



Mere Christianity
by C. S. Lewis

A Study Guide for Small Groups

Mere Christianity Study Guide

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PREFACE

Why does Lewis not address the differences between denominations?

1. _____
2. _____

cf. 1 Cor 1.18; Titus 3.9

Where did Lewis get the title "Mere Christianity?"

The words "Mere Christianity" came from Richard Baxter, a 17th century Anglican minister, in his book *The Saints' Everlasting Rest*.

The concept goes back even further, to the 16th century, to Richard Hooker and his multi-volume work *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, which was a masterful attempt at a systematic theology for the new Anglican Church. Lewis greatly admired Hooker and said this about him:

"Hooker had never heard of a religion called Anglicanism. He would never have dreamed of trying to "convert" any foreigner to the Church of England. It was to him obvious that a German or Italian would not belong to the Church of England, just as an Ephesian or Galatian would not have belonged to the Church of Corinth."

Uncle Toby is a character in the book *Tristram Shandy*, by Laurence Sterne. He makes the statement "they are written...in the Common-Prayer Book" in response to a question about the duties of a married man.

H.C.F. = Highest Common Factor, the British equivalent of Least Common Denominator

What is Lewis' point about the H.C.F. of Christianity?

Odium theologicum is Latin for theological hatred. How does this tie into Titus 3.9? Who exhibits this the most in Lewis' experience?

What would Lewis have thought of the extreme political correctness in our culture?

"We simply cannot, without disaster, use language as these objectors want us to use it."

Luke says the disciples were first called "Christians" at Antioch (Acts 11:26)
How was it applied there? How should we define and apply it today?

What analogy does Lewis use for Mere Christianity at the end of the Preface?

What criteria does he give for picking the right room?

How can we help those still in the hall?

BOOK I: RIGHT AND WRONG AS A CLUE TO THE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSE**1. THE LAW OF HUMAN NATURE**

A. It is Universal

1. Whether they admit it or not, all men recognize it, and even appeal to it.

cf. Rom 2.14-16

2. It is not the same as the "laws" of physics or chemistry.

What does this say about the difference between humans and other created things? *cf. Gen 1.26- 27; 2.7*

3. It cuts across all cultural, temporal, and geographical boundaries.

From the Code of Hammurabi to "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." there are intrinsic notions of Right and Wrong. Differences are mostly in application, preferences, or technology. Perversions are limited to cults or societies that are generally short-lived.

4. Some try to suppress it, or apply it inequitably. *cf. Rom 1.18-23*

B. It is universally broken – no one is keeping the Law *cf. Rom 3.9, 23; Jas 4.17*

1. **Why do humans not follow their own law as other objects do?**

cf. 2 Cor 4.3-4

What is the result of this?

2. The natural tendency of recognizing failure is to shift blame.

But in actuality this proves our knowledge and guilt! *cf. Gen 1.8-13*

CONCLUSION: *Like it or not, there IS a Universal standard or Right and Wrong, or Law of Human Nature, and NO ONE is keeping it!*

2. **SOME OBJECTIONS**

A. "Moral Law" is just evolved herd instinct.

1. Sometimes Right and Instinct conflict with each other

We honor those who overcome fear to protect or save someone else even at their own peril.

There is a difference between "want" and "ought." This is precisely the difference between desire and conscience. *cf. Rom 7.21-24*

"The Moral Law tells us the tune we have to play; our instincts are merely the keys."

2. When two impulses conflict, the stronger should win.

The very fact that there is a conflict tells us there is another set of impulses that is a "decider." This cannot be an instinct, but something with higher authority.

-- *cf. Gen 2.16-17; 3. 4- 5*

3. If Moral Law were an instinct, we should have instincts that are objectively "good" and "bad."

Instincts, are not good or bad; it is how we use or suppress them that determines morality.

An important corollary: Making any instinct an absolute guide results in evil and cruelty. Mercy without Justice, or Justice without Mercy both have tragic consequences. *cf. Matt 12.7; Luke 1.50*

"The road to hell is paved with good intentions."

B. Moral Law is just social convention

1. Just because something is taught doesn't mean it can't be Moral Law. *cf. Deut 6.4-9*

Conventions on the other hand must be taught and learned, and vary across cultures. Moral Law is inherently known or discovered.

2. People tend to magnify the differences in morals between cultures.

3. We make judgments about morals or conventions as to whether one is "better" than another. This requires a higher standard by which to judge.

QUESTION: Do Moral Laws change over time? What about their application?

What examples does Lewis give to address this issue?

Can you think of any others?

3. THE REALITY OF THE LAW

A. The fact that humans do not follow their own nature has consequences

1. Are the 'laws' that govern physical objects really laws in the moral sense?

2. The Law of Human Nature tells what Man *ought* to do, not what he *will* do.

The laws governing physical objects are just observable fact with no moral implications.

B. We try to explain away our failure to follow Moral Law because it is so odd

1. Not a matter of what is best for us or society

This argument leads to a tautology: "decent behavior is decent behavior."

2. Not necessarily what is most convenient

C. Moral Law must represent some different form of reality

1. The fact that there is a moral imperative implies that there is more than one kind of reality

-- cf. 2 Cor 4.17-5.1; Rom 1.19-20;

2. This reality comes from outside us and makes demands of us.

C.S. Lewis must have studied the philosophical writings of Immanuel Kant, an 18th century German philosopher who had similar conclusions:

The speculative employment of reason with respect to nature leads to the absolute necessity of some supreme cause of the world: the practical employment of reason with a view to freedom leads also to absolute necessity, but only of the laws of the actions of a rational being as such. Now it is an essential principle of reason, however employed, to push its knowledge to a consciousness of its necessity (without which it would not be rational knowledge). It is, however, an equally essential restriction of the same reason that it can neither discern the necessity of what is or what happens, nor of what ought to happen, unless a condition is supposed on which it is or happens or ought to happen. In this way, however, by the constant inquiry for the condition, the satisfaction of reason is only further and further postponed. Hence it unceasingly seeks the unconditionally necessary and finds itself forced to assume it, although without any means of making it comprehensible to itself, happy enough if only it can discover a conception which agrees with this assumption. It is therefore no fault in our deduction of the supreme principle of morality, but an objection that should be made to human reason in general, that it cannot enable us to conceive the absolute necessity of an unconditional practical law (such as the categorical imperative* must be). It cannot be blamed for refusing to explain this necessity by a condition, that is to say, by means of some interest assumed as a basis, since the law would then cease to be a supreme law of reason. And thus while we do not comprehend the practical unconditional necessity of the moral imperative, we yet comprehend its incomprehensibility, and this is all that can be fairly demanded of a philosophy which strives to carry its principles up to the very limit of human reason.

Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Morals, 1785

* There is therefore but one categorical imperative, namely, this: Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law.

4. **WHAT LIES BEHIND THE LAW**

A. Two main views of the Universe

1. The Materialist View

What is has always existed or came into being by random chance

2. The Religious View

There is some mind behind the Universe with purpose and will

3. Both views have existed from antiquity; one is not more 'modern' than the other.

B. Science cannot determine which of these views is right

1. Science can address "What?" or "How?" but not "Why?"

2. True scientists understand this distinction.

Whom does Lewis say usually confuses these issues?

C. The only thing in the Universe we can know more about than we can learn from observation is _____.

1. We could not deduce a Moral Law from mere external observation. **Why?**

2. A message from a reality beyond our Universe would require a supernatural means of delivery. *cf. Deut 29.29; 1 Cor 2.6-13; John 1.9-14*

3. What does the fact that we have received some message tell us?

What does Lewis mean by the statement that "There has been a great deal of soft soap talked about God for the last hundred years."?

D. Side note: The Life-Force Philosophy

The view that some sort of impersonal force or *élan vital* is behind the Universe:

"Matter or mind, reality has appeared to us as a perpetual becoming. It makes itself or it unmakes itself, but it is never something made. Such is the intuition that we have of mind when we draw aside the veil which is interposed between our consciousness and ourselves. This, also, is what our intellect and senses themselves would show us of matter, if they could obtain a direct and disinterested idea of it."

-- Henri Bergson, Chapter IV in *Creative Evolution*, 1911,

1. Does this remind you of any movies?

2. Why does this view fall apart?

3. Why is it so attractive?

4. What would you say to the question Lewis poses at the end of this chapter?

5. WE HAVE CAUSE TO BE UNEASY

A. "Going back is the quickest way on."

1. Going forward is not always progress if you are headed in the wrong direction
2. Sometimes progress means turning the clock backward
3. The sooner you correct the error, the faster progress will be made

Why is this so difficult for us?

B. What we can discover on our own about the source of Moral Law

1. The Universe was made by a great but merciless artist
2. This Being is interested in right conduct, or 'good.'
3. However, this goodness is not indulgent or soft.
4. If this Being is not a Person, there can be no forgiveness

What is our dilemma with respect to goodness?

-- *cf. Isa 6.1-6; Heb 10.26-27, 12.28-29; Isa 47.12-15*

What is our only Hope and Comfort?

-- *cf. Rom 6.17-18, 7.21-8.1; 2 Thess 2.16-17*

C. We can't find comfort without first experiencing dismay *cf. Matt 5.4*

1. **When does Christianity start to make sense?**
2. **To whom did Jesus say He came?** *cf. Matt 9.10-13;*
3. **What does Lewis say we must seek to find comfort?**

"Most of us have got over the pre-war wishful thinking about international politics. It is time we did the same about religion."

BOOK II: WHAT CHRISTIANS BELIEVE**1. THE RIVAL CONCEPTIONS OF GOD**

A. One thing that Christians do not need to believe: _____

1. Christians are free to think all religions have some elements of truth
How did Paul use this to his advantage in Acts 17?
2. Atheists must convince themselves (and others) that most everyone else is wrong about God
3. Of course, some wrong answers are closer to the Truth than others

B. The first big division of Humanity: Do you believe in God or not?

1. Christianity is on the side of the majority who say "Yes."
2. Whom does Lewis say form the bulk of the minority who say "No"?

C. The next big division: What is the nature of your God?

1. Pantheism: God is transcends good and evil

God is beyond good and evil and once humans are enlightened, they will be also.

What example does Lewis use to illustrate this relativistic viewpoint?

2. Which religions does Lewis say hold the other point of view, that God is good?
3. Another way to view the difference:

The pantheistic god is part of the universe, and dependent on its existence. The Christian God is not only independent but pre-existent to it.

How is this connected with the idea that God is beyond good and evil?

4. **What do you make of this statement?** "Christianity is a fighting religion."

"I came not to bring peace, but a sword"

-- cf. *Matt 10.34-39; Luke 12.51-53*

D. The big question: Why has the world gone so wrong?

1. Why did Lewis (and many others) reject Christianity's answer to this question?
2. Outline of Lewis' logic:
 - The Universe is unjust and cruel.
 - But how do I know what justice and cruelty are?
 - If they are my own notions, I can't make this statement about the Universe.
 - On the other hand, if they are absolute, transcendent realities, I must accept an ordered reality and that the Universe has meaning.
3. Lewis claims that "atheism is too _____." Is **that true?**

2. **THE INVASION**

A. Another view that is too simple: "Christianity-and-water"

1. God's OK, you're OK and He would never condemn anyone, much less send them to hell. C. S. Lewis calls this view, along with atheism, _____.
2. Real things are not simple

What silly strawman argument does Lewis say "people who are not silly" use?

3. How does Lewis say we should deal with such people?
4. God did not invent religion, much less make it simple.
5. Reality is usually odd, not neat and tidy.
6. Reality is not usually what you would have guessed it to be.

How does Lewis say this helps him believe Christianity is real?

B. The dilemma: How can a Universe that is bad and meaningless contain creatures who know that it is bad and meaningless?

1. Christianity says this is a good world gone bad.
-- cf. *Gen. 3.17-19; Rom. 8.20-23*
2. Dualism says there are equal and opposite forces of good and evil battling for the Universe.

How does Lewis say Dualism compares to Christianity?

C. The big problem with Dualism

1. Good and evil cannot be mere preferences or they cease to have any true meaning.
2. One must be right and the other wrong, or mistaken.
3. This leads to the unavoidable conclusion that there is a standard from some Power or Being that supersedes and hence created the other two.

Our definitions of good and evil are merely descriptions of relationship with or against this Being.

D. Goodness is independent reality; evil is dependent on good for its existence.

1. Wickedness is the pursuit of good in the wrong way.
-- cf. *Gen 3.6, 16.2; Lev 10.1,2; 2 Sam 6.5-7*
2. "Badness is only spoiled goodness." No one likes badness for its own sake.
3. Therefore goodness must precede badness.
4. Lewis says this Bad Power of Dualism is a _____.
5. To be bad requires things like intelligence and will, which are good things.
6. How does this square with Christianity's view of the Devil?
"It is a real recognition of the fact that evil is a _____."

Dualism falls apart because Evil cannot be independent of Good.

E. Primary difference between Dualism and Christianity

1. Similar to Dualism, Christianity believes in an Evil Being at war with Good.
2. But Christianity believes this Being was created by God, and was originally good.
3. Christianity views our world as being in a state of rebellion.
-- cf. *Eph 2.1-2; 1 John. 5.19; Jude 6; 2 Pet 2.4*

How does Lewis say Christianity describes our world in its present state?

4. The rightful king appeared in the world, occupied enemy territory, incognito and is leading the resistance movement against the Evil One.

There is no doubt as to the outcome or the victor!!!

3. THE SHOCKING ALTERNATIVE

A. Is this current state of affairs in accordance with God's will?

-- cf. Ezek 18.23,32; 33.11; 2 Pet 3.9; 1 Tim 2.3-4

1. If it is not, how can we explain God's omnipotence?
2. What example does Lewis give of this idea?
3. If a thing is free to be good it is also _____. cf. Gen 6.5-8
4. Free will makes evil possible but true love or joy is impossible without it.

B. The outcome of Free Will

1. The outcome must have been worth the cost.
2. Lewis says arguing against God is like _____.

“If God thinks this state of war in the universe a price worth paying for free will...then we may take it it is worth paying.”

3. "The better stuff a creature is made of...then the better it will be if it goes right, but also the worse it will be if it goes wrong."

C. Where Satan went wrong

1. Wanting to be first—God, in fact. cf. Gen 3.5-6; Isa 14.12-14
2. Trying to find happiness apart from God leads to the opposite.
3. The reason it never can work:

God designed the human machine to run on _____. cf. Ps 1.1-4; John 4.31-34

4. This is the key to human failure throughout history.

D. What God has done about it.

1. He gave us conscience.
2. He sent the human race _____.
3. He selected a nation to forge into His own people.
4. He came to earth as a Jewish man, and made a shocking claim.

E. For anyone but God to claim the authority to forgive sins is "so preposterous as to be comic."

1. Why is this so?
2. How did the opponents of Jesus react to these claims?

-- cf. *Matt 9.1-8; Luke 7.48-50; Mark 2.5-12;*

3. The possible alternatives to Jesus' identity:

He is either _____, _____, or _____.

"You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronising nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!" -- John 20.28

4. **THE PERFECT PENITENT**

A. So, God has infiltrated enemy territory as a man; the question is *Why*?

1. Christians believe His main purpose was to suffer death and live again.
-- *cf. John 3.16-18; 1 Cor 15.3-4; John 1.29; Matt 20.25-28; Rom 4.23-25;*
2. Furthermore, this resulted in reconciling us to God and getting a fresh start.
-- *cf. Rom 5.1,2; Titus 2.11-14; Eph 2.4-7*
3. Another related question is *How*? Christians have several theories about that.
4. No single theory can completely explain it; the important thing is to accept and appropriate the reality. Theories do not replace reality; they merely describe it.

Example: A man can enjoy and obtain nourishment from a good meal without understanding all the details of biochemistry and physiology. Similarly, "A man can accept what Christ has done without knowing how it works: **indeed he would not know how it works until he has accepted it.**"

James Jeans and Arthur Stanley Eddington were contemporary physicists and astronomers who debated about the nature of scientific methods, and describing and understanding reality.

"The essential fact is that all the pictures which science now draws of nature, and which alone seem capable of according with observational facts, are mathematical pictures."
-- James Jeans

"From the intrinsic evidence of his creation, the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician."
-- James Jeans

5. The bottom line is that Christ was killed for us, our sins are removed and forgiven, and death has been crushed.

B. Two of the theories described and contrasted

1. Penal Substitution: Christ took our punishment so we don't have to.
Why does Lewis think this is "a very silly theory"?
2. Payment of debt: Christ paid a debt that we could never hope to pay.
What was this debt? *cf. Rom 5.12-14, 6.23; Col 2.13-15; Acts 3.19*
3. What other theories do Christians have about this?

C. The nature of repentance

1. As Lewis states in the previous chapter, we replaced God with self.
2. This is not merely a flaw that needs correction, it is hostility and rebellion toward God! *cf. Rom 5.10; Col 1.21-22*
3. Repentance is the act of laying down arms, ceasing hostility, having a change of heart, and getting back on the right path.
4. Repentance is not just hard—it is *impossible* except for a perfect man, but then he doesn't need to do it.
5. Repentance is not something God demands so He can take you back; it is simply a description of what turning back to God is.
6. How does God help us repent?

D. The Catch-22 and a way out.

1. We need to repent but we cannot. God on the other hand does not need to repent, so it is foreign to His nature. He cannot place that nature within us because it is not in His.
2. But what if God became a man?
3. Now God can not only submit, suffer, and die—He can do it perfectly!
-- cf. 2 Cor 5.21; Gal 3.13; 1 John 3.4-5
4. We can share in God's death because He has died, but He had to become a man to do it.
-- cf. Heb 2.14-15, 5.8-9; Gal 2.20; Rom 6.3-11; Phil 2.8

E. The complaint (?!)

1. Since Jesus was God, it was easy for Him.
2. In what sense is this true?
3. How does Lewis address this complaint? What examples does he give?

“Such is my own way of looking at what Christians call the Atonement. But remember this is only one more picture. Do not mistake it for the thing itself: and if it does not help you, drop it.”

Arthur Stanley Eddington -- 28 December 1882 – 22 November 1944

Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington was an English astrophysicist of the early 20th century. The Eddington limit, the natural limit to the luminosity of stars, or the radiation generated by accretion onto a compact object, is named in his honour.

He is famous for his work regarding the Theory of Relativity. Eddington wrote a number of articles which announced and explained Einstein's theory of general relativity to the English-speaking world. World War I severed many lines of scientific communication and new developments in German science were not well known in England. He also conducted an eclipse expedition in 1919 that provided one of the earliest confirmations of relativity, and became known for his popular expositions and interpretations of the theory.



Eddington also investigated the interior of stars through theory, and developed the first true understanding of stellar processes. He began this in 1916 with investigations of possible physical explanations for Cepheid variables. He began by extending Karl Schwarzschild's earlier work on radiation pressure in Emden polytropic models. These models treated a star as a sphere of gas held up against gravity by internal thermal pressure, and one of Eddington's chief additions was to show that radiation pressure was necessary to prevent collapse of the sphere. He developed his model despite knowingly lacking firm foundations for understanding opacity and energy generation in the stellar interior. However, his results allowed for calculation of temperature, density and pressure at all points inside a star, and Eddington argued that his theory was so useful for further astrophysical investigation that it should be retained despite not being based on completely accepted physics. James Jeans contributed the important suggestion that stellar matter would certainly be ionized, but that was the end of any collaboration between the pair, who became famous for their lively debates.

During the 1920s and 30s Eddington gave innumerable lectures, interviews, and radio broadcasts on relativity (in addition to his textbook *Mathematical Theory of Relativity*), and later, quantum mechanics. Many of these were gathered into books, including *Nature of the Physical World* and *New Pathways in Science*. Albert Einstein called Eddington's books "the finest presentation of the subject in any language." His skillful use of literary allusions and humor helped make these famously difficult subjects quite accessible.

Eddington's books and lectures were immensely popular with the public, not only because of Eddington's clear and entertaining exposition, but also for his willingness to discuss the philosophical and religious implications of the new physics. He argued for a deeply-rooted philosophical harmony between scientific investigation and religious mysticism, and also that the positivist nature of modern physics (i.e., relativity and quantum physics) provided new room for personal religious experience and free will. Unlike many other spiritual scientists, he rejected the idea that science could provide proof of religious propositions. He promoted the infinite monkey theorem in his 1928 book *The Nature of the Physical World*, with the phrase "If an army of monkeys were strumming on typewriters, they might write all the books in the British Museum". His popular writings made him, quite literally, a household name in Great Britain between the world wars.

The English mathematician, physicist, and astronomer Sir James Hopwood Jeans (1877-1946) made important contributions to the development of quantum theory and to theoretical astrophysics, especially to the theory of stellar structure.

On September 11, 1877, James Jeans was born in Ormskirk, Lancashire, the son of a parliamentary journalist. He was brought up in a strict, very religious Victorian home atmosphere. A precocious child, he was reading by age 4 and had a remarkable ability to memorize numbers. At an early age he also became interested in physics, as well as in mechanical devices, especially clocks - the subject of a short book he wrote at age 9.

Jeans taught applied mathematics at Princeton University, N.J., from 1905 to 1909. He returned to Cambridge as Stokes lecturer in 1910 but 2 years later relinquished the position and thereafter devoted full time to research and writing.

In the first period of his scientific life (1901-1914), Jeans's interests were centered mainly on the kinetic theory of gases and the theory of radiation, especially applied to the new quantum theory of Max Planck and others. Through a vigorous interchange of ideas, Lord Rayleigh and Jeans, in 1905, separately derived what later came to be called the Rayleigh-Jeans law. Despite the fact that this law implied a failure of classical theory when applied to blackbody radiation, Jeans, during the ensuing years, repeatedly attempted to sustain classical theory instead of accepting quantum theory. Only after Henri Poincaré's 1912 paper on the quantum theory did Jeans become convinced. Two years later Jeans wrote a brief but comprehensive Report on Radiation and the Quantum Theory, which, after World War I, was extremely influential in convincing physicists of the importance of the new quantum ideas.



During the war years Jeans experienced his finest hour as a scientist - now a theoretical astrophysicist. His researches on stellar structure were most significant, especially his proof that a rotating incompressible mass will, with increasing rotational velocity, first become pear shaped and then cataclysmically fission into two parts (one model for a single star evolving into a double-star system). This and other important results, including a tidal encounter nebular hypothesis that replaced the classical Kant-Laplace nebular hypothesis, were published in his 1919 Adams Prize essay, Problems of Cosmogony and Stellar Dynamics.

The next decade of Jeans's life (1918-1928) was marked by a rather sharp decrease in his reputation as a theoretical astrophysicist. Already, in 1917, he had a famous debate with Arthur S. Eddington on stellar structure and, though not really apparent at the time, Jeans by and large emerged the loser. In 1929 Jeans turned to popular science writing, especially in astronomy, and soon became very successful. His Universe around Us ushered in a series of eight books between 1929 and 1942. All are stimulating expositions, though they suffer in one degree or another from presenting the results of scientific research a bit too dogmatically, thereby giving a distorted picture of such research in progress.

Jeans was awarded numerous honorary degrees and professional offices. He was knighted in 1928 and won the coveted Order of Merit in 1939. He was a modest and unassuming man and a devoted father. Jeans died on Sept. 16, 1946, at his home in Dorking, Surrey.

Brief Description of some Atonement Theories

(Taken from thepaulpage.com unless noted otherwise)

The Classical (Ransom) Theory

Theologians have attempted for centuries to weave these concepts into a comprehensive explanation of the atonement. The verses from Colossians were used to define the earliest theory of atonement. This “classic” doctrine, taught for the first 1000 years of Christian history described Christ’s work as a victory over Satan and a liberation of all human kind. Specifically, so the theory goes, Christ was paid as a ransom to the devil to free people’s souls. This was a clever ruse on God’s part, however, for unknown to the Devil, Jesus was actually God in person. Unable to constrain Jesus’ divine soul, the devil was defeated and Christ emerged victorious. This view was taught consistently by nearly all of the Church fathers including Augustine.

Satisfaction or Penal Substitution Theory

In the eleventh century Anselm of Canterbury developed a theory of atonement to explain why Jesus had to die. He said that the debt of sin was so great that humanity could not possibly pay it. Only God, in the person of Christ, could do so by undergoing the agony of the crucifixion. So Jesus became our substitute and satisfied God’s requirements under the law.

Moral Influence or Exemplary Theory

In reaction to Anselm, another early theory of atonement was put forth by the medieval theologian Peter Abelard. This theory, known as the “moral influence” theory, said that God exhibited love at the cross in such a way that contemplation of the cross would move us to repentance and faith. The actual act of salvation occurs in the believer’s subjective response to the cross.

Christus Victor Model

After Anselm and Abelard, the idea of atonement as a ransom to, or defeat of, the devil was more or less abandoned by theologians of subsequent eras. Bishop Gustaf Aulén, a historical theologian from Sweden, whose work was first translated into English in 1931, began a movement to breathe new life into the abandoned classic theory, and his title (Christus Victor: An Historical Study of the Three Main Types of the Idea of Atonement) popularized the name for it. He argued that the “classic” doctrine was not a crude, pictorial expression from a long-gone era, but rather a fully theological explication of Christ’s saving work.⁶ The Christus Victor perspective is that God, in Christ, intervened in the world to stand up to Satan and the forces of idolatry, materialism, violence and domination. Jesus came to free all creation from the warping power of sin, showing with his life and teaching what it means to be fully human in the will of God.

Covenantal View of Atonement

A view of atonement that reflects the principles of the New Covenant and emphasizes a grace-based justice (or righteousness) rather than law-based punitive justice can be summarized as follows:

- The meaning of the atonement is that God has executed the promised liberating justice for everyone (especially those who are forsaken, destitute, and excluded). God has done so by being faithful to God's ancient covenant in raising up Jesus as the mediator of a new covenant apart from the law.
- Jesus' death on the cross symbolized an ancient covenantal transaction familiar to all Hebrew people. As mediator of the covenant, his death put the covenant or will into effect.²⁰
- The resurrection is the Christian metaphor for the triumph of divine justice over sin, alienation, and death. Jesus completed the covenantal transaction that began with Abraham and culminated in the resurrection. It opened the door to a new covenant relationship with all people based not on law but on a promise.
- We also become mediators of this justice when we extend God's covenant promise of grace to all the downtrodden and outcast of society, for they too have full standing under the New Covenant as God's people. We become mediators of this justice when we extend compassion, forgiveness, and understanding in all our relationships and when we advocate for human rights and dignity.

The Participatory View of Atonement (from Bayne and Restall)

Christ's death is not presented as something we must emulate, nor is it presented as persuading God to forgive us, as constituting restitution for our debts, as punishment for our misdeeds. Instead, Paul is portrayed as focused on ontological and relational matters. This focus is encapsulated in Paul's frequent references to Christ as 'the Second Adam', a phrase that is code for Paul's notion that Christ's death brings about a new human nature (a new Adam) (Rom. 8:19-22; Col. 1:15-20); we are quite literally born again in the sense that we are literally new creatures (Gal. 2:20). This new identity, grounded in the Christian's participation in the death and resurrection of Christ as the Second Adam, is symbolized – and perhaps even constituted—by the rites of Baptism and the Eucharist. Baptism symbolizes death to the old self and rebirth, participating in new life "in Christ"; the Eucharist involves partaking in the blood and body of Christ. These rites are thoroughly participatory. Participatory language also infuses Paul's conception of the Church, which he describes as the body of Christ. Paul describes the Spirit as marrying the Christian to Christ so that "the two become one flesh" (Rom. 7: 1-4; I Cor. 6:15-18).

How does participation deal with sin? According to Paul, our change of identity liberates us from sin: since we are no longer bound by (or under the sway of) sin, we are free to participate in a restored relationship with God. In fact, Paul seems to think that we in some way participate in Christ's relationship with God (cf. Romans 6:8–11: the Christian is "alive

to God in Christ Jesus”). The central point to note here is that Paul’s conception of sin is not, primarily, deontic. Paul doesn’t see Christ’s death and resurrection as the salve for a troubled conscience—indeed, Paul is adamant that his conscience was clear (Acts 23:1, 2 Cor. 1:12). Instead, he regards Christ’s death as dealing with sin as part of the human (indeed: cosmic) condition. The participatory strand in Paul’s theology takes sin to be a problem of our identity. The atonement does not merely adjust our “moral standing” but instead inaugurates a change in the kind of beings we are.

Governmental (Arminian) Theory (from Wikipedia)

The Governmental theory holds that Christ's suffering was a real and meaningful substitute for the punishment humans deserve, but it did not consist of Christ receiving the exact punishment due to sinful people. Instead, God publicly demonstrated his displeasure with sin through the suffering of his own sinless and obedient Son as a propitiation. Christ's suffering and death served as a substitute for the punishment humans might have received. On this basis, God is able to extend forgiveness while maintaining divine order, having demonstrated the seriousness of sin and thus allowing his wrath to "pass over". This view is therefore very similar to the satisfaction view and the penal substitution view, in that all three views see Christ as satisfying God's requirement for the punishment of sin. However, the government view disagrees with the other two in that it does not affirm that Christ endured the precise punishment that sin deserves or its equivalent; instead, Christ's suffering is seen as being simply an alternative substitute to that punishment (in contrast, penal substitution holds that Christ endured the exact punishment, or the exact "worth" of punishment, that sin deserved; the satisfaction theory states that Christ paid back at least as much honor to God as sin took from Him). It is important to note, however, that these three views all acknowledge that God cannot freely forgive sins without any sort of punishment or satisfaction being exacted. By contrast, the Eastern Orthodox view, which was also held in the early Church, states that Christ died not to fulfill God's requirements or to meet His needs or demands, but to cleanse humanity, restore the Image of God in humankind, and defeat the power of death over humans from within.

5. THE PRACTICAL CONCLUSION

A. A New Man and a New Life

1. One giant leap for mankind.
-- cf. *Mark 2.21-22; John 3.3-8; Rom 6.4; 2 Cor 5.17; Rev 21.5-7;*
2. Occurs through a process we could never have guessed.
3. Three ways it is given:
 - a. Faith
 - b. Baptism
 - c. Eucharist
4. Lewis calls these the "ordinary" ways. Is it possible there are others?
5. Even though we don't know why it happens this way, we take it on authority.
"Ninety-nine percent of the things you believe are believed on _____."

The real question is: What is the basis or source of that authority?

B. Does this mean the christian doesn't have to do anything?

1. Being given a New Life doesn't mean we can then totally neglect it.
-- cf. *Heb 2.1-4; 5.11-6.12; 1 John 5.16-18; Gal 5.1-6*
2. What of Lewis' statement that we can lose this life by neglect or suicide?
3. The important point is that we didn't make it—it was given to us.
4. How does Lewis distinguish a live body from a dead one?

"[A] Christian is not a man who never goes wrong, but a man who is enabled to repent...because the Christ-life is inside him, repairing him all the time."

C. Christian good works are different

1. Outside Christ, men are trying to please God or others by their good works.
2. The christian has a totally different perspective. As Lewis puts it:

"He does not think God will love us because we are good, but that God will make us good because He loves us."

D. The Life in Christ is more than mental or spiritual.

1. The body of Christ is a physical thing with flesh and blood members.
-- cf. *1 Cor 6.12-20; 12.14-27; Eph 5.29-33; Rom 12.4-5*
2. This explains why the Christ-life is spread by physical acts like baptism and eucharist. -- cf. *John 3.3-6; Matt 26.26-29; John 6.53-58; Rom 6.4*
3. It is not merely the spreading of an idea!
4. Lewis describes it more like evolution—"biological or super-biological."
5. There is not point trying to be more spiritual than God.
 - a. Just because things like bread and wine are physical does not mean they are "crude and unspiritual."
 - b. God likes matter—He invented it.

E. What about those who have never gotten to hear about Christ?

1. The bottom line—We don't know.

“We do know that no man can be saved except through Christ; we do not know that only those who know Him can be saved through Him.”

2. The best way to make sure people hear about Christ is to join His team.
3. Not helping spread the gospel because not enough people are hearing it is very poor reasoning.

F. Why doesn't God just invade in force rather than coming behind enemy lines?

1. He wants to give everyone a chance to join freely.
2. "When the author walks on to the stage the play is over."

When God does finally come in force and end the play, the time for choosing sides is past. -- cf. *2 Cor 5.10; Heb 9.27-28*

“Now, today, this moment, is our chance to choose the right side. God is holding back to give us that chance. It will not last for ever. We must take it or leave it.”

BOOK III: CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR**1. THE THREE PARTS OF MORALITY**

A. Moral rules are instructions for running the human machine.

At first glance they seem to interfere with our natural inclinations, but in reality they are vital to its proper function. *cf. Prov 14.12*

B. Moral 'Ideals' versus moral rules

1. Ideals sometimes suggests personal taste or preference. This is dangerous in the realm of morals.
2. Moral ideals are necessary for proper human functioning.
3. Even more dangerous is to think we are better because we have "high moral ideals."
4. Comparison to arithmetic: failure at one step compounds errors later.

“By talking about rules and obedience instead of 'ideals' and 'idealism' we help to remind ourselves of these facts.”

C. Two ways the human machine goes wrong:

1. Individuals damage one another by their behavior towards other individuals.

-- *cf. Matt 7.12; Rom 14.7, 13-15, 15.1-3; Matt 18.6*

2. Things go wrong within the individual and his internal reason and faculties interfere with one another.

-- *cf. Matt 5.29-30, 6.22-24, 7.3-5; Rom 7.5;*

3. Example of a fleet of ships:

- Each ship must be prevented from colliding with or harming other ships, and
- Every individual ship must be seaworthy and function properly itself.

D. The most important part of all: what is our mission or destination?

-- cf. Rom 6.20-22; Eph 2.10; John 14.1-4; Rom 8.22-23; Rev 21.1-4, 22.1-5

1. In the example of the fleet, even if the first two objectives are met, the voyage will be a failure if the wrong destination is reached in the end.
2. So with human beings, a world full of harmonious, healthy individuals is useless without a purpose or destiny.

E. Three parts of Morality:

1. Fair play and harmony between individuals.
2. Harmony within each individual.
3. The purpose or meaning of life: what man was designed to do.

Do these have any correspondence to the Three Uses of the Law?

F. Modern people are preoccupied with the first part alone

1. 'It can't be wrong as long as it doesn't hurt anyone else.'
2. There is general agreement that it is important to control behavior in the social or political arena.
3. The problem is we can't keep or enforce good laws with bad people.

“You cannot make men good by law: and without good men you cannot have a good society.”

4. To have any chance at harmonious requirements, we must address the second part and build our society with good people.

G. Different beliefs about the universe (metaphysics) lead to different behavior.

1. Religion involves statements about facts that must be either accepted or rejected.
2. Whether we view ourselves as free agents or under ownership make a huge difference in our outlook and choices.
3. Direction is not that important if it is limited to 70 years or so. But if life is eternal, the end result will be drastically different with even a small change in direction.
4. The importance of the individual. An eternal being is infinitely valuable even more than a state or nation. A finite, mortal being is worth far less than the state.
-- cf. Matt 16.26

2. **THE CARDINAL VIRTUES**

A. Seven Virtues.

1. Four 'Cardinal' Virtues, i.e., virtues that almost everyone agrees are pivotal.
2. Three 'Theological' Virtues that will be dealt with in later chapters. These apply specifically to christians.

B. PRUDENCE

1. Thinking through to the consequences of your actions, or common sense.
2. Christians are to be child-like, but still use their intelligence. *cf. Mt. 10.16*
3. God doesn't want intellectual slackers any more than He does moral ones.
4. Christianity is a never-ending education, and it increases our reasoning abilities.

“[Christ] wants a child's heart, but a grown-up's head.”

C. TEMPERANCE

1. Not just with respect to drinking, but all pleasures. *Gal 5.19-23*
2. Moderation and control are the key factors.
-- cf. Prov 25.27-28, 16.32; 1 Cor 9.25; Titus 1.7-8
3. Not Legalism. This leads to pride and works-based righteousness.
-- cf. Col 2.20-23; Gal 5.13;

D. JUSTICE

1. Not the same as legal justice.
2. Lewis compares it to our modern term 'fairness': honesty, mutual respect, keeping commitments, etc. *cf. Isa 1.16-17; Jer 22.3, 7.5-7; Matt 5-7*
3. The purpose is not to effect justice on a global scale (i.e., 'Social Justice') but to take on and exemplify the compassionate, faithful, and holy aspects of God.

E. FORTITUDE

1. Includes two kinds of courage: facing dangers, and persevering.

-- cf. *Mark 15.43; Acts 6.8-10, 7.51-53; Phil 1.20; 1 Cor 15.58; 2 Thess 1.3-4; Jas 5.10-12; 2 Cor 12.7-10; Heb 11.32-38*

2. As Lewis points out, none of the other virtues are possible for very long without this one.

F. The difference between Doing and Being.

1. Virtues are not a means to an end. They are the end in themselves. The point is not to practice virtues, but to become virtuous.

-- cf. *Matt 5.27-30, 12.33-35; Col 3.12-15; Gal 5.18-24*

2. Why this distinction is important:

- a. The motives make all the difference. Good things done for the wrong reason don't build character. Putting on Christ involves a heart transplant.

-- cf. *Matt 15.1-9, 15-20*

- b. Good deeds done grudgingly are not pleasing to God.

-- cf. *2 Cor 9.6-7; Eph 6.5-7*

- c. God wants virtuous people in Heaven!

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

-- Matthew 5.8

3. SOCIAL MORALITY

A. Christian morality is nothing new. *Eccl. 1.9*

1. The 'Golden Rule' is just a summary of what everyone knows inside.

“Really great moral teachers never do introduce new moralities: it is quacks and cranks who do that.”

2. We don't need new teachings; just constant reminders of what we already know.

-- *cf. Deut 11.18-21*

B. Christianity is not a detailed political program.

1. Christianity gives broad guidelines on how to treat others.
2. The clergy should not be in the business of politics or economics.
3. They are in the business of shepherding "creatures who are going to live forever."

-- *cf. 1Pet 5.1-4*

4. Christian politicians, economists, lawyers, doctors, etc., are the ones who should be carrying out the tasks for which they are trained—as Christians.

5. What Christianity does tell us about society:

- a. No "passengers or parasites" *cf. 2 Thess 3.6-12*

- b. Should be marked by obedience to authority

-- *cf. Rom 13.1-7; Titus 3.1-2; 1 Pet 2.13-17*

- c. It should be a cheerful society

-- *cf. Eph 5.15-21; Col 3.16; Acts 16.25*

6. The problem is we all want our own little pieces of a Christian society, not a fully Christian one.

C. Christianity and other traditions teach not to lend money at interest

-- *cf. Exod 22.25; Lev 25.35-37; Deut 23.19-20; Prov 28.8; Matt 25.27;*

1. Does this apply to public, joint ventures, or only to private money-lenders?
2. Who should best decide this issue?

3. How many of our problems today stem from this practice?
- D. The reason everyone is to work—Charity *cf. 2 Cor 8.1-5, 11-15*
1. According to Lewis, Charity is an essential part of Christian morality.
 2. Charity is a responsibility of the church and individual Christians—not government.
 3. How much does Lewis say we should give?
 4. What does Lewis say is the main obstacle to our liberal giving?
- E. Until we really want a fully Christian society we will never have one.
1. Too often we are looking for Christianity to support our views rather than allowing it to shape and change our views.
 2. "We are looking for an ally where we are offered a Master—or a Judge."
 3. The steps to achieving the Golden Rule:
 - a. Learning to love our neighbor as our self,
 - b. which requires learning to love God,
 - c. which requires learning to obey God.
 4. This involves a something deeper than social matters; it drives us to religion.

“For the longest way round is the shortest way home.”

4. MORALITY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

A. Two jobs that must be begun at once:

1. Understanding how to apply the 'Golden Rule' in detail to modern society.
2. Becoming the sort of people who would truly apply it when we knew how.

B. How christianity compares to psychoanalysis.

1. It's important to maintain the distinction between the techniques and the general philosophical worldview of psychoanalysts.
2. It isn't sensible to pay much attention to someone speaking as an authority on something outside their field.
3. Psychoanalysis itself isn't contradictory with christianity.
4. Although there are parallels, psychoanalysis and christianity have different purposes.
5. Two things involved in moral choice:
 - a. The act of choosing
 - b. The 'raw material' that forms the basis of his psychological makeup
 - c. The raw material may be 'normal' or 'unnatural', e.g., heterosexual vs. homosexual desire *cf. Rom 1.24-32*
6. The purpose of psychoanalysis is to remove the abnormal feelings and desires.
7. However, psychoanalysis can do nothing to address the moral part of choice.

"...the real, free choice of the man, on the material presented to him, either to put his own advantage first or to put it last. And this free choice is the only thing that morality is concerned with."
8. "The bad psychological material is not a sin but a disease. It does not need to be repented of, but to be cured." Is this biblical? *cf. Rom 7.13-21*
9. Lewis goes on to say, "That is why christians are told not to judge. We see only the results which a man's choices make out of his raw material."

-- cf. Matt 7.1-5; Rom 2.1-3, 14-16; 1 Cor 5.9-13, 6.1-3

- C. Every choice makes one either more heavenly or more hellish.
1. This explains, at least in part, why sins of thought are so important.
 2. We are only limited by our opportunity once we have made the moral choice to sin.
- D. Choosing the right direction increases our level of discernment.

cf. Rom. 12.1-2; 1 Cor. 2.14-16; Phil 1.9-11; Col. 3.9-10

“Good people know about both good and evil: bad people do not know about either.”

Note on "V.C." the Victoria Cross medal:

The Victoria Cross (VC) is the highest military decoration which is, or has been, awarded for valour "in the face of the enemy" to members of the armed forces of various Commonwealth countries, and previous British Empire territories. It takes precedence over all other orders, decorations and medals. It may be awarded to a person of any rank in any service and civilians under military command. In the United Kingdom, it is usually presented to the recipient or their next of kin by the British monarch during an investiture held at Buckingham Palace.

The VC was introduced on 29 January 1856 by Queen Victoria to reward acts of valour during the Crimean War. Since then, the medal has been awarded 1,356 times to 1,353 individual recipients. Only 13 medals, nine to members of the British Army, and four to the Australian Army have been awarded since the Second World War. *Source: Wikipedia*



5. SEXUAL MORALITY

A. Chastity and Modesty are not the same thing

1. Rules about chastity never change, while those governing modesty depend on times and cultures.
2. Breaking the rules of modesty for the purpose of exciting lust offends chastity.
3. Breaking them for other rules is either bad manners or rudeness.
4. Differences in rules regarding modesty should be acknowledged and not judged.

B. "Chastity is the most unpopular of the Christian virtues."

1. The Christian rule is monogamy with faithfulness or else abstinence.
-- cf. Gen 2.21-25; Matt 19.7-9; 1 Cor 6.13-20; Heb 13.4
2. This goes against our nature so strongly that it is either wrong or our sexual instinct has gone wrong. *cf. Jude 5-7; Rom. 1.24-32*
3. Evidences that our sexual instinct has gone wrong:
 - a. Comparison of over-indulgence in sex versus overeating. Sexual appetite is way out of proportion.
 - b. No one would come to a food strip-tease. Even if they were starving, eventually the attraction would fade. It is exactly the opposite with sexual appetite though.
 - c. Food perversions are very rare.

C. Sexual instinct is not perverted because it has been repressed.

1. In fact, it is the other way round.
2. Sex as the way to reproduce the species is nothing to be ashamed of. Christianity does not teach that sex in and of itself is bad.
3. The current distorted state of sexuality is something to be ashamed of.
4. There are many who want to keep interest in sex elevated for profit.

D. "Before we can be cured, we must want to be cured."

Three reasons why this desire is difficult:

1. We have rationalized that it is "natural." In its rightful place, this is true, but the uncontrolled indulgence is not. We must exert control over nature to be truly happy and avoid ruin. *cf. Rom 6.19-23; 2 Pet 1.5-11*
2. We make the excuse that it is impossible. Even if true, that doesn't excuse not trying. And by trying, we develop habits that get us closer to perfection. Most importantly, we don't have to depend on our own strength.

-- *cf. Matt 5.48; Jas 1.2-4; 1 Cor 10.13; 1 Thess 4.3-8; Heb 4.14-16*

3. People misunderstand the technical term "repression." In psychology this refers to subconscious desires. Resisting conscious desires involves moral choice, raises the conscious level even further, and produces self-knowledge.

“Virtue—even attempted virtue—brings light; indulgence brings fog.”

E. Sexuality is not the center of Christian morality

1. Christians do not regard sexuality as the supreme vice.
2. The worst sins are spiritual in nature.
3. We have two dueling natures—the Animal and the Diabolical selves. The Diabolical is the worse of the two. *cf. Matt 15.17-20, 21.28-32*

“That is why a cold, self-righteous prig who goes regularly to church may be far nearer to hell than a prostitute. But, of course, it is better to be neither.”

6. CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

A. The Christian Idea of Marriage

1. Husband and Wife are a single organism. *cf. Eph 5.25-33*
2. Not mere sentimentality, but a statement of fact.
3. Sexuality outside marriage is as unnatural and abhorrent as eating just for taste and spitting out the food.
4. A natural consequence is that divorce is like dissecting a living organism.

-- *cf. Matt 19.3-6; Mal 2.13-16*

B. The 'modern' view of marriage

Divorce is a simple readjustment of partners.

This is not only unchaste, but unjust—it involves the breaking of sacred promises.

Not taking such promises seriously is deceit.

- a. They are trying to deceive either God,
- b. Themselves,
- c. Family, or most likely,
- d. The general public.

Thus, they want the respectability of marriage without the responsibilities and duties.

Lewis speculates that perhaps it is better for those who don't take marriage seriously to live together unmarried. What do you think of this statement?

“...unchastity is not improved by adding perjury.”

C. Love and Marriage.

1. If being 'in love' is the only reason for marriage, the promise adds nothing.
2. In fact, making ardent, passionate promises is a natural part of being in love.
3. The Christian law is not forcing something onto passion that is foreign to it.
4. Falling 'out of love' is not a valid reason to break a promise. **Promises can't be based on feelings.**

5. Lewis anticipates the question, "So why keep two people together who are no longer in love?"

D. What is better than being 'in love'?

1. We tend to think in terms of 'good' and 'bad' rather than 'good', 'better', and 'best'.
2. Being in love is glorious, but Love is better.
3. 'In love' is a feeling, but Love remains even when the feeling does not. Love is:
"a deep unity, maintained by the will and deliberately strengthened by habit; reinforced by the grace which both partners ask, and receive, from God."
4. Being in love leads to the promise; Love helps keep it. *cf. 1 Cor 13.4-8*
5. The thrill of being in love, like any other, doesn't, and shouldn't, last forever. It deepens and makes way for new ones.
6. 'Falling in love' isn't some irresistible force that just happens.

E. Christian versus 'Secular' marriage.

7. How far should Christians go in forcing our view of marriage on society?
8. What do you think of Lewis' idea that there should be two types of marriage—Christian and Civil—and the distinction between them sharply maintained?

F. Order in Christian marriage

1. Why must there be a Head? As a tie breaker.
2. Why is man the Head? *cf. Gen 3.16*
 - a. What do you think of Lewis' idea that woman as the Head would be 'unnatural'?
 - b. Lewis claims that men are less biased in favor of their own children than mothers, and thus able to make more balanced judgments towards those outside his family.

“A woman is primarily fighting for her own children and husband against the rest of the world.”

An Elizabethan poem that expresses this idea beautifully, and shows how well pre-modern society understood this view of Love.

BEHOLD a wonder here :
LOVE hath received his sight,
Which, many hundred years,
Hath not beheld the light.

Such beams infused be,
By CYNTHIA in his eyes ;
As first have made him see,
And then have made him wise.

LOVE now no more will weep
For them, that laugh the while,
Nor wake for them that sleep,
Nor sigh for them that smile.

So powerful is the Beauty,
That LOVE doth now behold ;
As Love is turned to Duty,
That's neither blind, nor bold.

This Beauty shews her might,
To be of double kind ;
In giving LOVE his sight,
And striking FOLLY blind.

From *The Third and Last Book of Songs or Airs*, 1603, as found in *Shorter Elizabethan Poems*,
A.H. Bullen, Archibald, Constable and Co., LTD., 1903, p. 120

7. **FORGIVENESS**

A. May be even more unpopular than Chastity

1. Loving our neighbor as ourselves includes our enemies.

-- cf. *Lev 19.18; Luke 10.25-29; Exod 23.4-5; Matt 5.43-48; Luke 6.27-36; Rom 12.17-21*

2. Loving them includes forgiving them.
3. How do we forgive truly evil people?

B. We *must* forgive to receive forgiveness.

-- cf. *Matt 6.11-15; Mark 11.25; Matt 18.21-22, 33-35*

C. Learning to forgive, Part I:

1. As with anything, we learn by starting with the easier parts first.
2. Start with forgiving those closest to us; those we find it easier to love.

D. Part II: Understanding what it truly means to love others as we love ourselves.

1. Loving ourselves doesn't mean we are fond of ourselves or even like ourselves.
2. So also loving our neighbor doesn't require warm feelings towards him
– feelings can't be ordered or manufactured.
3. We don't love ourselves because we think we deserve it. We think more highly of ourselves than we deserve because we love ourselves.
4. We forgive ourselves even though we know we don't deserve it.
5. Loving and forgiving our neighbors doesn't require us to think they are nice or deserving either.
6. We loathe sin in ourselves even though we love ourselves, and do both without trying.
7. The same principle applies to neighbors and enemies: Hate the sin but love the sinner.

“In fact the very reason why I hated the things was that I loved the man. Just because I loved myself, I was sorry to find that I was the sort of man who did those things.”

E. The real test.

1. Do we want to believe the best or worst about our enemies?
2. If so, it leads to a path where we believe the worst of everyone, even God.

F. Does loving our enemy mean never punishing him?

1. No. We believe that even we ourselves deserve punishment for wrongdoing.
2. Punishment, even to death, is justifiable for criminal action.
3. Killing and murder are distinguished in both Old and New Testaments.

“All killing is not murder any more than all sexual intercourse is adultery.”

G. How then, is Christian morality any different than ordinary morality?

1. Christians believe that man lives forever. The effects of action on the soul count infinitely more than those that affect the body.
2. But killing must never be done as revenge or with pleasure. That temptation must be put to death as often as it arise.

“That is what is meant in the Bible by loving him: wishing his good, not feeling fond of him nor saying he is nice when he is not.... Perhaps it makes it easier if we remember that that is how He love us. Not for any nice, attractive qualities we think we have.”

But how can we love a man or a woman who is cruel and unjust to us?-- who sears with contempt, or cuts off with wrong every tendril we would put forth to embrace?--who is mean, unlovely, carping, uncertain, self-righteous, self-seeking, and self-admiring?--who can even sneer, the most inhuman of human faults, far worse in its essence than mere murder?

These things cannot be loved. The best man hates them most; the worst man cannot love them. But are these the man? Does a woman bear that form in virtue of these? Lies there not within the man and the woman a divine element of brotherhood, of sisterhood, a something lovely and lovable,--slowly fading, it may be,--dying away under the fierce heat of vile passions, or the yet more fearful cold of sepulchral selfishness--but there? Shall that divine something, which, once awakened to be its own holy self in the man, will loathe these unlovely things tenfold more than we loathe them now--shall this divine thing have no recognition from us? It is the very presence of this fading humanity that makes it possible for us to hate. If it were an animal only, and not a man or a woman that did us hurt, we should not hate: we should only kill. We hate the man just because we are prevented from loving him. We push over the verge of the creation--we damn--just because we cannot embrace. For to embrace is the necessity of our deepest being. That foiled, we hate. Instead of admonishing ourselves that there is our enchained brother, that there lies our enchanted, disfigured, scarce recognizable sister, captive of the devil, to break, how much sooner, from their bonds, that we love them!--we recoil into the hate which would fix them there; and the dearly lovable reality of them we sacrifice to the outer falsehood of Satan's incantations, thus leaving them to perish. Nay, we murder them to get rid of them, we hate them. Yet within the most obnoxious to our hate, lies that which, could it but show itself as it is, and as it will show itself one day, would compel from our hearts a devotion of love. It is not the unfriendly, the unlovely, that we are told to love, but the brother, the sister, who is unkind, who is unlovely. Shall we leave our brother to his desolate fate? Shall we not rather say, "With my love at least shalt thou be compassed about, for thou hast not thy own lovingness to infold thee; love shall come as near thee as it may; and when thine comes forth to meet mine, we shall be one in the indwelling God"?

If any one say, "Do not make such vague distinctions. There is the person. Can you deny that that person is unlovely? How then can you love him?" I answer, "That person, with the evil thing cast out of him, will be yet more the person, for he will be his real self. The thing that now makes you dislike him is separable from him, is therefore not he, makes himself so much less himself, for it is working death in him. Now he is in danger of ceasing to be a person at all. When he is clothed and in his right mind, he will be a person indeed. You could not then go on hating him. Begin to love him now, and help him into the loveliness which is his. Do not hate him although you can. The personality, I say, though clouded, besmeared, defiled with the wrong, lies deeper than the wrong, and indeed, so far as the wrong has reached it, is by the wrong injured, yea, so far, it may be, destroyed."

-- George MacDonald in the essay, *"Love Thine Enemy"*

8. THE GREAT SIN

A. The Christian moral that differs most from others.

1. Hardly anyone will even admit this flaw in themselves
2. On the other hand, it bothers us the most seeing it in others.
3. In fact, the more we have, the more we resent it in other people.

B. The center of Christian morality--Pride, or Self-Conceit.

-- cf. *Ps 10.1-4, 40.4; Prov 6.16-19, 8.13, 11.12, 16.5, 18, 21.4; Isa 13.11; Jer 49.16; Ezek 16.49-50; Amos 6.8;*

1. What does Lewis say is its opposite virtue?

- *2 Sam. 22.28; Prov 29.23; Matt 18.4; Jas 4.6*

2. Do you agree with Lewis that Pride is the source of all other vices?

3. Pride was the ultimate downfall of Satan himself. cf. *Isa 14.12-15*

C. What sets Pride apart: Competitiveness

1. Every person's pride is in competition with everyone else's.

2. The real reason we resent other people getting attention is that *we* want it.

3. Pride doesn't just want something, it wants *more* of it.

4. It leads to greed and selfishness because it is never satisfied.

5. It drives us to seek things not out of need or even want, but to appear superior.

D. Pride *always* creates enmity.

1. Other vices can sometimes bring people together; Pride never does.

2. It not only creates enmity with people, but with God.

-- cf. *2 Chr 7.14; Ps 18.27, 138.6, 147.6; Prov 3.34;*

3. God is the ultimate in superiority. No one who is honest can look down on Him.

4. Proud people can't worship or fellowship with the true God. *Luke 11.42-44*

5. The test: Do we ever think ourselves good, or even worse, better than others?

-- cf. *Isa 64.6; Ps 14.1-3; 53.1-3; Rom 3.9-18*

“The real test of being in the presence of God is, that you either forget about yourself altogether or see yourself as a small, dirty object. It is better to forget about yourself altogether.”

E. Pride is spiritual cancer.

1. Other vices work through our animal nature. Pride "comes direct from Hell."
2. Sometimes it can even be used as an appeal to quench other vices.
3. Lewis says this is like trading chilblains for cancer.

F. Four misconceptions to avoid:

1. Pleasure at being praised is not Pride.
 - a. The question is whether your delight is in pleasing someone else or just getting attention.
 - b. The worst case is when we don't even care what others think because we think of ourselves as vastly superior that their opinions don't matter.
 - c. Trading Vanity for Pride is another case of trading cancer for a minor irritation.
2. Genuine admiration that is earned is not Pride.
3. God doesn't want to rid of us Pride for His sake, but ours.
4. True Humility is not self-deprecation. It is interest in others more than Self.

“If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realise that one is proud....If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.”

I am more afraid of my own heart than of the pope and all his cardinals. I have within me the great pope, Self. -- Martin Luther

9. CHARITY

- A. The first of three of what C. S. Lewis calls the "Theologic Virtues."
1. The three Theologic Virtues are Faith, Hope, and Charity.
 2. Partly dealt with in the chapter (VII) on Forgiveness.
- B. The meaning of Charity.
1. More than giving alms
 2. Charity means Love in the Christian sense.
 3. Not a state of feelings but of will. *cf. 1 Cor 13.4-7*
 4. 'Liking' is an emotion, Love is seeking the good of its object. *cf. John 13.1, 34*
- C. Having affection for someone makes it easier to love them.
1. Thus, it is our duty to encourage our affections for others.
 2. Not as an end, but as a means to reaching the true goal of Charity.
 3. However, sometimes affection can hinder Charity.
 4. The way to Charity is not to attempt manufacturing feelings of affection.
- D. A simple rule.
1. Don't worry about whether you love you brother—*act* like you do.
 2. Feelings will follow the actions.
 3. This seems cold and formulaic to those who have a maudlin view of love.
 4. In fact, it leads to love that is superior in quality and quantity.
- E. A warning: This spiritual law works in reverse.
1. Good and evil both increase in proportion to their practice.
 2. That is why all our actions, even small ones, are so important.

F. The same ideas can be applied to love between God and man

1. Loving God involves answering the question, "If I loved God, what would I do?" and then doing it.
2. We can't manufacture or even control our feelings but we can control our actions
3. God will give us the feelings in accordance with our actions
4. God's love for us means He always seeks, and provides for, our good.

-- cf. *Deut 7.6-9; John 3.16; Rom 8.28; Eph 2.4-7*

“But the great thing to remember is that, though our feelings come and go, His love for us does not. It is not wearied by our sins, or our indifference; and, therefore, it is quite relentless in its determination that we shall be cured of those sins, at whatever cost to us, at whatever cost to Him.”

10. HOPE

A. Hope is not wishful thinking or escapism.

1. It does not mean we neglect or abandon the world. *1 John 3.1-10*
2. Great Christians have always left the world a better place.
3. We accomplish less good in this world because we become comfortable in it.
4. The more we make fixing this earth our aim, the less effective we are at it.

“Aim at Heaven and you will get earth 'thrown in':
aim at earth and you will get neither.”

B. Desiring Heaven.

1. Our entire society and training militate against this desire.
2. We rarely recognize the desire when it occurs.
3. We have a built-in longing for something that cannot be satisfied in this world.
-- *cf. Rom 8.18-25; 2 Cor. 5.1-5*

C. Three ways of dealing with this unfulfilled *Sehnsucht*.

1. The Fool's Way: blaming the objects themselves. Results in severe disappointment.
2. The Sensible Way: convincing one's self that the whole idea is silly. Creates prigs.
3. The Christian Way: realizing that where there is desire, there must be fulfillment.
-- Results in satisfaction in this life, and Hope for attainment in the next.
4. The Christian Way recognizes that the pleasures of this world are not meant to satisfy our longing, but to arouse them and point the way to the real thing.

D. Disregard those who misunderstand and belittle Christian Hope.

1. The response to them is: "if they cannot understand books written for grown-ups, they should not talk about them."
2. Harps, gold, crowns, etc., are only symbols of the joy we will experience in Heaven.

“People who take these symbols literally might as well think that
when Christ told us to be like doves, He meant that we were to
lay eggs.”

Quotes from Lewis on *Sehnsucht*:

In speaking of this desire for our own faroff country, which we find in ourselves even now, I feel a certain shyness. I am almost committing an indecency. I am trying to rip open the inconsolable secret in each one of you—the secret which hurts so much that you take your revenge on it by calling it names like Nostalgia and Romanticism and Adolescence; the secret also which pierces with such sweetness that when, in very intimate conversation, the mention of it becomes imminent, we grow awkward and affect to laugh at ourselves; the secret we cannot hide and cannot tell, though we desire to do both. We cannot tell it because it is a desire for something that has never actually appeared in our experience. We cannot hide it because our experience is constantly suggesting it, and we betray ourselves like lovers at the mention of a name. Our commonest expedient is to call it beauty and behave as if that had settled the matter. Wordsworth's expedient was to identify it with certain moments in his own past. But all this is a cheat. If Wordsworth had gone back to those moments in the past, he would not have found the thing itself, but only the reminder of it; what he remembered would turn out to be itself a remembering. The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust to them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things—the beauty, the memory of our own past—are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshippers. For they are not the thing itself; they are only the scent of a flower we have not found, the echo of a tune we have not heard, news from a country we have never yet visited.

-- C. S. Lewis, *Weight of Glory*

You have stood before some landscape, which seems to embody what you have been looking for all your life; and then turned to the friend at your side who appears to be seeing what you saw—but at the first words a gulf yawns between you, and you realise that this landscape means something totally different to him, that he is pursuing an alien vision and cares nothing for the ineffable suggestion by which you are transported . . . All the things that have deeply possessed your soul have been but hints of it—tantalising glimpses, promises never quite fulfilled, echoes that died away just as they caught your ear. But if it should really become manifest—if there ever came an echo that did not die away but swelled into the sound itself—you would know it. Beyond all possibility of doubt you would say 'Here at last is the thing I was made for.' We cannot tell each other about it. It is the secret signature of each soul, the incommunicable and unappeasable want . . . which we shall still desire on our deathbeds . . . Your place in heaven will seem to be made for you and you alone, because you were made for it—made for it stitch by stitch as a glove is made for a hand.

-- C. S. Lewis, *Problem of Pain*

A passage from George MacDonald that expresses the feeling of *Sehnsucht* poignantly. MacDonald was tremendously influential on C.S. Lewis, especially with regard to his understanding of Joy.



Once when I was shedding bitter tears, when, dissolved in pain, my hope was melting away, and I stood alone by the barren mound which in its narrow dark bosom hid the vanished form of my Life, lonely as never yet was lonely man, driven by anxiety unspeakable, powerless, and no longer anything but a conscious misery;—as there I looked about me for help, unable to go on or to turn back, and clung to the fleeting, extinguished life with an endless longing: then, out of the blue distances—from the hills of my ancient bliss, came a shiver of twilight—and at once snapt the bond of birth, the chains of the Light. Away fled the glory of the world, and with it my mourning; the sadness flowed together into a new, unfathomable world. Thou, soul of the Night, heavenly Slumber, didst come upon me; the region gently upheaved itself; over it hovered my unbound, newborn spirit. The mound became a cloud of dust, and through the cloud I saw the glorified face of my beloved. In her eyes eternity reposed. I laid hold of her hands, and the tears became a sparkling bond that could not be broken. Into the distance swept by, like a tempest, thousands of years. On her neck I welcomed the new life with ecstatic tears. Never was such another dream; then first and ever since I hold fast an eternal, unchangeable faith in the heaven of the Night, and its Light, the Beloved.

-- From *Hymns to the Night* by Novalis, as translated by George MacDonald

11. FAITH

A. Two types, or levels of Faith. The first is mere belief or acceptance.

1. This level of faith believes that Christianity is true.
2. Belief based on good evidence is not a virtue. *Jas 2.19*
3. Believing something with a lack of, or contrary to, evidence is foolish. *Ps 14.1*
4. Faith is based on reason, but sometimes overwhelmed by imagination and emotion
 - a. For examples: Desire overtaking experience,
 - b. learning to swim [*Matt 14.28-31*], and
 - c. Christians in difficult or tempting circumstances *Luke 8.11-14*
5. Faith according to Lewis, is "the art of holding on to things your reason has once accepted, in spite of your changing moods." *Heb. 11.1*

“Consequently, once must train the habit of Faith.”

6. That is why things like prayer, devotion, bible study, worship, etc. are so vital.
-- cf. 1 Cor 9.24-27; 1 Tim 6.11-12; 2 Pet 1.3-11; Jas 1.5-8

“Neither this belief nor any other will automatically remain alive in the mind. It must be fed.”

B. The second level of Faith: understanding our true standing before God.

This will be explored in detail in the next chapter!

1. It begins like Humility—realizing that we are the opposite by nature.
-- cf. Rom 1.18-20; 2.1-3, 12-14; 3.9-24
2. When we try to be or do good on our own we realize how bad we truly are.
3. We don't realize the real strength of our evil impulses until we fight them.
4. After realizing how wicked we are, we must then understand that we can never earn or bargain acceptance before God.

C. Two discoveries necessary for Faith in the higher sense:

1. Understanding that God is not a judge in the sense of weighing good vs. bad or right vs. wrong and deciding the balance, and
2. The realization that *nothing* we have or could ever imagine having comes from any source other than God – we cannot give to or do *anything* for God!

-- cf. *Job 41.11; Rom 4.13-16; 5.15-17; 6.23; 11.29-36*

12. FAITH

A. Some things in Christianity can't be understood from the outside.

--cf. *1 Cor 1.18, 2.14-16*

1. Part of walking by faith means we don't get all the knowledge and understanding until we are ready for it.

-- cf. *John 16.12; 1 Cor 3.1-6; Heb 5.12-14; 1 Pet 2.2-3*

2. If you don't understand something about Christianity or the Bible, leave it for later.

B. The second level, or sense, of Faith requires supernatural help.

1. The first step is to discover our moral bankruptcy before God. This doesn't mean just mental understanding, but true and full acceptance by experience.

-- See verses in *B.1 of Chapter XI*

2. According to Lewis, the only way to gain this experience is by trying our hardest to keep God's law on our own, and then failing. cf. *Rom 7.15-24*

3. We must realize that all we can do before God is nothing. cf. *Isa 59.1-16, 64.6-7*

4. Conversion happens when we change from confidence in our own efforts to despairing in our abilities and placing complete trust in Christ and his work.

-- cf. *Rom 7.24-25, 4.4-5; John 6.27-29*

5. This doesn't mean we don't try at all to be good—the motivation is completely opposite though.

-- *Rom 12.1-2; 1 Cor 6.19-20; Phil 1.21; 2 Tim 2.15*

C. Faith versus Works-based righteousness.

1. Historical Christianity has struggled between two opposite errors.

2. Legalism

- a. Says that good deeds are what matters and lead to acceptance before God

- b. Ultimately leads to trying to buy, or earn, our way to Heaven.

3. Antinomianism *Rom 6.1-4*

- a. Says that since we aren't made righteous by works, it doesn't matter what we do.
- b. Part of trusting Christ is believing that what He says is best for us is what we should do.

D. To Work or not to Work—that is the question.

1. The Bible says to work.... *Phil 2.12*
2. ...and also that God is the one working. *Phil 2.13*
3. The root of the problem is that we try to understand God and our relationship with him as we would with another human.

-- *cf. Ps 100.3; 1 Cor 15.9-10; 2 Cor 3.4-6; Rom 9.19-24*

In-depth on doctrine of Faith from *Christian Dogmatics* by J.T. Mueller

- I. Historic, or General, Faith is not *Saving* Faith.
 - A. Theoretical belief and mental assent to the existence and work of God and Christ belong to the unsaved and even to demons.
 - B. Without it, however, Saving Faith is impossible.
- II. Saving Faith is placing trust in the gospel message of Jesus Christ
 - A. The object of Saving Faith is the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God through Christ's perfect obedience.
 - B. Rejecting God's offer of forgiveness results in damnation even to those who have Historic Faith and try to obey the Law found in scripture.
 - C. Some important aspects of Saving Faith:
 1. Specific intent.

Saving faith is always the special faith (*fides specialis*) by which an individual believes that for Christ's sake his sins are forgiven. It applies the universal gift of God specifically to an individual.
 2. Involves mind and heart.

Saving faith is always *fides actualis*, the *apprehension* of the divine promise by *an act* of the intellect and will. The scholastic theologians defined faith as an "idle habit" (*otiosus habitus*), which Luther condemned as a "mere verbal monstrosity, giving no sense." Also a weak faith and the longing for grace in Christ must be regarded as *fides actualis*, or true faith.
 3. Centered on the Gospel.

Saving Faith is always *fides directa*, or faith that concerns itself directly with the divine promise set forth in the Gospel. Often compared to the faith of a small child or new believer.
 4. Believers can rest confidently in it.

Saving Faith is not in every case *fides reflexa*, reflex, discursive faith, by which the believer reflects on, and is conscious of, his faith. The faith of infants is true faith, though the *fides reflexa* is wanting; they have *fides specialis*, which is *fides actualis*, which is *fides directa*.

"General faith is that by which man...believes all things to be true that are revealed in the Word of God. Of this species of faith we are not now speaking because we are treating of faith as the means of salvation... Special faith is that faith by which the sinner applies to himself individually the universal promises in reference to Christ, the Mediator, and the grace of God accessible through Him and believes that God desires to be propitious to him and to pardon his sins on account of the satisfaction of Christ made for his and all men's sins." -- David Holla(t)z, as cited in Schmid, *Doctrinal Theology of the Evangelical Lutheran Church*, p. 419.

"Men are also admonished that here the term faith does not signify merely the knowledge of the history, such as it is in the ungodly and in the devil, but signifies a faith which believes not merely the history, but also the effect of the history, namely,... that we have grace, righteousness, and forgiveness of sins through Christ." Augsburg Confession XX.23

"It is true, a believer may not always be conscious of his faith. Saving faith (*fides directa, fides actualis*) need not always be conscious faith (*fides reflexa*), or faith which is perceived by the believer. Thus Christian adults, while asleep or engrossed with their daily occupation, indeed possess direct faith, which truly apprehends the grace of God in Christ Jesus, yet not reflex and discursive faith. That is to say, they meditate neither on their act of faith nor on their state of faith. For the time being faith with all that it implies has passed out of their direct consciousness. They may even be in a condition of coma, not being able to reflect on spiritual things at all; or they may be in a state of trial, when they believe themselves to be without faith because they have lost the sense, or feeling, of faith. In all such cases saving faith truly exists, though the believer is not conscious of it. Even in baptized infants, faith is not a mere potentiality to believe (*potentia credendi*) or an inactive quality (*otiosus habitus*), but *fides actualis*, or actual trust in, and active apprehension of, divine grace."

5. Not an excuse for sin.
However, the doctrine regarding reflex faith must not be abused in the interest of carnal security and indifferentism; for it is God's will that all believers should be sure of their state of faith and grace.
6. Not the result of a long process.
Conversion, or the bestowal of faith, does not take place by stages, or degrees, but instantaneously. In other words, it is an *event* not a process.

BOOK IV: BEYOND PERSONALITY: FIRST STEPS IN THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY**1. MAKING AND BEGETTING**

A. What is Theology and why is it important?

1. Theology is "the science of God."
2. Theology is like a map for an explorer.
 - a. It includes and combines the experience of countless others.
 - b. It guides us to places beyond our experiences.
 - c. It keeps us on the right path and from being lost.
3. Theology is practical, but not always fun.
 - a. Experiences are less work and more thrill, but lack direction and authority.
 - b. Without theology, it is very easy to follow bad ideas and teachings.

B. Popular religion versus orthodox Christianity.

1. The popular idea: Jesus was a good moral teacher and we should follow some of his advice.

“...if only we took His advice we might be able to establish a better social order and avoid a war?”

2. But if that's all Jesus is, why follow him and not others? Because he's better?

“If we cannot take the elementary lessons, is it likely we are going to take the most advanced one?”

3. True Christian doctrine says something quite different.
 - a. It says that Jesus is the Son of God. *cf. Matt 3.17; 17.5; 2 Pet 1.16-18*
 - b. It also says that we shall become sons of God.
-- cf. John 1.12-13; Rom 8.14-17; Gal 3.26-27, 4.4-7

Are we not all already sons of God? Why or Why not?

- c. It says His death saved us from our sins.
-- *cf. John 1.29; Rom 5.6-8; 1 Cor 15.3-5; 1 Pet 2.24*
 - d. Christianity claims to tell us about a world beyond our senses.
-- *cf. John 1.18, 5.37, 2 Cor 4.16-18; 1 Tim 6.13-16*
- C. Christianity says that Christ is the only 'begotten' Son, not 'created'.
1. This is *not* referring to Christ's virgin birth on earth. *cf. Phil 2.5-8; Gal 4.4-7*
 2. This 'begetting' occurred before time began. *cf. Prov 8.22-31; John 1.1-3; Col 1.15-20*
 3. Beget means to become father of whereas create means to make something.
 - a. Begetting means to make something of the same kind, or substance, *homoousios* (ὁμοούσιος). *cf. John 3.16; Heb 11.17; 1 John 4.9 [μονογενῆ]*
 - b. Making an object results in something of a different kind, like a house or car.
 - c. Even a statue, though closely resembling its maker, is only an image, not the same kind.
 4. Therefore what God begets is *God*.
 5. But what God *creates* is not God—it is something different.
 - a. Everything God creates has some likeness to Him.
 - b. Just as a statue resembles a man, but is not alive, so we are in many ways like God but not the same as God.
 - c. Mankind has the closest resemblance to God of anything created.
- D. Biological life versus Spiritual life.
1. Man, in his natural condition has only Biological life, not Spiritual.
 2. Biological life (βίος) comes to us through Nature just as it does to plants and animals. *cf. Gen 1.28, 3.16-20; Rom 8.12-13;*
 3. Spiritual life (ζωή) is transcendent, eternal in nature, coming from outside creation.
-- *cf. John 10.10; 1 John 4.9, 5.11-12, 20*

“And that is precisely what Christianity is about. This world is a great sculptor's shop. We are the statues and there is a rumour going round the shop that some of us are some day going to come to life.”

2. THE THREE-PERSONAL GOD

A. Beyond the Personal God

1. We are persons in one "dimension", but God's personhood exists in three.
2. A being in three dimensions is just as incomprehensible to us as a 4-dimensional world.
3. Understanding is not the point—being drawn into Him is.
4. The way to know and enter God is through Christ—who is also God!
He is both the end and the means.
5. This brings us into higher realms, the higher 'dimensions', of life—Zoe.

B. How Theology started.

1. A man came, claiming to be God, who couldn't be dismissed as a crackpot or charlatan.
2. Furthermore, after being killed, he appeared to hundreds alive again and then left, promising to send another person of God.
3. The Spirit came as promised, empowering and nurturing a congregation of believers.
4. To explain all this requires a three-personal God, and the study of this God is Theology.

-- cf. *Matt 3.16-17, 28.18-20; John 14.26-28, 15.26, 16.12-15; Acts 2.32-33; 1 Pet 1.1-2*

C. Theology involves discovery, not invention.

1. Science of living beings requires cooperation or initiative from their side.
2. The more advanced the being, the more initiative required.
3. When it comes to God, the initiative is wholly on His side.

-- cf. *Eph 2.4-10*

D. Seeing God clearly requires clean and clear instruments

1. God shows Himself more to some than others because they are more capable of seeing Him.

-- *cf. Matt 13.10-17; John 8.12*

“Just as sunlight, though it has no favourites, cannot be reflected in a dusty mirror as clearly as in a clean one.”

2. The instrument through which we see God is our *selves*.

- a. If that instrument is contaminated, our picture is distorted.

-- *cf. Luke 11.34-36*

- b. According to Lewis, that is why horrible nations have horrible religions—they see God through a dirty lens.

-- *cf. Rom 1.18-21*

3. "God can show Himself as He really is only to real men."

-- *cf. Acts 28.23-28*

4. We can't be good on our own. This is why the community of believers is so important. We help keep one another clean and clear.

-- *cf. Prov 27.17; Heb 3.12-14, 10.19-25*

5. Therefore the entire Christian community working together as one is necessary for Theology. There can be no 'lone rangers'.

-- *cf. Phil 2.12-13; 2 Tim 2.14-17*

6. Christianity is Fact, and thus we cannot make it simpler like the invented religions.

“That is why all these people who turn up every few years with some patent simplified religion of their own as a substitute for the Christian tradition are really wasting time. Like a man who has no instrument but an old pair of field glasses setting out to put all the real astronomers right. He may be a clever chap—he may be cleverer than some of the real astronomers, but he is not giving himself a chance.”

3. TIME AND BEYOND TIME

A. How can God answer the prayers of millions of people "all at one time?"

1. We experience life and the universe in a continuous flow of moments.
2. For us, these moments always occur in a sequence from past to present to future.
3. Theologians were the first to perceive that God must exist independently, or outside of, time.

B. God is outside of Time.

1. He is not trapped in a moment by moment existence. *cf. 2 Pet 3.8*
2. Consider Lewis' analogy of an author writing about the timeline of a character.
3. God can spend an infinite amount of attention on any one person or any moment in time.
4. But, unlike the analogy, God is not in a *different* time-stream; He is out of Time altogether.
5. Thinking about God's relation to Time in this way resolves some difficulties.

C. God's existence on Earth was not just one period out of His entire existence.

1. We tend to think of Jesus' life on Earth as a slice out of God's time like going to school was one of many periods that make up our lives.
2. But for God, there is no "period." He was God the Father and Spirit the whole "time" He was Jesus the man.
3. We cannot think of God as before, during, and after *anything*, including the incarnation.
4. God has no history, and no future; only an infinite present.

-- *cf. Exod 3.13-14; John 8.56-59; Heb 1.10-12; Rev 4.8*

Being stuck in a present that only exists for an instant limits the extent of our existence. God has no such limits.

D. Outside of Time, foreknowledge can easily exist without determinacy.

1. For us, the only way we can know the future is to control or dictate it.
2. We have difficulty understanding how free will can exist simultaneously with foreknowledge.

-- *cf. Isa 46.8-11; Luke 22.21-22; Acts 2.23, 29-31; 4.27-28; Rom 8.28-30*

3. But God, being outside, or above, the timeline can see everything simultaneously, like a three-dimensional creature can see all of flatland at once.
4. God does not "remember" yesterday—He simply sees it happening, just as He does the future.

How does this help us understand a passage like Jer 31.34?

5. Thus God can see what each person will do without controlling it. All moments for God are 'Now'.

“In a sense, He does not know your action till you have done it: but then the moment at which you have done it is already 'Now' for Him.”

4. **GOOD INFECTION**

A. The Law of Causality

1. In our one-way journey through time and space, cause *always* comes before effect.
2. However, if we could imagine a cause that didn't have a beginning, the effect wouldn't either. They would coexist eternally.

B. Causality outside of Time.

1. God is the First Person of the Trinity but that doesn't mean He *came* first. *Rev 1.8*
2. Recall the discussion about begetting and making in Chapter I.
3. The Father has been begetting The Son eternally, and so The Son did not come "after" The Father. *cf. John 1.1-4; Rev 22.13*

“The Son exists because the Father exists: but there never was a time before the Father produced the Son.”

4. We can try to imagine the relationship like light and heat from fire, but they don't capture the true essence of Father and Son.
5. The Son, The Logos, is a continuous expression proceeding from the Father outside our timeline.

C. What does "God is Love" imply?

1. Love must be exchanged between at least two persons.
2. This single statement has tremendously important implications for what Christians teach and believe.
3. The Christian God is unique in this aspect. No other religion has a god with more than one person in a single being. *cf. 1 Cor. 8.5-6*
4. This also means that God is not a static individual, but a continuous source of energy, activity, and vitality.

D. How does The Spirit fit into this picture?

1. The union between Father and Son is so vital and dynamic that it is in and of itself another person.
2. Consider Lewis' example of the 'spirit' of a club or family.
3. This Third Person is more ethereal and difficult for us to grasp.

-- *cf. John 15.26; 16.5-15*

4. The Son became flesh, and He points explicitly to The Father, but The Spirit is all around and inside us, so we don't look *at* Him.

-- *cf. Rom 5.5; Gal 4.6*

E. So what is the point of all this?

1. The point is we are created and meant to take our place in this activity and relationship, or the 'dance' as C. S. Lewis calls it.
2. When we are in this relationship, it is impossible for us not to be changed and vitalized, and to experience the full, joyous, and glorious life God intends for us.

-- *1 Cor 15.45-49; 2 Cor 3.16-18*

“Good things as well as bad, you know, are caught by a kind of infection.”

3. On the other hand, if we are not connected to this source, we will wither and die.

-- *cf. John 15.5-6*

4. As discussed in Chapter I, we are made, not begotten, but if we catch this 'good infection' we can participate in the life that was begotten.

“He came to this world and became a man in order to spread to other men the kind of life He has—by what I call 'good infection'. Every Christian is to become a little Christ. The whole purpose of becoming a Christian is simply nothing else.”

5. **THE OBSTINATE TIN SOLDIERS**

A. Why the Son of God became a man.

1. To enable men to become sons of God. *cf. John 1.12; Rom 8.14-17; Gal 3.26*
2. Would He have come if the Fall had not occurred? We can only guess.

B. The present state of things.

1. There are two kinds of life that are not only *different*, but in opposition. *Gal 5.16-17*
2. The natural life is self-centered. *cf. Gal 5.19-21*
3. It wants to exploit others,
4. It is insecure and afraid of anything that makes it look frail.
5. Thus, it is afraid of anything from the spiritual world because that will kill its self-centeredness.

C. Turning tin soldiers into real men.

1. This would involve changing tin into real flesh.
2. The tin soldier might fear this and even think it was killing him.
3. In this case he would do everything he could to resist you.

D. How God overcame this resistance.

1. He became one of us. *cf. Phil 2.5-11*
2. The result was that there was one man who was what God really intended.
3. He was resisted to the point of being killed.
4. But His resurrection resulted in a Man who became our prototype. *cf. Rom 8.29*

“That is the whole point. For the first time we saw a real man. One tin soldier—real tin, just like the rest—had come fully and splendidly alive.”

- E. The difference between tin soldiers and humanity.
1. Tin soldiers are all separate—Human beings are not.
 2. Every person was at one time part of his mother and father.
 3. From God's standpoint, humanity doesn't look like unconnected dots, but more like connected branches on a single tree. *cf. Heb 7.4-10*
 4. In one sense, humanity is like a single, living organism.
 5. In addition, we are not only connected to each other, but to God, and sustained by Him.
- F. What are the implications of this with respect to the incarnation?
1. When the Son of God became human, he became part of this connected organism.
 2. The effects of His life spread, like a "good infection," to each person in the whole, both to those who lived before and after Him.

See Rom 5.12-21 for both sides of this infection in humanity.
 3. It even affected those who never heard about Him.
 4. Just like a little leaven leavens the whole lump, Christ saved all of Humanity. All that is left for us is to appropriate it. *cf. Eph 4.11-13*
- G. We can express this idea in many different ways.
1. Each of them reflects and emphasizes a piece of the whole Truth.
 2. Take the one that helps you the best and leave the others alone.

“And, whatever you do, do not start quarreling with other people because they use a different formula from yours.”

6. TWO NOTES

A. Why did God not beget many Sons?

1. The transformation from creature to son was not meant to be difficult. *cf. Gen 2.7-9*
2. It is foolish and dangerous to speculate about what God *could* be.
 - a. God is the irreducible Fact of the universe—the uncaused Cause.
 - b. If there were more than one Son, how could they be different without a universe?
 - c. We unconsciously, perhaps unavoidably, project our notions of time and space onto God.

B. Human beings are Individuals even though they are part of an organism.

1. Each Individual is important and their differences matter.
2. Similarity and difference do not govern connectedness, nor vice versa.
3. The Bible is very clear that Christians are different with different roles, but still members of the same Body with equal importance and value.

-- *cf. 1 Cor 12.12-27; Eph 4.11*

4. The tension between Individualism and Totalitarianism
 - a. Forgetting our interdependence and connectedness leads to Individualism
 - b. Forgetting the importance of our differences and varied roles leads to Totalitarianism.
 - c. Neither extreme is better or worse than the other.

What do you think about Lewis' maxim that the devil sends errors in pairs?

7. LET'S PRETEND

A. When we call God 'Our Father' we are in a sense pretending to be sons because we are not really transformed yet. *1 Cor 4.14-16*

1. In a way it seems quite presumptuous, even disrespectful, but God commands it.

-- cf. *1 Cor 11.1; Eph 5.1-2; Phil 3.17; 1 Thess 1.6-7; Matt 5.48*

2. But there two kinds of pretending.

a. The bad: meant to deceive and defraud.

b. The good: where acting transforms bad feelings into good results *and* feelings

“Very often the only way to get a quality in reality is to start behaving as if you had it already.”

B. This pretending to be like Christ is part of our transformation into His image.

1. Not by our own power, but the power of Christ Himself changing us.

2. It is not a matter of trying to do good things to become better, but to become right so that we *want* to do good.

“For you are no longer thinking simply about right and wrong; you are trying to catch the good infection from a Person. It is more like painting a portrait than like obeying a set of rules.”

3. It is part of the process of changing from tin soldiers to real men, and the tin part doesn't like it. *cf. 2 Cor 4.16-18*

C. Part of the way Christ works on us is through other people.

1. Even people who don't realize it can be used for good influence.

-- cf. *Exod 1.16-20; Josh 2.1-6*

2. If help from Christ didn't come to humans first, we could never help each other.

3. We are mirrors, little Christs, carriers of the "good infection" to others.

D. It is vital to remember from where the true power for help comes.

1. The true source is always God, even if we don't see it.
2. We should be thankful to others for their help, but never put our faith in them rather than God. If we do, we will be disappointed without fail.

E. The principle in Biblical terms

1. This is the whole idea of being "born again," "putting on Christ," "having the mind of Christ," etc. *cf. Rom 12.1-2; Gal 3.26-28; Eph 4.20-24; Col 3.9-10*
2. It is not a self-help or 12 step program to improve ourselves though.
3. It is a living man, Jesus Christ, physically and really transforming us into new beings that look like and act like Him. *cf. 2 Cor 3.18; Rom 8.29*

F. Two discoveries

1. We start to become more concerned with our *condition* than our behavior. *Ps 51.10*
 - a. When our condition is right, the behavior is automatic. *cf. Matt 15.18-20*
 - b. When our condition is not right, it will be revealed by our behavior unexpectedly.
 - c. We can control our behavior to some extent, but we cannot change our condition by our own strength of will.
 - d. Even our good actions are suspect because they come from flawed motives.
2. In one sense, God is the One doing the pretending
 - a. God sees our true, sinful nature but 'pretends' that He sees His Son.
-- cf. Rom 5.1-2; 1 Cor 6.9-11
 - b. But He not only pretends, He makes it so.

“God looks at you as if you were a little Christ: Christ stands beside you to turn you into one.”

8. IS CHRISTIANITY HARD OR EASY?

A. Putting on Christ is not a part of Christianity; it is the whole thing. *cf. Rom 6.1-4*

1. A common misconception is that being a Christian means gradually becoming good.
2. Thinking we can start from our natural self and go from there is a big mistake.
3. This usually leads to one of two results:
 - a. Giving up being good altogether, or
 - b. Becoming very miserable at trying to be good.
4. The natural man simply cannot meet the demands of perfection.

“The more you obey your conscience, the more your conscience will demand of you.”

B. The Christian Way is both harder and easier than this.

1. Christ doesn't want part of us; He wants to put us to death and start over.
2. Christ Himself talked about Christianity as both hard and easy.
 - a. "Take up your cross..." *cf. Matt 7.13-14; Matt 16.24-25; Luke 18.23-25*
 - b. "My yoke is easy and my burden is light.." *cf. Matt 11.28-30; 1 John 5.3*
3. As hard as it is to hand over our whole selves, it is far easier than the alternative.
4. It is absolutely impossible to rehabilitate our natural self.
5. The battle against self begins anew each and every morning.

C. This is where putting on Christ comes to our rescue.

1. Rather than struggling against our nature, we die to it and let Christ do the work of drawing us into Him. *cf. Rom 6.6-8; 8.12-14; Gal 5.22-24; Phil 1.21*
2. We must let the good infection take hold and spread within us.

“It is the difference between paint, which is merely laid on the surface, and a dye of stain which soaks right through.”

3. Being Perfect requires destroying the imperfect and replacing it with perfection.

D. The ultimate purpose of Christianity.

1. The Church exists for nothing else than to draw men into Christ.

-- *cf. John 6.44; Eph 4.11-16; Heb 10.19-25*

2. As Lewis says, "God became Man for no other purpose."

-- *cf. John 3.13-17; 12.31-32*

3. He even speculates that perhaps the entire universe was created for that purpose.

4. What we know for sure is that it is what we were created for.

“And there are strange, exciting hints in the Bible that when we are drawn in, a great many other things in Nature will begin to come right. The bad dream will be over: it will be morning”

9. **COUNTING THE COST**

A. "Be ye perfect" is troubling for some people

1. Sometimes we want just enough cure to make the pain go away.
2. Example of going to the dentist.
3. God is like the dentist—He wants to give us the "full treatment."
4. The only way to stop Him is to Him away ourselves.
5. He wants to be just as pleased with us as He was with His Son.
6. We must realize the cost of attaining perfection. It is high.

-- *Matt 19.16-22; 1 Cor 13.9-10; Heb 2.10, 10.1; Jas 1.4; Eph 5.27*

B. God is delighted with our progress but not satisfied with less than perfection.

1. Parents are delighted at baby's first steps, but not with a grown man who totters.
2. Just as with parents and their babies, God will pick us up when we fall. *Isa 40.28-31*
3. It is important to remember *He will never stop* until we are perfect.

-- *cf. Ps 57.2-3, 138.7-8; Phil 1.6*

"God is easy to please, but hard to satisfy."

4. We can become frustrated if we forget that point. There is no such thing as 'good enough' with God. *cf. Col 1.21-23; 1 Pet 1.14-16; Heb 12.28-29*
5. Sometimes we are complacent with our progress and don't want more.
6. We may even mistake complacency for humility.

C. We must never forget that God is our creator and He knows what we should be.

-- *cf. Isa 64.8; Rom 9.19-21*

1. We are works in progress and cannot see the end result as God can. *cf. Rom 9.20*
2. We will be as radically different from what we are now as we are from an embryo.
3. It is natural for us to be content with what we are now and fear changing.

D. God is determined to make us superior to any hero or saint we can imagine.

1. The process won't be complete before we die but God means to get us as far down the road as possible.
2. The road is not always smooth or as we expect it though. *cf. 1 Pet 2.20-21*
3. We shouldn't be surprised or disappointed when suffering or trials come because they are being used to get us farther down that road.

-- *cf. 1 Pet 4.12-14; 2 Cor 12.7-10*

“It seems to us all unnecessary: but that is because we have not yet had the slightest notion of the tremendous thing He means to make of us.”

4. As in George MacDonald's Parable of the House, the rearrangement sometimes goes much further than we expected or want. (*See inset below from Diary of an Old Soul*)
5. When Jesus said "*Be ye perfect*" He really meant it. *cf. 2 Cor 6.14-7.1*

“You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.”

Too eager I must not be to understand.
 How should the work the master goes about
 Fit the vague sketch my compasses have planned?
 I am his house--for him to go in and out.
 He builds me now--and if I cannot see
 At any time what he is doing with me,
 'Tis that he makes the house for me too grand.

The house is not for me--it is for him.
 His royal thoughts require many a stair,
 Many a tower, many an outlook fair,
 Of which I have no thought, and need no care.
 Where I am most perplexed, it may be there
 Thou mak'st a secret chamber, holy-dim,
 Where thou wilt come to help my deepest prayer.

--- *From Diary of an Old Soul, July 15 and 16 entries*

10. NICE PEOPLE OR NEW MEN

A. If Christianity is true, why aren't all Christians nicer than non-Christians?

1. Not a totally unreasonable question—if there is no improvement, what's the point?
2. When Christians don't act any better than the world, we lose credibility.

B. The world is not divided into two neat camps: Christians and non-Christians.

1. People are in constant motion towards godliness or away from it.
 - a. We don't even know who is a Christian and who is not.
-- cf. Matt 21.28-32; Luke 10.29-37, 16.15
 - b. We can compare general classes that are obviously distinct, like cats and dogs.
 - c. When comparing Christian vs. non-Christian, we must take specific examples.
2. None of us started from the same place regardless of which direction we are moving.

“To judge the management of a factory, you must consider not only the output but the plant.”

3. The ultimate question is *"What will the finished product be in each case?"*
 - a. Each of us, naughty or nice, needs saving. *cf. Rom 3.10, 23*
 - b. In fact, any niceness we have is a gift from God. *cf. Jas 1.17; 1 Cor 4.6-7;*
 - c. God is continually and unrelentingly drawing us to Himself, but we ultimately choose our direction and destiny.
 - d. Niceness is not the point – new creatures are.

“It costs God nothing, so far as we know, to create nice things: but to convert rebellious cost His crucifixion.”

C. The paradox: rejecting God causes us to think any niceness we have comes from ourselves, but by thinking that, it is not even niceness..

1. It is only when we realize what we have comes from God and offer it back to Him that it becomes our own.
2. The more satisfied we are with "our" wealth or goodness, the harder it is to realize our need for God. *cf. Luke 7.37-50, 18.9-14*

3. This helps explain why Christ attracted the "nasty" people—they could see much more easily their need for help. *cf. Matt 9.10-12; Luke 15.1;*
 4. A double-sided warning and encouragement:
 - a. 'Nice' people beware! You are more easily deceived and your fall will be greater. -- *cf. Matt 23.23-36*
 - b. 'Nasty' people take comfort! God will destroy your broken equipment and replace it with new. *cf. 2 Cor 5.16-19*
- D. God is not in the improvement business, but the new construction business.
1. Niceness is good, but it's not the ultimate goal. *cf. Matt 5.17-20*
 2. God wants sons and daughters, not patched-up broken creatures.
 3. Not better versions of the old kind, but a new kind altogether.
- “It is not like teaching a horse to jump better and better but like turning a horse into a winged creature.”
4. The new creature may stumble at first, and even be worse off than an old one that started at a higher position, but ultimately it will surpass the old kind.
- E. In the end, rejecting God because not all Christians are nicer than all non-Christians is an excuse.

It is only where love is not that law must go. Law is indeed necessary, but woe to the community where love does not cast out—where at least love is not casting out law. Not all the laws in the universe can save a man from poverty, not to say from sin, not to say from conscious misery. Work on, ye who cannot see this. Do your best. You will be rewarded according to your honesty. You will be saved by the fire that will destroy your work, and will one day come to see that Christ's way, and no other whatever, can either redeem your own life, or render the condition of the poorest or the richest wretch such as would justify his creation. If by the passing of this or that more or less wise law, you could, in the person of his descendant of the third or fourth generation, make a well-to-do man of him, he would probably be a good deal farther from the kingdom of heaven than the beggar or the thief over whom you now lament. The criminal classes, to use your phrase, are not made up of quite the same persons in the eyes of the Supreme as in yours.

-- *George MacDonald, Weighed and Wanted, Ch. 26*

11. THE NEW MEN

A. The Next Step

1. People have imagined all sorts of things about what Man will be like in the future.
2. As in most cases, they are almost always very wrong about it.
3. In fact, the next step is radically different from expectations, and...
4. It is already here! The Christian view is that it happened 2000 years ago. *1 John 2.8*
 - a. Not from Nature, but outside. *cf. John 1.9-13, 18.36-37*
 - b. Unexpected because people look at the past to predict the future.
 - c. Not brainier men, but NEW Men altogether! *cf. 2 Cor 5.17*

B. Ways in which the next step is completely different.

1. Not transmitted by physical reproduction. *cf. John 1.13*
2. The Next Step is voluntary. *cf. John 8.12*
3. Christ is not only the Prototype of the New Man, but the continual *source* of new creatures. *cf. Rom 8.29; Col 1.15-20;*
4. This New Creation takes place at lightning speed.
5. The stakes are much higher.
 - a. Previous steps resulted in incremental changes, and weren't necessary
 - b. The Next Step is not only forward, but out. It is not optional—rejection means death. *cf. 1 John 5.11-12*

C. Recognizing the New Men.

1. Not stereotypical religious people. *cf. Matt 5.20*
2. "They love you more, but need you less." *cf. John 13.34-35*

“...to become holy is rather like joining a secret society. To put it at the very lowest, it must be great fun.”

D. Even though they have the same source, the New Men are not identical.

-- *cf. 1 Cor 12.27-31*

1. Losing our selves does not mean losing our identity. In fact, it means finally achieving our true identity.
2. Two (imperfect) illustrations.
 - c. Explaining light to people who have always lived in the dark. The same light reflects from each of them, but what it reveals is different for every person.
-- *cf. Matt 4.15-16*
 - d. The taste of salt. The same salt brings out different flavor in every food.
-- *cf. Matt 5.13*
3. When we reject Christ, we actually lose our true identities and become what heredity and circumstance make of us. *cf. Rom 1.21-25; 2 Thess 2.11-12*

“Propaganda will be the real origin of what I regard as my own personal political ideas.”

4. Until we give ourselves to Christ we will not have a real self. *cf. John 12.25*
- E. Giving up our selves requires 100% commitment. It is all or nothing.
-- *cf. Matt 13.44-45; Luke 9.62; Phil 3.7-8*
1. The first step is to forget about our self altogether. *cf. Col 3.1-5*
 2. Just like in social settings, we don't make a good impression until we stop thinking about making a good impression.
 3. The surrender must be total and absolute.

“Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will be really yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead.”

Then the Old Man of the Earth stooped over the floor of the cave, raised a huge stone from it, and left it leaning. It disclosed a great hole that went plumb-down.

“That is the way,” he said.

“But there are no stairs.”

“You must throw yourself in. There is no other way.”

-- George MacDonald (The Golden Key)

Excursus: C. S. Lewis and Evolution

The views of C. S. Lewis on Evolution developed over his lifetime as a Christian. His starting point was atheism, which naturally accepts Evolution as scientific fact. Even as a Christian, however, he did not find Biological Evolution as a means used by God for creation incompatible with the Bible or Christianity. By the time of his death, he had serious misgivings about the *philosophy* of Cosmic Evolution because he saw that it had become its own mythopoeic religion. One of his later essays was titled *The Funeral of a Great Myth*, and dealt with the idea that Cosmic Evolution as a myth trying to explain moral and philosophical issues was wholly inadequate and inappropriate. Following are some excerpts explaining Lewis' viewpoint on the philosophy of Cosmic Evolution.

C.S. Lewis on materialistic thoughts

'If the solar system was brought about by an accidental collision, then the appearance of organic life on this planet was also an accident, and the whole evolution of Man was an accident too. If so, then all our present thoughts are mere accidents—the accidental by-product of the movement of atoms. And this holds for the thoughts of the materialists and astronomers as well as for anyone else's. But if their thoughts—i.e. of materialism and astronomy—are merely accidental by-products, why should we believe them to be true? I see no reason for believing that one accident should be able to give me a correct account of all the other accidents. It's like expecting that the accidental shape taken by the splash when you upset a milkjug should give you a correct account of how the jug was made and why it was upset.'

C.S. Lewis (1898–1963), *The Business of Heaven*, Fount Paperbacks, U.K., p. 97, 1984.

Excerpt from *Is Theology Poetry?* found in [They Asked for a Paper](#):

On these grounds and others like them one is driven to think that whatever else may be true, the popular scientific cosmology at any rate is certainly not. I left that ship not at the call of poetry but because I thought it could not keep afloat. Something like philosophical idealism or Theism must, at the very worst, be less untrue than that. And idealism turned out, when you took it seriously, to be disguised Theism. And once you accepted Theism you could not ignore the claims of Christ. And when you examined them it appeared to me that you could adopt no middle position. Either he was a lunatic, or God. And He was not a lunatic.

I was taught at school, when I had done a sum, to "prove my answer." The proof or verification of my Christian answer to the cosmic sum is this. *When I accept Theology I may find difficulties, at this point or that, in harmonising it with some particular truths which are embedded in the mythical cosmology derived from science. But I can get in, or allow for, science as a whole. Granted that Reason is prior to matter and that the light of that primal Reason illuminates finite minds, I can understand how men should come, by observation and inference, to know a lot about the universe they live in. If, on the other hand, I swallow the*

scientific cosmology as a whole, then not only can I not fit in Christianity, but I cannot even fit in science. If minds are wholly dependent on brains, and brains on biochemistry, and biochemistry (in the long run) on the meaningless flux of the atoms, I cannot understand how the thought of those minds should have any more significance than the sound of the wind in the trees. And this is to me the final test. This is how I distinguish dreaming and waking. When I am awake I can, in some degree, account for and study my dream. The dragon that pursued me last night can be fitted into my waking world. I know that there are such things as dreams: I know that I had eaten an indigestible dinner: I know that a man of my reading might be expected to dream of dragons. But while in the nightmare I could not have fitted in my waking experience. The waking world is judged more real because it can thus contain the dreaming world: the dreaming world is judged less real because it cannot contain the waking one. For the same reason I am certain that in passing from the scientific point of view to the theological, I have passed from dream to waking. Christian theology can fit in science, art, morality, and the sub-Christian religions. The scientific point of view cannot fit in any of these things, not even science itself. I believe in Christianity as I believe that the Sun has risen not only because I see it but because by it I see everything else.

-- The Oxford Socratic Club, 1944. pp. 154-165 (*Emphasis added*).

For more information, see

<http://creation.com/cs-lewis-and-evolution>

<http://creation.com/cs-lewis-and-the-great-myth>

<http://www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/1996/PSCF3-96Ferngren.html> (Letters to Acworth)

<http://biologos.org/blog/c-s-lewis-on-evolution-and-intelligent-design-part-1/> (1 of 7).

www.asa3.org/ASA/PSCF/2010/PSCF12-10Peterson.pdf (PDF article on CSL and ID).

*As Heaven and Earth are fairer, fairer far
Than Chaos and blank Darkness, though once chiefs;
And as we show beyond that Heaven and Earth
In form and shape compact and beautiful,
In will, in action free, companionship,
And thousand other signs of purer life;
So on our heels a fresh perfection treads,
A power more strong in beauty, born of us
And fated to excel us, as we pass
In glory that old Darkness:*

-- Lines 206-215 from Keats' *Hyperion* quoted by Lewis in *The Funeral of a Great Myth*

Lewis quoted this poem (published circa 1820) to show that the idea of Cosmic Evolution had already started well before Darwin's *Origin of the Species*.