

TH400
Mere Christianity
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Book 1: Right And Wrong As A Clue To The Meaning Of The Universe

Chapter 1 The Law of Human Nature

The simple fact that humans quarrel makes it obvious there is an expectation of right and wrong; some unwritten rule of fair play. This has been referred to as the Law of Nature, but may also be called the Law of Human Nature. It's the one law of nature we have a choice to obey. No other law of nature has this option or applies only to humans. The law of human decent behavior may seem obvious. Even between widely diverse cultures and civilizations, the differences are not significant, mainly points of minor conduct, dress codes and cultural differences.

Even those who deny the existence of this law will fight strenuously when they feel they are treated unfairly. The reality of a True Right and Wrong becomes an issue when we realize that none of us are actually following this law. Although we expect certain behavior from others, we fail to practice these ourselves, and are ready with a list of excuses when we do not. Our excuses prove a deep belief in the Law or we wouldn't be so anxious to make excuses for not behaving decently. Essentially, human beings believe they ought to behave in a certain way and do not actually behave in that way.

Chapter 2. Some Objections

It has been argued that this moral law is nothing more than instinct. However, when the impulse to help another conflicts with the impulse of self-preservation, it seems the moral law is the stronger. Instinctive behavior does not weigh choices. Impulses can not be good or bad in themselves, like notes on a piano, each note can be used at the right or wrong time. We may learn the Rules of Decent Behavior from parents, teachers, or books, but these rules are changeable, socially and culturally dependent, and the moral law doesn't fluctuate with time, culture or social norms. We can compare the morality of two cultures but once we say one is better or more true, it becomes obvious there is a standard of measure, and one is closer to that standard.

Chapter 3: The Reality of the Law

Breaking the moral law simply means that humans are not perfect. The rest of the universe and its laws can be reduced to facts, but humans behave in certain ways, knowing they ought to behave differently. Society realizes there is safety and happiness in fair play by all, yet it doesn't appear that is motivation enough to behave correctly. It's not simply about how others should behave for our convenience. Therefore, this Rule of Right and Wrong must somehow be a real thing that we have not made up ourselves but weighs on each of us.

Chapter 4: What Lies Behind the Law

The moral law is be a real law we ought to obey, which means there must be something behind the law. The materialist view is that the whole of the universe, matter and space, humankind, just happened; a kind of cosmic fluke. The religious view believes there is something like a mind behind the universe, a mind created the universe and creatures that also have a mind. Neither view is able to be examined and explained by science. If there is a mind, it must either remain unknown or make itself known by something other than scientific means.

The moral law can not be observed directly, but we humans have inside information. "I find that I do not exist on

my own, that I am under a law; that somebody or something wants me to behave in a certain way” (Lewis pg 25). Something directing the universe appears in the law, making us feel responsible and uncomfortable when we do wrong. *Note: Lewis explains he had not addressed the ideologies of creative evolution or emergent evolution. He says these ideas allow for a mind behind the universe; a Life-force, which is not involved nor interfering with humanity, leaving no responsibility to a God.

Chapter 5: We Have Cause to Be Uneasy

Someone is behind the moral law, and we have two pieces of evidence about Him: First, He made the universe. 2. Secondly, we have the moral law in our minds, so He is interested in right conduct. If God is good, He must detest wrong behavior or He is not good. We may agree with His side, disapproving of evil, but we want an exception in our own case. We find ourselves constantly on the wrong side, unable to uphold the moral law. God is our only possible ally and often times we behave like His enemy. Christianity makes no sense until we face these facts; there is a moral law, a power behind it, we break the law and are in conflict with the power. Once we realize this situation is desperate, we can begin to understand what Christians are talking about. God is the Moral Law Giver and yet He became a man in order to save man. This offers both dismay and comfort. Our dismay may lead us to a search for the truth.

Book 2: What Christians Believe

Chapter 1 The Rival Conceptions of God

Christianity is like math, there is only one right answer to a problem. Humanity is divided into two categories: Those who believe in some kind of God or gods, and those who do not. The next division among those believing in God is the kind of God in which they believe. One side believes God is beyond good or evil, and as one gets closer to the divine viewpoint, the distinction between good and evil disappears completely. Pantheism, belief that God inhabits the universe like we inhabit our bodies, is in everything, and everything is part of God. Christianity believes that God is good and righteous, that He made the universe and everything in it, and He loves good and hates evil. In trying to prove God did not exist, and the world was senseless, “I was forced to assume that one part of reality-namely my idea of justice-was full of sense” (Lewis pg 39).

Chapter 2 The Invasion

Atheism is too simplistic, as is the view that God is good, everything is all right, (leaving out sin, hell, the devil and redemption), the idea that God would have made it simple, as if this ‘religion’ was something God invented instead of His declaration of His own nature to us. A child saying a prayer seems simple, but when you ask what is actually occurring, you must be prepared for difficulty. Reality is complicated, and usually not what we expect. Christianity is like that. It’s not what we expect, certainly not the kind of thing someone would have made up.

We have a universe that contains both the bad and meaningless and men that recognize this. Christianity is one of two views that face these facts. Another view, Dualism, is the belief that there are two independent equal powers, one good, and the other evil. Two powers in endless battle, each independent and believing itself to be good and the other bad, fight for their view. When we call one the *Good Power* and the other the *Bad Power*, we are saying one is actually wrong and one is right. This would mean there is a third thing in the universe; some standard to which one conforms and the other does not. This standard infers a law or law maker higher up than either of these, and He is the real God. Saying one is good, is saying one is in a right relationship with the real, ultimate God and the other is in wrong relationship. The bad Power is a being who is bad just to be bad, yet we have no example of this in our universe. In reality, people are cruel for a reason; there is some satisfaction or pleasure received. “Badness is only spoiled goodness.” or pursuing a good thing in the wrong way. (Lewis pg 44) This Bad Power is equal and independent of the Good Power yet he cannot invent the good things to desire or good impulses to pervert. These must come from the Good Power, therefore he is no longer independent, he is a part of the Good

Power, so must have either been created by the Good Power or some power above both of them. Put in even simpler terms, the Bad Power must exist and have intelligence and will, which are good, and must have come from the Good Power or the power above them.

Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

Christians believe there is an evil power that has made himself at home in this world. Although it seems strange that this could possibly be in the will of God, it is in His plan. By allowing us free will He has allowed us to choose to follow Him or ignore Him, making evil possible. Only the ability to choose right or wrong, good or evil, allows any good or happiness. “The happiness which God designs for His higher creatures is the happiness of being freely, voluntarily united to Him...” (Lewis pg 48) We cannot answer why Satan went wrong, but it is reasonable to assume he desired power and control, the same thing that causes us so much trouble as well; the desire to be a god, to be in control. We want to be in control and to live selfishly, making only ourselves happy. Human history proves this over and over, yet happiness apart from God will never be complete. God designed humans to need Him, with a spirit that desires Him, that hungers after His Spirit. There is no peace or happiness apart from Him.

To combat Satan’s lies, God first gave us conscience, the moral law, which people have tried to obey. Secondly, He gave the human race all the stories about a god who somehow gives hope and new life to men. Thirdly, He picked one race of people, the Jews, and spent hundreds of years teaching them about Him and how they should live. Among the Jews, a man shows up talking as if He were God. He claims to forgive sins, any sins. This makes sense only if He really was God, whose laws mankind had broken. Jesus was either truly God incarnate and could forgive the sins of man, or was a complete lunatic and liar. There is no other option.

Chapter 4 The Perfect Penitent

“God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form.” (Lewis pg 53). Jesus came to put us in a right relationship with God and give us a new start. How Jesus’ death accomplished this is not something we can explain, it is beyond our understanding, an event outside our limited, natural world. Christ died for us, His death washed our sins and by His death He defeated death itself. That is Christianity. Fallen man is in rebellion against God. Sin has gotten man into debt with God. Realizing the debt and the need to start over is called repentance. Repentance, the willing submission to God, a death to self, has a problem built into it. We need to ask God to take us back, but the same “badness which makes us need it, makes us unable to do it.” (Lewis pg 57). We need God’s help to surrender, suffer and submit, but nothing in the nature of God can relate to submission or surrender in any way. That is where the death, suffering and surrender of Christ come into play. Jesus, as man, could surrender His will, suffer and die, and, as God, could do it perfectly. We can follow Christ in this process because He leads us through it. We can submit because He can show us perfect submission and we can surrender because of His perfect surrender.

Chapter 5 The Practical Conclusion

When we share in the perfect surrender and death of Jesus, we also share His defeat of death and we begin a new life. Lewis proposes the three things necessary for developing and spreading this new life are: baptism, belief and Communion (the Lord’s Supper). This is what Jesus taught His disciples. The growth and care of this life is not only belief, but the physical acts of submission (baptism) and taking in the body of Christ (Communion). This life of following Christ’s leading is not a life we ourselves have made, but was given to us, which we must nourish and protect. A Christian does not believe God will love him because he is good, but is able to be good because God loves him; because of the Christ-life inside him. Christ operating through each Christian enables us to operate together as the body of Christ. The whole process of submission and new life begins with each person’s choice. We must choose a side in the battle.

Book Three: Christian Behaviour

Chapter 1 The Three Parts of Morality

The moral rules laid down by God are not designed to keep humans from enjoying themselves, but directions for “running the human machine” (Lewis pg 69). Every rule is to prevent breakdowns, strife and friction, though they frequently conflict with our natural inclinations. Every broken rule will cause problems with others and always within ourselves. There are two ways human machines go wrong, either by drifting apart or colliding with each other, or by something having gone wrong inside the individual. Humanity, like a band playing a tune, needs each instrument to be in tune as well as play in harmony with the others. In addition, there must be a purpose, a piece of music to be played.

Morality is mainly concerned with these three things: First, Fair play or harmony between individuals, then Internal “tidying up or harmonising” and finally, the general purpose, what man was made for, the tune the conductor wants played. There is little disagreement with the first issue, as most people agree they should be honest and kind. A good society requires good men, but goodness can not be forced by law. This takes us to the second thing, the internal morality of the individual. Some will say that unless he is harming others, what he does to himself is his own business. That could be true if he belonged only to himself with no creator who designed him for a specific purpose. In thinking about morality, each of the three departments are vital, but it is in the third department that we see the main differences between Christian and non-Christian morality.

Chapter 2 The “Cardinal Virtues”

The “Cardinal”, pivotal, virtues are those recognized by most people. They are Prudence, Temperance, Justice and Fortitude. Prudence means practical common sense, thinking out what you do and the consequences. Jesus told us to be “wise as serpents” (Matt 10:16 KJV), meaning He wants us to use our intelligence, use all the sense they have. “Anyone who is honestly trying to be a Christian will soon find his intelligence being sharpened” (Lewis pg 78).

Temperance means moderation and self restraint, not just in the use of alcohol but in any area which could become the center of one’s life. Justice includes honesty, fairness, truthfulness and keeping promises. Fortitude entails both the courage to face dangers and the courage to endure. Lewis says fortitude is necessary in practicing any of the other virtues.

These virtues are not just the actions taken, doing something honest or prudent, but the quality of character. Only looking at the action can lead to three wrong ideas. First, doing the right thing and not the attitude behind it matters most. A right thing done for wrong reasons does not build the internal character of the virtue. Secondly, God wants simple obedience to a set of rules, but He really desires more from us. Thirdly, these virtues are necessary only for this present life. Although the other world may not have quarreling or a need for bravery, it will be necessary for us to be the sort of people we become, having the quality of character we begin to develop through the use of these virtues.

Chapter 3. Social Morality

Christianity does not profess to have a new brand of morality nor a political program for society, but is meant for all people, at all times. A fully Christian society would have as its motto, “Do as you would be done by”(Lewis pg 83). This would be a society in which everyone would work for what they get, produce something useful, without an upper class, obedient and respectful, and cheerful, “but I am afraid very few of us would like the whole thing.” (Lewis pg 83). Since we all have departed from God’s total plan for humanity in one way or another, we wouldn’t find everything in this society comfortable. Lewis mentions the teaching against lending money with interest which the modern economic system is completely disobeying as investing is the basis of our whole system. He says it is a question that he can not determine. Charity is another essential part of a Christian morality. The only safe rule, according to Lewis, “is to give more than we can spare.” (pg 86) The fear of insecurity and pride are the main obstacles to our giving.

A Christian society cannot exist until most people want it, and we aren’t going want it until we learn to be

more fully Christian. We can't do unto others as we want done to us until we can love our neighbor as ourselves. This can't be achieved until we learn to love God by learning to obey Him. The social matters are the results of the internal religious matters.

Chapter 4. Morality and Psychoanalysis

Christian morality claims to be a process for "putting the human machine right" (Lewis pg 88), but psychoanalysis makes a similar claim. There is a distinction between the medical theories or techniques and the general philosophical views of psychologists. Although the technique may overlap with Christian morality at some points, they are very different in their purpose. A moral choice involves the act of choosing and the feelings, impulses, thought processes or "raw material" behind the choice. Psychoanalysis attempts to remove abnormal thinking to give improved raw material for a man's choice. Morality is concerned with the actual choices. Removing abnormal thinking still leaves man with the free choice whether to put his own desires first or put himself last. God judges only the moral choice itself, not the outside results.

Christianity is not a bargain with God where we follow a list of rules and get rewarded or don't and consequently get punished. Each time we choose, we are affecting our central character, either turning closer into harmony with God or away from Him. When we are seriously turning toward God, each right choice develops our character, our understanding of God, our understanding of good and evil.

Chapter 5 Sexual Morality

The virtue of chastity must not be confused with society's current rules of modesty or decency. Chastity, sex only within marriage, is the least popular of the Christian virtues. Sex itself is not bad, and Christianity supports sex within marriage as a good and healthy act. Sexual appetite grows by indulgence and for many years we have been inundated with lies and propaganda that sexual indulgence is completely natural. The constant flow of propaganda supporting the pursuit of sexual pleasure makes it difficult to maintain clear thinking and the will to resist is relentlessly attacked. One must actually desire to be chaste before they can stop an obsession with sex. There are three reasons it's especially difficult for us to desire, let alone achieve, chastity.

The first obstacle is our own nature which is easily influenced by the propaganda which says it's perfectly natural to indulge every sexual temptation. Christian morality requires we learn to control our desires. The second obstacle is the belief that Christian chastity is not even possible, deterring some from even trying. Perfect chastity, just as with any other virtue is not attainable by mere human effort, it requires God's help. Thirdly, people misunderstand the term "repression" used by psychology to explain the process of completely suppressing desires into the subconscious. Repression of sexuality disguises sexuality into an unrecognizable form. Repression is not just denied or resisted temptations. Although chastity is an important issue, it is not the center of Christian morality. Unchastity is not the ultimate sin, the worst of possible vices. Sins of the flesh are not nearly so detrimental to the soul as the purely spiritual sins. Condemnation, hatred, back-biting, power lust and greed Lewis refers to as the "Diabolical self", fleshly sins are the "Animal self," but the Diabolical self is the worst of the two. (Lewis pg 103).

Chapter 6 Christian Marriage

The Christian idea of marriage is man and wife are one flesh, one united organism, two halves designed to be combined in pairs. The modern view disagrees and feels that changing partners when it's convenient is an acceptable practice. Justice includes keeping promises and marriage is a promise. The romantic feelings of love may lead to marriage, but when those feelings fade, the vow is still binding. As the 'being in love' feelings fade, a new kind of love can grow; a deeper unity based on the deliberate will to love and reinforced by the grace given by God. This kind of love enables us to keep the promises we made. Books and movies lead us to expect that feeling of being 'in love' to last forever, but when the initial rush of romance fades, people think they made a mistake and are entitled to a change. Another idea we get from books, movies and poetry, is that 'falling in love' is completely irresistible; it just happens and we can't help it. In truth, married or not, people find themselves attracted to a

person, but there is a choice whether the attraction is allowed to develop into anything more. Christian marriage should be permanent; maintained by our choice and will and the help of God.

Another, much more unpopular, part of Christian marriage is the man is to be the 'head' of the home. This doesn't mean a dictator, but when agreement can't be reached, someone must take the responsibility for setting the family policy, one must have the deciding vote. If there must be a head, why must it be the man? Lewis says, as far as he can tell, women may want to run their own houses, but scorn other women for doing so. It must not be a natural state if women are embarrassed by the accusation that they rule the roost, and most often they will resent the husband who allows it. Another factor is that women are, by design, the caretakers and protectors of the family, whereas men much more naturally deal with the outer world. Lewis says it's "for the protection of other people from the intense family patriotism of the wife." If your dog bit a child, who would you rather deal with, the man of the house or the child's Mother? (Brigette edited to this point...she is Awesome!)

Chapter 7 Forgiveness

Forgiveness seems like a good idea until we actually have something to forgive. The Christian rule, "thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (Lev.19:18 KJV), includes your enemy. That means we must forgive our enemy. "Forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who sins against us." (Luke 11:4 NIV) If we don't forgive, we won't be forgiven. Two things will make this process easier. First we must begin to practice forgiving those its easier to forgive, form the habit of forgiving. Second, we must consider what it means to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Forgiving our enemies does not mean we approve of their actions or excuse them from punishment. We are still to hate the sin just as we hate things we ourselves have done, but in the same way we wish we hadn't done wrong, we should be sorry the enemy did the bad thing, hoping that somehow they can be "cured and made human again." (Lewis pg 117) Christian morality requires forgiveness, allows for punishment but is concerned mainly with the marks or twists on the soul, both of the forgiver and the forgiven, turning them into either a heavenly or evil creature. This means every time we feel resentment, need for revenge, and anger, we must work to defeat it. We must strive to feel like we do about ourselves; wish that he weren't bad, hope he will get better, wish for his good. This means loving some who have nothing lovable about them, just as God loves us. He gave us the perfect example to show us how it works. He loves us, and we are unlovely, He forgives when He could be angry and vengeful, and we are to follow His lead.

Chapter 8 The Great Sin

There is one vice that plagues all humans, is seldom recognized within oneself but is despised in others. Pride, the starting point for all the other vices, "is the complete anti-God state of mind." (Lewis pg122) The corresponding virtue, humility, is at the very center of Christian morality. Essentially competitive, pride seeks not just to have, but to have the most of everything, the pleasure of being above the rest, the power and superiority over others. Pride has been the main cause of misery since the beginning. Pride is what turned the devil into the devil. It is the total enmity between men and enmity to God. Pride cannot know God. A good measure of pride is the feeling of being better than anyone. Other vices work through our animal nature or baser instincts but pride is strictly spiritual, a spiritual cancer. It eats up any possibility of love, contentment or even common sense.

Pleasure at being praised is not pride but vanity, which, in seeking approval of others, still values others. Pride doesn't value others or their opinions. We also use the term "proud of" someone, but intend it to mean the admiration and love of that person.

God and pride are totally at odds because pride leaves us with no need or desire for God. Humility rids us of all our pretenses and posturing. We can be close to Him when we are not above

anyone else. Humility will make a cheerful, intelligent man who takes a real interest in others rather than just himself. To acquire humility we must first realize our pride, and if you think you aren't conceited, that is evidence you are very conceited indeed.

Chapter 9 Charity

The Theological virtues are faith, hope and charity. Charity, or love, in a Christian sense is not an emotion but a state of the will, a choice. Charity doesn't necessarily mean we like a person, but liking does encourage the natural affections and thereby encourages the virtue of charity. Charity does not require the feelings of love for our neighbor, it requires action. When we begin to act in charity we will begin to feel it. Charity depends on our attitude, our desire to please God and obey His law. Charity is not sentimental affection. A Christian acting in charity will find the more he treats people kindly the more he likes people. The opposite is true also, the worse you treat people, the more you will dislike others. Good and evil increase exponentially, each act compounds interest.

Charity does not depend on how we feel but how we determine to act. Our feelings are changeable, God's are not. By practicing charity, we learn to love in spite of the undesirable, unlovable qualities of others, in the same manner as God loves us.

Chapter 10 Hope

Hope is the virtue of continually looking forward toward the eternal world, focusing on heaven, the home God intends for us. Keeping our minds focused on the eternal will create changes in this world, focus on this world gains us nothing. It is difficult to change our focus as we have been trained our entire lives to concentrate on this material world around us. In order to refocus we must look inside ourselves and realize the longing for something more, something we cannot attain here on earth. We are born with a desire for something larger. We have the sense inside that we were made for another place and nothing here will completely satisfy. We must keep that desire for our true home alive, make it the main point of life, to push on to that other place and to help others to do the same.

The scriptural imagery of harps, crowns, and gold are symbolic, an attempt to explain the unexplainable. Music in this present life suggests joy and life. Crowns represent the power and splendor of God, and how we will share in God's glory. Gold is timeless and precious, a suggestion of Heaven.

Chapter 11 Faith

The word faith when used in a Christian sense has two levels. The first level is Belief; accepting the truth of the doctrines of Christianity. Once the human mind accepts something as true, believes it, then it will go on believing it unless there comes a real reason to reconsider that belief. The minute reason decides the evidence is true, reason and belief become faith. Naturally bad news will come or moments when it would be more convenient to reject Christianity. Faith then becomes the act of holding on to our beliefs in spite of changing moods or feelings. The virtue of faith teaches us the difference between feelings and belief. Feelings are changeable, faith is immovable. We must develop the habit of faith, it must be fed and brought to mind daily and deliberately.

Faith in the higher level takes us back to humility. The first step toward humility is the recognition of pride. The next step is the serious, earnest attempt to practice the Christian virtues. Only when you try to resist temptation can you realize how strong it is. "No man knows how bad he is till he has tried very hard to be good." (Lewis pg 142) Christ is the only one who knows fully what temptation really means, because He was the only one who fully resisted it. Our first lesson when we seriously try to practice Christian virtue is that we fail. It's not a test ; if we do well enough we deserve good grades, or a bargain with God; if we hold up our end of the contract, God owes us something. These ideas are destroyed by real Christianity. God is waiting for us to realize we have no chance of getting a good grade or holding

Him to a bargain. Then comes the discovery that everything we are, our thought processes, our bodies, our lives are all given us by God. He already owns us, so to speak, so anything we could ever give Him is already His by rights. When we realize our failure and total dependence on God is when real life begins, when God can get to work on us.

Chapter 12 Faith

Faith in the higher sense arrives after we have failed in our honest attempts at virtue, and after we realize we can't give anything back to God that isn't already His. We discover our "bankruptcy" (Lewis pg 145). We don't discover this bankruptcy until we have tried our very hardest and failed, and realized we must try harder and harder. All our trying will not bring us to God but does finally lead us to the moment when we turn to Him and say "You have to do this because I can't." This is the change from being confident with our efforts at morality and virtue to the state of despair when we finally must leave it to God. This means putting all trust in Christ, trust that He will share with us the perfect human obedience, that He will make us a person more like Himself. Christ offers all this for nothing, everything for nothing. The whole Christian life is simply the acceptance of this offer, not in earning or deserving it. Turning everything over to God and trusting Him we will try to do all that He says, "trying in a new way, a less worried way." (Lewis pg147) It is no longer working to earn heaven but learning to act differently because of Christ inside you.

Faith in Christ is the only way out of the despair at our bankruptcy and from that faith, our actions will change. Good actions are not going to buy heaven, and faith without actions is not obedience. Christianity might seem at first to be about morality, rules, duties, guilt and virtue but it leads us into something beyond, where we see a glimpse of that country, that place we belong, "near the stage where the road passes over the rim of our world." (Lewis pg 150)

Book Four: Beyond Personality: Or First Steps In The Doctrine Of The Trinity

Chapter 1 Making and Begetting

_____Theology, meaning the science of God, is the means to the most accurate idea of God. Like a map, it shows a place beyond our own experience, and lead us to places we couldn't have known otherwise. Theology doesn't give us the popular, feel-good, trendy religion that is all feeling and no work, but a practical and proper view of God.

At the center of theology is the creed that calls Christ the Son of God, begotten but not created. This is not referring to His life here on earth but His life from beyond the beginning, before the earth was created, before time began.

To *beget* means to father something of the same kind as itself but to create something is to make some different from itself. A human father begets human babies but can *create* only images or imitations without life. What God begets is God, what He creates is not, which is why man can be sons of God but not in the same sense as Christ. Man is created in a likeness of God, but without the same life as God. Human life is only a shadow of His life. Lewis refers to the natural life as Bios, and the God life, the spiritual life, as Zoe. Zoe life is only obtained through God. The change from the Bios life to the Zoe life is what Christianity is all about.

Chapter 2 The Three-Personal God

_____Christianity offers the only idea about a God who is both personal and yet more than a person, and how a human can personally be taken into the life of God, but stay themselves. Other religions offer the idea that we become one with God, absorbed into Him, which means we no longer exist. The purpose of our existence is to be taken into the life of God and still continue to be ourselves, only better. As we move on to more complicated levels of understanding, the simpler concepts are not left behind.

The human level is simple, one person is one being, but on the divine level, there are still personalities but combined in ways our three dimensional mind does not comprehend. God's dimension consists of one being who is three but still one being. As a Christian tries to get in touch with God, we are prompted by God, He is the goal we try to reach, the motivation to try to reach and the bridge we travel to God. The man is being caught up into the Zoe or spiritual life, pulled into God, by God.

Theology started from a vague idea of God until a man claimed to actually be God, they believed Him, and saw Him again after seeing Him killed. When they gathered together they found God somehow inside them, leading and directing them, making them able to do things they couldn't before. "They had arrived at the Christian definition of the Three-Personal God." (Lewis pg 163) God has made the initiative to draw us to Him, to unite us into a body, loving each other and showing Him to one another.

Chapter 3 Time and Beyond Time

God is not in Time, He doesn't require a moment here and there to listen to each person's prayers. We view this life moment by moment and assume it must be the way all things exist. God is not inside of or bound by our time stream but has infinite attention for each individual. He is able to give us His complete attention individually at any moment. Christ's life on earth cannot be fit into any time relation with His life as infinite God, beyond time. God has no history, no future, only infinite Present. Its as if He sees you doing now what you did yesterday and what you are doing tomorrow. It is always Now for Him.

Chapter 4 Good Infection

Although we think of cause and effect in sequential order, this is not always the case. Picture a beach in your mind. Your act of imagination is the cause and the mental picture in your mind is the effect yet they happen simultaneously. In the same way, the First person of God, called the Father, begat the Second person, the Son. The Son exists because the Father exists but there was never a time before the Father begat the Son. The Son is and always has been like light streaming from the Father, the self-expression of the Father and there was never a time when He was not expressing Himself. The relation between Father and Son is most like the relation between the First and Second Person, a relation of love. The Christian statement "God is Love" has no meaning unless there are in fact two persons because love is something one does to another. This living, dynamic activity of love has existed in God the Father and God the Son forever and has created everything else.

The relationship between Father and Son is such a real and living thing that this union is its own Person, the Third Person of God. When we humans unite in a team or a club or family, we say we have team spirit, we develop a dynamic between all involved. Of course, in the human sense, this isn't another person, but what exists out of the joint life of the Father and Son, the dynamic, living love union is a real Person we call the Holy Spirit. He is more vague to us but usually because we aren't looking at Him, He is acting through and in us.

The Father is out in front of us, the Son is standing at our side, helping us to become more like Himself, and the Holy Spirit is working inside us. Another way of understanding this is; God is Love, that love works through men, but the Spirit of Love is the love between the Father and Son, drawing us into itself. True happiness, peace, power, love and eternal life are obtained only by moving in closer, into the One life that can offer these things. We don't start out with a Zoe, or spiritual life, but the offer of Christianity is that if we let God have His way, we share in the life of Christ. Sharing in His life, we are becoming sons of God, we will love the Father and the Holy Spirit will fill us. Jesus came to this earth as a man to share this life with other men, the kind of life He has, the spiritual life. The whole purpose of becoming a Christ is this new kind of life.

Chapter 5 The Obstinate Toy Soldiers

_____The natural life and the spiritual life are not only very different but in complete opposition. The natural life is self-centered, wants admiration and praise, wants to take advantage of others and exploit everyone and everything, but mostly it wants to be left to itself. It is afraid of the light of the spiritual. It knows if the spiritual life gets a hold of it, self-centeredness and self will are going to have to die. This death of the self is what is referred to so often in the New Testament, sharing in the death of Christ. God knew our resistance to this death and change so He sent the Son to become human, born as an actual man. The Eternal being who created the universe became human. The result was that one man was as all men are intended to be, the one in whom the created life became perfectly the begotten life, the one instance of humanity fully taken into the divine. His entire earthly life involved the killing of His human desires from before His birth; poverty, misunderstanding from family and friends, rejection, betrayal by a close friend, humiliation, torture and execution. After being killed, the human man, the Divine Son, came back to life. The whole of humanity was affected. Man can move from the Bios to the timeless Zoe life, because Christ already did it for us. We don't have to try to climb up to the spiritual life by our own effort, "it has already come down into the human race." (Lewis pg 181) We only have to open ourselves to the one Man, fully God and man, and He will do it for us and in us.

Chapter 6 Two Notes

1).A critic asked why God didn't beget many sons to start with. The process of turning from a creature into a son of God would be much easier if mankind hadn't rejected God centuries ago, but they were able to do this because He gave them free will. Were mankind without free will, they would also be incapable of infinite love or happiness. The difficulty of God begetting many sons from all eternity is they would have to somehow be different from each other. The Father and the Son are related as the one who begets and the other begotten. The relation of the Father to Son is not the same as Son to Father, therefore if there were many Sons, they would all be related to the Father the same way and to each other the same. They would not be different. It can only be vaguely imagined within the bounds of our natural world, which didn't exist during the begetting.

2). The idea of the human race as one huge organism must not be confused with the idea that there are no individuals, just as there are many organs in a body, each different from one another and each having its own usefulness. If we ignore that we all belong to the same body, we become an Individualist, but to ignore differences and think all people alike is Totalitarian. Christians should be neither. The desire to stand more strongly against either, saying one error is worse, is straight from the devil. He sends errors out into the world in pairs, opposite pairs. Then he encourages us to spend time figuring out which is worse, and our stronger dislike for one error will gradually lead us closer to the other. "We have to keep our eyes on the goal and go straight through between both errors." (Lewis pg 186)

Chapter 7 Let's Pretend

Up to this point we have been dealing with facts about who and what God is. Now its time to put these things into practice. We are told in Phil. 2:5(KJV) "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:" We are to put on the mind of Christ. That means that dressing up like Jesus in a sense. We start acting like Him, pretending to be like Him and we will become more like Him. This doesn't mean pretending we have already arrived, but developing the habit of thinking and acting like He would. In this practicing, we will also begin to see where we are not living up to His standard. By acting as Jesus would, He will begin to transform you into the same kind of thing as Himself. He is there with you each step and helping you. Sometimes we don't feel the sense of being helped by an invisible Christ, but there are many times the help comes from other people allowing Christ to act through them.

The New Testament talks about becoming a new creation, putting on Christ and being born again. This is not fancy Christian talk, it means there is a real Person, a living Man and present God, coming in and interfering with your very soul. He is working within you to kill the old selfish natural self and replace it with the kind of life in Him.

We will make two discoveries: 1. We begin to notice our own sinfulness, especially when we are caught off guard and act ugly. We see the evidence of our real nature in those surprise circumstances, and that is when we can begin to deal with them. We can't do this by our own moral effort, for everything that really needs to be changed must be done by God. 2. We don't do any of this on our own. God does it all and our part is to allow it to be done to us, to allow Him to change our self-centered, rebellious human nature. Its as if God is also pretending. He looks at us and sees our awful self and says "Lets pretend this is our Son, let's pretend this human is like Him in Spirit. Let's pretend so that we can make the pretense into a reality." God sees us as His sons and Jesus stands right beside you helping you to turn into one. Its like a mother teaching her baby to talk by talking to him as though he understands her long before he really does.

Chapter 8 Is Christianity Hard or Easy?

Acting Christ-like, while being transformed into one like Christ, is not a special exercise for the top of the class. "It is the whole of Christianity. Christianity offers nothing else at all." (Lewis pg 195) This is different from the ordinary ideas of morality or being good. Before we become Christians, we take our Self as the starting point, then morality or decent behavior interferes with our own desires. If what self wants turns out to be wrong we must give it up, and what our self doesn't want to do, but is the right thing, we have to do that. So we are good hoping that at some time we will meet all the demands and self will have a chance to get on with its own life and do what we desire. At some point we will either give up being good or we will be good but with a bad attitude about it. The natural self will become more angry and frustrated with our denial of it and our following our conscience.

The Christian way is different and harder in some ways but much easier in others. Christ says to give Him all of ourselves. He didn't come to torment our natural self, but to actually kill it. He doesn't want to just fix up a thing here or there but to tear it all down and give us a new self instead. He says He will give you Himself; His own will becomes our will. Christ Himself describes the Christian way as hard and easy; "Take up the cross" (Mark 10:21 KJV) and "My yoke is easy and my burden light." (Matt 11:30 KJV) The hard part is to hand over your entire self, all your hopes and cares, to Christ but it is far easier than trying to be good and moral on our own. We try to stay 'ourselves' and keep our own personal happiness and at the same time be 'good'. If we desire a change it must involve more than the surface. The first thing every day we must push aside all our own desires and listen for that quiet, stronger, larger life to flow into us. This isn't a one-time thing, it must happen over and over each day, only for a moment at a time perhaps, but growing and spreading through our soul more as we allow Him to work. Lewis repeats, "This is the whole of Christianity. There is nothing else." (Lewis pg 199) God became a Man for no other reason than to draw men into Himself. The bible says the whole universe was made for Christ and its all to be gathered together in Him. We don't really know how that will actually happen as we only have been shown the plan where it concerns ourselves. What we do know it that men can be drawn into Christ, become part of the gift the Son offers His Father, the gift that is Himself and us in Him. "It is the only thing we were made for." (Lewis pg 200)

Chapter 9 Counting the Cost

Jesus spoke of us being perfect, not that we should accomplish this ourselves, but that He would help us to become perfect. We may actually want less, but He is only willing to give us the whole

process. People often come to Him to cure a specific sin or trouble, but He isn't going to stop there, He will continue working on you to cure all the sins. Jesus warned people to count the cost before making a decision. He wants us to know that if we follow Him, we are in for changes, He will make us perfect. As long as we allow Him to work, and don't push Him away, He plans to see the job through, till the Father can say that He is well pleased with you. He says He can and will do this for us, but will not stop at less. The wonderful thing is that He will be pleased with every fumbling, stumbling effort along the way.

We never need to be discouraged in our attempts toward perfection because each time we fall He will pick us up again. There is nothing that will stop His guiding and training us in perfection except our own unwillingness. We may not have intended to become the kind of creature He is making us into but this is what He intended for us when He made us. We may be perfectly content to remain ordinary people but He has another plan and submission to His plan is obedience. We can't depend on our own efforts to make us decent people, but with His support, we are open to the highest possible degrees of holiness which He intends for each of us. It won't be fully accomplished in this lifetime, but He intends to get us as far along as possible before death.

Once we begin this journey, troubles and disappointment will come, but this is where God is pushing us to a higher level, putting us in situations where we have to be braver, more loving, more patient than ever before. We seem to think He is going to just come in and fix the drains, repair the leak in the roof, and maybe a fresh coat of paint, but He is renovating the whole house. He is building a palace where He plans to come and live. Of course, we do have a choice to allow or not, this renovation,. We can allow Him to make us into a radiant, immortal creature full of His life, love and wisdom, a reflections of Himself. The process is not easy or quick, but it is what we were made for.

Chapter 10 Nice People or New Men

It would seem that if Christians are becoming these glorious new creatures then all Christians should obviously be much nicer than all non-Christians. In a true conversion to Christianity, these changes will begin to be evident in a man's outward actions. When Christians behave badly, it makes Christianity unbelievable, giving the outer world grounds to doubt the truth of Christianity. Often men will demand that if they will believe in Christianity they must see the world divided neatly into Christian and non-Christian and the Christians must at all times be nicer than the other group. In the actual world, Christians are in the midst of growing into Christ-like men, and non-Christians, strongly attracted to God, haven't yet made that commitment. We cannot compare the Christian on his journey to the non-Christian who hasn't begun. If we are talking about two real people, a Christian and a non-Christian, it doesn't necessarily follow that the Christian is a nice person to start with, and hasn't arrived at a Christ-like mindset, and the non-Christian may be a very likeable person, with a pleasant temperament. Anyone who becomes a Christian will be nicer then before, but that doesn't mean instant change into a person with an agreeable temperament. As a matter of fact, the person with the nice temperament, the person with advantages, may feel they are not in as much need of Christ. On the part of the unpleasant person, God is watching and waiting and working to change him, transform him. Both are free to either turn to Him or refuse Him, but both need Him just the same. He will help us to make the choice for a new life, but will not force it upon us. It takes nothing for God to give us good things, "but to convert rebellious wills cost His crucifixion." (Lewis pg 212) So we should not be surprised that we will find among the Christian group those who are still nasty. Actually, it seems the nasty people are more attracted to Christ because they are not satisfied with the life they have, the nice ones may be quite satisfied and fail to realize the need for God. Those with the most advantages in life are likely to believe all the good and niceness is their own doing and cannot be brought to recognize the need for a transformation in their

lives. It's different for the disadvantaged ones, for any attempt at goodness and they learn they cannot possibly do it themselves and they need help. This whole idea is summed up when Jesus said "So the last shall be first, and the first last." (Matt. 20:16 KJV)

Improvement is not redemption but redemption will always improve people and will continue to improve them to such a degree that we can't even imagine. God became man for this purpose, to turn humans into sons, not just to make better humans, to make a new kind of man altogether. Its easy to look at one Christian who is failing or faulty and argue that Christianity is nothing, but we can never know that person's soul, their temptations or struggles. We can't even know what kind of person he would have been if he were not a Christian. We only can truly know one soul, and it is the one soul whose entire fate is placed in our own hands. It is our own soul that must answer to God, to decide for or against Him.

Chapter 11 New Men

We have been talking about more than an improvement, but a major transformation. When people talk about evolution, and mankind making a next step, it's often seen as man developing a better brain and better control over nature. The real Next Step is actually something new altogether, a new kind of difference, not a change but a new way of change. The Christian viewpoint is that the Next Step has already happened, has appeared in the person of Christ and in our relation to Him. We won't change into smarter men, but change from being creatures of God into actual sons of God. Nature changes genetics, organisms have no choice about this new change, and according to evolution is a long process. This new step is voluntary, we can accept what is offered or refuse it, and by the standard of the universe, the step is like a flash of lightening, the diffusion of Christianity throughout the human race took place in just two thousand years. Christ is not just the first instance of this change, but is the New Man, the origin and center and the life of all new men. He came to the earth He had created and brought with Him the Zoe, the new life. Everyone who makes this next step, this change to a higher being, does so by personal contact with Jesus.

The outer world has often thought that Christianity was dying by persecutions from outside and corruptions from inside but the outside world is always disappointed. "Its first disappointment was over the crucifixion. The Man cam to life again" (Lewis pg 222) They keep on trying to kill what Jesus started and every time they think it is down, it pops up again, just as alive and in even more places. The new men are spread all over the earth, some still in infancy spiritually but others are easily recognized. They are different; they are happier, stronger, and more peaceful. They are rarely the type we would think of as 'religious people' and do not call the attention to themselves. They love more, are kinder, it seems they can recognize each other immediately and Lewis says "it must be great fun." (Lewis pg 223)

Don't think that all new men are alike, that becoming more like Christ means to lose your own personality. He created each of us as a unique person, an individual personality. As we become more Christ-like, our differences begin to show. Our personality, tempered with the mind of Christ, becomes more our true self as God intended us to be instead of the self we have developed through our heredity, upbringing, cultural surroundings and desires. The real you, the new you, develops only in giving up your self to Him and allowing Him to transform you. In giving up yourself to Christ, you will find your true self. In the submission of your earthy ambitions and desires, submission of every part of your entire being, your old self will die. "Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead." (Lewis pg 227) Look for Christ and you will find Him, you will be transformed and you will find eternal life. ~

I found this book to be a great help in my own studies and in my ability to share with others. I believe every Christian should Study this book. His explanation of the Trinity was wonderful, and so many of his

teachings make the whole Christian experience simple to explain and understand. I have a better perspective of Christianity and Jesus and new insights into His life because of this book.