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Review of C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Discovering Hidden Truth

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Salwa Khoddam and Mark R. Hall, eds., with Jason Fisher, *C. S. Lewis and the Inklings: Discovering Hidden Truth* (Cambridge, 2012). xiii + 266 pages. \$68.39. ISBN: 9781443840934.

This collection of fifteen essays began as papers delivered at the C. S. Lewis and Inklings Society Conference at Oklahoma City University in April 2010. It is a companion volume to *Truths Breathed through Silver: The Inklings' Moral and Mythopoeic Legacy*, published in 2008, with many of the same contributors. Not all of the Inklings are included in this second volume, merely Lewis, Tolkien, and Barfield, while Lewis' literary predecessors, George MacDonald and G. K. Chesterton, are each the subject of one essay. The contributors vary from the very well-known, including the keynote speakers at the conference, Michael Ward and Diana Pavlac Glyer, to three graduate students at the start of their academic careers.

The volume opens with Ward's article on divine and literary hiddenness in Lewis' *Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, which continues one of the themes of his bestselling work *Planet Narnia* (Oxford, 2008), and develops his analysis of solar influence in the novel. This detailed study is preceded by a reminder of Lewis' use of the concepts "Enjoyment" and "Contemplation" as defined by the philosopher Samuel Alexander, known to most readers from Lewis' essay "Meditation in a Toolshed." While some of the content will already be familiar to those who have read *Planet Narnia*, this is a clear and concise presentation of the material and well worth the separate study.

In the second essay, Glyer focuses on portraits of Lewis in his friends' works of fiction, and presents material which will probably be new to the majority of readers. A detailed examination of Tolkien's *Notion Club Papers* and three of Owen Barfield's stories – "Night Operation," "Worlds Apart," and "This Ever Diverse Pair" – enable Glyer to conclude that the Lewis we meet in these works confirms what we already knew about Lewis from other sources, and also gives insight into the ways these writers interacted.

Other high points in the book include Joe Christopher's fascinating study of the Dantean allusion at the end of Lewis' early poem, "The Nameless Isle." While some may be put off by such a detailed examination of a very small point, this article enables Christopher to present one of Lewis' lesser known works, to demonstrate how Lewis presented Christian references and imagery while still an atheist, and to show how the author portrayed his "Romantic rebellion" (208) in his writing. Salwa Khoddam's

analysis of how Lewis integrates elements not only from the biblical Book of Revelation, but also from the Nordic legend of Ragnarök, in his Narnian apocalypse is equally enthralling, as is (in a very different context) David L. Neuhouser's brief portrait of Louisa MacDonald and her influence on George MacDonald's attitude to women.

Well-presented and competently edited, this volume is a useful addition to any Inklings scholar's library and also contains articles of interest for both students and the general reader.

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Richard Platt, *As One Devil to Another. A Fiendish Correspondence in the Tradition of C. S. Lewis' The Screwtape Letters* (Carol Stream, IL, 2012). xi + 196 pages. \$15.99. ISBN: 9781414371665.

Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* has become a classic; brave the soul who attempts to continue that correspondence! And yet the "fiendish correspondence" of Mr. Platt reminds us that there are still good reasons for taking up a diabolical pen à la Lewis.

Who can resist eavesdropping, er, eavesreading (?) into a correspondence that reveals "classified" plans and techniques that devils are using... on us! Their struggles, their failures, their spite against each other, and above all their inability to grasp the love of God; these all give us reason to cheer, and no cause to pity them. They deserve each other!

But the format has proved to be more than just devil names that carry an odor of brimstone, wry humor, and a failed attempt to get humans safely "below." Every infernal success – in the marketplace, the academy, churches, and of course human relationships of all kinds – provided Lewis, and now Platt, with an ideal format to speak prophetically to the authors' times and places. And both have made full use of the opportunity.

The correspondence begins at Temptation University, and Platt sees today's universities as cause for rejoicing down below over the flood of useless dissertations, continuous assessment with the real goal of praise, and, above all, an atmosphere of competition rather than mutual support.