

Planets and Philosophers etc.

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Preacher: Harvey Guest

[0 : 00] Thanks, Bill. I want to get right down to this. Our world, as you know, has in many ways, if not separated, it has distinguished intellect, or what we sometimes call reason, from the other part of us, referred to as the imagination, our intuitive, emotional, spiritual selves.

The enlightenment versus the dark obscurity of the church and Christianity, science, sometimes versus the romantics. Put nature on the rack, said Bacon. Imagine that. Put nature on the rack. Find out what it's about.

But Wordsworth later on says, no, we murder to dissect. Kind of an early form of technology versus the greens. So this is an old discussion. Two cultures that used to be called. C.P. Snow, I never read a word by the man, but he wrote a lot about this division, apparently, in an earlier generation.

The hard sciences, you could call that the first of these cultures, and their rigorous method, or methods, versus the humanities, that second culture. A theme, again, with many faces.

Within religion, in general, and our faith in particular, it takes the form of, you've heard this time and time again, of theology versus a living spirituality.

[1 : 25] Confessionalism versus pietism. You know, I know the creed, yes, but I'm going to heaven. You know, there's the difference. We just live with this division, but it masks deep issues.

Bertrand Russell's friend, Alfred North Whitehead, joint authors, you'll recall these gentlemen of Principia Mathematica, bedtime reading for many in this place.

He considered this division, this dualism, it's sometimes called a very bad thing. A paralyzing hindrance to real healthy thought, a healthy culture, is the result of this division.

Determinism versus freedom. We live as if free, but our reigning intellectual paradigm is a scientific determinism. I think Whitehead is essentially correct.

There are two worlds that we live with all the time, completely and absolutely, in fact, incompatible. That's a strong statement, I know. There are at work here.

[2 : 24] A cultural and spiritual and intellectual war is indicated by this division and is behind this division at the same time. Today, I just want to look at this with you.

In the 17th century, I quote from memory here, but I know this is what the gentleman said, We began to realize, says Richard Rorty, a great modern philosopher, He says that truth is created, not discovered.

By we, I can say in passing he means folks really in the know, philosophers like himself, who live in the pursuit of careful, critical knowledge, real and disputable knowledge.

Mr. Rorty always writes and sounded like he had just returned from Mount Olympus, if you ever heard him. This is not a view, I'll say to begin with, this is all by way of introduction, not a view easy to dismiss really.

Our minds on this view, that is more precisely our ideas, our constructions of what we see, what our senses take in.

- [3 : 33] They do not, our minds, mirror what is there. They just don't. The world, that is to say, in itself, is simply inaccessible to us.
- But we do have acquaintance with ideas. This is the world of real knowledge, according to much of modern thinking.
- There it is. I want to talk about this today, these two worlds at war. Not merely to rehearse the old story of reason versus those other ways of knowing, but to look at the strange story behind it.
- I think we will find it strange. It is the story of what is the sure ground, the foundation, the indubitable place, where real knowledge resides.
- And is it this real knowledge, our creation, as Mr. Rorty confidently tells us? Our creation because it forms in us, through our senses, through the brain, becoming ideas with which we are acquainted, with which we have certainty.
- [4 : 49] Or is this story of the world that has become quite dominant, is it in fact disputable? Are other ways of knowing really credible?
- Through our senses, again, means the first culture. We see, we use our real senses when we investigate through experiment. Put nature, put everything, in fact, on the rack, and real knowledge will follow.
- Other forms of knowledge, again, are intuitive guesswork, really. A form of poetry, maybe. They come from, they are merely in our imaginations.
- This is, again, the second culture, again, generally. Science and religion. Reason versus the romantics. Prose versus poetry. There's an introduction to what I want to do today, broadly speaking.
- The way of looking at this will be by looking at two books. Now, there's a big mouthful by way of an introduction. Before I show you, literally, these two books, I want to say a word of prayer.
- [5 : 57] Please join me. Lord, we thank you for the mystery of the creation and that you have placed us in it. It's a creation you want us to live in intelligently, giving you praise as our creator and our redeemer.
- Help us to know more about these things as we inquire together today. Our Lord of wisdom, be with us as we inquire. Amen. Again, I want to look at these issues today by looking at a couple of books with you.
- A couple of, today's a book review in two parts, really. The first book is called, give me just the titles to begin with, Thomas Reed and the story of epistemology.
- You won't find this in London Drugs on the bookshelf there. Thomas Reed, and it's by a chap named Nicholas Waltersdorf. The second book is called, Planet Narnia, subtitled, The Seven Heavens in the Imagination of C.S. Lewis.
- This is by a fellow named Michael Ward. The authors of these two books, the first one again is Nicholas Waltersdorf.
- [7 : 09] A lot of you know of him. He's a retired Yale philosopher. He has written about aesthetics, about the subject in philosophy called universals. He writes about many theological and philosophical issues.
- He's lectured at UBC for the Christians out there and at Regent College. If there's any Christians there, I don't know. A real, he is, that's a horrible thing for me to say. He is, Mr. Waltersdorf, a real analytic philosopher.
- A real diamond cutter of a thinker. He makes distinctions where you never thought distinctions existed. Mr. Ward is a Church of England clergyman.

And he's an editor of a book that's either out there now or is about to come out there. He's going to be the editor of the Cambridge Guide to C.S. Lewis. This book is a doctoral thesis, apparently.

He did his doctoral thesis with another chap that many in this room will know. He did his doctoral thesis again that became this book under Jeremy Begby. Supervised this book.

[8 : 14] Another gentleman who's lectured at Regent many times. This volume, the first one again, is about Thomas Reed, a one-time Presbyterian clergyman, a Scot.

He was a philosopher, really, taught at Aberdeen. His dates are 1710 to 1790. So when he was an old man, Jane Austen was about, when he died, Jane Austen was 15 years old, to give us some sort of historical sense.

Apparently, I had no idea this was the case, in his day, this man, Thomas Reed, was as famous in Europe as Immanuel Kant. He was a very much regarded, highly much read philosopher.

The third one in this book is a chap named, and misspelled for us today, epistemology with an E. The study of how we know, or do we know, in broad strokes, what is knowledge, or what are the grounds for belief.

I think it was Plato, one day, pondering a cave, way back when, usually credited with starting this discipline. And it more or less continues, although some have declared the inquiry over.

[9 : 26] Mr. Rorty, the chap I quoted earlier, does think that the story of epistemology is now over. Again, just reviewing these books, so we're generally familiar with them, as you already are, for the most part.

Narnia, the subject of this second book, is a country reachable through a wardrobe. I don't know where that wardrobe is. You get there through a wardrobe. A country much associated with his inventor, of course, C.S. Lewis, about whom I'll tell you nothing, a Christian writer who died the same day that John S. Kennedy was assassinated, if you recall.

Mr. Reed, of the 18th century, Mr. Walterstorff, a contemporary of ours, Mr. Ward, another contemporary, and C.S. Lewis, they all shared the belief that we live out our lives and will live out our eternities in the presence of the God and Father of Jesus Christ.

So it's good to turn to brothers in Christ when you read books like this. And they shared the belief that our knowledge and our imaginations are gifts of God.

They are contested gifts, however, deeply contested. Gifts in need of redemption. But gifts to be very much treasured and carefully, very carefully pondered.

[10 : 47] I read these books over the Advent and Christmas season, and I read them concurrently. And I had a strange sensation, most of it unconscious, that they were really about the same thing, these two books.

The Reed volume I was reading for the second time, I'd read it a few years ago, Ward on Lewis for the first. They could not, these books, feel more different.

I mean, you didn't get that sense as I showed them to you, I'm sure. Books have a texture. Before everything else, you could say, this is true of books. They have a feel.

Christians, of course, are book-centric people. God gave us a book composed of many books. And each of the books in the Bible has a certain feel to it, doesn't it?

A certain texture. God, we can safely say, is a multifaceted author. I'm tempted to begin, as I move into the story of these two books, I'm tempted to begin drawing attention to a book like this, Thomas Reed again, in the story of epistemology, by simply saying that, of course, it is a very distinct kind of book.

[12 : 01] Distinct enough as to be somewhat tongue-in-cheek. The first time I read it, I found it almost fascinating and unreadable at the same time.

It is from the reason side of the divide referred to in the introduction, for sure. It has the set-apart vocabulary of professional philosophy.

It talks a lot about perception, conception, and acquaintance, what philosophers mean by knowledge, by acquaintance. It talks about occasionalism, nominative apprehension, all the kinds of things that you were talking about this morning before breakfast.

It is this kind of book. This book specifically, certainly, is about what you might call the hyper-obvious.

Or the super-obvious, if you will. Obviously, today, as you sit there today, this is what this book's about, just what you're doing as you sit there today.

[13 : 03] But you're not thinking about it, nor am I. We see. You're seeing right now. You hear. You tasted coffee or tea this morning, something else. You touch surfaces.

You pick up fragrances all around you. And immediately, without stopping, without hesitation, you form ideas and beliefs and thoughts, later remembrances about the seeing, touching, fragrance world you live in.

You just do it immediately. You perform, without thinking about it, you perform, without thinking about it, intellection in a space usually called the mind. About this super-obvious thing, we know what?

Well, according to this book's an authority, not much at all. We might even say nothing. We might even say nothing. Nothing. We know nothing about ourselves in the world.

Nothing. This book is about or disputes what famous minds in our world have told us that have told us what we may know about it all.

[14 : 17] Famous names that you've heard of many times are chaps like Descartes, Law, Cume, Bishop Barclay, Immanuel Kant, have put their stamp on this field of inquiry.

Their conclusion, their view of all this has been referred to earlier in the introduction. We know ideas in our minds.

You're forming them right now as you hear, as you see, as you touch surfaces. There's only so much that we human beings do through our senses in the world.

You form ideas in your mind. We know, says this tradition, and it controls our whole way of thinking in the world, really. We know nothing else, really. We really take all of this for granted without even thinking about it.

It's so powerful in our culture. Know here means knowledge by acquaintance, an immediate certain knowledge that is in the mind immediately.

[15 : 22] Thomas Reed calls this tradition the way of ideas. This way has become dominant in our world and has had an enormous influence.

It, in fact, has made our culture what it is, really. It defines real knowledge. Other forms of knowledge are not really real, or certainly they're not certain.

Hence, these other forms of knowledge have become, in our culture, somewhat marginal. Hence, the divide we referred to earlier. If you needed a social expression of this fact, because ideas become social facts sooner or later, don't they?

On a university campus in the Middle Ages, they were there for the study of theology. But not in our culture. Those places of learning were founded by and for theology.

But that's all been eliminated now. On many campuses, there is no theology faculty. Or it has been transformed into a school of religious studies.

[16 : 31] A completely different animal than a theology faculty. Believe you, me. Oh! A different world. To summarize this kind of why this has happened, well, Hume.

There's a big name in the history of philosophy. Mr. Reed deals with him a lot. He famously said that books about metaphysics should be, he said, commit them to the flames.

Not a lovely phrase. Commit them to the flames. That's how trivial they are. That's how silly they are. The first culture would become dominant because chaps like Hume thought the way they thought.

They marginalized the second culture. Commit it to the flames. Wow. Why? Because they contain little of anything that comes to us through the senses, forming ideas in us.

And if they don't do that, they're not worth much. This unfolding tradition we all know more or less. And I could review it in great detail, but for purposes of time, I'll just keep it really short.

[17 : 40] Early chap in this tradition was the famous Rene Descartes. You know, he looked inside himself to find a first principle beyond all doubt that he could count on to produce some sort of structure of certain knowledge.

He famously said, oh, I found it now. I think, therefore I am. And that became the basis of modern knowledge. What a thin read to base it all on, as Pascal remarked.

He considered this indubitable, hyper-certain knowledge. This idea in him is certain. Nothing else is certain unless it can be shown to be based upon that initial certainty.

There it is. Later on, a chap like Immanuel Kant got down to even listing all the faculties and telling us how they worked. That's how important the world of mind and ideas had become.

That's what the whole story is about. How we perceive, how we conceive, how our discursive reason works. Knowledge is what happens within these faculties.

[18 : 48] All thought about everything answers to this profound schema. That's what our culture really believes when it gets serious about knowledge.

The way of knowledge must submit to this way of ideas, as Thomas Reed calls it. You can say, for some, this is a good thing. For others, it's a bad thing. It's a kind of prison.

You have to live in this way of knowing. There is no other way of knowing. This gives rise again to the culture of two worlds. A lot of this is, I'm pointing out the obvious.

Well, I have to do this very briefly today, because I've got two books to look at, not one. How does Thomas Reed, way back in the 18th century, respond to all this?

And it's interesting to note, by noting his dates, that he is speaking to this tradition early in this tradition. He's kind of in it. He's in its unfolding.

[19 : 44] He responds, and this is the center of gravity of this wonderful book. Unreadable, but wonderful. He responds with devastating insight.

And it seems to a chap like Nicholas Walterstorff, he in fact, early on in the tradition of this way of knowing, overthrew it. But he already showed that it's nonsense.

And I'll only quote him once, directly word for word. This is Mr. Reed speaking. Every kind of reasoning. This is his conclusion, of course.

There's lots of tight, careful reasoning that gets him to this conclusion. But he says, every kind of reasoning for the veracity of our faculties amounts to no more than taking their own testimony for their veracity.

Now that is a weighty and profound sentence. Let me say it again. Every kind of reasoning, says this chap with the funny headgear on. Did you know if that's a clergyman's headgear?

[20 : 56] Every kind of reasoning, he says, for the veracity, that is the truth-bearing capacity, you might call it. Every kind of reasoning for the veracity of our faculties amounts to no more than taking their own testimony for their veracity.

That's a profound statement. To a philosopher, says Mr. Walterstorff, who thinks that Mr. Reed is exactly correct.

To a philosopher, this is humiliating. As he summarizes Mr. Reed, when we have dug down to the deepest level, here I won't distinguish from Reed, Walterstorff, or a little bit of me to make it more accessible on a Sunday morning before 10 o'clock.

When we have dug down to the deepest level, the deepest strata of our human understanding, what confronts us is mystery.

Deep, impenetrable mystery. These are the exact words of Mr. Walterstorff, I treasure them. There is a mystery within.

[22 : 12] And then, Mr. Reed moves in. These are my words for sure. He moves in, if you will, for the kill in the big war. He says this, Here he has his mind, his eye, right on Descartes.

He says we trust our introspection. We trust our reason. We trust our intellection. That's his conclusion. We are walking, talking, trust machines.

God created us this way. Mr. Reed's a Christian. He's not ashamed to talk about our creator in his philosophy. Nietzsche, Mr. Walterstorff makes a wonderful comparison here.

Nietzsche essentially saw that knowledge was like this. Nietzsche saw the darkness of our contingent understanding. And he railed against it.

Nietzsche. And he knew it. Reed, a Christian philosopher, saw this darkness and rejoiced in it as a gift from heaven. We were created to trust our creator.

[23 : 33] Reed sees this clearly early on. I think he devastates everything that we've learned from Hume and Locke and Descartes. They're all wrong.

He honors these people, but he sees that at the basis of our understanding, there can be nothing but a foundation of trust.

We walk in this God-given darkness. This is a wonderful theme from Mr. Reed.

I've got to find where I am here. There it is from a philosopher on a philosopher talking about the dominant intellectual tradition of our culture.

People live in the acceptance of, that is to say, trusting in the truth-bearing capacity of our whole selves.

[24 : 38] Again, that's your senses, your brain apparatus, your mind producing ideas. Even if we're not aware of this prison that the modern world has put us in regarding where knowledge comes from, we are more or less, again, very much shaped by it.

But again, Reed declared war on it, this received prison two centuries ago. And isn't it, I find it, a breath of fresh air to see it vindicated, if only, in this regard, by a self-declared philosophical soulmate of Mr. Reed, like Mr. Volterstorff.

Well, so what, you might say? Well, we may see and accept and rejoice in, not the way of ideas, as Mr. Reed again calls it, but in the way of belief, the way of trust.

The way of trust. Again, the God-given darkness regarding the grounds of knowledge. And the way of belief, therefore, we may embrace with, I would think, enthusiasm and a very good intellectual conscience.

I believe, said a famous man, I believe so that I might understand. So, speaking of these two cultures, I want to put the feel of these two cultures in front of us today.

[26 : 09] Keep an eye on the time here. Turning from Mr. Reed and his Yale admirer, it is a deep, a deep pleasure to experience, therefore, a mind, which you might call a mind saturated in belief.

This thing that Mr. Reed tells us we live by, whether we like it or not. A trusting belief in the world in which we live. C.S. Lewis, I now turn to a second book here.

Didn't make too much reference to that, did I? We'll put it aside for now. Put up our second, overhead above this second book. Mr. Lewis, a lot of you are familiar with this, I know, was once standing in a back yard.

I think, realize that's probably an Americanism, isn't it? He was in his back garden. Englishmen are usually in a garden. He was, in fact, in a tool shed.

And there he saw, this is a famous moment in the Lewis output, he saw a beam of light arriving there in his tool shed from the sun, many, many millions of miles away.

[27 : 29] Do you know this essay, I can, Meditation in a Tool Shed, it's called. It's a lovely piece by Lewis. Mr. Ward repeats it early on in his, this lovely book, which I enjoyed so much, Planet Narnia.

If you read a book like that, and then you turn to a book like this, it's like turning from cauliflower to Christmas cake. Which I got too much.

You may do one or two things with such a wondrous beam of light coming to you from the sun. You may look, and this is the weight, the center of this famous essay by Lewis, you may look at the sun, at the beam of light, or you may look along it.

Look at the light, or look along it. Mr. Ward has done both, as he has been studying the works of Mr. Lewis generally, and the famous Chronicles of Narnia in particular.

Has anybody in the room read the Chronicles of Narnia? I'll bet most have. The famous Chronicles of Narnia. The thesis of this book, to run through it very quickly, because actually I'm a book salesman here today, as much as anyone else.

[28 : 52] The thesis of this book is quite new, actually. Mr. Ward has a new revolutionary, and I find totally convincing, thesis about the Chronicles.

The thesis of this book is new, regarding the famous seven books. And again, I found it completely convincing. Here's the way it runs.

Each of the seven books in the Narniad, as he nicely calls the seven volumes, Mr. Ward's term, each of them is under the ruling, spiritual, and moral attributes associated with the seven planets of the medieval pre-Copernican world.

The thesis further states that this was done intentionally by C.S. Lewis and was meant to be hidden. Lewis, he convincingly argues, Mr. Ward does have many models of some of his favorite authors who hid many things, even their central theme in their books.

Lewis wanted to do the same thing, Mr. Ward argues, done intentionally. Readers are meant to fall under the spell of what these seven planets stand for intuitively, and for the benefit of their starved, anemic, if not stupid, I hate that, that's overstating, modern sensibility that Lewis wanted to undermine at every turn.

[30 : 26] A sensibility, in fact, in the prison of the two worlds model that we started to look at in the introduction. The real knowledge world versus the other kinds of knowledge world.

In the introduction, we mentioned the feel of a book, the texture of it as you read it. This book, if one looks along this book, if you will, it is almost disorienting in its difference from this book again.

Here is a world where, in principle, as you read this book, here's a world presented where, again, in principle, everything means, if you will.

The sun means spiritual light. The moon means a contested, reflected light.

Mars, we all know this one, more or less, means war. Or it means a martial, the martial virtues, steadfastness, bravery, resolution.

- [31 : 43] Don't look at those virtues, though, look along them. Look along them. One more for now, Jupiter, or Job, as he's called in later literature often, Jupiter is kingship, generous kingship, golden kingship, magnanimous kingship, a kingship ordering to joy for those who live under the authority of this king.

And, again, Mr. Ward argues that each of the seven books of Lewis's famous Chronicles of Narnia reflects each planet and its associated virtues.

From Lewis's poetry, from his literary criticism, from correspondence, across the whole Lewis, ooh, the whole output, he, Mr. Ward, makes his delightful and charming case.

Can I afford it's worth it? It's totally convincing. It's convinced many spisticates, too, what it says on the back of the book, at least. These ruling virtues, powers, dominions, really take in, are really about, the realities they stand in for, if you will, the realities of our God's attributes.

That's what it's really about, finally. These seven planets represent attributes of the God we believe in. The Middle Ages, you will know, thought the planets were seven, really, they thought of them as seven spheres, apparently, of created, but almost divine glory.

- [33 : 22] Their virtue, or their power, falling upon a fallen, sub-lunary, sub-moon sphere, world, that's our world, revealed the spiritual state of folks like you and me, here as a kind of marriage of cosmology and spirituality.

Again, what a difference as you read this book and currently read that book, the epistemology stuff.

They're both delightful, but in a completely different way. These beliefs, of course, they've, in terms of cosmology and an immediate response to the heavens, these beliefs survive in our time largely as dead metaphors.

Our culture may be the culture of the worship of dead metaphors. That's the result of these two cultures. The influence of the heavens is now an underdefined medical condition you will know called influenza.

The two cultures, the two, this dualism makes all meaning again something like a dead metaphor. There's the real world of knowledge and then there's these dead metaphors that you can play games with in your spare time.

- [34 : 48] Cosmologies, Lewis believed, I don't know if he overstated this, I suspect he did, they come and go, I don't know how often they come and go, but the issue raised by this cosmological vision that the medievals held it raises deep and searching questions which go back to that kind of book.

I keep pointing over here to Thomas Reed and Mr. Balterstor. It goes back to these questions. The moderns always ask, we always ask, how does it work?

Another question is, what does it mean? But we had trouble asking that question. Or even, does it say anything at all to us, the heavens?

You know, the Bible says that the heavens, I kept thinking about this, apparently it comes from Lewis' favorite song, The Heavens Declare. Lewis has got a case, Mr. Ward's case for him.

The heavens declare the glory of God. According to this big metaphor, they've got a lot to say. But we forgot how to listen to it.

- [36 : 01] Lewis once gave an address, Mr. Ward points this out in his wonderful book, an address entitled Imagination and Thought in the Middle Ages. And from it, I just want to quote one sentence.

He, Mr. Lewis, is meditating on and explicating this idea. I'm sure you've heard of it, the Medievals believed in it. I think quite literally, the music of the spheres.

And Lewis wants to explicate that and he, as Lewis could do so wonderfully, hypnotically, almost enchantingly, couldn't he? He writes this sentence, Mr. Lewis, the music, which is too familiar to be heard, enfolds us day and night and in all ages.

I keep thinking, that could almost be the perfect summary of Psalm 19. The music, which is too familiar to be heard, enfolds us day and night and in all ages.

Ward quotes that early on in his book and would make, I think, a better title for my little talk. Read, back to him for a moment, Read is saying, as I understand him via Mr. Walterstorff, that our primal basis for knowledge is not to be understood.

[37 : 25] It is in principle. It could not be. It is, if you will, too familiar to be understood. When I read this Lewis quote, I went right back to reading it.

These books are about the same thing. Our very structure of knowledge, we're too familiar with it. God doesn't mean us to understand it. He just wants us to be familiar with it.

He created it to work a certain way. That's what Mr. Reed is saying. The whole modern attempt at understanding understanding is a failure. It has to be a failure.

Mr. Reed proves it, I think. There it is. It's too familiar to be understood, the mechanism of understanding. It is hidden. But it works because it works on trust.

Trust, as Mr. Reed says. Not by introspection, I think, therefore I am.

[38 : 26] Not by seeing the senses magically learning or becoming thoughts, an unthinkable thought. No, but by trust.

Necessarily by trust. We study the brain, yes. Neuroscientists do that all the time. But they have to do it by trusting their senses. They can't get away from the Reed argument.

You have to start by trusting. There's no way out of this. These two books, you can see where I'm going with this, have an underlying, as I draw to a close, have an underlying family resemblance.

They celebrate, you can tell me in a discussion time if I've over-read these books or under-read them or got this wrong. But I think they celebrate the strangeness, the God-given strangeness of the world and it helps Christians to be more in touch with this.

Certainly, I think I'm helped by seeing this. There is a God-given strangeness of the world that we're to know and rejoice in. Not apologize for it, no, it permeates the world, strangeness and mystery.

[39 : 43] When Mr. Ward gets around to quoting from C.S. Lewis' book called Miracles, I almost think that these two books are about to unite wonderfully.

He quotes a wonderful summarizing statement from Lewis from his book Miracles. A bit difficult, but it's really quite a lovely idea. The discrepancy, says Mr. Lewis in his book Miracles, the discrepancy between a movement of atoms in an astronomer's cortex and his understanding that there must be a still unobserved planet beyond Uranus is already so immense that the incarnation of God himself is in one sense scarcely starkly.

Do you get the import of that sentence? How strange is knowledge how it works? A culture which divides the world into real knowledge and imaginary, perhaps even fun knowledge, is lame.

Alfred North Whitehead is right. We know that this two-world scheme is wrong. It has to be.

It is a sad division. I started by quoting Richard Rorty died a while ago of cancer. Did you know that he settled for a dualism in his own life?

[41 : 08] He talked about this. He loved orchids. They were his private bliss, he said. But they had nothing to do with public truth. No, that was his, quote, his, as he would have put it, my little religion, my little getaway, my fun.

The real world was, for him, he contrasted it with, of all people, Trotsky. The man who wants public justice.

Orchids and Trotsky. That's the world in which Mr. Rorty lived. What a tragic prison it is. This two worlds, two cultures. That these two books are about and reconcile is the gist of what I want to say.

These two books show that there is a way forward. And that the way is the full recognition that trust is our humanity's real stance in the world.

So when you move from Thomas Reed in *Historic Epistemology* to C.S. Lewis' imagination about the seven planets, you're not in two different worlds. You're in the same world. They're both based on trust.

[42 : 17] God-given trust. The two books are really about the same thing. I'm not really surprised that all four chaps involved in the books are Christians.

They don't live, they don't accept these two worlds, airtight compartments. They're all driven by trust and belief. They have to be. All human beings have to be.

Reed, as I come to a close, Reed is really at a distance here, I know, but I kept thinking about Paul as I read Walter Storr on Reed. what may be known, Paul said, is evident.

Paul wasn't thinking like an analytic philosopher, but he intuited what an analytic philosopher comes to know. What is evident is that we live in the world by trust and belief, that we're in a trustful, believing kind of space that comes from a creator.

That's why we can trust it. even evident it is in a search for the grounds of knowledge that Mr. Reed back in the earlier centuries saw.

[43 : 26] And Mr. Ward's Lewis knew that if you look along a beam of light, even in a tool shed in an Englishman's garden, you will see the Lord of the heavens who created our minds to live in a trustful way in his creation.

All of it telling the glory of God. So the story of epistemology and the seven planets in the imagination of C.S. Lewis are all a witness to God.

Those two books are really about the same thing. I'm going to write the book that reconciles them. I'm just kidding. But it's the same world that they're talking about.

That was why I decided I wanted to talk about something that I recently knew something or felt I knew something about or I've been experiencing. These two books from these two cultures which have to be destroyed and the unifying mystery.

And it is the word mystery. We have to love that word. This mystery that is within us. Our very knowing, our ability to know is mystery.

[44 : 33] And on that basis you can live in your imagination freely, reasoning freely, being in God's creation, fighting for the things that are worthwhile.

I have a healed imagination in the gospel. I have a healed reason in the gospel. So I was happy to have this wonderful reading experience over Christmas along with some Christmas cake.

I stopped for occasion. So that's what I wanted to say today. I thought I was going to run out of time but I don't think I have so if I say a closing prayer and then you can tell me what this all really means.

So let's say a word of prayer. Lord, thank you for men and women who use their minds carefully and with great imagination to teach us more about you and the gospel and things that we should know about including the mystery of ourselves.

Thank you for creating us as mysteries to give praise and thanks to you. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm aware that was a big mouthful but thank you for putting up with it.

[45 : 53] I like essays about everything. Harry? Are we at an auction? I want you to explain under which book Haiti comes.

Oh, it comes under it comes under Saturn in the Ward on Lewis book. Saturn is the planet of darkness and catastrophe and catastrophe and disaster war chaos not understanding that the children go through in the last battle.

So Lewis is saying God's mysterious attribute of darkness the one who even allows these things must be endured for his own purposes in his own way.

God sometimes puts us through what appears to be last battles. So there's the beginning of an answer, Harry. That's these seven planets represent war darkness joy Venus represents the glory of our sexuality all the seven try to capture God's attributes falling on us testing us giving rise to opportunities for growth or judgment.

So the answer the short answer to it is Saturn darkness Saturn is the reigning spirit in the last battle. that's the way this whole thing unfolds this picture the schema of the line which in the Roman wardrobe is about kingship Prince Caspian is about war the voyage of the dawn treader is about the mystery of divine light the moon is reflected light contested light in our lives Mercury is about swiftness about the mystery of language and how God heals it a lot about language in that book Venus the magician's nephew is about Venus is about love especially the chief character's love for his mother and the whole passion of love and how it works out and again the last battle book is based upon Saturn apparently traditionally associated with darkness chaos so Hades would be Lewis would say the kind of thing that he grapples with in the last battle when God's darkness brings chaos how are we to respond what's that about so there's my short answer

[48 : 31] TV sure has put it right in front of us hasn't it yes yes hasn't it we don't escape yes facing yes I can't think there's too much about the mystery of the human condition that's missing from the these reigning powers over the seven stories kingship warriors wars light reflected light swiftness swiftness means man's variableness his gift of speech love and darkness these are themes that Lewis grapples with according to Ward in the seven chronicles under these ruling powers darkness did I answer your question here that's the gist of it what Lewis would say as I understand his meditation and tool shed Harry to me as much and in the light of your question is don't look at the darkness try and look along it to see what God is doing in the darkness but if you look at it you'll rail as Nietzsche railed against epistemological darkness darkness and said if I can't have full complete transparent knowledge of the world then I'm out of here whereas he should have said

I accept the darkness and I'll live in it in trust as Mr. Reid would have said it's a gift to live in the world trustingly so I think the two themes start to I find them overlapping it's it's it's confounded our world with the necessity to try and find meaning and it seems to be a meaningless tragedy and our world can't quite accommodate a meaningless tragedy to that extent in this I'm trying to end this if I can a footnote to what you've said Harry in this Narnia book he does cover a lot of the Lewis genre or the Lewis not genre his output Lewis got around to saying well yes about I think it's in the context of dealing with Saturn and the darkness he said let us rail against the darkness of say Haiti yes but let us never forget that if our railing against it is not rooted in a light which is justified then our railing has no meaning that's how Lewis worked out his theodicy and I think it's very convincing if there isn't a light which is justifiable on what basis are you railing about Haiti and all the suffering there must be a justified light upon which I can rail upon which I can be angry at the darkness so Lewis

I think does good in that in that in that battle and I'm almost certain it's in it's in this part where he unfolds the mystery of what as Ward sees what as Ward sees Lewis doing in his final chronicle the last battle where darkness does take over the story every you know Michael Ingham religion excuse me religion takes over where they they start combining different gods and everybody's going along with it you know it's Tashcan remember not Aslan and and evil seems to be winning everywhere darkness and everywhere there's violence and Lewis deals with it there in that last book but thanks for the question here please sir just a footnote to the question about Haiti sure in many respects that question and thinking goes along with it echoes what's already transpired 250 years ago in the decades after the

Lisbon first of 1755 yeah yeah sure it's exactly the same issues if you will yeah well well I mean that's another stuff Reed is dealing with Hume and Hume is the classic formulator of it isn't he if there's an infinite good god either he hasn't got the power to stop evil or he's not interested in stopping evil so Hume thinks he's got the believers backed up against a wall but I don't think he does I think Lewis's response is good to hear sir it says that ministry in essence isn't able to explain why did god let it happen in other words I mean obviously if there had been no sin then there would be no suffering but for now it's kind of like food camp food camp is what meant to be it wasn't time but it's designed to build character you know make people the character of soldiers without both testing them and giving them suffering both to test them and to develop those things as immediate obedience and endurance simulate the conditions of battle exhaustion injustice abuse the sort of things that occur and how well do people do and it would be nice if things would work out and be different but as long as we're fallen that will be the way it is another thing to

I think about Haiti and so on is that really it's not fair to judge individuals by those circumstances necessarily look at Hebrews 11 the godly did not always outwardly do well but that's because at the end there can be a writing of wrongs there can be a paying settling of accounts but when it comes to nations they don't have any eternal souls only individuals will be judged which means that the wars and consequences must happen here and now in other words the political social economic conditions are a direct reflection from the national character and if you see third world countries you will see third world character if you see primitive tribes you will see base character indeed please I just wanted to comment and question but I'm absolutely delighted that at no point in your talk did you differentiate between the sciences and the arts because back in the day all knowledge was one and creatives weren't hived off to the stupid part

[55 : 12] I think it's really interesting that you are respectfully analyzing as did my board who I did here oh good wonderful wonderful talk and I'm excited as you are about the theory I think it's really interesting that you are giving a talk that we are analyzing today children's literature that we are looking at books in which CS Lewis buried such important dimensions and you're putting that against a pretty heavy given in the 1700s and you're talking about the themes being equal similar yeah visions I just think it has to be marvelous thank you thank you it's a new thought for me to say and I'm going to try and now think it habitually thought begins in mystery and that's a technical analytic philosopher's provable conclusion you know that's it has to be there it has to be in trust you can't find its ground it's impossible in principle so that to me in principle unites these two worlds so

Lewis is of course seven planets seven ruling gods with a small g ruling over Narnia is wild wild imaginative thought but it's not alien to the first world anymore for me they go together sheila well Harvey I'm still trying to digest half of what you said here it's not bad but you did talk a lot about mystery and I find the mystery is increasingly on the wane in the way we worship and the way we talk about our faith it's as if it's a no-no you know when you start talking mystery people's eyes glaze over but also we've made some of the mysterious things that we celebrate

I'm thinking particularly of the Lord's Supper I guess so user friendly that the mystery has kind of been overshadowed and you know people are talking and laughing and telling jokes and everything all the way through the service and greeting their neighbours and I say this having been guilty of that as well sometimes but you know you don't the mystery is missing from our religion except as a word in the vocabulary I wish we could get it back yes well thank you for that I think that's what Mr.

Reed and by Mr. Walter sort of helps me to do at the end of the day I found that very moving I was being a bit facetious but I found it moving it gave me a deeper sense of God's mystery mystery in their context if I've got it right is mystery is that which God expects us to know is not in principle understandable by us but we are to accept that Jesus is in the sacrament we don't understand that but he is that he's in the mystery of preaching that God meets us there we don't understand it but we trust and believe it that's what mystery is not dealing in spookiness you don't have to have candles that mystery some people find it helpful too but it's that which God expects us to know he expects us to know as Reed would say that this is the darkness that God needs us to accept

I don't know why my reasoning faculty is working but it is God needs us to rejoice in it I don't and it's ground so formally Mr.

[59 : 45] Walter in formal philosophical terms Mr. Reed is and this is a compliment he's an irrationalist there is no foundation for knowledge which the mind may quote understand it starts there that's the darkness that he rejoices in please given that Michael has written here about the basis for these books literature how I know when I grew up and raising my children in their education there was very much a division as you have described between reason and the literature and what I would call matters as being lesser than what we can technically know how do you propose or is there anything that came to you in your reading or through what Michael Ward has specifically said that we could reintroduce the junction of these two areas in children's education we're way past that but really we need to hear it in the next generation after that that's a huge question yes

I mean one answer is the hard work people we should pray more for than we do the hard work of people like Nicholas Walterstorff and Thomas Reed a couple hundred years ago who saw that they wanted to undermine that foundationalism as they would call it which gives rise to the two cultures inevitably and when you undermine that over time there'll be a more wholesome understanding of the person in the world and therefore children's literature will find its rightful place now that's the long term answer but I don't know about short term Lewis would say just do it get them to look along not at Lewis wanted a child or an adult to feel to feel golden magnanimous generous power not by looking at it but by looking along it

Peter becomes in the line Peter the magnificent the children would feel his magnificent he's brave he got to know the line and worship the line he wears beautiful robes he rules a country in justice so as they experience the story they're looking along this golden virtue of kingship and feeling it so they're with him in the tool shed looking along this glory and if they do that you'll baptize their imagination in a Christian ethos so Mr.

Ward is quite convinced and is quite convincing in arguing that Lewis self-consciously did this in each story all across his letters his literary criticism it's there it's such a convincing argument I don't know how anybody will overthrow it just that's the way Lewis was doing this it's a response to that generation that came out of World War I and said goodbye to all that we don't want romance we don't want nationalism we don't want the flag we don't want those loyalties anymore they're all evil and a cynicism and a sneering knowingness took over that our world still lives with in a lot of ways well Lewis wanted to say to people who taught that if you say goodbye to all that let's unfold what you mean by all do you really want to get rid of golden kingship the beauty of love the beauty of life he wanted to deeply challenge not overthrow that cynicism but challenge it by reintroducing these lovely virtues back into the imagination of a child as

Mr. Reed I think wants to say to philosophers do you know that you are a mystery that when you try and work out your epistemology it fails because you're not realizing that you're a mystery that's what Mr. Reed is virtually saying as an analytic philosopher of all people professor well thank you very much I'll give you this inspirational talk sometimes joke about your role as a bishop thank you this was in the episcopal episcopal visit statement in the sense of prophetic and pastoral at the same time we're looking at 300 years of reinforcement of this divide so what we just heard of the school system it's a total educational system from top to bottom and so one might despair but your optimism

[65 : 15] I think and your suggestion of the coherence is very helpful there's more literature emerging with this theme it seems to be if one looks at Dennis Alexander's discussion of the reformulating of the matrix or Charles Taylor's discussion of the secular age is a very coherent for this thesis thank you for that yes Taylor especially seems to be modernity is on its last legs it really is it's exhausted there's a shift going on you think there's a shift but there's a dysfunction here in a sense it's obvious but in another sense it's impossible to bridge the divide because it'll be enforced for the 300 years of touch yes yes Harry you're going well I came back from Toronto the other day on Air

Canada and the airports of Canada have given up trust they trust you for nothing and I suppose it's going to be the model of our culture as it proceeds is that nobody will trust anybody under any circumstances that seems to be the way we're going to live isn't that exactly right that is prophetic here it's either trust me or show me we want to show they'll have to see you naked before they let you on that plane so the sciences are a show me discipline but trust is do you trust your imagination do you trust the seven heavens maybe the teacher wrote God Lewis would say but again these two worlds are not to be divorced they're rooted in trust both of them the epistemologists are just arrogant take it

Reed was marginalized Walter Storff doesn't go into this but Reed was probably marginalized because he's saying and Walter does say this the man in the street and the philosopher are on the same ground they have the same mind in the same world the philosopher is not in a privileged position to know now that is not going to make him popular with philosophers with the tradition so I bet my guess is that's why he was marginalized it's that simple it's vanity they don't want to hear from this brilliant Mr. Reed who already undermines their whole tradition I think that's just me sir the word mystery reminds me of numinous which is not a word you don't hear it's sort of like hearing the Eucharist sign in a massive cathedral and listening to the anchor which gives you a sense of the mystery of the world do you like that phrase there's Mr.

Walter Storff as he summarizes me to read that there is a mystery within that's what Descartes should have realized it shouldn't have been I think therefore I am he should have said I'm trusting and the obvious implication of that and Descartes was in his own way a Catholic wasn't he he said oh you need God trust God yes trust the creator who created you but again that was a mouthful I know I just let's talk about everything on your mark is that go epistemology medieval planets children's literature thank you who's next week again would you remind us you forgot next week well Olaf is on are you asking me to re-inclose what you want

I'm in a sort of a mild stupor are you really in a mild stupor well I can't see darkness as an attribute of God but that's just picking at bones isn't it I send darkness he says to the prophets I believe but that's another topic for him to take well thank you I think Molly thank you thank you thank you thank you thank you I mouth it's really it's really interesting to see that a few evil men yeah a few evil men can create something that people will grab hold and and and and at worst that's what it is

[70 : 35] Reed really respects these guys he thinks they're good thinkers and they ask good questions but they're unaware that their conclusions are nothing else than absurd from the brain state to ideas it's simply incomprehensible they don't see them anyway yeah thanks welcome home again yeah thank you art went no they both went you were cheering for the arts well you know he did this he did this book under begbie and it's