



Further Up & Further In

Exploring *Mere Christianity* with C.S. Lewis

Book 2: What Christians Believe

“What was from the beginning, what we have **heard**, what we have **seen** with our eyes, what we have **looked at** and **touched** with our hands, concerning the Word of Life— and the life was **manifested**, and we have **seen** and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was **manifested** to us — what we have **seen** and **heard** we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.”

1 John 1:1-3



Session 2: Preview

1. Pay attention to how Lewis presents Christian theism as the best answer to the moral nature of reality
2. Briefly consider how Lewis compares and contrasts Christianity with other worldviews regarding the character of God and existence of evil.
3. Consider how the uniqueness of Jesus Christ fits into Lewis's presentation of the Christian faith.
4. Briefly examine how Lewis views the relationship of reason, imagination, and faith.

Conscience

Christ

Character

Change

UNDERGRADUATES OF UNIVERSITY COLLEGE - 1917





Mere Christianity

BOOK 1:

Right and Wrong As a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe

1. The Law of Human Nature
2. Some Objections
3. The Reality of the Law
4. What Lies Behind the Law
5. We Have Cause to Be Uneasy



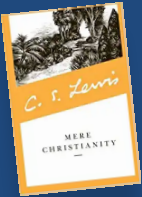
Chapter 1: The Law of Human Nature

“These, then are the two points
I wanted to make.

First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it.

Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of Nature; they break it.

These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in.” p.8



Mere Christianity

BOOK 2:

What Christians Believe

1. The Rival Conceptions of God
2. The Invasion
3. The Shocking Alternative
4. The Perfect Penitent
5. The Practical Conclusion



Important!

Worldview – a perspective on life to which we are often deeply committed; it

1. serves as a grid by which we make sense of the world and our experience
2. provides shape and direction for our lives
3. is understood and communicated in the form of a story

Our Worldview Describes “*the Basic Constitution of Reality*”



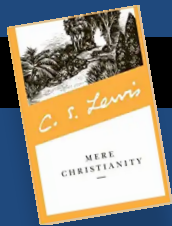
- Our worldviews contain answers to the **basic questions of life** such as:

- What is prime reality-the really real?
- How can we know anything for sure?
- Where did this world come from?
- What is a human being or who am I?
- Is there any such thing as right and wrong?
- What is wrong with the world?
- Is there any meaning or purpose to history (human and cosmic)



Chapter 1: The Rival Conceptions of God

“I have been asked to tell you what **Christians** believe, and I am going to begin by telling you one thing that **Christians** do not need to believe. If you are a **Christian** you do not have to believe that all the other religions are simply wrong all through. If you are an **atheist** you do have to believe that the main point in all the religions of the whole world is simply one huge mistake. If you are a **Christian**, you are free to think that all those religions, even the queerest ones, contain at least some hint of the truth.”
p. 35

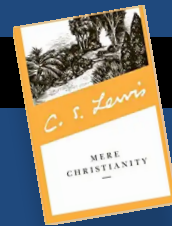


Chapter 1: The Rival Conceptions of God

“The first big division of humanity is into the majority, who believe in some kind of God or gods, and the minority who do not.



“On this point, Christianity lines up with the majority—lines up with ancient Greeks and Romans, modern savages, Stoics, Platonists, Hindus, Mohammedans, etc., against the modern Western European materialist.” p.35



Chapter 1: The Rival Conceptions of God

“But, of course, being a Christian does mean thinking that where Christianity differs from other religions, **Christianity is right and they are wrong**. As in arithmetic—there is only one right answer to a sum, and all other answers are wrong; but some of the wrong answers are much nearer being right than others.” p.35

Time to Discuss

What are some beliefs and practices that Christianity and naturalism have in common? What are some differences?

Conscience

Christ

Character

Change



Similarities and Differences

Christianity

God
Supernatural
Miracles
Revelation
Afterlife
HB-Body/Soul



Naturalism

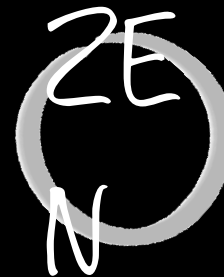
Material World
Sense Exp
Reason
Uniformity
Science
Human dignity



Atheism
Materialism
Closed Sys
Silence
Extinction
HB-Physical

Chapter 1: The Rival Conceptions of God

“Now I go on to the next big division. People who all believe in God can be divided according to **the sort of God they believe in**. There are two very different ideas on this subject. One of them is the idea that He is beyond good and evil. We humans call one thing good and another thing bad. But according to some people that is merely our human point of view.”



Arthur Koestler in conversation with a Zen Buddhist scholar:

“You favor tolerance toward all religions and all political systems. What about Hitler’s gas chambers?”

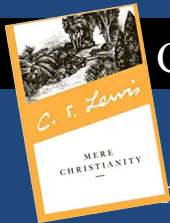
‘That was very silly of him.’

‘Just silly not evil?’

‘Evil is a Christian concept. Good and evil exist only on a relative scale.’

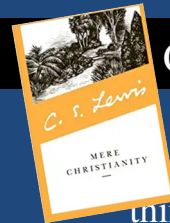
‘Should it include those who deny tolerance?’

‘That is thinking in opposite categories, which is alien to our thought.’”



Chapter 1: The Rival Conceptions of God

“And with this big difference between Pantheism and the Christian idea of God, there usually goes another. Pantheists usually believe that God, so to speak, animates the universe as you animate your body: that the universe almost is God, so that if it did not exist He would not exist either, and anything you find in the universe is a part of God. The Christian idea is quite different. They think God invented and made the universe—like a man making a picture or composing a tune.”
pp. 36 - 37



Chapter 1: The Rival Conceptions of God

“... Christianity is a fighting religion. It thinks God made the world—that space and time, heat and cold, and all the colours and tastes, and all the animals and vegetables, are things that God ‘made up out of His head’ as a man makes up a story. But it also thinks that a great many things have gone wrong with the world that God made and that God insists, and insists very loudly, on our putting them right again. And, of course, that raises a very big question. **If a good God made the world why has it gone wrong?**” pp. 37 - 38

Time to Discuss

How might the existence of evil effect a persons view of God?

Conscience

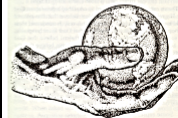
Christ

Character

Change

The Big Three

Theism: A World Plus
an Infinite God



Atheism: A World
Without God



Pantheism:
A World That Is God



Christianity
Islam
Judaism

Materialism
Atheism
Secularism

Hinduism
New Age
Transcendentalism

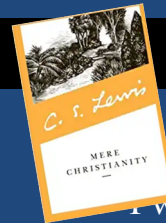


Mere Christianity

BOOK 2:

What Christians Believe

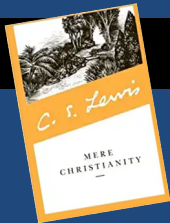
1. The Rival Conceptions of God
2. The Invasion
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Chapter 2: The Invasion

“Very well then, atheism is too simple. And I will tell you another view that it also too simple. It is what I will call Christianity-and-water, the view that says there is a God in heaven and everything is all right—leaving out all the difficult and terrible doctrines about sin and hell and the devil, and the redemption. Both these are boys philosophies.

It is not good asking for a simple religion. **After all real things are not simple.** They look simple but they are not.” p. 40



Chapter 2: The Invasion

“Besides being **complicated**, reality, in my experience, is **odd**. . . Reality, in fact, is usually something you could not have guessed. That is one of the reasons I believe Christianity. It is a religion you could not have guessed. . . So let us leave behind all these boys philosophies—these **over-simple answers**. The problem is not **simple** and the answer is not going to be **simple** either.” p. 41 - 42



So, What Is the Problem?

“A universe that contains much that is obviously bad and apparently meaningless, but containing creatures like ourselves who know that it is bad and meaningless. There are only two views that face the facts.” p. 42

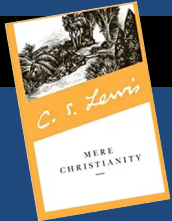
Christianity

A good power
created the world
gone bad but we still
have the memory of
the good

OR

Dualism

Good and evil
powers exist and
are battling it
out



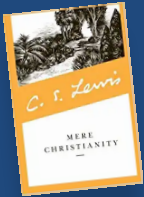
Chapter 2: The Invasion

“Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage. . . I know someone will ask me, ‘Do you really mean, at this time of day, to re-introduce our old friend the devil. . . my answer is ‘Yes, I do.’”



“The September 8, 1947 cover of *Time Magazine* improbably depicts the demure C. S. Lewis accompanied by a fiercely impish devil poised on his left shoulder, a caricature of his infamous fictional protagonist, Screwtape, AKA, Senior Tempter of Hell.

<https://www.cslewis.com/the-devil-and-mr-lewis/>

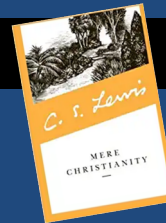


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Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

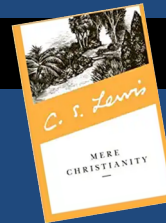
Why Is There Evil?

“Christians, then, believe that an evil power has made himself for the present the Prince of this World. And, of course, that raises problems. Is this state of affairs in accordance with God’s will, or not? If it is, He is a strange God, you will say: and if it is not, how can anything happen contrary to the will of a being with absolute power?” p. 47



Defining Terms

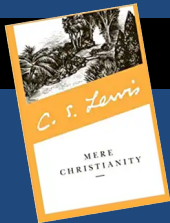
Evil – a deficiency or distortion of what is good: “a departure from the way things ought to be.” This means that good is primary and evil is a parasite. Lewis writes, “Badness is only a spoiled goodness.” He illustrates this by saying that judging a stick to be crooked assumes some idea of straightness and counterfeit currency assumes a real currency.”



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

Free Will

“Of course God knew what would happen if they used their freedom the wrong way: apparently He thought it worth the risk. Perhaps we feel inclined to disagree with Him. . . If God thinks this state of war in the universe a price worth paying for **free will—that is, for making a live world in which creatures can do real good or harm and something of real importance can happen**, instead of a toy world which only moves when He pulls the strings—then we may take it it is worth paying.” p. 48



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

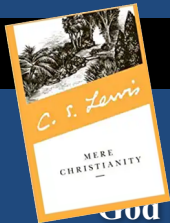
Why Did God Make Us This Way?

“When we have understood about **free will**, we shall see how silly it is to ask, as somebody once asked me: ‘Why did God make a creature of such rotten stuff that it went wrong?’ The better stuff a creature is made of—the cleverer and stronger and freer it is—then the better it will be if it goes right, but also the worse it will be if it goes wrong.” p.49



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

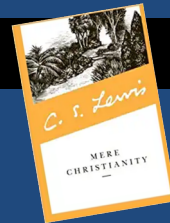
“How did the Dark Power go wrong? . . . The moment you have a self at all, there is a possibility of putting yourself **first—wanting to be the centre—wanting to be God**, in fact. That was the sin of Satan: and that was the sin he taught the human race.” p.49



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

“The reason why it can never succeed is this.

God made us: invented us as a man invents an engine. A car is made to run on petrol, and it would not run properly on anything else. Now God designed the human machine to run on Himself. He Himself is the fuel our spirits were designed to burn, or the food our spirits were designed to feed on. There is no other. That is why it is just no good asking God to make us happy in our own way without bothering about religion. **God cannot give us a happiness and peace apart from Himself, because it is not there. There is no such thing.” p. 50**

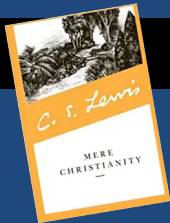


Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

God's Remedy

“And what did God do? **First of all** He left us conscience, the sense of right and wrong: and all through history there have been people trying (some of them very hard) to obey it. None of them ever quite succeeded.

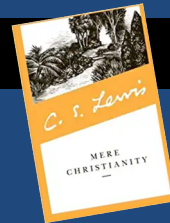
Secondly, He sent the human race what I call good dreams: I mean those queer stories scattered all through the heathen religions about a god who dies and comes to life again and, by his death, has somehow given new life to men. . .”



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

Thirdly, He selected one particular people and spent several centuries hammering into their heads the sort of God He was—that there was only one of Him and that He cared about right conduct. Those people were **the Jews**, and the Old Testament gives an account of the hammering process.

p. 51 - 52



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

“Then comes the real shock. Among these Jews there suddenly turns up a man who goes about talking as if He was God.”

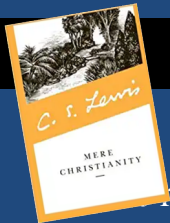
- has always existed
- forgives sins
- will judge the world

Conscience

Christ

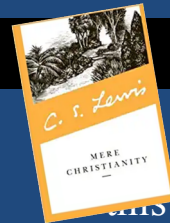
Character

Change



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

“I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a **great moral teacher**, but I don’t accept His claim to be **God**.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a **great moral teacher**. He would either be a **lunatic**—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the **Devil of Hell**. . . Either this man was, and is, the **Son of God**. . .” continued



Chapter 3: The Shocking Alternative

“**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.” p. 52

MBG – Mad, Bad, or God

Responses to Jesus in the Gospels

- 📖 **Mark 2:5-7:** “And Jesus seeing their faith *said to the paralytic, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, “Why does this man speak that way? **He is blaspheming**; who can forgive sins but God alone?”
- 📖 **Mark 3:22-30** – “And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, ‘**He is possessed by Beelzebul!** By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.’
- 📖 **John 8:57-58:** So the Jews said to Him, “You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?” Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, **I am.**” Therefore **they picked up stones to throw at Him**, but Jesus hid Himself and went out of the temple.
- 📖 **John 10:31-33** – The Jews **picked up stones again to stone Him**. Jesus answered them, “I showed you many good works from the Father; for which of them are you stoning Me?” The Jews answered Him, “For a good work we do not stone You, but for **blasphemy**; and because You, being a man, **make Yourself out to be God.**”



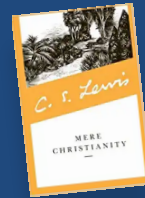
Letter to Mrs. Mary Neylan,
March 26, 1940

“Now the truth is, I think, that the sweetly-attractive-human-Jesus is a product of 19th century scepticism, produced by people who were ceasing to believe in his divinity but wanted to keep as much of Christianity as they could. It is not what an unbeliever coming to the records with an open mind will (at first) find there. The first thing you really find is that we are simply not invited, so to speak, to pass any moral judgement on him, however favorable . . .



Letter to Mrs. Mary Neylan,
March 26, 1940

“it is only too clear he is going to do whatever judging there is: it is we who are being judged, sometimes tenderly, sometimes with stunning severity, but always *de haut en bas*.* . . . The first real work of the Gospels on a fresh reader is, and ought to be, to raise v. acutely the question, “Who-or-What is This?” For there is a good deal in the character which, unless he really is what he says he is—is not lovable or even tolerable.”

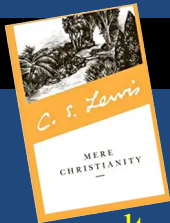


Mere Christianity

BOOK 2:

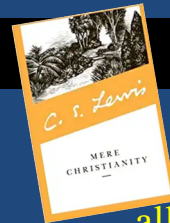
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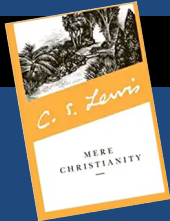
Chapter 4: The Perfect Penitent

“We are faced, then, with a **frightening alternative**. This man we are talking about either was (and is) just what He said or else a lunatic, or something worse. Now it seems to me obvious that He was neither a lunatic nor a fiend: and consequently, however strange or terrifying or unlikely it may seem, I have to accept the view that He was and is God. **God has landed on this enemy-occupied world in human form.**” p.53



Chapter 4: The Perfect Penitent

“And now, what was the **purpose of it all? What did he come to do?** Well, to teach, of course; but as soon as you look into the New Testament or any other Christian writing you will find they are constantly talking about something different—about His death and His coming to life again. **It is obvious that Christians think the chief point of the story lies there. They think the main thing He came to earth to do was to suffer and be killed.**” p.53



Chapter 4: The Perfect Penitent

“The central Christian belief is that Christ’s death has somehow put us right with God and given us a fresh start.” p. 54

“We are told that Christ was killed for us, that His death has washed out our sins, and that by dying He disabled death itself. That is the formula. That is Christianity.” p.55



Time to Discuss

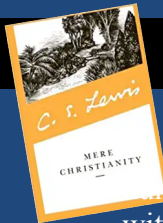
Why can't God just forgive us without any atonement?

Conscience

Christ

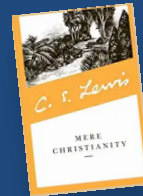
Character

Change



Chapter 4: The Perfect Penitent

“But supposing God became a man—suppose our human nature which can suffer and die was amalgamated with God’s nature in one person—then that person could help us. He could surrender His will, and suffer and die, because He was man; and He could do it perfectly because He was God. You and I can go through this process only if God does it in us; but God can do it only if He becomes man. Our attempts at this dying will succeed only if we men share in God’s dying, just as our thinking can succeed only because it is a drop out of the ocean of His intelligence: but we cannot share God’s dying unless God dies; and He cannot die except by being a man. That is the sense in which He pays our debt, and suffers for us what He Himself need not suffer at all.” p. 58

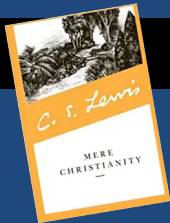


Mere Christianity

BOOK 2:

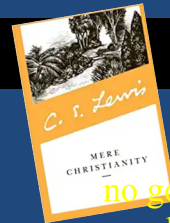
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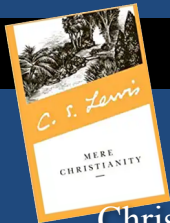
Chapter 5: The Practical Conclusion

“The perfect surrender and humiliation were undergone by Christ: perfect because He was God, surrender and humiliation because He was man. Now the Christian belief is that if we somehow share the humility and suffering of Christ we shall also share in His conquest of death and find a new life after we have died and in it become perfect, and perfectly happy, creatures. This means something much more than our trying to follow His teaching.” p. 60



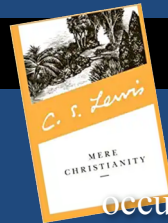
Chapter 5: The Practical Conclusion

“We have to take reality as it comes to us: there is no good jabbering about what it ought to be like or what we should have expected it to be like. But though I cannot see why it should be so, I can tell you why I believe it is so. I have explained why I have to believe that Jesus was (and is) God. And it seems plain as a matter of history that He taught His followers that the new life was communicated in this way. In other words, I believe it on His authority. Do not be scared by the word **authority**. Believing things on authority only means believing them because you have been told them by someone you think trustworthy. Ninety-nine per cent of the things you believe are believed on authority.” p. 62



Chapter 5: The Practical Conclusion

“And let me make it quite clear that when Christians say the Christ-life is in them, they do not mean simply something mental or moral. When they speak of being ‘in Christ’ or of Christ being ‘in them’, this is not simply a way of saying that they are thinking about Christ or copying Him. They mean that Christ is actually operating through them; that the whole mass of Christians are the physical organism through which Christ acts—that we are His fingers and muscles, the cells of His body.” p. 63 - 64



Chapter 5: The Practical Conclusion

“Why is God landing in this enemy-occupied world in disguise and starting a sort of secret society to undermine the devil? Why is He not landing in force, invading it? Is it that He is not strong enough? Well, Christians think He is going to land in force; we do not know when. But we can guess why He is delaying. He wants to give us the chance of joining His side freely. . . **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.**” p. 65



Further Up & Further In

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