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## Lewis, Lost Letters, and Love

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# Lewis, Lost Letters, and Love

GREGORY M. ANDERSON

How hard it is to live spiritually in Easter when ones nervous system can't get out of Gethsemane.

This evocative quotation from C. S. Lewis comes not from one of his books but from a series of three previously unpublished Lewis letters. All three were written to the literary critic Harold Montgomery Belgion (1892-1973) and are perhaps most remarkable for their discussion of courtly love, the topic which first gave Lewis some professional acclaim through his book *The Allegory of Love: A Study in Medieval Tradition* (1936). Yet they also show Lewis exercising Christian love and courtesy in response to attacks on his scholarship. The purpose of the present essay is not to trace the development of Lewis's notion of love, either as a literary historian or Christian apologist. Rather it is to set these letters in their historical context.

The history of how the letters have come to be printed in *Sehnsucht* also deserves some explanation. I had arrived at the archives of Churchill College, Cambridge at the request of General Editor Bruce R. Johnson. He sent me there to search out an elusive 1943 letter from Lewis to Belgion. Alas, I almost left empty-handed until I stumbled upon these three 1939 letters instead. Besides being grateful for Bruce's prompting, I must also express thanks to William Gentrup, Jason Lepojärvi, and Charlie Starr for help with transcribing these letters. They are published here for the first time, along with the republication of a long-forgotten 1939 letter to the editor by Lewis, thanks to the good graces of the C. S. Lewis Company.

The main story begins with an anonymous review of Denis de Rouge-

mont's *L'Amour et l'Occident* in the 18 February 1939 edition of the Catholic journal *The Tablet*. Curiously, the reviewer decided to do battle with Lewis by alleging an inconsistency between the Christian faith and the "anti-Christian" notion of "courtly love" that Lewis was allegedly promoting in *The Allegory of Love*.

At that moment, Lewis was working on his next scholarly work, *Rehabilitations and Other Essays*, which would be published in a matter of weeks on 23 March 1939 by Oxford University Press. His editor at OUP was Charles Williams. The reviewer noted that both Williams and Lewis, although "orthodox members of the Church of England," had "celebrated the emergence in Provence during the eleventh century of the notion of love as 'a noble and ennobling passion.'"<sup>1</sup> The reviewer went on to claim that Lewis had erred not only in terms of Christian morality, he was also wrong in his literary and historical scholarship. "On the view to which Mr. Lewis is committed—that all Western poetry and also prose fiction and drama derive their themes from the troubadours"<sup>2</sup> means that Lewis is celebrating something against the Christian view of love. By contrast, the review went on to praise de Rougemont for supporting, in "a thoroughly demoralized world, the Christian view of love and marriage."<sup>3</sup>

When de Rougemont's book was translated into English and published the following year (entitled *Passion and Society* in British editions and *Love in the Western World* in American), the translator was Montgomery Belgion. The review of that edition in the Anglican journal *Theology* was by C. S. Lewis. There, Lewis claimed *Passion and Society* contained a valid moral thesis (upholding Christian love) coupled with an invalid historical thesis: "The purpose of this review is to deter readers either from neglecting the moral because they perceive the weakness of the historical, or from debauching their sense of evidence by accepting M. de Rougemont's history because they approve his ethics."<sup>4</sup> By this time, Lewis knew that anonymous reviewer in *The Tablet* was Belgion. Lewis began his own review by

1 Anonymous, "Courtly Love," a review of Denis de Rougemont, *L'Amour et l'Occident* (Paris: Plon) in *The Tablet*, vol. 173 (18 February 1939), 225-26.

2 "Courtly Love," 225.

3 "Courtly Love," 225.

4 C. S. Lewis, "*Passion and Society*. By D. de Rougemont. Translated by M. Belgion. Faber and Faber. And *The Bride of Christ*. By Claude Chavasse. Faber and Faber," in *Theology* vol. 40 (June 1940), 459-61. The Wade Collection at Wheaton College has Lewis's personal copy of the French version, inscribed by de Rougemont to Lewis.

stating, "For the present writer to criticize Mr Belgion as a translator from the French would be impertinent, so we may proceed at once to consider his original."<sup>5</sup> This mild deflection was not the only public reply by Lewis to what Belgion has written.

Much earlier, Lewis had responded directly to the charges leveled by the yet unnamed reviewer. His scathing rebuttal appeared in the March 4, 1939 issue of *The Tablet*.

#### THE ALLEGORY OF LOVE

Sir,—Allow me, of your charity, space to remove a false impression probably created in many minds by references to my *Allegory of Love* in a review of M. de Rougemont's *L'Amour et l'Occident* in THE TABLET of February 18<sup>th</sup>. Your reviewer asserts that if M. de Rougemont has proved his case (a question which he leaves open), it will then follow that I, while "supposing that I wrote as an orthodox member of the Church of England," have in reality been "celebrating something anti-Christian." In fact, though I did not, like M. de Rougemont, speculate about a possibly anti-Christian origin for courtly love, I attributed to it a certainly anti-Christian content, as the glorification of a mortal sin, adultery; and I am thought by real scholars to have even exaggerated this aspect of it. What is meant by "celebrating" I am not sure, but I suspect that your reviewer has fallen into the error of supposing that an historian approves *simpliciter* whatever he describes with some degree of interest and imaginative sympathy. I have never maintained that the original code of courtly love was compatible with Christian ethics. In my book I described the conversion which this original code underwent at the hands of the Italian and the English poets: and I assumed that the conversion was an improvement. But whether, even in its converted form, it is absolutely a good thing, is a question to which I do not claim to know the answer; and if I attempted to find the answer I should certainly begin by distinguishing the problem of origin from that of value. Finally, your reviewer misunderstands me if he thinks I believe that the "themes" of *Macbeth*, *Samson Agonistes*, *The Prelude*, *Alice in Wonderland* and *The Dynasts* are "derived from the Troubadours."

Yours faithfully,  
C. S. Lewis.

Magdalen College, Oxford<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Lewis, *Passion and Society*, 459.

<sup>6</sup> C. S. Lewis, "The Allegory of Love," *The Tablet*, vol. 173 (4 March 1939), 294.

One indication of the profound and lasting impact that Lewis made with his literary sensation *Allegory of Love* is the number of stellar medievalists who contributed to the memorial volume *Patterns of Love and Courtesy: Essays in Memory of C. S. Lewis*. As its editor John Lawlor noted in the preface, Lewis “once described himself as a man ‘hungry for rational opposition.’ It is our loss that we cannot now look to him to challenge, to reorder, and where necessary to confute, what we have written.”<sup>7</sup> More recently, Yale professor Claude Rawson summed up the continuing impact of Lewis: “Many have found fault or expressed radical disagreement with his first and most famous scholarly book, *The Allegory of Love*, but few have come away from it with their sense of literary history unaltered.”<sup>8</sup>

### The Anonymous Reviewer Discovered: Letter One

The public debate begun by Belgion and Lewis would continue in the pages of *The Tablet*. Its 11 March 1939 issue contained an attack on Lewis’s letter by F. J. Friend-Pereira, the Anglo-Indian academic from Christ’s College, Cambridge. He tried to catch Lewis in contradictions about the origins of “courtly love.” Friend-Pereira studied pages 11-17 of the *Allegory of Love* and wrote: “The brew of the far-fetched . . . with the obvious . . . is characteristic of too much of the *Allegory of Love*.”<sup>9</sup> The letter comes across as a petty and distorted attack, sadly characteristic of far too much academic discourse.

Meanwhile, Belgion and Lewis began a private correspondence perhaps because of their mutual friend Charles Williams. In the course of preparing *Rehabilitations* for publication, Lewis may have learned from Williams that Monty Belgion was the anonymous reviewer. But who was this Belgion?

Henry Montgomery Belgion, at the time the letters were exchanged,

<sup>7</sup> This amazing book (London: Edward Arnold, 1966) was being prepared for Lewis’s retirement, with his successor to his Cambridge professorship J. A. W. Bennett, friends Colin Hardy and, N. K. Coghill, and scholars such as Lawlor, Elizabeth Salter, and P. C. Bayley contributing chapters.

<sup>8</sup> Claude Rawson, “The Schoolboy Johnson,” in *We Remember C. S. Lewis*, ed. David Graham (Nashville: Broadman and Holman, 2001), 94

<sup>9</sup> F. J. Friend-Pereira, “The Allegory of Love,” in *The Tablet*, vol. 173, (4 March 1939), 327.

was a journalist and writer. He was born in Paris, he was fluent in French, and had a career with the *New York Herald* before his service in WWII. He worked for the *Daily Mail* and other papers, but by the 1930s he was reading and writing in philosophy and literature. He had a strong Anglican faith and was growing more and more conservative politically by the time of his correspondence with Lewis. Grevel Lindop describes Belgion as “a talkative literary journalist who delighted in introductions.”<sup>10</sup> He was a protégé of T. S. Eliot and wrote sixty-two reviews for Eliot’s *Criterion*.<sup>11</sup> Eliot found Belgion “an exceedingly difficult man to deal with,” and A. L. Rowse asked, “Who on earth was he? Though I met him several times over years, I never succeed in making him out.”<sup>12</sup> This energetic and exasperating man met Charles Williams in 1933 and introduced him to T. S. Eliot. Belgion lunched with Williams weekly before Williams moved with Oxford University Press from London to Oxford in October 1939.

After Belgion exchanged letters with Lewis in the spring of 1939, he enlisted, at the age of forty-six, as a captain in the Royal Engineers. He was captured by the Germans in Greece in March 1941. While in a POW camp, Belgion began lecturing to his fellow prisoners on English literature and also worked on an English Literature degree program set up for British POWs through Oxford University. In 1943, he was awarded a Special English degree, second class honors, by Oxford. His examiners were Mr. C. S. Lewis, Mr. J. R. R. Tolkien, and Mr. L. Rice-Oxley. It is interesting to note that all three of the examiners had been British Army officers in WWI and that Lewis and Rice-Oxley were officer cadets together, along with Lewis’s friend Paddy Moore, at Keble College in 1914. Rice-Oxley returned as an English tutor at Keble from 1921-1960.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Grevel Lindop, *Charles Williams: The Third Inkling* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 213.

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Julius, attorney for Princess Diana and the author of *T. S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), used the *Criterion*, which Eliot edited from 1922-1936, to attempt to prove Eliot’s anti-Semitism. Unfortunately, he blamed Eliot for a review written instead by Belgion. See Michael R. Stevens, “The Bones in Mr. Eliot’s Closet,” in *Books and Culture Magazine*, 2000, <http://www.booksandculture.com/articles/2000/novdec/10.36.html>, accessed online 22 August 2017.

<sup>12</sup> Eliot and Rowse are cited in Judson Harding, *The Criterion: Cultural Politics and Periodical Networks in Inter-War Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 144.

<sup>13</sup> “Notebook of Leonard Rice-Oxley,” Oxford, Bodleian Library MS. Eng. d. 4160,

H. B. Everard wrote to Belgion on 4 May 1944 to inform him of his second-class honors:

We have received from Mr. C. S. Lewis brief comments on the candidate for the Honours English Examination of the University of Oxford. The comments on the work of H. M. Belgion P.O.W. 182 read as follows: H. M. Belgion began well and was often interesting, but knowledge tended to fade in the later papers and there was much irrelevance.<sup>14</sup>

It is tempting to ponder how much Lewis was affected by Belgion's critical comments in 1939 and how much Belgion was affected by Lewis's comments on his work for an Oxford diploma.

Charles Williams remained a friend of Belgion, but his growing friendship with Lewis and the Inklings squeezed Belgion out of the closeness with Williams he once enjoyed. He met up with Williams shortly before the latter's death. Writing to his wife in 1945, Williams wrote: "He was much the same M. B., planning possible futures which I should think were most unlikely to come off. He is (if one may say so) the typical example of the drawback of thinking in grandiose terms, yet he's not a bad fellow."<sup>15</sup>

Belgion was not asked to contribute to the memorial volume *Essays Presented to Charles Williams* (1948). Instead he would write an unflatteringly review of the collection:

A hotch-potch is an excellent dish. . . . What Williams would have thought privately of this particular hotch-potch we shall never know . . . it must make difficult the belief that the shimmering dance of Williams' mind would have fallen into step with such ponderous gambols.<sup>16</sup>

fol. 1-2.

<sup>14</sup> H. B. Everard in BLGN 3/7 1944 Churchill College Library Cambridge.

<sup>15</sup> 9 January 1945 letter, Charles Williams, *To Michal from Serge: Letters from Charles Williams to His Wife Florence, 1939-1945*, ed. by Roma A. King (Kent: Kent State University Press, 2002), 240.

<sup>16</sup> In *Theology*, vol. 51, no. 366, 239. It is found under the "Shorter Notices" section under the title "*Essays Presented to Charles Williams*." The typed manuscript of this review is in the Belgion archives at Churchill College, Cambridge. Churchill/BLGN 5/15. In 1993, I found a copy of this memorial volume in Blackwells Rare Books Department. The book was combined with autograph letters from most of the contributors and a letter of regret from T. S. Eliot that he would not be able to contribute a chapter. The set had not yet been priced. I wonder who ended up with the book and letters—what a treasure trove!

Dorothy Sayers was not at all sanguine about the impact of Belgion's comments. In a letter to Lewis, she called Belgion "a nasty little centre of spite from which all the attacks on *Essays Presented to C. W.* all radiate."<sup>17</sup>

## Letter One

MAGDELEN COLLEGE,  
OXFORD.<sup>18</sup>

April 12<sup>th</sup> 1939

Dear Belgion

Thanks for your encouraging letter. What I was referring to in *Descent into Hell* was the 'substitution' theme—the poet bearing the heroine's fear as she bears the Marian martyr's fear. But I forgot that this is not really the main action. It's much his best novel, isn't it: the old flamboyant element in his style—always his great weakness—has almost disappeared.

Someone told me that you, of all people, are the anonymous reviewer of De Rougemont with whom I have been contending in the *Tablet* and that I mistook the point of your argument. If this is all true, I can only plead that the company in which I found you naturally predisposed me to read the review in the wrong sense. I don't (much) mind making a fool of myself but I hope I haven't made the pair of us—or the Church of England—look silly in such a place.

How hard it is to live spiritually in Easter when ones nervous system can't get out of Gethsemane.

Yours  
C. S. Lewis<sup>19</sup>

In this first letter, Lewis begins by exchanging pleasantries about their mutual friend Charles Williams and his latest book. Then Lewis tells Belgion he thought that the reviewer was a Catholic writer having fun at a Protestant's expense. When he learned it was actually from a member of the

<sup>17</sup> 19 July 1948, letter to C. S. Lewis, in Dorothy Sayers, *The Letters of Dorothy L. Sayers, Volume Three: 1944-1950: A Noble Daring*, ed. by Barbara Reynolds (London: The Dorothy Sayers Society, 1998), 388.

<sup>18</sup> These words are on the college letterhead Lewis used.

<sup>19</sup> BLGN MS, Churchill College, Cambridge. 12 April 1939, C. S. Lewis letter to M. Belgion, *Belgion Papers*, vol. 7, 45.



Established Church, he was chagrined by the misunderstanding. Not that he personally minded looking like a fool, but he did not want their church or its members portrayed as foolish. The closing sentence is as poignant as anything Lewis wrote and highlights his cordial approach here. Writing only three days after Easter, Lewis was perhaps hoping that their literary exchange could be transformed into something less antagonistic and more life-giving.

## Letter Two

Magdalen.

April 25<sup>th</sup> 1939

Dear Belgion

I see no particular reason why you should have told me you were writing that review. I took it to be primarily a Papist attack on Anglicanism—‘see what a mess an Anglican has got himself into celebrating what now turns out to be a Pagan doctrine’—and I still think that is the impression it is likely to produce on most readers. That was what I replied to. When I discovered it was by you I felt (a.) That I had made sport for the editors of the *Tablet* by showing two Anglicans fighting at cross purposes in their columns. (b.) That, since I had apparently misunderstood you, my letter might sound ungracious. That is why I wrote to you. Nothing was further from my mind than the idea that people who are friends ought not to criticise one another in public without private warnings and apologies. All that kind of collusion and secret society business in the world of modern literature is my pet abomination.<sup>20</sup> I neither ask nor offer anything but ‘the rigour of the game’.

As to my failure to follow up the question raised in your original letter to me about de Rougemont, the truth is that I am not very interested in the origins of courtly love. I raise all the usual theories in the first chapter of my book, dismiss them in a purely agnostic way, and hurry on to my real subject—what the thing was like once it had originated and what sort of poetry it produced. I might go further and say that I am less interested in Courtly Love itself than most peo-

<sup>20</sup> In 1944, Lewis delivered a “Memorial Oration” at Kings College, University of London, in which he railed against such collusion and secret societies. The speech became the essay, “The Inner Ring,” *C. S. Lewis, Essay Collection and Other Short Pieces*, ed. by Lesley Walmsley (London: Harper Collins, 2000), 721-28.

ple suppose. My real concern was allegory and C. L.<sup>21</sup> originally came in for the sake of studying allegory, not *vice-versa* as most people think. Temperamentally I find the phase of sexuality exhibited in C. L. most uncongenial. Any strength my book has results from the fact that it is the work of an outsider.<sup>x</sup>

I hope it is now clear that I have nothing to ‘forgive’. I never thought you had injured me. I did think we had between us given the Papists an occasion for some chuckles, but it’s no great matter. I enclose the page from the Tablet,

Yours  
C. S. Lewis

<sup>x</sup> i.e. if you regard perfectly normal sexuality as the centre, and C. L. as the extreme left, then I am to the right of centre rather than to the left—I mean as a chap not as a moralist or critic. In those capacities I of course support the centre i.e. the Dominical and Pauline utterances on marriage. What I dislike to the point of nausea is all that ‘love and death’ stuff in de Rougemont . . . better be a eunuch than a Tristan<sup>22</sup>

The second letter reiterates the fear Lewis had that the whole exchange was giving Catholics “chuckles” at the expense of Protestants. What troubled Lewis most is that he appeared ungracious to Belgion by misunderstanding him. He wanted to make sure that Belgion knew his rule and knew he kept it. Lewis loved the robust exchange of ideas. The image of an Ulsterman who enjoyed verbal engagement was drawn by A. N. Wilson in his biography of Lewis: “He ceased to be an academic and became once more the son of the police-court solicitor in in Belfast.”<sup>23</sup> Even as Belgion and Lewis were exchanging letters, Oxford University Press published *The Personal Heresy: A Controversy*, a spirited account of a debate between Cambridge Milton scholar E. M. W. Tillyard in which Lewis took the objective “poem above poet” view while Tillyard took the subjective “poet above poem” position.<sup>24</sup> Lewis does not expect or give special treatment

<sup>21</sup> “C. L.” is used as an abbreviation for “Courtly Love” throughout this series of correspondence.

<sup>22</sup> BLGN MS, Churchill College Cambridge. 25 April 1939, C. S. Lewis letter to M. Belgion, *Belgion Papers*, vol. 7, 46.

<sup>23</sup> A. N. Wilson, *C. S. Lewis: A Biography* (London: Collins, 1990), 57-58.

<sup>24</sup> It was published April 27, 1939 by Oxford University Press.

or advance notice to his friends when he goes after a point in print. Still, he worried that he had let down his fellow Anglicans. He felt that he had “made sport” for the Catholic editors of *The Tablet* by giving them an example of Anglican infighting.

Lewis then addresses the issue that caused this exchange of articles and letters: courtly love. He claims that he failed to answer Belgion’s original questions about de Rougemont’s treatment of the origins of courtly love because he is not concerned about the historical origins of courtly love or its influence on future literature. Lewis and de Rougemont were allies in terms of sexual morality, but Lewis found his historical analysis flawed. As he wrote a year later in his review of de Rougemont’s book, he condemned the “weakness of the historical” thesis:

The historical thesis is that the earliest medieval literature of Courtly Love was not really an expression of sexual passion at all, but the exoteric and symbolic expression of a wish for death and pain, itself the product of a widespread pagan Eros-mysticism, mediated to the Provençal poets through the Catharist heresy. The very best that can be said for this theory is that it is not formally impossible.<sup>25</sup>

Alas, since Lewis typically burned letters to him two days after reading them, we do not have Belgion’s response. But the discussion of *Allegory of Love* continues in the third Lewis letter.

### Letter Three

MAGADLEN COLLEGE,  
OXFORD.<sup>26</sup>

May 2<sup>nd</sup> 1939

Dear Belgion

It seems we are agreed. I fully admit that there is “in the notion of C. L. as expounded by the Troubadours an element irreconcilable with the description of C. L. by a Christian as a ‘noble and ennobling passion.’” But when did I describe C. L. as a noble and ennobling passion? What I said (p. 3) was that ‘it seems or seemed to us till lately natural that love shd. be regarded as a noble and ennobling

<sup>25</sup> C. S. Lewis, review of *Passion and Society*, 459.

<sup>26</sup> These words are on the college letterhead Lewis used.

passion' and thought this prevalent view resulted from the change begun by the Troubadours. We are confusing 2 different propositions.

- A. I, C. S. Lewis, think C. L. a noble passion.
- B. Courtly Love inaugurated a tradition which still survives in the prevalent view that Love is a noble passion.

I asserted B, never A. Surely the difference is obvious

- A. C. L. = noble passion
- B. View that L is a noble passion = a result of C. L.

I admit I seem to have missed the tone of your review and taken au pied de la lettre what was meant as light raillery.

My reference to Lewis Carroll etc was a way (perhaps rather unkind) of pointing out the difference between the statement you attributed to me (that the themes of modern imaginative literature were derived from the Troubadours) and my real claim (that the tone of modern imaginative lit. about love were derived from the Troubadours) Once again its the difference between

TH (m. I. L) = d. from TR <sup>27</sup>

T (m. I. L about Love) = d. from TR. <sup>28</sup>

Sorry to be so troublesome,

Yours  
C. S. Lewis<sup>29</sup>

Lewis begins by acknowledging common ground. Courtly love is not compatible with Christianity. Presumably, Belgion continued to claim that Lewis, although a Christian, still found courtly love a “noble and ennobling passion.” Lewis referred back to page three of the *Allegory of Love*. The context is everything:

It seems—or it seemed to us till lately—a natural thing that love (under certain conditions) should be regarded as a noble and ennobling passion: it is only if we imagine ourselves trying to explain this doctrine to Aristotle, Virgil, St. Paul, or the author of *Beowulf*, that we

<sup>27</sup> Themes of modern imaginative literature are derived from the troubadours.

<sup>28</sup> Tone of modern imaginative literature about love is derived from the troubadours.

<sup>29</sup> BLGN MS, Churchill College Cambridge: 2 May 1939, C. S. Lewis to M. Belgion, *Belgion Papers*, vol. 7, 47.

become aware how far from natural it is.

Lewis does not give the textual explanation but the logical one instead. He posits that he does not believe courtly love is noble but rather that courtly love began a tradition. The reference to Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* points to the absurdity of claiming that Lewis actually believed that the "themes" of that work as well as works by William Shakespeare, John Milton, William Wordsworth, and Thomas Hardy were all "derived from the Troubadours."<sup>30</sup>

Paul Holmer, the great Yale philosopher, wrote to Lewis several times in 1939. He was then a young student who had some criticisms of C. S. Lewis' interpretation of *Paradise Lost*. Holmer remembered, "He thanked me so much for the criticism. Then he proceeded to correct me on my point of view, and I felt like I'd been sort of spanked. He was so just, so kind, so appreciative."<sup>31</sup> Lewis, as a letter writer, had a knack for such gracious criticism.

Lewis would go on to develop a close friendship with Belgion's mentor Charles Williams and, later, a working relationship with Belgion's hero T. S. Eliot. But a friendship between Lewis and Belgion themselves was never to be. The last known contact between the two was the unkind review Belgion wrote when Lewis edited *Essays Presented to Charles Williams*. This time it was Dorothy Sayers who offered the public and forceful rebuttal: "Your reviewer M.B. [Monty Belgion] sees fit to imply that . . . I (among others) have been so impertinent, or so maladroit, as to offer to the memory of a man I respected a gift that he would have disliked."<sup>32</sup> She went on to quote from a letter from Williams inviting her to write on what later turned out to be her contribution. She concluded, "Your reviewer says that 'we can guess'

<sup>30</sup> See footnote 6.

<sup>31</sup> Bruce Carlson, "Shadowlands: An Interview with Paul Holmer," in *Pietism*, vol. 9, no. 1 (Spring 1994), 2. The present writer took an evening course on Lewis offered by Holmer in 1984. He was my Yale master's thesis co-advisor and shared this encounter with me in personal conversation. Notre Dame Professor David Fagerberg has written an e-book entitled *C. S. Lewis* (Hong Kong: Chora Books, 2016). He remembers Holmer talking about an angry letter he sent Lewis and the gracious reply Holmer received. A significant question is whether any portion of this correspondence between Lewis and Holmer is extant.

<sup>32</sup> 14 June 1948, Dorothy Sayers letter to the editor of *Theology*, cited in *The Letters of Dorothy Sayers*, vol. 3, 378. Belgion was on the Advisory Board of *Theology*.

what Charles Williams would have thought of the essays presented to him. But since in this particular case, guesswork happens to be unnecessary, I will suppose him scholar enough to prefer the evidence.”<sup>33</sup>

The *Allegory of Love* was not Lewis’s last word on love. In *The Problem of Pain*, published in October 1940, Lewis reaffirmed God’s love for humanity though we live in a perilous world.<sup>34</sup> The wartime broadcast talks gathered together into *Mere Christianity* include a chapter on love.<sup>35</sup> Lewis engaged with a variety of scholars in debates about love, most especially Anders Nygren and Denis de Rougemont.<sup>36</sup> But in the introduction to his last and longest treatment, *The Four Loves*, Lewis returns to the book that started his exchange with Belgion. He quotes, with approval, Denis de Rougemont: “love ceases to be a demon only when he ceases to be a god.”<sup>37</sup> He goes on to warn, “If we ignore it the truth that God is love may slyly come to mean for us the converse, that love is God.”<sup>38</sup>

**These three letters and the letter to the editor by C. S. Lewis**

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<sup>33</sup> Sayers, *Letters of Dorothy Sayers*, vol. 3, 379.

<sup>34</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (London: Centenary Press, 1940).

<sup>35</sup> C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: MacMillan, 1952).

<sup>36</sup> Jason Lepojärvi’s doctoral dissertation is the new standard of scholarship on Lewis and love. *God Is Love But Love Is Not God: Studies on C. S. Lewis’s Theology of Love* (Helsinki University, 2015).

<sup>37</sup> C. S. Lewis, *The Four Loves* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1960), 17.

<sup>38</sup> Lewis, *Four Loves*, 17.