

## The Marriage of Heaven and Hell - an overview

Here poet William Blake presents a transvaluation of values, nearly a century before Nietzsche. He exhibits a patchy, visionary look at the spiritual world and supposes moral dualism (good vs. evil) to be a falsehood. Instead, good and evil need each other and will cease to war in the end. The poem is composed of a series of visions interspersed with aphorisms and tirades.

This series of short poems and comments comes closer than perhaps any other piece of literature to being a "wolf in sheep's clothing". He makes evil palatable by dressing it up as something other than it is-- indeed, dressing it up as goodness. The sense behind this, and the germ of truth in Blake's enchanting philosophy, is a rightful disgust at puritanism, legalism, and religious animosity towards sensation and emotion and pleasure. If rejection of these repressive attitudes constitutes evil, Blake seems to say, then hurrah for evil, for it is better than what is being called good! In turning conventional morality on its head, therefore, Blake seems actually to be trying to get a better grip on goodness. I suggest that Blake concedes too much to his (presumed) puritanical opponents when he places himself in league with the Devil. Perhaps they (the judgmental legalists) would brand him this way, but is this truly where Blake wants to end up? For from this perspective he has no grounds to criticize anything, even the repressiveness and asceticism he detests. When you marry Heaven and Hell, nothing is wrong, but it follows that nothing is right either. If good and evil cease to war, as he claims they will, then we will cease to be able to make moral distinctions or evaluations, including the very distinctions and evaluations Blake makes in order to argue against conventional morality. Where Blake is going, therefore, is eventually the undoing of his own philosophy. Of course, this criticism applies to any yin-yang, neutralist or "balance" notion of morality: if you argue for the importance of the dark side because the light side has begun to be muddled, you'll find yourself arguing for nothing, against nothing; and accomplishing nothing.

*"Without Contraries is no progression. Attraction and Repulsion, Reason and Energy, Love and Hate, are necessary to Human existence."*

-The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, after The Argument.

*"This Angel, who is now become a Devil, is my particular friend: we often read the Bible together in its infernal or diabolical sense, which the world shall have if they behave well."*

-The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, after A Memorable Fancy (5th).

*"For every thing that lives is Holy."*

-The Marriage of Heaven and Hell, Chorus.

# The Great Divorce

C.S. Lewis

## - Study Guide -

*The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever." Isaiah 40:8*

Each week...

- Bring your copy of The Great Divorce
- Bring your Bible -- we'll use it every week!
- Read the assigned chapters prior to class

Format...

- Oral reading of the assigned chapters.
- Discussion (guided as well as spontaneous questions)
- Biblical "foundations" for the ideas expressed in the book
- Please! Your questions and inquiries are what will bring this study alive.



## C. S. Lewis: A Modest Literary Biography

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Born in Belfast, Northern Ireland on November 29, 1898, Clive Staples ("Jack") Lewis was reared in a peculiarly bookish home, one in which the reality he found on the pages of the books within his parents' extensive library seemed as tangible and meaningful to him as anything that transpired outside their doors. As adolescents, Lewis and his older brother, Warren, were more at home in the world of ideas and books of the past, than with the material, technological world of the 20th Century. When the tranquillity and sanctity of the Lewis home was shattered beyond repair by the death of his mother when he was ten, Lewis sought refuge in composing stories and excelling in scholastics. Soon thereafter he became precociously oriented toward the metaphysical and ultimate questions.

The rest of his saga and the particulars of his writing career might be seen as the melancholy search for the security he had took granted during the peace and grace of his childhood. By Lewis's testimony, this recovery was to be had only in the "joy" he discovered in an adult conversion to Christianity. Long-time friend and literary executor of the Lewis estate, Owen Barfield has suggested that there were, in fact, three "C. S. Lewises." That is to say, during his lifetime Lewis fulfilled three very different vocations-- and fulfilled them successfully. There was, first, Lewis the distinguished Oxbridge literary scholar and critic; second, Lewis, the highly acclaimed author of science fiction and children's literature; and thirdly, Lewis, the popular writer and broadcaster of Christian apologetics. The amazing thing, Barfield notes, is that those who may have known of Lewis in any single role may not have known that he performed in the other two. In a varied and comprehensive writing career, Lewis carved out a sterling reputation as a scholar, a novelist, and a theologian for three very different audiences.

No brief summary can thus do justice to the many and varied works Lewis produced in his lifetime between 1919-1961. Indeed, more Lewis volumes--collection of essays, chiefly--have appeared after his death than during his lifetime. A sampling of the range and depth of his achievements in criticism, fiction, and apologetics might begin, however, with

the first books Lewis published, two volumes of poetry: *Spirits in Bondage*, published in 1919 when Lewis was but 23, and his long narrative poem, *Dymer*, published in 1926. Neither were critical successes, convincing the classically trained Lewis that he would never become an accomplished poet given the rise of modernism; subsequently he turned his attention to literary history, specifically the field of medieval and renaissance literature. Along the way, however, Lewis embraced Christianity, and in 1933, published his first theological work, *The Pilgrim's Regress*, a parody of John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, that details Lewis's flight from skepticism to faith in a lively allegory.

In 1936, Lewis published the breakthrough work that earned him his reputation as a scholar, *The Allegory of Love*, a work of high-calibre, original scholarship that revolutionized literary understanding of the function of allegory in medieval literature, particularly Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*. Between 1939 and 1954, Lewis continued to publish well-received works in criticism and theory, debating E. M. W. Tillyard on the objectivity of poetry in *The Personal Heresy*, published in 1939, and in that same year publishing a collection of essays under the title *Rehabilitations*--a work whose title characterized much of Lewis's work, as he attempted to bring the fading critical reputation of authors he revered back into balance. In 1942, his *A Preface to Paradise Lost* attempted to rehabilitate the reputation of John Milton, while in 1954, he offered a comprehensive overview of 16th-century British poetry and narrative in his *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*.

Lewis is best known, however, for his fiction and his Christian apologetics, two disciplines complementary to each other within his oeuvre. In 1936, Lewis completed the first book in a science-fiction space trilogy, *Out of the Silent Planet*, that introduced the hero, Edwin Ransom, a philologist modeled roughly on Lewis's friend, J. R. R. Tolkien. *Perelandra*, a new version of *Paradise Lost* set in Venus, followed in 1943, and *That Hideous Strength* completed the trilogy in 1945; the latter Lewis billed as "a fairy tale for adults," treating novelistically of the themes Lewis had developed in his critique of modern education in *The Abolition of Man*, published two years earlier. Lewis's most notable critical and commercial success, however, is certainly his seven-volume *Chronicles of Narnia*, which he published in single volumes from 1950-56. These popular children's fantasies began with the 1950 volume, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, a tale centered around Aslan the lion, a Christ-figure who creates and rules the supernatural land of Narnia, and the improbable adventures of four undaunted British schoolchildren who stumble into Narnia through a clothes closet. Lewis's own favorite fictional work, *Till We Have Faces*, his last imaginative work, published in 1956, is a retelling of the Cupid/Psyche myth, but has never achieved the critical recognition he hoped it would.

Lewis's reputation as a winsome, articulate proponent of Christianity began with the publication of two important theological works: *The Problem of Pain*, a defense of pain--and the doctrine of hell-- as evidence of an ordered universe, published in 1940; and *The Screwtape Letters*, a "interception" of a senior devil's correspondence with a junior devil fighting with "the Enemy," Christ, over the soul of an unsuspecting believer, published in 1942. Lewis emerged during the war years as a religious broadcaster who became famous as "the apostle to skeptics," in Britain and abroad, especially in the United States. His wartime radio essays defending and explaining the Christian faith comforted the fearful and wounded, and were eventually collected and published in America as *Mere Christianity* in 1952. In the midst of this prolific output, Lewis took time to write his spiritual autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, published in 1955. In the two decades before his death, Lewis published more than eight books that directly or indirectly served him in the task of apologetics and he is arguably the most important Christian writer of the 20th Century.

A prolific and popular author, Lewis's criticism, fiction, and religious essays stay in print, and are continually reprinted in various bindings and new collections. Lewis's life and work have been also the focus of countless books since his death in 1963. Ironically, though, Lewis may eventually suffer the same fate as other authors he himself "rehabilitated" during his scholarly career. Surfeited by volume after volume of analysis, paraphrase, and critique, Lewis's own canon may be dwarfed by secondary sources, an attitude he opposed all of his life in reading others. As it stands, both his fiction and theological writings have been endlessly and hyper-critically explored, creating a trail of footnotes and asides long enough to camouflage the essential viewpoints and facts about his life--thus discouraging even the most diligent student of Lewis. It must be said that Lewis's own works remain the most reliable source and insightful interpreter of this original thinker and personality.

# The Great Divorce - Study Guide -

## Introduction: Oral Reading

- Blake: The Marriage of Heaven and Hell
  - How do you see the attempt to "marry" heaven and hell?
  - Isaiah 5:20, Matthew 23:27
- On the journey to heaven, which luggage cannot be "carried along?"
  - Matthew 5:30
- *"Good, as it ripens, becomes continually more different not only from evil but from other good."* (p. VIII)
  - 2 Corinthians 3:18
- *"Evil can be undone, but it cannot 'develop' into good."*
- How does Lewis say that Blake might, in some way, be "right?" (p.IX)
- What biblical idea gives Lewis the idea that *"earth, if put second to Heaven, to have been from the beginning a part of Heaven itself."* (P.IX)
  - Isaiah 66:22; Romans 8:22; Revelation 21:1-2
- Why does Lewis put in his "disclaimer" at the conclusion of the preface? (p.X)

## Chapter 1 - The Nature of Hell

- In the first paragraph, there are several biblical images that we can perceive from Lewis' description of the "grey town." (p.1)
  - Mark 9:48; Ecclesiastes 3:11
- *"...evening never advanced to night..."* Along with this and his other descriptions of the grey town, do you find Lewis' depiction of hell "accurate?"
- Describe the personalities he encounters while waiting for and getting on the bus... (p.2) What "sins" are described?
- What principle is Lewis trying to establish regarding one's desire to WANT to be in heaven if you're already in hell? *"So what with one thing and another the queue had reduced itself to manageable proportions long before the bus arrived."* (p.3)
- *"Why can't he behave naturally?"* With what doctrine does Lewis undergird this comment? (p.4)
  - Psalm 51:5; Romans 3:11-12
- What do you think of Lewis' idea that there will be fish and chips and movies and such in hell? (p.5)

## Chapter 2 - A Bus Ride into Heaven

- Discuss the "Tousle-Headed Poet." What is his sin? How does it affect him and others? (p.5-9)
- Note how the "victim mentality" appears. (p.8) Also with Napoleon (p.12)
  - Matthew 7:3-5; Genesis 3:12
- Is the nature of hell to continue to "keep spreading?" Is *"the trouble is that they're so quarrelsome?"* (p.10) What is the biblical idea of "loneliness" and "isolation?"
- Is the trouble in hell that people have no "needs?" (p.13)
  - Psalm 62:5, Jeremiah 6:16-19, Matthew 11:29, Matthew 12:43
- Lewis introduces the idea of "reality" in the Intelligent Man's discussion of "bringing back some real commodities.) What he hopes for is "centralisation." Why can this never happen in hell?
- What seems to be the great unspoken fear? (p.14-15) Who are "they?" (p.15) What Roman Catholic doctrine might seem to explain their current circumstances?
  - Revelation 20:7 - 15
- What might we call the "Clean-shaven man" and his philosophy today? (p.16)
- *"They were all fixed faces, full not of possibilities but impossibilities... Then -- I caught sight of my own."*
  - 1 Corinthians 13:12

## Chapter 3 - The Nature of Heaven

- What differences do you notice between the gray town and "heaven?"
- What is perhaps the greatest "physical" difference between the two? How does this relate back to the 1 Corinthians 13:12 passage?
- The Screwtape Letters might give us some insight on this issue:
  - (Letter 1 - "Real Life")
  - Note the distinction between the "unfamiliar" and the "familiar."
  - Romans 11:33-36
- What do you make of the difference in the nature/physical makeup of the people? See page 21: *"I also was a phantom. Who will give me words to express the terror of that discovery?"*
  - 1 Chronicles 29:15, Job 8:9, Job 10:20-22, Job 38:17, Psalm 102:11, Psalm 144:4, Isaiah 9:2, Colossians 2:17, Hebrews 8, Hebrews 10:1

- What is the deep irony in the ghost's statement on p.22? *"Damn it, one's chief object in coming here at all was to avoid them!"*
  - Which Jewish group might find themselves making the same complaint?
  - Luke 15:1-2
- Lewis begins to describe further the "bright country" on p.23. What biblical images does it bring to mind? Ezekiel? Revelation?
- Why is there both "promise" and possibly "threat" in the sunrise? (P.23)
  - Matthew 3:1,10; Matthew 25:1-13
- Are there any other characteristics of the "bright people" that strike you and bring out a biblical resonance?
- Note: How many "shadow people" have chosen to return at this point?

## Chapter 4: The Bleeding Charity

- The story of the "Big Ghost." Describe the circumstance of his life and what do you deduce about the "bright man" who came to greet him? Occupation? Len's "sin?" Who is "Jack?"
- What is the primary issue at stake here? If you had to pick a quote of the "Big Ghost" that summarized his position, what would it be?
- I believe this chapter contains the "theme" and key phrase of the entire book. What might it be, do you think?
- Note the use of the word "charity." Remember your King James version? What parallel to "charity" do we see in that older translation? How does it fit into this scenario?
  - 1 Corinthians 13; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 2:5-8; John 3:16; Rom 5:11; Psalm 103:10; Isaiah 64:6
  - Find correlations for these passages in this chapter.
- What do you make of the "bright man's" statements to the Big Ghost beginning on the bottom of page 29?
  - Luke 13:30; Matthew 20:16
- Lewis speaks of *"a kind of triumph"* that the Ghost experiences. (p.30) This introduces a major theme we'll explore in future sessions.
- The Ghost also calls those in heaven part of "a bloody clique." Churches are often accused of being "cliquish." When are those criticisms fair? When are they not? How do we guard against becoming cliquish and avoid using that criticism unfairly?
- Now how many have returned to the bus? How many so far have chosen to stay permanently?

## Chapter 5: "Honest Opinions Sincerely Expressed"

- The story of the "Cultured Ghost." Describe what you learn of this Ghost's "history."
- Note the first criticism of "Dick" by the Ghost. (p.34) How do you see this criticism voiced in our society today?
  - Matthew 5:11; Genesis 19:5-9
- What is the "Cultured Ghost's" sin? (p.35 gives the literal answer, but what is it in a greater sense?)
- Do you know of any current or modern personalities/religious personages and ways of thinking that echo this Ghost's perspective?
- Jack says, *"It all turns on what are honest opinions."* What fundamentally key principle is revealed here?
  - John 14:6; Psalm 86:11; John 18:37-38
- What is the one question on which all turned? (p.37) Is there a parallel question in the New Testament?
  - Matthew 16:15; John 11:26
- What is *"crude salvationism?"* (p. 37) Is crude salvationism "milk" or "meat?"
- The theme of this chapter appears on the bottom of p.37. How does Jack show the weakness of this view on the next page?
- What is the opposite error of the Inquisition? (p.38)
- *"We are not playing now."* (p.38) Jack continues with an unusual intensity. Is that the right approach in every case? Why does he use it here with the "Cultured Ghost?"
  - Romans 13:11; 2 Corinthians 6:2
- Note that each ghost along the way wants to "bargain." (p.39) Thoughts? (Remember Lewis' preface...)
- *"I shall bring you to the land not of questions but of answers..."* (p.40)
- *"I will bring you where you can taste it (truth) like honey and be embraced by it as a bridegroom. Your thirst shall be quenched."* Find the biblical equivalents of these images. Note who says them in the scriptures!
  - John 4; John 10; Revelation 21; Matthew 23:37
- Lewis often uses capitalization of certain letters to convey importance. See page 41 for an example. Find other examples. Keep track of these instances. What is his point in using this convention?
- *"Once you knew what inquiry was for."* (p.41) What is inquiry for? With what kind of person does he equate this correct process with?
  - Mark 10:15 (note that this is met with scripture in retort: 1 Cor 13:11)

- The great error here is that there is an inability to grasp that there is such a thing as fact, truth, and Christ. "*We know nothing of religion here: we think only of Christ. We know nothing of speculation.*" (p.42) How must this direct us in the church?

- Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:15-20

- What is the Spirit pondering on page 42?

- In what way does the "Apostate Cleric" completely "miss the point" on page 43-44?

- 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

## Chapter 6: More on the Nature of Heaven

- Note again the capital "T" on tree. What significance might there be in this?

- Genesis 2:9; Genesis 3:24; Revelation 2:7

- Read Psalm 19:1-6; Luke 19:38-40; Micah 6:1-2; Ezekiel 6:3. Do you see a parallel to the activities on page 49?

## Chapter 7: "The Hard-Bitten Ghost"

- What is it about this type of person that makes us instinctively think they are "reliable?"

- 1 Thessalonians 5:21

- What is the "Hard-Bitten Ghost's" "conspiracy theory?"

- There's a couple more "capital letter" words on page 53. What of it?

- Is the "Hard-Bitten Ghost" Lewis' attempt at personifying William Blake and his "marriage of heaven and hell?" (p.54)

- What is the primary sin Lewis is portraying here?

- Ezekiel 18:20; Matthew 25:14-30

- What is the great danger in pessimism/skepticism?

- What's our tally now on who has gone back and who has stayed?

## Chapter 8: Vanity, Vanity...

- The narrator begins to be drawn into the skeptic's argument. He frets over the essential goodness of the bright spirits. He wonders why they don't take more action to help the people in hell. He actually becomes fearful of his circumstances.



- In *The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe*, Susan is a bit worried about meeting Aslan:
  - "Is he - quite safe? I shall feel rather nervous about meeting a lion."*
  - "That you will, dearie, and no mistake," said Mrs. Beaver; "if there's anyone who can appear before Aslan without their knees knocking, they're either braver than most or else just silly."*
  - "Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.*
  - "Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe" 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you."* (*The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe* - p.80)
  
- What is the "real and present danger" about interacting with lions -- and, for that matter, God? What is the significance of the statement "*This is no place for you.*" (p.58 -- note the presence of lions.)
  - Isaiah 6:1-7; Revelation 1:12-18
  
- The Well-Dressed Ghost. What is the sin addressed here?
  - Ecclesiastes 1
  
- "*You can lean on me all the way. I can't absolutely CARRY you...*" (p.60)
  - Matthew 11:30
  
- "*Have everyone staring through me...*" (p.60)
  - Genesis 3:7
  
- "*What are we born for?*" (p.61)
  - John 10:10
  
- What is shame like? (p.61)
  
- What ultimately prevents the well-dressed ghost from accepting the invitation? (p.62)
  - Hebrews 12:2
  
- Why are the herd of unicorns called? (p.62)
  
- What do you think will be the outcome of this encounter?

## Chapter 9: Meeting a Mentor - George MacDonald

- What does this initial encounter reveal about the author?
  
- How does Lewis help us "suspend our disbelief" when the question arises about whether the ghosts can actually stay in heaven? (p.67-68)

- *"Is judgment not final? Is there really a way out of Hell into Heaven?"* (p.68)
  - Hebrews 9:27-28
- What term does MacDonald use to describe the place they are in? What qualifications does he place upon it? *"Heaven is reality itself."* (p.68) (An aside from the first of The Screwtape Letters)
  - Psalm 23:4
- *"We have never lived anywhere except in Heaven."* (p.69) What practical insight does this give to us regarding redemption and sanctification?
  - 2 Corinthians 5:19
- What is the great falsehood in the typically commended statement, *"At least I've been true to myself?"* (p.70)
- MacDonald gives definite definitions of Hell and Heaven:
  - Hell:
  - Heaven:
- We're reminded to keep the main thing the main thing. Why has the narrator been brought there to *"the valley of the shadow of life?"* (p.71)
- What is it that the damned are really rejecting? (p.71)
  - Acts 7:54; John 8:12ff
- We are taught that every sin is the same in the eyes of God? Does this contradict what MacDonald says on page 72? How might he respond to that question?
- Little children are held up again for a certain quality they have in "self-perception." What is it and how can it be of great value? (p.73)
- What is the subtlest of all the snares? (p.74)
  - Matthew 6:16-18; Jeremiah 2:33-37
- A key section of the book: "Burger King theology" -- Have it your way. (p.75) How does the doctrine of free will come into play here?
  - Luke 11:9-13; Matthew 26:39-42
- The Grumbling Ghost. (p.75ff) What is the sin here?
- How does this vignette seem to echo the common phrase, "Hate the sin but love the sinner?" (p.77)
- *"I owed all this ease to the strong arm of the Teacher."* (p.78) What benefits does being in the presence of the Teacher bring?

- There are a series of brief encounters or observances of other ghosts which Lewis describes on pages 78-82. Most seem to simply want to extend Hell into Heaven or scoff or mock. MacDonald: *"Those that hate goodness are sometimes nearer than those that know nothing at all about it and think they have it already."* (p.82)

- Can you see how this might be reflected in the early church, which after just a few years ended up having greatest success among the pagans and not the Jews?

- Do the demons who recognise Jesus give us insight here?

- The Artist Ghost. What is the sin encountered here?

- Lewis reinforces the idea that what we often take for spiritual symbols are actually spiritual realities. How does he do so? (bottom of p.82, top of 83)

- What is the true relationship between the Creator and the created? How can it be abused and distorted? (p.83-85)

- Isaiah 29:16; Isaiah 64:8

- What is the holiest and best form of "ownership?" In whose works do we take the greatest pride? (p.85-86)

- Romans 12:9-21

- How does one gain notoriety in Heaven?

- Isaiah 26:3-8

- What's the tally of "goers" to "stayers" now?

## Chapter 10: A Wife's Control

- The Controlling Ghost. Why is the discussion of forgiveness difficult here? What is it that prevents real healing from happening?

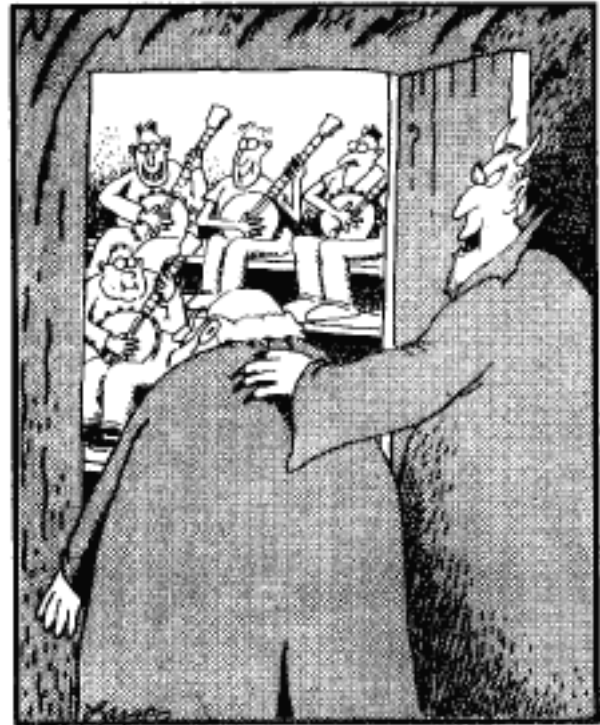
- Jeremiah 31:34; Hebrews 8:12; Hebrews 10:17; Psalm 103:12; 1 Corinthians 13:5

- Outline the lengthy discourse and argument by the ghost. What is the sense of irony that Lewis is building?

- As the book progresses, we see that many of the biblical ideas we've already unearthed are "re-expressed" with different nuances in different encounters. Can you see an example of that here?

- What is the danger of exercising the principle of "the end justifies the means?"

- The Ghost wants to be *"somewhere quite to ourselves."* (p.94) How does this go against the very principles of God's



"Your room is right in here, Maestro."

goal for us? How is it that believers often choose to separate themselves from the family of God at the very time they most need the community of faith to surround them?

- Hebrews 10:25

- Whose opinion is obviously left out of this decision-making process? How does the "Burger King theology" come into play here? Why is there nothing left of this ghost at the end of the chapter?

## Chapter 11: A Mother's Love(?)

- The (s)Mothering Ghost. Describe the family situation and circumstances surrounding this encounter.

- Note again the use of capital letters. Who is "*Someone Else?*" (p.94)

- Matthew 19:16-22

- What does it mean to "*want God for His own sake?*" (p.99)

- On the same page, we have an example of what might be called the "kerygma" (a summary of the Gospel message). What is it and how does it relate to this ghost?

- Mark 8:31; Revelation 5:6; Luke 13:34

- Note again the use of irony as it relates to the ghost's treatment of her own mother.

- The bright spirit (Reginald) goes so far as to call this Ghost's sin the sin of idolotry. (p.100) How can that be true when it is her son she loves?

- Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Exodus 20:1-6

- What is the "*tyranny of the past?*" (p.102) Have you witnessed examples of this in your own life or in the lives of others? How does it become our tyrant?

- The Mothering Ghost pulls out an old line: "*I hate your religion and I hate and despise your God. I believe in a God of Love.*" (p.103) Why is this argument an incongruity?

- Romans 8:39; Ephesians 3:14-20; 1 John 4:7-8; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5; 1 John 4:19-21; Matthew 6:12

- "*Don't you know that you CANT hurt anyone in this country?*" (p.104) How do we see the reality of that statement in our Christian lives even now? How is it especially true in Heaven?

- 1 Corinthians 15:54-57

- "*Brass is mistaken for gold more easily than clay is. And if it finally refuses conversion its corruption will be worse than the corruption of what ye call the lower passions. It is a stronger angel, and therefore, when it falls, a fiercer devil.*" (p.105) How does this relate to the ideas of tolerance, patriotism, work ethic, commitment, independence, family, intellect, and other examples you can think of? (see also p.106)

- "*Every natural love will rise again and live forever in this country; but none will rise again until it has been buried.*" (p.105)

- Romans 6:3-9; Romans 7:4; Colossians 3:1-5
- Is Lewis unpatriotic? Is he against "artsy" things? (p.106)
- The Oily Ghost. He has a "pet." What is it? What is it a symbol for?
- He is confronted, not by a bright spirit, but by a flaming angel. What request is made of him and what significant point is made about how God and His agents choose to act with humans?

- Joshua 24:15; Luke 11:9-10; Jeremiah 29:13-14

An aside from The Screwtape Letters:

*"You must have often wondered why the Enemy does not make more use of His power to be sensibly present to human souls in any degree He chooses and at any moment. But you now see that the Irresistible and the Indisputable are the two weapons which the very nature of His scheme forbids Him to use. Merely to override a human will (as His felt presence in any but the faintest and most mitigated degree would certainly do) would be for Him useless. **He cannot ravish. He can only woo.**"* (emphasis mine - Letter VIII)

- Why is "the gradual process" no use at all? (p.108)
  - Romans 13:11; 2 Corinthians 6:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:2-3
- "This moment contains all moments." (p.109) What reality is this trying to give the ghost a sense of?
- How does a person who knows right from wrong continue to keep lust as a "pet sin?" (p.110)
- We often hear of "the sinner's prayer." Lewis is unconventional and almost, some might say, irreverent as he portrays a sinner approaching God. Do you see a "sinner's prayer" on page 110?
- Observe what happens next. How would you describe it? (p.111-112)
  - Romans 12:2; 2 Corinthians 3:18
- What Psalm or stanza in the scriptures does the "song" on p.113 remind you of?
  - Luke 10:17-22; John 16:33; 1 John 2:13-16; 1 John 4:4; Hebrews 2:6-9; Revelation 1:5-6; Isaiah 32:1
- "Nothing, not even the best and the noblest, can go on as it now is." (p.114)
  - 1 Corinthians 15:42-44; 1 Corinthians 15:50; John 3:6
- "If the risen body even of appetite is as grand a horse as ye saw, what would the risen body of maternal love or friendship be?" What do you think? Note that this foreshadows what comes next...
- What is the tally now of those who have returned to Hell and those who have chosen to stay and journey into Deep Heaven?

## Chapter 12: A Great One: Sarah Smith

- Who is Sarah Smith? What do you know about her? Who does the narrator mistake her for? (p.118)
- Who ultimately is regarded as family in the Kingdom of God?
  - Matthew 12:46-50
- Jesus' words on "position in heaven" are clear. Yet we probably will still be surprised at who we see and who is "unimportant" and who is a "celebrity." Why?
  - Matthew 19:30; Mark 9:35; John 13
- What is the role of beasts and their relationship to Sarah? Significance? (p.120)
  - Colossians 3:4; Galatians 2:20
- The Tragedian and The Dwarf. Who is the dwarf ghost? What role does the Tragedian play? Why is it significant? (p.120ff)
- Note the very first action of Sarah. Where does the beginning of healing start? (p.121)
- There is another "key question" here. Note just how different it is from the previous "key question." This one is asked by the Dwarf Ghost and the Tragedian in unison. (p.123)
- This ghost comes so close to heaven... What prevents him?
- Sarah notes that she now knows what love is because she is truly "in love." I wonder why this word is not capitalized? (p.125 -- cf. 126)
- The idea of "needs" comes up again. Heaven seems to be a place where there are no longer any "needs." How will we know what to do? How to function? What will we pursue? Will it matter? (p.126)

## Chapter 13: A Final Struggle Against Joy

- *"Here is all joy. Everything bids you stay."* (p.130)
  - Acts 20:24; James 1:2
- Sarah has a discourse on pity. (p.131) How is pity often a good thing? How can it be distorted and abused? What is the result?
  - Psalm 72:13; Luke 10:33; Jonah 4:2
- This encounter seems to define the word "self-absorbed." (p.133)
- Read Psalm 91 and then the verse on page 134. Sound familiar? What points of contact do you find?
- What is the problem in thinking that the final loss of even *"one soul gives the lie to all the joy of those who are saved?"* (p.135)

- MacDonald reiterates the "Burger King Theology" once again on page 137. How does he articulate it there?
- Why don't the Bright Spirits pursue their loved ones all the way into the Grey Town -- into Hell itself? (p.137)
- *"The damned cannot receive it."* (p.139)
  - Isaiah 6:9; Matthew 13:14; Mark 4:12; Acts 28:26; Hebrews 4:1-7
- *"Then can no one ever reach them?"* (p.139)
  - 1 Peter 3:18-20
- Through which gift do we most resemble our Creator? (p.141) But we still live with great limitations...
  - 1 Corinthians 13:12
- Why are so many of our discussions of things like Universalism and Predestination inadequate? (p.140-141)

## Chapter 14: The Dreamer Awakes

- What's the problem with Swedenborg and Vale Owens? (p. 144 - cf. preface - last sentence)
- What is the significance of the sunrise? For both the literary convention as well as the spiritual importance? (p.145)
  - Ephesians 5:13-16

167 quotes from The Great Divorce: "There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done, and those to whom God says, 'Thy will be done.' Those who knock it is opened." ~ C.S. Lewis, *The Great Divorce*. tags: free-will, hell. 1513 likes. The Great Divorce. 31,258 likes · 18 talking about this. Official Facebook Page for The Great Divorce by C. S. Lewis Also Visit "No soul that seriously and constantly desires joy will ever miss it. Those who seek find. To those who knock it is opened." ~From *The Great Divorce* by C. S. Lewis.

C.S. Lewis's *The Great Divorce* is a classic Christian allegorical tale about a bus ride from hell to heaven. In *The Great Divorce*, C. S. Lewis again employs his formidable talent for fable and allegory. The writer finds himself in Hell boarding a bus bound for Heaven. The amazing opportunity is that anyone who wants to stay in Heaven, can. *The Great Divorce* is a novel by the British author C. S. Lewis, published in 1945, and based on a theological dream vision of his in which he reflects on the Christian conceptions of Heaven and Hell. The working title was *Who Goes Home?* but the final name was changed at the publisher's insistence. The title refers to William Blake's poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*. *The Great Divorce* was first printed as a serial in an Anglican newspaper called *The Guardian* in 1944 and 1945, and soon thereafter in *The Great Divorce* arose out of Lewis's interest in the nature of spiritual choices. The idea for allowing damned spirits a "holiday" in Heaven was suggested to him by his reading of the seventeenth century Anglican divine Jeremy Taylor, who introduced him to the ancient Catholic notion of *Refrigerium* "that the damned are given occasional repose from the torments of Hell by being granted "days off" in other places." (13) If you drew one lesson from your reading of *The Great Divorce*, what would it be? © C.S. Lewis Foundation, 2001.