *God in the Dock*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1970, 33.

¹⁶ Lewis, “Miracles,” in *God in the Dock*, 35. By “new senses” Lewis means more senses than the five senses of sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste.

¹⁷ Don King, *C.S. Lewis, Poet*, Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 2001, 199.

¹⁸ *Collected Letters*, II, London: HarperCollins, 2004, 573.

Hill Church, seems to be a follow-up to the 1942 talk. The Vicar at the time of these talks was William Heron Maxwell Rennie, Vicar at St. Jude from 1936 until 1954. As far as we know, Lewis did not know Rennie, so Lewis was simply one of a series of high profile speakers. In 1942, other speakers included the Headmaster of Rugby, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and, had poor health not forced him to cancel, the American Ambassador, John G. Winant. In 1945, Lewis followed the wartime government minister Sir Stafford Cripps in this same series.

On Dec. 11, Lewis' letter, "Religion in the Schools," was published by *The Spectator*. In his letter, Lewis briefly challenged the idea that Christianity meant ethics to laymen and doctrine to the clergy. In his experience, many laymen wanted to hear sermons and lectures that set forth the basic teachings of the Bible, which he had provided in his BBC talks, including a defense of the historicity of the Gospels, an issue raised for Lewis by Magdalen College philosopher Harry Weldon in 1926.²⁰ As the year drew to a close, Lewis remained very much engaged in the battle on behalf of the Christian faith.

1943

A series of books, published over two decades, led to the publication of Lewis' seminal work on natural law, *The Abolition of Man*. I.A. Richards and C.K. Ogden's book *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923) had had an impact on A.J. Ayer, who, in turn, had an impact on King and Ketley, which directly led to Lewis' book, *The Abolition of Man*. Alec King and Martin Ketley's book *The Control of Language* appeared in 1939, just three years after A.J. Ayer's *Language, Truth and Logic*, the latter both an introduction to Logical Positivism and a challenge to Christianity.

King and Ketley explicitly acknowledged their indebtedness to Ogden and Richards in their preface, stating, "Finally the authors, realizing that the book makes no claim to any great originality, wish to acknowledge their debt to two writers, Mr. C.K. Ogden and Prof. I.A. Richards, whose work on language was the starting-point and the inspiration of the book."²¹ Lewis referred to this book as *The Green Book* in *The Abolition of Man*, which was originally given as the Riddell Memorial Lectures on February 24-26 at the University of Durham.

King and Ketley agreed with the logical positivists that the primary meaning of some sentences was their emotive meaning. For example, the positivists argued that to say 'x is good' is to say 'I like x.' Therefore, King and Ketley argued that to mean 'the waterfall is sublime' is to mean 'I have sublime feelings about the waterfall.' Lewis insisted, sensibly, that the waterfall was objectively sublime and that such statements were about the waterfall rather than the emotions of the speaker. King and Ketley were also downplaying emotions and teaching students to treat emotions with suspicion. In the meantime, however, they substituted their own values, which included the conviction that they had been lied to about the Great War, World War One. All of this denigration of emotions, Lewis argued, would result in "men without chests," that is, people whose emotional growth, aesthetic appreciation, and rationality have been diminished.

In one sense, Lewis wrote *The Abolition of Man*, Part 2, just two years later. In his preface to *That Hideous Strength* (1945), Lewis described *That Hideous Strength* as the novelistic depiction of the conditions predicted in *The Abolition of Man*.²² George Sayer wrote, "His dislike of what he saw as the

¹⁹ It was published in *The Guardian* on April 27 according to Walter Hooper's Preface to *God in the Dock*, and it appeared in the *St. Jude's Gazette* in May according to Rev. Alan Walker.

²⁰ C. S. Lewis, *Surprised by Joy*, San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1955, 223f.

²¹ *The Control of Language*, London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1939, xviii.

²² *That Hideous Strength*. New York: Macmillan, 1946, 7.

negative anti-Christian machinations of some of his colleagues developed little by little into almost an obsession and compelled him to write *That Hideous Strength*. But this remarkable novel was merely one prong of a sustained counterattack against the anti-Christian forces that he found around him.”²³

Richards and Ogden had correctly warned that language could be used to control the behavior of people. This is truer today than ever. When, in *That Hideous Strength*, Mark Studdock used his writing skills to shape the opinions of the community, he was controlling language for evil rather than good. When the speech at Belbury was confounded, as at Babel, everything backfired for the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments, and this backfiring was the natural result of their pride and ambition. Such is the natural end of the theories of Ogden and Richards, King and Ketley.

With the Riddell Memorial Lectures fresh in his mind, one of Lewis’ arguments from those lectures, that about the Tao or Natural Law, is reflected in a letter Lewis wrote to Martyn Skinner on March 4, 1943, stating, “The relation between the Tao and Xtianity is best seen from Confucius’ remark ‘There may be someone who has perfectly followed the way: but I never heard of one.’”²⁴ According to C. S. Lewis, that remark suggests the inability of an ordinary human being to live a good life, including Confucius. Though Confucius didn’t know it, Jesus Christ would one day live that perfect life.

Some time that year, Lewis prepared an evening speech at the request of Sir Henry Tizard, then President of Magdalen College, apparently for a group of undergraduates of the College. It would have worked well as an end of the year address in April or May. It was entitled “De Futilitate,” and he addressed the disappointments that World War One had brought and which World War Two was likely to bring. World War Two would not bring an end to war; human misery would never be abolished. But there is a much deeper futility that is incurable: according to J.B.S. Haldane²⁵ (whom Lewis called “a real scientist”), though evolution was in progress, degeneration was the rule. Haldane wrote, “We are therefore inclined to regard progress as the rule in evolution. Actually it is the exception, and for every case of it there are ten of degeneration.”²⁶

The influence of Logical Positivism had led many to conclude that scientific thought put people in touch with reality, while moral or metaphysical thought did not. Lewis challenged this conclusion, arguing that religious language and the physical sciences were as dependent on logic as any other branch of knowledge was. One cannot be a total skeptic because if all thoughts are untrue, then the thought that all thoughts are untrue is itself untrue! Lewis’ main argument held that for us to accuse the universe of futility, we must have a valid standard against which to make that claim. To have such a standard is to admit that there is such a thing as right and wrong and that the universe has meaning. “If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning.”²⁷ Without a standard, nothing could be right or wrong and the charge of futility would be empty. If there is such a standard, then Someone has made both that standard and us. If we accept that standard, then we imply that this standard and the Someone who made it are articulating good. To pursue that good, we have agreed that the universe is not futile.

1943 was the year that astronomers discovered that the universe was much larger in size than previously thought, with the result that some began to claim that Christianity was no longer needed. The

²³ George Sayer, *Jack*, second edition, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1994, 286f.

²⁴ *Collected Letters*, II, 561, written on March 4, 1943.

²⁵ See my article, “JBS: The Life and Work of J.B.S. Haldane, Interactions with C.S. Lewis.” *CSL: The Bulletin of The New York C.S. Lewis Society*, Vol. 38, No. 6 (Nov/Dec 2007), 12-16, for a more complete picture of Haldane.

²⁶ Haldane, “Darwinism Today,” *Possible Worlds*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1927, 28. Lewis cites Haldane on this issue not only in “De Futilitate,” but also twice in “The Funeral of a Great Myth.” Both essays appear in the collection *Christian Reflections*.

²⁷ *Mere Christianity*, 39. See also Chapter 1, “The Law of Human Nature,” especially page 3, and Chapter 3, “The Reality of the Law,” especially page 18.

smaller man became, the less the value that mankind and the earth seemed to carry. Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington (1882-1944), who wrote *The Expanding Universe* (1933), and whom Lewis mentioned both in *Mere Christianity*²⁸ and in “Dogma and the Universe,” had written that the earth was infinitesimal in comparison with the whole content of space. In response to this thinking, Lewis wrote a two-part essay for *The Guardian*, “Dogma and the Universe,” published on March 19, and “Dogma and Science,” published on March 26.²⁹ In those articles Lewis argued that the size of the universe had no effect upon Christian theology and that, in fact, we ought to expect a massive universe if it was created by an omnipotent God. “I should be suffocated in a universe that I could see to the end of.”³⁰ We will return to this argument later.

A brief essay from Lewis appeared in the March 21st issue of *The Sunday Times*. Lewis combined the battle for Christianity with the context of World War Two by writing “Three Kinds of Men.” He claimed that it was “disastrous” to divide the world into good and bad people, i.e. the Allied Forces and the Nazis. The three kinds of men cut across both the Allies and the Nazis. The three kinds of men were those who lived for themselves, those who lived partly for themselves and partly for other causes (the largest of the three groups), and those who did not live for themselves at all, i.e. those who were all wrapped up in Christ. Lewis showed that he did not view the two sides of the war as the good and the bad; it was more complicated than that. Those who fought in the war consisted of the very selfish, the very unselfish, and those who had a mixture of selfishness and unselfishness, regardless of the side for which they fought.

Christian Behavior, the third collection of BBC talks, was published about one month later on April 19. In it, Lewis seems to have commented on William Temple’s book *Christianity and Social Order*, which had given a theological green light to a moderated form of socialism.³¹ Temple and the Malvern conference of clergy and laymen, held in January 1941, had advocated a Christian social program for the post-war society. In the BBC talk delivered on Sept. 27, 1942, Lewis had argued against Temple that it is a mistake to request a particular political program from those who lead the Church, when those very same people have been trained to be concerned about our spiritual lives.³² Temple was appointed Archbishop of Canterbury on April 23, 1942, and this had put him in a position of reshaping the future, but not everyone appreciated his efforts. “He was accused of openly preaching socialism.”³³

George Musacchio described scientism as “a philosophical attitude toward science, sometimes even a worship of science”;³⁴ Lewis described it as “the belief that the supreme moral end is the perpetuation of our own species, and that this is to be pursued even if, in the process of being fitted for survival, our species has to be stripped of all those things for which we value it—of pity, of happiness, and of freedom,”³⁵ a position he challenged both in the Ransom Trilogy and, specifically, in his 1943 book, *Perelandra*, the second of the three books in the trilogy. Lewis elsewhere referred to scientism as Developmentalism, an “extension of the evolutionary idea far beyond the biological realm...as the key principle of reality.”³⁶ Had Lewis portrayed good science more positively,³⁷ this would have shown

²⁸ *Mere Christianity*, 55.

²⁹ Griffin, *Clive Staples Lewis: A Dramatic Life*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1986, 215.

³⁰ Lewis, “Dogma and the Universe,” *God in the Dock*, 42.

³¹ Hastings, 398.

³² Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, Book 3, Chapter 3, “Social Morality,” 83.

³³ Phillips, 83.

³⁴ George Musacchio, “Exorcising the *Zeitgeist*: Lewis as Evangelist to the Modernists,” C. S. Lewis: Lightbearer in the Shadowlands, edited by Angus J. L. Menuge, Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1997, 222.

³⁵ Lewis, “A Reply to Professor Haldane,” *Of Other Worlds: Essays and Stories*, Orlando: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1966, 76f.

³⁶ Lewis, “Modern Man and his Categories of Thought,” *Present Concerns*, London: Fount Paperbacks, 1986, 63. See also “The Funeral of a Great Myth” (ca. 1945).

more clearly that he was not opposed to science *per se*, but we see that position, and his challenge to the myth of Developmentalism, clearly described in “The Funeral of a Great Myth.”³⁸ He opposed “scientific materialism raised to a philosophy and imposed on society and morals.”³⁹ In the character of Ransom, Lewis used the three stories of the space trilogy to refute the common assumption that scientific knowledge frees us from the delusion of religion. These views were held by J.B.S. Haldane, Olaf Stapledon, Ogden, Richards, and Wells.⁴⁰ When Haldane became a socialist as an Oxford undergraduate, he was concerned about attacking religion.⁴¹ He once wrote that scientists were able to kill an animal and “keep its heart or liver alive for a day or more. Soon it will be a matter of months or years.”⁴² If such is the case, why can’t we keep a human body, or part of it (such as a head) alive indefinitely? Mark Studdock, whose education had made “things that he read and wrote more real to him than things he saw,” illustrated this position.⁴³ Studdock was a man whose “education had been neither scientific nor classical—merely ‘Modern.’ The severities of both abstraction and of high human tradition had passed him by. . . . He was a man of straw, a glib examinee in subjects that require no exact knowledge.”⁴⁴ Studdock was a man without a chest, a man whose desire to enter the Inner Ring caused him to compromise the truth.

On April 20, *Perelandra* was published by Bodley Head. *Perelandra* brought together many influences, not the least of them two novels by H.G. Wells’ *The Time Machine* (1898) and *First Men in the Moon* (1901). In a 1949 letter to I. O. Evans, Lewis stated that in Wells one had “first class pure fantasy.”⁴⁵ In *Out of the Silent Planet*, the prelude to *Perelandra*, Lewis took the society of aliens from *First Men in the Moon*, whose Selenites did not enjoy themselves but only worked, and offered instead a more advanced society on three levels (the philosophers, the poet-hunters, and the artisans, corresponding to the three kinds of humans who visited there: Devine like the pfifltriggi, Weston like the sorns, and Ransom like the hrossa.⁴⁶) whose primary purpose was to enjoy themselves. Economic activity was secondary.⁴⁷ Herein, following Milton, Lewis echoed what he considered to be the purpose of education—to produce the good man and the good citizen, but also to enjoy leisure.⁴⁸ Furthermore, these Malacandrians did not need religious training, for they were industrious, chaste, honorable, courageous, temperate, and possessing all of the virtue of the traditional Christian religion; they lived in an unfallen world.

Lewis used the narrative structure and the plot outline from *The Time Machine*, and both novels used a flashback for the center of the story. Both novels dealt with the nature and destiny of man. Lewis also used three encounters by Ransom with the Green Lady,⁴⁹ similar to the three major hypotheses of

³⁷ Doris Myers suggests that Hingest and MacPhee could have been portrayed more satisfactorily, *C. S. Lewis in Context*, Kent, Ohio: The Kent State University Press, 1994, 107.

³⁸ See *Christian Reflections* for this undated essay that may have been published in 1945. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1967, 82ff.

³⁹ Thomas Howard, *C.S. Lewis: Man of Letters*, San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1987, 99.

⁴⁰ Myers, 41.

⁴¹ *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, “John Burdon Sanderson Haldane (1892–1964)” by Claude Rogers, consulted Jan. 11, 2005, 3.

⁴² Haldane, “The Future of Biology,” *Possible Worlds*, 152.

⁴³ Lewis, *That Hideous Strength*, New York: Macmillan, 1946, 87, cited in Howard, 176.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 185. See also “A Reply to Professor Haldane,” 78.

⁴⁵ *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, San Diego: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1988, 389.

⁴⁶ Wesley Kort, *C. S. Lewis Then and Now*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, 68.

⁴⁷ Myers, 45.

⁴⁸ Lewis, “Our English Syllabus,” 81-82. Lewis, *Rehabilitations*, London: Oxford University Press, 1939, Preface, vii.

⁴⁹ When Lewis drew a comparison between the Green Lady of *Perelandra* and “an actor seen from the gallery at Covent Garden” (*Perelandra*, New York: Macmillan, 1944, 53), he was drawing on his experiences enjoying theater at Covent Garden in London.

the Time Traveler about the future. The first hypothesis had to do with the survival of the fittest, the second with man as a social being within a hierarchy, and the third with man's relationship to scientific knowledge.⁵⁰

But there were other influences as well, chief among them David Lindsay. Lewis first heard about a David Lindsay novel, *A Voyage to Arcturus*, in 1934 from Arthur Greeves. The novel had been published in 1920 and was out of print at the time he heard about it, but he finally located a copy and read it. He later wrote to Charles A. Brady, stating that Lindsay's novel was the father of *Perelandra*.⁵¹ In addition, Milton's *Paradise Lost* influenced Lewis, who was working on the university lectures that later became *A Preface to "Paradise Lost"* at the same time that he was writing *Perelandra*.⁵²

Perelandra truly illustrates the combativeness of Lewis, especially in his defense of orthodox Christianity. The fight of Ransom against Weston is not an allegory of Lewis' fight against the enemies of Christianity, but it does at least illustrate the willingness of the author to enter into combat when necessary. Some of *Perelandra* reflected the current World War when Ransom said that the two sides appear much more clearly now.⁵³ As we look more closely at *Perelandra*, Ransom represents those who were fighting for freedom and Weston represents those who were fighting in the cause of oppression, social engineering, and godlessness.

Lewis satirized the godless view in Weston, the atheist physicist of the first two books of the trilogy, who believed that an "unconsciously purposive dynamism," or a "blind, inarticulate purposiveness," explained the origin and purpose of life.⁵⁴ Weston desired "to cooperate with the *élan vital* by aiding 'the forward movement of Life.'"⁵⁵ That statement echoed J.B.S. Haldane, who once wrote of "...the duty of man to cooperate in the process of evolution."⁵⁶ Physics in Oxford allowed a person to avoid the emptiness of materialism without having to believe in God, and it gave Weston the right to annihilate creatures on the planets of our solar system to make room for the expansion of Earth's population. In *Perelandra*, Weston expressed the idea that humanity must seek to colonize other planets, systems, and galaxies. His "forward movement of Life" would be aided by that colonizing spirit. For Weston, progress was the supreme law of the universe.⁵⁷ For Weston heaven and hell, God and the devil were the same, the one merely an aspect of the other.⁵⁸ He stated in another place that if Ransom's God did exist, it made no difference.⁵⁹

Lewis was very much aware of the discoveries that were taking place in astronomy, which allegedly proved, in the words of Ransom, that "the enemy's talk ... thrusts my world and my race into a remote corner and gives me a universe, with no center at all, but millions of worlds that lead nowhere or (what is worse) to more and more worlds forever, and comes over me with numbers and empty spaces and repetitions and asks me to bow down before bigness."⁶⁰ As stated above, the vast distances allegedly proved that Christianity could not be true, and this issue especially surfaced in 1943.

Ransom thought of ...

⁵⁰ Myers, 56f.

⁵¹ The letter is dated Oct. 29, 1944. *Letters of C.S. Lewis*, 375.

⁵² Myers, 61f.

⁵³ *Perelandra*, Chapter 2, 23.

⁵⁴ Lewis, *Perelandra*, 90-91.

⁵⁵ Chad Walsh, *C. S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics*. New York: Macmillan, 1949, 145.

⁵⁶ Haldane, "Science and Theology as Art Forms," *Possible Worlds*, 236.

⁵⁷ A letter to his father Albert Lewis on Aug. 14, 1925, *Collected Letters*, I, London: HarperCollins, 2000, 649. See also footnote 17 on the same page.

⁵⁸ Lewis, *Perelandra*, 93.

⁵⁹ Lewis, *Perelandra*, 168.

⁶⁰ Lewis, *Perelandra*, 213.

the great myth of our century with its gases and galaxies, its light years and evolutions, its nightmare perspectives of simple arithmetic in which everything that can possibly hold significance for the mind becomes the mere by-product of essential disorder. Always till now he had belittled it, had treated with a certain disdain its flat superlatives, its clownish amazement that different things should be of different sizes.... Even now, his reason was not quite subdued, though his heart would not listen to his reason. Part of him still knew that the size of a thing is its least important characteristic, that the material universe derived from ... that very majesty before which he was now asked to abase himself, and that mere numbers could not overawe us unless we lent them, from our own resources, that awfulness which they themselves could no more supply than a banker's ledger.... Mere bigness and loneliness overbore him.⁶¹

When he wrote *Perelandra*, Lewis knew about Giovanni Schiaparelli (1835-1910), the Italian astronomer who thought that both Mercury and Venus revolved around the Sun while rotating once a year, so that they always presented the same side to the Sun.⁶² So Lewis had to set that idea aside to create his imaginative story, but he still acknowledged the existence of the theory. He had a character by the name of Lewis in the story say, "If Schiaparelli is right there'd be perpetual day on one side of her and perpetual night on the other?"⁶³

In the Ransom trilogy, Lewis was also challenging the modern conception of outer space as a dead and lifeless place, advocating instead the medieval conception of space as a place of life and light. Ransom, the hero of the space trilogy, found goodness in the species of Malacandra and Perelandra, since all creatures on all planets were under the authority of its Oyarsa and, ultimately, of Maleldil, i.e. God. Ransom made sense out of language, something that was not so easily done by the logical positivists of the day. Ransom, a linguist or philologist, learned the Malacandrian language and the Old Solar language. He also made use of "the traditional virtues of temperance, justice, prudence, and courage taught in old books" to make contact initially with Devine and Weston at the start of *Out of the Silent Planet*.⁶⁴

On December 7, Lewis wrote a letter to Arthur Clarke, who had written to Lewis with some criticisms of *Perelandra*. Clarke shared Lewis' interest in science fiction, or what Lewis called scientifiction. Clarke later wrote an essay called "Extra-terrestrial Relays," a paper that proposed a technology that was the forerunner both to communication satellites and to books such as *The Sands of Mars* (1951) and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). Lewis wrote,

I don't of course think that at the moment many scientists are budding Westons: but I do think (hang it all, I *live* among scientists!) that a point of view not unlike Weston's is on the way. Look at Stapledon (*Star Gazer* ends in sheer devil worship), Haldane's *Possible Worlds* and Waddington's *Science and Ethics*. I think Technology is *per se* neutral: but a race devoted to the

⁶¹ Lewis, *Perelandra*, 164f. See also Lewis' article in *God in the Dock*, "Dogma and the Universe," 39, where he writes, "In popular thought, however, the origin of the universe has counted (I think) for less than its character—its immense size and its apparent indifference, if not hostility, to human life. And very often this impresses people all the more because it is supposed to be a modern discovery—an excellent example of those things which our ancestors did not know and which, if they had known them, would have prevented the very beginnings of Christianity. Here there is a simple historical falsehood. Ptolemy knew just as well as Eddington that the earth was infinitesimal in comparison with the whole content of space. There is no question here of knowledge having grown until the frame of archaic thought is no longer able to contain it. The real question is why the spatial insignificance of the earth, after being known for centuries, should suddenly in the last century have become an argument against Christianity. I do not know why this has happened; but I am sure it does not mark an increased clarity of thought, for the argument from size is, in my opinion, very feeble."

⁶² Lewis, *Perelandra*, 26. See also <http://www.cartage.org.lb/en/themes/Biographies/MainBiographies/S/Schiaparelli/1.html>.

⁶³ Lewis, *Perelandra*, 26.

⁶⁴ Myers, 42.

increase of its own power by technology with complete indifference to ethics *does* seem to me a cancer in the universe. Certainly if he goes on his present course much further man can *not* be trusted with knowledge.⁶⁵

Clarke was especially unhappy with Lewis' comment in *Perelandra* about "little Interplanetary Societies and Rocketry Clubs,"⁶⁶ apparently a reference to Clarke's involvement in the British Interplanetary Society, to which George Bernard Shaw also belonged. The society, founded in 1933, is still in existence today with headquarters in central London. Lewis' comment in the same chapter that "The destruction or enslavement of other species in the universe, if such there are, is to these minds a welcome corollary" angered Clarke.⁶⁷ At one point Lewis and Clarke, with Val Cleaver accompanying Clarke, met at the Eastgate to discuss some of those disagreements. Lewis and Clarke seemed to end on cordial terms in spite of the fact that Clarke had disagreed with some of Lewis' views.⁶⁸

Although undated, "Forms of Things Unknown" must have been written around this time, since Lewis does with the Medusa myth something similar to what he did with the Helen of Troy story. He takes a familiar story and gives it a new and unusual twist. "Forms of Things Unknown" was first published in August 1966 in *Fifty-Two: A Journal of Books and Authors*, nearly three years after Lewis' death. The story is an illustration of a statement made in *Perelandra* that what is myth in one world may well be fact in another world.⁶⁹

In the summer of 1943, Lewis also wrote "The Poison of Subjectivism" for *Religion in Life*. Not surprisingly, the essay contained arguments similar to *The Abolition of Man*. Reason and logic, built upon objective values, provide checks to evil, but subjectivism removes those checks and enables totalitarian states. Written in the midst of World War Two, Lewis undoubtedly had Nazi Germany (whom he explicitly names in the essay), Fascist Italy, and the Soviet Union especially in mind. If there is no objective standard of right and wrong, the Third Reich can define justice as that which serves their own interests, including genocide. The denial of objective and eternal truth led to the death of six million Jews and the loss of tens of millions of other lives in the wars of the twentieth century.

In another war-related essay, Lewis' essay "Equality," published by *The Spectator* on August 27, gave his view of equality, calling it a hindrance to democracy to treat equality as an ideal. Equality carries much esteem because of the abuses of power in recent years, but equality is a medicine, not an ideal. In the wake of Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism, Lewis saw that equality prevented more abuses of power, so we need both legal and economic equality. Friendship is based on equality, but other relationships are not. Full equality would end the Monarchy in Britain. He could have added that it would end the symphony, team sports, government, and most work environments, to name just a few examples. The people of England understood equality as the opposite of elitism and in the post-war era developed a hostility towards the latter.⁷⁰

"My First School," published on Sept. 4 as "Notes on the Way," contained an expression of Lewis' understanding of joy, *Sehnsucht*, or desire, based upon his negative experiences at Wynyard School (September 1908 to November 1910). During that time, Lewis had learned the power of the group, the nature of joy, something distinct from pleasure, and the ability to live by hope and longing, knowing that both the school term and the holidays would end, just as the whole universe will run down.

⁶⁵ Lewis, *Collected Letters*, II, 594.

⁶⁶ Lewis, *Perelandra*, 81.

⁶⁷ Arthur C. Clarke, "Memoirs of an Armchair Astronaut (Retired)," in *Voices from the Sky*, New York: Pyramid Publications, 1967, 150f. See also *The Lamp-Post* (January 1979), Vol. 3, No. 1, 7.

⁶⁸ Lewis received an amicable letter from Clarke, dated Sept. 23, 1946. Lewis, *Collected Letters*, II, 741, n. 123.

⁶⁹ *Perelandra*. New York: Macmillan, 1944, 102.

⁷⁰ Pauline Adams, *Somerville for Women: An Oxford College 1879–1993*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 312.

“It does not surprise me,” he wrote, “that there should be two worlds.”⁷¹ Though not specifically stated, Lewis suggests that this leaves room for a spiritual or Christian world and life after death.

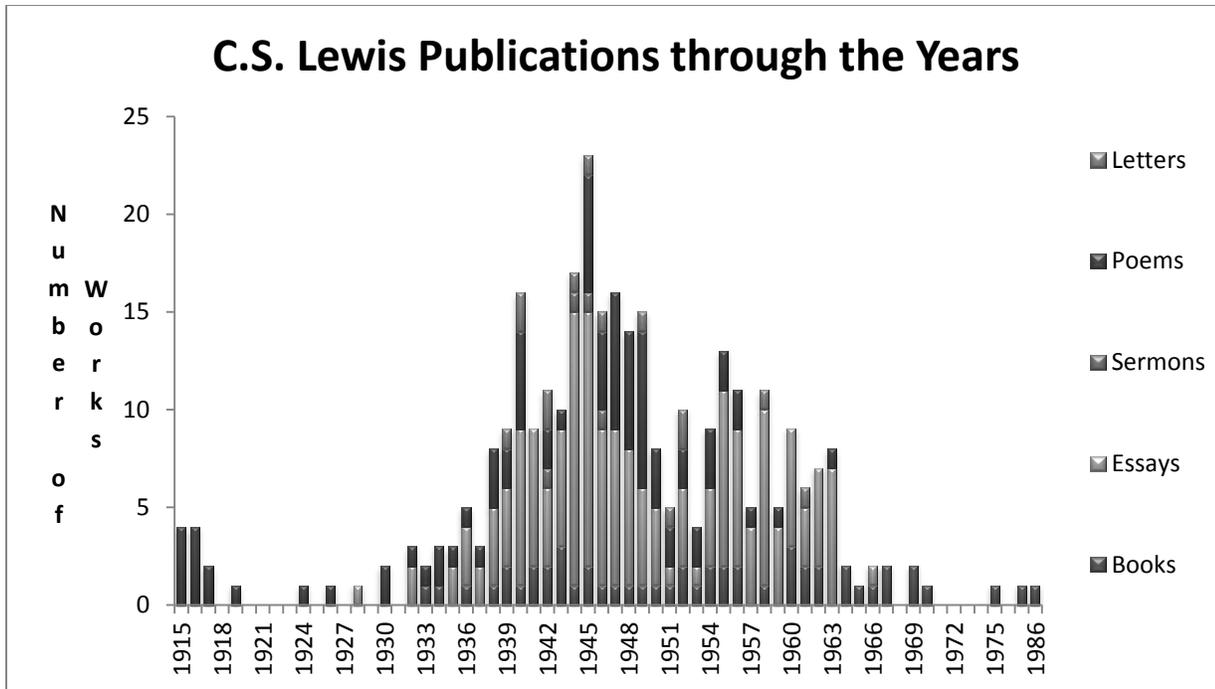
Lewis wrote the poem “Awake, My Lute!” for *The Atlantic Monthly*, which published the poem in November. Called “a nonsense poem” by Jared Lobdell,⁷² this playful poem, set in the author’s dream, joked about education and health insurance by commenting on an imaginary lecturer, publishers, examinations, and Sir William Beveridge (1879-1963). In the poem the lecturer spouted various forms of nonsense, such as a comment about a Methodist horse catching a bus. Beveridge, lightheartedly called “Beverage” in the poem, was known for the Beveridge Report, called “the Beverage Plan” in the poem, which was published in 1942 as *Social Insurance and Allied Services*. This report was released in the very same year that William Temple, who was very social-minded, became Archbishop of Canterbury. This plan provided benefits for the sick, unemployed, retired, or widowed. In 1948 it became known as the National Health Service, and it refers to the five single-payer publicly funded health care systems in the United Kingdom. Beveridge was known as a socialist, an authority on unemployment insurance, and a participant in setting up the Academic Assistance Council in 1933, which helped German Jewish academics escape Nazism. Beveridge had been appointed Master of University College, Oxford, Lewis’ alma mater, in 1937. The reference to Blair in the same poem may refer to Eric Blair (1903-1950), whose pen name was George Orwell, author of *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, both of which Lewis had read. Blair was a strong opponent of totalitarianism, and he had criticized both socialism and colonialism and, by extension, the National Health Service. Lewis may have seen him as an opponent of Beveridge and so included him in this poem. In 1942, commenting sarcastically on the pro-Soviet views of one particular journalist, Orwell said, “all the appeasers, e.g. Professor E. H. Carr, have switched their allegiance from Hitler to Stalin.”⁷³

For C. S. Lewis, the middle war-years were productive years, not as much for quantity as for the power of three of his most effective works, *The Screwtape Letters*, *The Abolition of Man*, and *Mere Christianity*, the latter appearing only in two earlier volumes, *Broadcast Talks* and *Christian Behavior*. Also very influential in these years were his talk “Miracles,” his essay “The Poison of Subjectivism,” and, especially, the second volume in his Ransom Trilogy, *Perelandra*. While it is tempting to describe Lewis as embattled and compare these intellectual battles with the battles going on in World War Two, a fairer portrayal of Lewis would see continuity between the pre-1942 Lewis and the post-1943 Lewis, a man whose conviction about the truths of traditional Christianity drove the topics on which he wrote and the logic he brought to his writing.

⁷¹ Lewis, “My First School,” *Present Concerns*, 26.

⁷² Jared Lobdell, *The Scientifiction Novels of C. S. Lewis*, Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, 2004.

⁷³ Stefan Collini, “E. H. Carr: Historian of the Future.” *The Times* (March 5, 2008) <http://entertainment.timesonline.co.uk>.



Appendix I: Lewis Publications: 1942 (11 published pieces in approximate chronological order)

1. *The Screwtape Letters* (Bles 1942; Macmillan 1943) is published on Feb. 9
2. *Broadcast Talks* (the second series of talks, ‘What Christians Believe’, was given in 1942, as was the third series, “A Further Series of Broadcast Talks”) (Bles 1942; as *The Case for Christianity*, Macmillan 1943)
3. “On Ethics” (*Christian Reflections*, xiii) (undated, but perhaps best placed here)
4. “Hamlet: The Prince or the Poem?” was read to the British Academy at Wantage April 22 as the Annual Shakespeare Lecture and was published that year in the Proceedings of the British Academy, Vol. XXVIII (*Selected Literary Essays*, xviii)
5. Poem “Epitaph” No. 11 in *Time and Tide* (XXIII) on June 6 (*Poems*, 135)
6. “The Founding of the Oxford Socratic Club” which was Lewis’ Preface in *The Socratic Digest*, No. 1 (1942-1943) (*God in the Dock*, 14)
7. “First and Second Things” as “Notes on the Way” from *Time and Tide*, Vol. XXIII, on June 27 (*God in the Dock*, 16)
8. “Miracles” was a talk given at St. Jude on the Hill Church, London, on September 27 and appearing in *St. Jude’s Gazette* in October (*God in the Dock*, 13)
9. Poem “To a Friend” (or “To G.M.”) in *The Spectator* (CLXIX) on October 9 (*Poems*, 104) This poem is later echoed in the poem that Lewis wrote after Joy Davidman’s death.
10. Letter “Miracles,” *The Guardian*, October 16 (*God in the Dock*, 328)
11. Letter “Religion in the Schools,” *The Spectator*, December 11 (*Collected Letters*, II, 540).
[A Preface to ‘Paradise Lost’ was published by Oxford University Press on October 8, but it is not included here because it was included in my article, “C. S. Lewis and Three Wars: 1941,” which was published on the HarperCollins blogspot. The talks that led to the book were delivered Dec. 1, 2, and 3, 1941 as the Ballard Matthews lectures at the University College of North Wales in Bangor, Wales.]

Appendix II: Lewis Publications: 1943 (10 published pieces in approximate chronological order)

1. *The Abolition of Man* (“or, Reflections on Education with Special Reference to the Teaching of English in the Upper Forms of Schools”) (Riddell Memorial Lectures, Fifteenth Series) February 24-26 (Oxford)
2. “De Futilitate” (*Christian Reflections*, xiii) was given at Magdalen College at the request of Sir Henry Tizard, President of Magdalen
3. “Dogma and the Universe” was published in two parts in *The Guardian* on March 19 and March 26, with the second part originally being entitled “Dogma and Science” (*God in the Dock*, 14)
4. “Three Kinds of Men” from *The Sunday Times*, No. 6258, on March 21 (*Present Concerns*, 9)
5. *Christian Behavior* (“A Further Series of Broadcast Talks”) is published April 19 (Bles, Macmillan) (in *Mere Christianity*)
6. *Perelandra* is published on April 20 (Bodley Head)
7. “The Poison of Subjectivism” from *Religion in Life*, Vol. XII, Summer (*Christian Reflections*, xiii)
8. “Equality” in *The Spectator*, Vol. CLXXI, on August 27 (*Present Concerns*, 9)
9. “My First School” is published as “Notes on the Way” in *Time and Tide*, Vol. XXIV, on September 4 (*Present Concerns*, 9)
10. Poem “Awake, My Lute!” (*Collected Poems*) (published in *The Atlantic Monthly*, CLXXII, November)