

Concordia Seminary - Saint Louis

## Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary

---

Bachelor of Divinity

Concordia Seminary Scholarship

---

5-1-1948

### C S Lewis- His Method and Message

Paul W. Harms

Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, ir\_harmsp@csl.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv>



Part of the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

---

#### Recommended Citation

Harms, Paul W., "C S Lewis- His Method and Message" (1948). *Bachelor of Divinity*. 254.  
<https://scholar.csl.edu/bdiv/254>

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Concordia Seminary Scholarship at Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. It has been accepted for inclusion in Bachelor of Divinity by an authorized administrator of Scholarly Resources from Concordia Seminary. For more information, please contact [seitzw@csl.edu](mailto:seitzw@csl.edu).

**C. S. LEWIS: HIS METHOD AND MESSAGE**

---

**A Thesis Presented to  
The Faculty of Concordia Seminary  
Department of Systematic Theology**

---

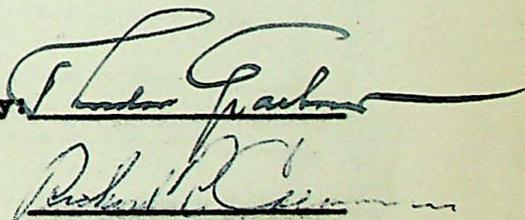
**In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Bachelor of Divinity**

---

**by  
Paul W. F. Harms**

**May 1948**

Approved by:

  
Robert P. C. [unclear]

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>I. The Author</b> . . . . .		1
<b>II. Naturalism and Supernaturalism</b> . . . . .		4
The problem . . . . .		4
$2 \div 2 = 4$ . . . . .		5
Am I on my own? . . . . .		6
I ought to . . . . .		8
The borderland . . . . .		9
Joseph knew . . . . .		10
The Laws of Nature . . . . .		12
Nature is a creature . . . . .		15
Explain yourself . . . . .		16
God is basic Fact or Actuality . . . . .		21
Theme and sub-plot . . . . .		27
Could it be? . . . . .		28
The Incarnation: The Miracle. . . . .		34
Death . . . . .		40
Miracles that look back . . . . .		43
Miracles that look ahead . . . . .		45
Summary . . . . .		47
<b>III. Some Odd Ways of Thinking</b> . . . . .		49
What do I want? . . . . .		49
The middle Road . . . . .		53
Half a man . . . . .		53
Thirty miles a day . . . . .		54
Are we human? . . . . .		54
I like religion . . . . .		55
A big help, but-- . . . . .		56
The Landlord and His Son . . . . .		58
Moderation unveiled . . . . .		61
Summary . . . . .		61
<b>IV. Have you Thought About This?</b> . . . . .		63
Where did I come from? . . . . .		63
Dualism . . . . .		65
Things . . . . .		66
Fear and obligation combined . . . . .		66
The presence of morality . . . . .		67
Psychoanalysis and morality . . . . .		71
Summary . . . . .		72

V. Something for Christians . . . . .	74
Kerygma and John the Baptist . . . . .	74
Christ as Saviour . . . . .	74
Necessity for Doctrine . . . . .	75
The self and God . . . . .	76
Moment to moment living . . . . .	78
On perfection . . . . .	79
Good conduct of Heathen, poor conduct of Christians . . . . .	80
The Devil uses jargon, not logic . . . . .	81
What is your reaction? . . . . .	82
Prayer . . . . .	83
The Law of Undulation . . . . .	85
"Christianity And" . . . . .	87
Change and novelty . . . . .	88
Humility . . . . .	89
Christianity side-tracked . . . . .	90
You're guilty . . . . .	91
Past Sinai . . . . .	92
Pride . . . . .	93
Faith . . . . .	94
Summary . . . . .	97
VI. Old Areas of Emphasis. . . . .	100
Trinity. . . . .	100
Heaven and Hell . . . . .	100
The Devil . . . . .	100
Why do I suffer? . . . . .	101
Summary. . . . .	108
VII. New Areas of Emphasis. . . . .	110
Cosmic battle of good and evil . . . . .	110
The Communion of Saints . . . . .	110
Sex, marriage, and "being in love" . . . . .	112
Love and God's love. . . . .	117
Summary. . . . .	124
VIII. This is Unique . . . . .	127
The Three-Personal God . . . . .	127
Time and beyond time . . . . .	132
Be yourself then . . . . .	135
We are God's . . . . .	139
Summary . . . . .	146
IX. Mr. Lewis's Method. Conclusion . . . . .	149
Bibliography. . . . .	154

## C. S. LEWIS: HIS METHOD AND MESSAGE

### I. The Author

The name C. S. Lewis has gained wide reputation in England and America. His popularity is quite unorthodox because it comes from expounding orthodox Christianity. His name has come more and more to the attention of the public since the publication of his now famous work The Screwtape Letters in 1941. One cause was probably the way he shattered the picture in people's minds that a Christian didn't know how to laugh. The other was his keen insight into the problems that were really bothering people and giving them a concrete way in which to solve their problems.

Mr. Lewis was brought up in the Church of England but left the church when he was about fourteen years old. At about thirty years of age he returned to the Church of England once again. The man most influential for bringing him back to Christianity was George Macdonald, a clergyman and author of the 19th century who had his home in Scotland. All of Macdonald's writings and particularly his compositions of fantasy fascinated Mr. Lewis. If he were to rate Macdonald as an author, Mr. Lewis said he would even hesitate to rate him a second rank rating. It was the content and 'soul' of Macdonald's writings that gripped the imagination of the then unbelieving Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Lewis says that he knows of no man in modern times who was more aware of the distinction of Law and Gospel. The Divine Sonship

is the theme which underlies and unites all of his writings. Only the New Testament itself brought together love and terror more vividly for Mr. Lewis. The constant theme of Macdonald's writings that God wants His creatures to be happy in Him alone and is unhappy unless that is happening gripped the author's mind.

Macdonald is unusual in another way. Because of his beliefs he underwent great hardships. The usual reaction is to become vehement against those who have caused suffering. That was not the reaction of Macdonald. He had a great appreciation for the beautiful, for all the gifts that wealth could buy and at the same time was just as content to get along without them. The anthology which Mr. Lewis has compiled shows this part of Macdonald's character very plainly.

Macdonald was living in an age that was susceptible to Romanticism. While all romantics know of Mutability, most of them weep about it. Macdonald went on to see what was behind Romanticism. This very balanced yet vigorous outlook of Macdonald has probably been quite influential in the presentation that Mr. Lewis has made of Christianity. His style of presentation is straight-forward yet winning.

After his return to Christianity Mr. Lewis came into contact with a Charles Williams in London who had written a great deal for a small group of Christian friends. It was his novel, War in Heaven, which inspired Mr. Lewis to write his now famous trilogy, Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, and That Hideous Strength, which depicts the cosmic battle that is constantly raging between the forces of good and evil.

The purpose of his broadcasting, which he did during the recent war, and his writing is best pictured from a few quotations from his pen.

The moral question is, given that situation, what we do about it.<sup>1</sup> 'Your belief' means 'what you think true.' And if you think one thing true, of course you must think the opposite false. But this is a very different thing from saying that those who hold the opposite belief are necessarily bad or stupid.<sup>2</sup> Because Christ said we could only get into His world by being like children, many Christians have the idea that, provided you are "good," it doesn't matter being a fool. . . He wants a child's heart, but a grown-up's head. . . God is no fonder of intellectual slackers than any other slackers.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Lewis's real job is being a don in the Honour School of English Language and Literature, a Tutor and Fellow at Magdalen College, Oxford, a position he has held since 1925. Bitterest opponents of his bearing a torch for Christianity say that his work in the field of literary criticism is unsurpassed. His works in this field include, The Allegory of Love, Rehabilitations, The Personal Heresy, and Preface to 'Paradise Lost'. In the field of social theory he has written The Abolition of Man. In this thesis we shall concern ourselves only with the theological writings of Mr. Lewis.

Mr. Lewis is a bachelor of some 49 years who says he likes monotony. His interest in books and writing was stimulated from his earliest youth when he had to spend many hours by himself, and those he spent in his father's substantial library. He says that he had to write books because no one had ever written the particular kind he had in mind and liked to read. He was born in Belfast, Ireland, in 1898, and served as a 2nd Lieutenant in the Somerset Light Infantry in World War I.

- 
1. C. S. Lewis, Christian Behaviour, p. 28.
  2. C. S. Lewis, Beyond Personality, p. vi.
  3. Behaviour, p. 8.

## II. Naturalism and Supernaturalism

### The Problem

In his study of Naturalism and Supernaturalism Mr. Lewis merely wishes to establish the probability of miracles. The Naturalist maintains "that nothing but Nature exists, the word Nature means to him merely 'everything' or 'the whole show' or 'whatever there is'."<sup>1</sup> Thus free will would be eliminated because that would mean that the human being would have independent power outside of Nature.

The Supernaturalist agrees that things fall into two classes. In the first class we find either things or (more probably) One Thing which is basic and original, which exists on its own. In the second we find things which are merely derivative from that One Thing. The one basic Thing has caused all the other things to be. It exists on its own; they exist because it exists. They will cease to exist if it ever ceases to maintain them in existence; they will be altered if it ever alters them.<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Lewis states that Naturalism cannot accept the idea of a God because that would mean that there is something outside of Nature. The crux is to determine whether Nature is everything or not. If that problem cannot be definitely decided, we are not in a position to say whether or not miracles are possible.

But if Naturalism is true, then we do know in advance that miracles are impossible; nothing can come into Nature from outside because there is nothing outside to come, Nature being everything.<sup>3</sup>

- 
1. C. S. Lewis, Miracles, p. 15.
  2. Ibid., p. 17.
  3. Ibid., p. 21.

$$2 \neq 2 = 4$$

One of the first inconsistencies that the Naturalist encounters is his thinking on the validity of thought.

Unless human reasoning is valid no science can be true. . . A theory which explained everything else in the whole universe but which made it impossible to believe that our thinking was valid, would be utterly out of court.<sup>4</sup>

We may then ask why the discovery of the cause of a thought sometimes reinforces it and sometimes damages its credit. Mr. Lewis would answer that objection by saying that in some case the argument is carried on from observed facts and in other instances from what he would term irrational causes, association of ideas. In other words we could say that no process of

. . . thought is valid if it can be fully explained as the result of irrational causes. . . Obviously then, the whole process of human thought, what we call Reason, is equally valueless if it is the result of irrational causes. Hence every theory of the universe which makes the human mind a result of irrational cause is inadmissible, for it would be a proof that there are no such things as proofs. Which is nonsense.<sup>5</sup>

The Naturalist runs into the difficulty of saying that the mind is simply a product of the Total System and at the same time saying that it is running on its own accord; that is, if he is using his mind to prove that there is nothing behind Nature itself. All thoughts must be the result of irrational causes since the mind is a mere product of the Total System which in itself is irrational.<sup>6</sup>

But says Mr. Lewis aptly,

All arguments about the validity of thought make a tacit, and illegitimate, exception in favour of the bit of thought

---

4. Miracles, p. 26; C. S. Lewis, Case for Christianity, p. 32.

5. Miracles, pp. 27 - 28.

6. Ibid., p. 28.

you are doing at the moment. . . Thus the Freudian proves that all thoughts are merely due to complexes except the thoughts which constitute this proof itself. The Marxist proves that all thoughts result from class conditioning--except the thought he is thinking while he says this.<sup>7</sup>

Mr. Lewis would say that the Naturalist's case is already greatly weakened by his using a product--the mind, of validity of thought--of an irrational system, Nature, to prove that that system is irrational. In order to do that you have to use a rational process.

Am I on my own?

It is further evident that Rational thought can and does alter Nature, but Nature itself does not have the power to produce Rational thought. It may modify thought; but when it attempts to do something to it, it only is successful in killing it.

Nature can only raid Reason to kill; but Reason can invade Nature to take prisoners and even to colonise. Every object you see before you at this moment--the walls, ceiling, and furniture, the book, your own washed hands and cut fingernails, bears witness to the colonisation of Nature by Reason: for none of this matter would have been in these states if Nature had had her way. . . In other words the relation between Reason and Nature is what some people call an Unsymmetrical Relation. Brotherhood is a symmetrical relation because if A is the brother of B, B is the brother of A. Father-and-Son is an unsymmetrical relation because if A is the father of B, B is not related to Nature as Nature is related to Reason.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Lewis refers to the Quantum Physics as an example of the lessening homogeneity of the world about us.

Within man, furthermore, there appears to be an area, no matter how small, which is independent of Nature. This doesn't mean necessarily that it therefore must exist on its own.

---

7. Ibid., p. 30.

8. Ibid., p. 34.

For it is not dependence simply but dependence on the irrational which undermines the credential of thought. . . It is therefore obvious that sooner or later you must admit a Reason which exists absolutely on its own. The problem is whether you or I can be such a self-existent Reason.<sup>9</sup>

This problem is soon answered when you remember what it means to exist on one's own. To exist on one's own means to exist from all eternity without the support of anyone or anything.

The objection has been raised by some that possibly Reason only works through a person rather than that a person is a product of eternal Reason. Says Mr. Lewis,

It is not an object which knocks against us, nor even a sensation which we feel. Reasoning doesn't 'happen to' us: we do it. Every train of thought is accompanied by what Kant called 'the I think'. The traditional doctrine that I am a creature to whom God has given reason but who is distinct from God seems to me much more philosophical than the theory that what appears to be my thinking is only God's thinking through me. On the latter view it is very difficult to explain what happens when I think correctly but reach a false conclusion because I have been misinformed about facts. Why God--who presumably knows the real facts--should be at the pains to think one of His perfectly rational thoughts through a mind in which it is bound to produce error, I do not understand. Nor indeed do I understand why, if all 'my' valid thinking is really God's. He should either Himself mistake it for mine or cause me to mistake it for mine. It seems much more likely that human thought is not God's but God-kindled.<sup>10</sup>

The idea of an Emergent God does not solve the problem. We can imagine that all of the atoms of the universe would eventually fall into a certain relation with each other and possibly develop a universal consciousness. But this again will only be the product of chance, unless we think of it as The Fact which exists on its own. But to do that will once again lead us to a God outside of Nature, and that does not help us maintain the cause of Naturalism.

9. Ibid., p. 36.

10. Ibid., p. 37.

Reason then appears to be at the spearhead of the Supernatural and links together all the functions of the man. When the purely physical rules the thinking, disorder results. It is somewhat akin to the unsymmetrical relationship spoken of before.

Reason saves and strengthens my whole system psychological and physical, whereas that whole system, by rebelling against Reason, destroys both Reason and itself.<sup>11</sup>

In the same way it seems the right conclusion to draw that the obedience of Nature indicates that it is its very nature to be a subject. Few people who have grasped the idea of a supernatural God deny that He is also the Creator. For himself Mr. Lewis writes,

No philosophical theory which I have yet come across is a radical improvement on the words of Genesis, that 'In the beginning God made Heaven and Earth'. . .The idea of creation in the rigorous sense of the word is there fully grasped.<sup>12</sup>

I ought to

There are difficulties that arise in the consideration of Moral Judgments. We consider the other man's point of view to be worthless if we can show that it is based on non-rational or non-moral causes. We may cite the prejudice of an opponent and thus show that his moral judgment is of no value.

But, of course, what discredits particular moral judgments must equally discredit moral judgments as a whole. If the fact that men have such ideas as ought and ought not at all can be fully explained by irrational and non-moral causes, then those ideas are an illusion. . .For when men say 'I ought' they certainly think they are saying something, and something true, about the nature of the proposed action, and not merely about their own feelings. But if Naturalism is true, 'I ought' is the same sort of statement as 'I itch' or 'I'm going to be sick'. In real life when a man says 'I ought' we may reply, 'Yes. You're right. That is what you ought to do', or else, 'No. I think you're mistaken'.

---

11. Ibid., p. 40.

12. Ibid., p. 42.

But in a world of Naturalists (if Naturalists really remembered their philosophies out of school) the only sensible reply would be, 'Oh, are you?' All moral judgments would be statements about the speaker's feelings, mistaken by him for statements about something else (the real moral quality of actions) which does not exist.<sup>13</sup>

Some Naturalists will admit that there is no absolute true and false, but the next minute will be exhorting to educate, to live and die for posterity.

Do they remember while they are writing thus that when they tell us we 'ought to make a better world' the words 'ought' and 'better world' must, on their own showing, refer to an irrationally conditioned impulse which cannot be true or false any more than a vomit or a yawn?<sup>14</sup>

In order to avoid any difficulty many Naturalists will say that they follow a type of behaviour only in order to keep the human race alive, but they will not admit to being called moralists. Mr. Lewis aptly says, "The Naturalists must not destroy all my reverence for conscience on Monday and expect to find me still venerating it on Tuesday."<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Lewis follows much of this same line of argumentation in the early pages of his book The Case for Christianity.<sup>16</sup>

If we are to make moral judgments then we must believe that the conscience of man is not a product of Nature. It can be valid only if it is an offshoot of some absolute moral wisdom, a moral wisdom which exists absolutely 'on its own' and is not a product of non-moral, non-rational Nature.<sup>17</sup>

#### The Borderland

Mr. Lewis would say that man's rational thinking is a certain share of eternal Reason to the degree to which the brain will let it become operative.

13. Ibid., pp. 44 - 45.

14. Ibid., p. 46.

15. Ibid., p. 47.

16. C. S. Lewis, The Case for Christianity, pp. 16 - 17.

17. Miracles, p. 48.

It is conditioned by it but not originated by it. . . The various and complex conditions under which Reason and Morality appear are the twists and turns of the frontier between Nature and Supernature. That is why, if you wish, you can always ignore Supernature and treat the phenomena purely from the Natural side; just as a man studying on a map the boundaries of Cornwall and Devonshire can always say, 'What you call a bulge in Devonshire is really a dent in Cornwall'. And in a sense you can't refute him. What we call a bulge in Devonshire always is a dent in Cornwall. What we call rational thought in a man always involves a state of the brain, in the long run a relation of atoms. But Devonshire is none the less something more than 'where Cornwall ends', and Reason is something more than cerebral bio-chemistry. . . The Naturalists have been engaged in thinking about Nature. They have not attended to the fact that they were thinking.<sup>18</sup>

#### Joseph knew

In a manner of speaking human Reason is a Miracle insofar as it is an invasion of Nature; it can't be accounted for inside the system. The big question confronting us, however, is whether Supernature invades Nature, which we call space and time, in any manner except the human mind. Miracles are usually excluded on two different grounds. Some maintain that the very nature of God excludes them others that the nature of Nature excludes them. Believers in miracles do not deny that there is a normal mode of operation, sometimes called the Laws of Nature. They maintain only that they can be suspended for that is the nature of Miracle.<sup>19</sup>

A common objection raised is that people only believed in miracles before the birth of science. Mr. Lewis cites the Virgin Birth.

When St. Joseph discovered that his fiancée was going to have a baby, he not unnaturally decided to repudiate her. Why? Because he knew just as any modern gynaecologist that in the ordinary course of nature women do not have babies

---

18. Ibid., pp. 50 - 51.

19. Ibid., pp. 54 - 55.

unless they have lain with men. No doubt the modern gynaecologist knows several things about birth and begetting which St. Joseph did not know. But those things do not concern the main point--that a virgin birth is contrary to the course of nature. And St. Joseph obviously knew that. . . When St. Joseph finally accepted the view that his fiancee's pregnancy was due not to unchastity but to a miracle, he accepted the miracle as something contrary to the known order of nature.<sup>20</sup>

It is necessary to know the laws of nature otherwise you could not tell when a miracle occurred.

Belief in miracles, far from depending on an ignorance of the laws of nature, is only possible in so far as those laws are known. We have already seen that if you begin by ruling out the supernatural you will perceive no miracles. We must now add that you will equally perceive no miracles until you believe that nature works according to regular laws. If you have not noticed that the sun always rises in the East you will see nothing miraculous about his rising one morning in the West.<sup>21</sup>

True science has disproved many fantastic tales, magnetic islands, giants with one foot. It could do so because these fantastic tales were advanced as the common part of nature, not as invasions from Supernature.

No one ever pretended that the Virgin Birth or Christ's walking on the water could be reckoned on the recur. When a thing professes from the very outset to be a unique invasion of Nature by something from outside, increasing knowledge of Nature can never make it either more or less credible than it was at the beginning. In this sense it is mere confusion of thought to suppose that advancing science has made it harder for us to accept miracles. We always knew they were contrary to the natural course of events; we know still that if there is something beyond Nature, they are possible.<sup>22</sup>

If a norm of activity were not supposed, violations of a norm would not be anticipated. The advancement of information regarding the universe does not of itself eliminate the possibility of miracles

---

20. Ibid., p. 57.

21. Ibid., p. 58.

22. Ibid., p. 58.

because miracles have always been supposed to be contrary to the natural events of the universe. And the possibility of any interruption of Nature hinges on the possibility of there being something beyond Nature itself.

Another objection to the whole idea of a god is that of man's seeming insignificance. Again Mr. Lewis.

It is a profound mistake to imagine that Christianity ever intended to dissipate the bewilderment and even the terror, the sense of our own nothingness, which comes upon us when we think about the nature of things. It comes to intensify them. Without such sensations there is no religion . . . Christianity does involve the belief that God loves man and for his sake became man and died.<sup>23</sup>

If our insignificance makes us

. . . too unimportant to merit the love of the Creator, we reply that no Christian ever supposed we did merit it. Christ did not die for men because they were intrinsically worth dying for, but because He is intrinsically love, and therefore loves infinitely. And what after all, does the size of a world or a creature tell us about its 'importance' or value?<sup>24</sup>

If you will reflect for a moment, any discussion regarding the importance of sizes is only thought to be valid if the sizes are very great.<sup>25</sup>

#### The Laws of Nature

Then we come to miracle and the Laws of Nature. It would appear that breaking of the Laws of Nature would be a contradictory procedure, and even God Himself is incapable of the self-contradictory. To clear up this problem Mr. Lewis advances the example of the movements of billiard balls on a table. A physicist knows that if two billiard balls are hit with a certain force, he can accurately predict the course that they will take. Should there be, however, a roughness in the cloth of

---

23. Ibid., p. 62.

24. Ibid., p. 63.

25. Ibid., pp. 63 - 64.

the table his prediction will not be true. Its falsity will not consist in this that new laws have come into operation, but because the old law is true. It is illustrated in the statement that experimenters must always include in their predictions, "Other things being equal." The deflected billiard ball illustrated the old law that the experimenter was counting on, but it illustrated it in a different way. Had the experimenter been cognizant of the roughness in the cloth, he could have made a prediction regarding the course of the ball which could have been fulfilled.<sup>26</sup>

Likewise a miracle does not need to break the laws of nature.

It is with them as with the laws of arithmetic. If I put six pennies into a drawer on Monday and six more on Tuesday, the laws decree that—other things being equal—I shall find twelve pennies there on Wednesday. But if the drawer has been robbed I may in fact find only two. Something will have been broken (the lock of the drawer or the laws of England) but the laws of arithmetic will not have been broken. The situation created by the thief will illustrate the laws of arithmetic just as well as the original situation.<sup>27</sup>

The question of miracles is a question of whether or not Nature is doctored. From a scientist's point of view we could say that a miracle is a form of doctoring. A new factor has been introduced. He is always calculating the future on the basis of what has happened in the past. He has been reckoning with the factor A. But when the Supernatural has been introduced into the scene, the factor for basic reckoning is no longer A but AB. When the supernatural is introduced, we are dealing with AB and not A alone. Since the basis for a prediction has changed, the result will also vary. Recall the story of the billiard balls. This difference in result is only possible because there is such a thing as

---

26. Ibid., p. 68.

27. Ibid., p. 70.

a systematic and lawful universe. If A and AB produced the same results, the universe would be lawless.

The better you know that two and two make four, the better you know that two and three don't.<sup>28</sup>

So if God at any point develops a new situation by creation, annihilation, or deflection, beginning with that situation Nature again goes on its way. The Virgin Mary becomes pregnant according to the Laws of Nature after a miraculously spermatozoon had been introduced. The miraculous wine at the feast of Cana was able to intoxicate. Miraculous bread can be digested.

The divine art of miracle is not an art of suspending the pattern to which events conform but of feeding new agents into that pattern.<sup>29</sup>

A miracle, then, is not a happening that does not have cause or effect. The events which follow after it are interlocked with Nature just like any other event. Its uniqueness is that it is not interlocked in just that same manner with Nature in a backward direction. It comes immediately from the Creator. That is the crux for many people, and it comes because they think that Nature is the 'whole show'. Mr. Lewis would say that to get a true picture of both Nature and miracles both must be placed in a much larger context, and that, of course, embodies the supernatural. Both of them only make sense when they are viewed in this fashion.

By definition, miracles must of course interrupt the usual course of Nature; but if they are real they must, in the very act of so doing, assert all the more the unity and self-consistency of total reality at some deeper level. They will not be like unmetrical lumps of prose breaking the

---

28. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 72.

unity of the poem, yet, coming just where it does, and effecting just what it effects, is (to those who understand) the supreme revelation of the unity in the poet's conception. If what we call Nature is modified by supernatural power, then we may be sure that the capability of being so modified is of the essence of nature--that the total event, if we could grasp it, would turn out to involve, by its very character, the possibility of such modifications. . . In calling them miracles we do not mean that they are contradictions or outrages; we mean that, left to her own resources, she could never produce them.<sup>30</sup>

We could say that a miracle introduces a factor into the course of nature which has results which are usual and interlocked with Nature in a conventional way. It is unique in this way that its previous history is not interlocked with Nature as are other events. It comes immediately from the Creator. But even this direct interruption of Nature can be understood if it is taken in its larger context of the Supernatural. Looking at it in this fashion we can see that a miracle is a something which would be expected; it is in harmony with the essence of the universe. It is an interruption like the interruption we expect in the harmonious verse of a great poet. It is evidence of the deeper unity.

#### Nature is a Creature

Mr. Lewis turns to an emotional objection to miracles. Looking at nature in one fashion makes us think that she is cruel. Looking at her from another direction we may think that she is beautiful. We are tempted to worship her as the self-existent Fact, but she gets to mean to us whatever our particular moods at a specific moment may dictate. All of this is possible because we regard her as the ultimate reality and completely self-sufficient. The whole problem can be viewed in a

---

30. *Ibid.*, pp. 74 - 75.

clearer light if we see Nature not as self-existent but only as a creature. She can only be properly explained if we go beyond her.<sup>31</sup>

Nature is a creature with her good points and bad points. Every part of Nature expresses some characteristic which God chose to give her. The quality of Nature is present in all of its events and happenings.

Just as the Latinity of Latin is present in every inflection of the 'Correggiosity' of Correggio in every stroke of the brush.<sup>32</sup>

Nature has been corrupted. The same basic quality runs throughout her corruptions and excellencies. In motherhood and in parasitism we have the same principle put to work. Everything is in character.

She is herself. Offer her neither worship nor contempt. Meet her and know. . . The 'vanity' to which she was subjected was her disease, not her essence.<sup>33</sup>

Just as people who know at least one other language will only appreciate the Englishness of English, so only the Supernaturalists really understand Nature and her position. Again and again Mr. Lewis reaffirms the point that Nature taken as the ultimate reality doesn't answer the questions we have to put to her. To look upon her as a creature with all the virtues and corruptions of a creature is to put her in her proper place. You must go beyond her to understand her.<sup>34</sup>

#### Explain yourself

Much confusion has resulted in religious thinking not because of the religion itself but because language and speech itself has not

---

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 77 - 78.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 80.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 81.

34. *Ibid.*

been understood. Much of this has come about because we have not understood the place of mental imagery in relation to statements of fact. And it does have a place. A city like New York, for example, may bring a certain image to your mind. Provided we have been there, the statements that we make about it will only make sense because we are making them about the real New York, not about the mental picture we may have in our minds. Likewise when we think of the distance that separates the sun from ourselves, we probably conjure up some kind of weird image to make that tremendous distance more real to ourselves. But our statements about that distance will only make sense if we stick to mathematics and not to images in our own minds. Here you can see that clear thinking may be accompanied by some ridiculous imagining.<sup>35</sup>

Because of a statement made by its mother, a child had the idea that poison was made up of horrid red things. When the child thought of poison, the mental image of horrid red things came into her mind. The child really thought that the poison was horrid things. In that mental image she was mistaken, although she thought it was true. But because her mental image was false, that does not mean that the statements she made about poison were in every instance false. She knew that anyone who would swallow it would suffer pain and possible death.

We can now add to our previous statement (that thinking may be sound where the images that accompany it are false) the further statement: thinking may be sound in certain respects where it is accompanied not only by false images but by false images mistaken for true ones.<sup>36</sup>

When we are talking about things that our five senses cannot perceive, we use words to describe that particular thing which can refer

---

35. Ibid., p. 86.

36. Ibid., p. 87.

to it in one of its meanings. For that reason any time we speak of things that are beyond our sense we must speak in a metaphorical sense.

We now have three guiding principles before us. (1) That thought is distinct from the imagination which accompanies it. (2) That thought may be in the main sound even when the false images that accompany it are mistaken by the thinker for true ones. (3) That anyone who talks about things that cannot be seen, or touched, or heard, or the like, must inevitably talk as if they could be seen or touched or heard.<sup>37</sup>

The point to be made here is this. A statement is not to be regarded as true or false just because the imagery is inadequate or false. Mr. Lewis has pointed out that true statements are made when an image is known to be false, or even in some instances when a false image is thought to be true--as in the case of the little girl and the poison. Thought itself is something distinct from the imagery. Absurd thinking does not necessarily follow from absurd imagery.<sup>38</sup>

To go on then. Christians may think of two human forms of different ages when they think of the Son and the Father. The Christians at the same time hasten to tell us that God has no human form. The fact that most Christians have a mental picture of two humans does not mean that the thought behind it is absurd. The suggestion to get rid of imagery is of no help because imagery of another kind is merely introduced. Some people choose to think of God as some vague spiritual force. The imagery of a gas or fluid or electricity is only being exchanged for the picture of a royal-looking gentleman. Nothing has been accomplished.<sup>39</sup>

Consequently, absurdity of images does not invalidate doctrines. A peasant of Galilee could have thought of Christ actually sitting at

---

37. Ibid., p. 89.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., p. 90.

the right hand of God being unaware that God had no right hand. Later he could have found out that God did not have a right hand, and he could change his imagery. The changing of the imagery or elimination of the right hand of God didn't change the forcefulness of the doctrine.

What mattered must have been the belief that a person whom he had known as a man in Palestine had, as a person, survived death and was now operating as the supreme agent of the supernatural Being who had governed and maintained the whole field of reality. And that belief would survive substantially unchanged after the falsity of the earlier images had been recognized. . . The difficulty here is that they were not writing as philosophers to satisfy speculative curiosity about the nature of God and of the universe. They believed in God; and once a man does that, philosophical definiteness can never be the first necessity. A drowning man does not analyse the rope that is flung him.<sup>40</sup>

The modern literalist and materialist gets into difficulty because he comes to the ancient writers with the modern distinction between 'material and immaterial' and on that basis tries to determine where the Hebrews stood. The charge is brought that primitive man could not conceive the idea of pure spirit. If that is the case, he was no more able to conceive of pure matter. He could not have started out with a purely material concept of God and gradually spiritualized him.

For the 'material' as we understand it, comes to be realized only by contrast to the 'immaterial'. And the two sides of the contrast grow at the same speed. He started with something which was neither and both.<sup>41</sup>

This then leads us to the point where we must discuss the difference between explaining and explaining away. To some people metaphorical expression means that a statement doesn't carry much weight. Mr. Lewis suggests that people are correct when they think of the expression 'hell fire' as being metaphorical, but they are wrong when they think

---

40. Ibid., pp. 91 - 92.

41. Ibid., p. 94.

it means nothing more serious than remorse.<sup>42</sup>

Some will say that the Fall spoken of in Genesis is not to be taken literally and at the same time speak of it as a fall upwards, "which is like saying that because 'My heart is broken' contains a metaphor, it therefore means 'I feel cheerful'."<sup>43</sup> Doctrines which are metaphorically expressed are not for that reason untrue. Besides the physical universe and the psycho-physical universe there is an uncreated and unconditioned reality which has a definite structure which is expressed usefully for us in the doctrine of the Trinity. And this reality entered the universe in a specific point in time and became one of the creatures of that universe. Whatever metaphor is employed to express what happened there, very little improvement or none at all can be made on the Scriptural 'came down from heaven'.<sup>44</sup>

In the Incarnation of Christ we are dealing with two things. One is the supernatural or unconditioned reality, and the events on the historical level which are supposed to have happened as a result of the supernatural interference. Of the first type we speak metaphorically, but of the second we can and do use literal speech because they are events metaphorically where the slight twist is made from explaining something to explaining it away.

And so we do not alter Christianity by rendering explicit the fact that 'sonship' is not used of Christ in exactly the same sense in which it is used of men. But the assertion that Jesus turned water into wine was meant perfectly literally, for this refers to something which, if it happened, was well within the reach of our senses and our language. When I say, 'My heart is broken', you know perfectly well

---

42. Ibid., p. 95.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid., p. 96.

that I don't mean anything you could verify at a post-mortem. But when I say, 'My boot-lace is broken,' then if your own observation shows it to be intact, I am either lying or mistaken. The accounts of the 'miracles' in first century Palestine are either lies, or legends, or history.<sup>45</sup>

Granted then that for the purpose of grasping something of what goes on in the supernatural metaphor must be employed, we are not to get the idea that metaphor is used to describe what went on in the historical level after the supernatural interfered. We cannot at will say that something is metaphorical in the religious level unless it is dealing with the supernatural part of the religious. Mr. Lewis has made this quite clear in the above quotation. The relation of the Father to the Son and the Holy spirit is dealt with in the first two chapters of Beyond Personality.<sup>46</sup>

#### God is basic Fact or Actuality

After we have now eliminated the difficulties that arise largely just out of poor understanding of language and not of religion or miracles themselves, we can turn to the question proper. Christians have difficulty not so much with the irreligion of people as with their religion. It is the type of religion that thinks of God as beauty, truth, or goodness or some vague indwelling force in man. A God of purpose, a God of action, a God with a commanding, determinate character is not wanted. This vague religiosity excludes the God of the Christians. This religion rejects a God who would do miracles, or anything for that matter.<sup>47</sup>

Pantheism is the name given to this type of popular religion.

---

45. Ibid., pp. 96 - 97.

46. G. S. Lewis, Beyond Personality, pp. 1 - 13.

47. Miracles, pp. 99 - 100.

It is so appealing not because it is the final refinement of man's religious thinking but because it is so old and obvious. Only during the time of Plato and Aristotle did the Greeks get beyond it. Europe only managed to rise above it while it remained predominantly Christian. If we concede that religion is only what man says about God and not what God does about man, then we could concede that Pantheism is the religion. The old atomic picture is to physics what Pantheism is to religion. It is the normal guess about things. We can't say that it is absolutely wrong, but we do say that it is in need of correction.<sup>48</sup>

Pantheism is led in much of its thinking by a great deal of picture thinking.

Pantheists and Christians agree that God is present everywhere. Pantheists conclude that He is 'diffused' or 'concealed' in all things and therefore a universal medium rather than a concrete entity, because their minds are really dominated by the picture of a gas, or fluid, or space itself. The Christian, on the other hand, deliberately rules out such images by saying that God is totally present at every point of space and time, and locally present in none. Again the Pantheist and Christian agree that we are all dependent on God and intimately related to Him. But the Christian defines this relation in terms of Maker and made, whereas the Pantheist (at least of the popular kind) says, we are 'parts' of Him, or are contained in Him. Once more, the picture of a vast extended something which can be divided into areas has crept in. Because of this fatal picture Pantheism concludes that God must be equally present in what we call evil and what we call good and therefore indifferent to both (ether permeates the mud and the marble impartially). The Christian has to reply that this is far too simple; God is present in a great many different modes: not present in matter as He is present in man, not present in all men as in some, not present in any other man as in Jesus.<sup>49</sup>

Christianity confronted with popular religion finds itself occupied with the troublesome task of correcting common notion. It is

---

48. Miracles, pp. 100 - 103; Case, pp. 33 - 34.

49. Miracles, p. 103.

a nuisance as the historian is a nuisance to anyone who wants to dream about the good old days. The point is worth emphasizing that this type of popular religion has its appeal as long as we are only concerned about what we want to say about God rather than what He wants to do for us. As long as we keep God an indefinite being, Pantheism will do the job for us. But what are we going to do with all the concreteness around us?<sup>50</sup>

Laws do not explain this concreteness. They can only give us a series of If's and And's. The Laws only tell us that there must be connections of some sort. There must be something to which these connections connect. There must be some opaque actualities fed into the system. If God then created this world, he must be the source of all of these concrete things. If God then is the source of all these concrete things, He Himself must be concrete and individual in the highest degrees.

For there is no conceivable means whereby what is abstract or general could itself produce concrete reality. Book-keeping, continued to all eternity, could never produce one farthing. . . If anything is to exist at all, then the Original Thing must be, not a principle nor a generality, much less an 'ideal' or a 'value', but an utterly concrete fact.<sup>51</sup>

Here again the Pantheists or vague religionists run into the difficulty of explaining the source and origin of the concreteness we see round about us. The vague, the indefinite, the indeterminate cannot produce the concrete reality. Also in this point Mr. Lewis does away with people who are quite willing to be religious but religious in such a way that nothing is definite and thereby eliminate anything that

---

50. Ibid., p. 104.

51. Ibid., p. 106.

might deal with responsibility and certainty.

Again in point of language. Just because the Christians say that God is infinite, we are not to get the impression that He has no form or is only a vague reality. We should not be afraid to say that God is a particular Thing. At one time He was the only Thing. But He chose to create and make things outside Himself. If He were 'Universal Being', He could make nothing because generality can make nothing. It would be best to say that He is The Absolute Being because He alone exists in his own right.<sup>52</sup>

Possibly to say that God is a 'particular Thing' somewhat lessens the difference between Himself and all of the derivative creatures. But we should remember that their principle of existence is not in themselves as God's principle of existence is in Himself.

You can distinguish what they are from the fact that they are. The definition of them can be understood and a clear idea of them formed without even knowing whether. Existence is an 'opaque' addition to the idea of them. But with God it is not so: if we fully understood what God is we should see that there is no question whether He is. It would always have been impossible that He should not exist. He is the opaque center of all existences, the thing that simply and entirely is, the fountain of facthood.<sup>53</sup>

It is only because this God has now created that we are bound to say that He is a particular Thing. We must do that so we do not confuse Him with the creatures and things He has created. We can say that He was so full of existence that He could and did give some of it away. He caused things to be that were other than Himself. We can even say that God made the statement untrue to say that He was everything.

---

52. Ibid., p. 106.

53. Ibid., p. 107.

We need more than a surface understanding to get a picture of the relation of God to His creation. In saying He is a particular, separate Thing we are not limiting Him in any way but really showing His greatness. The Absolute Being capable of creating things other than Himself is the true picture we get when we get away from the image of something vague and indefinite. God as existence personified, as the I AM is difficult to grasp. As Mr. Lewis puts it, "God is the fountain of facthood."<sup>54</sup>

Great prophets and saints have had pictures of God which have been positive in the highest degree. But since there was nothing in the vocabulary of their peoples to express adequately the insights they had been given, they usually employed negatives to eliminate any false impression their countrymen might get. They said that God was not this, not that. Along every step of the way it is necessary to strip off some human attribute of our idea of God. As St. Paul said, the purpose was not that God should stand before us in His nakedness, but that in this fashion he could be re clothed. The only difficulty is that man cannot supply the necessary re clothing. It is for that reason that we may come to a vague picture of God. Imagination can help a little but not a great deal.

That is why the Christian statement that only He who does the will of the Father will ever know the true doctrine is philosophically accurate. The imagination may help a little: but in the moral life, and (still more) in the devotional life we touch something concrete which will at once begin to correct the growing emptiness of our idea of God. One moment even of feeble contrition or blurred thankfulness will, at least in some degree, head us off from the abyss of abstraction. It is Reason herself which teaches us not to rely on Reason only in this matter. For Reason knows that she cannot work without materials. When it becomes clear that you cannot find out by reasoning whether the cat

---

54. Ibid.

is in the linen-cupboard, it is Reason herself who whispers, 'Go and look. This is not my job; it is a matter for the senses'. So here. The materials for correcting our abstract conception of God cannot be supplied by Reason: she will be the first to tell you to go and try experience--'Oh, taste and see!'<sup>55</sup>

Mr. Lewis has a suggestion which might help us get the picture of God as the source of all facts, the basic Fact or Actuality. Words like incorporeal and impersonal are somewhat misleading. The terms transcorporeal and transpersonal would be more accurate. Grammatically, we have indicated that the things we say of God are metaphorical, but in a deeper sense it is our own powers and energies that are mere metaphors on the real Life which is God.<sup>56</sup>

Many people have been worried about the imagery of the Old Testament. Strangely enough these pictures of a threatening God, of a God thundering and lightning out of dense smoke, even of a God who changes His mind transmit a very definite impression of a living deity. Abstract thought manages to squelch this impression. If we would then wish to reject the imagery of the Old Testament, we should do so not because it is too strong; but because it is too weak. Much damage has been done by a confusion between the words 'spirit' and 'ghost'. Ghosts appear to be shadowy beings. Spirit is quite the opposite. The traditional picture we have of God is not a shadowy being at all. When human dead are glorified in Christ, they are no longer ghosts but saints.

The difference in atmosphere which even now surrounds the words 'I saw a ghost' and the words 'I saw a saint'--all the pallor and insubstantiality of the one, and the gold and blue of the other--contains more wisdom than whole libraries of 'religion'. If we must have a mental picture to symbolize Spirit, we should represent it as something heavier than matter.<sup>57</sup>

---

55. Ibid., pp. 109 - 110.

56. Ibid., pp. 110 - 111.

57. Ibid., p. 112.

### Theme and sub-plot

If we take for granted that the ultimate Fact is the living God, we want to ask whether He would perform any miracles. We feel that it would not be in place. We think that only an incompetent workman would construct something that would require interference. To help us across this barrier Mr. Lewis mentions the beginning scholar, and the man who is merely a critic. When irregularities were discovered in Shakespeare, the critics were surprised. In some of the great poets irregularities and half-ryhmes were discovered. At first they were charged to stupidity, but they actually served a definite purpose. There was something higher than mere superficial observance of metrical rules. We could say that there were and are rules behind the rules, a deeper unity.

A supreme workman will never break by one note or one syllable or one stroke of the brush the living and inward law of the work he is producing. But he will break without scruple any number of those superficial regularities and orthodoxies which little, unimaginative critics mistake for its laws. The extent to which one can distinguish a just 'license' from a mere botch or inward significance of the work as a whole.<sup>58</sup>

The so-called invasions of Nature by God are unexpected only so long as we look at the superficial. A miracle is to Nature what an unexpected half-rhyme or line of prose is to poetry. These so-called breaks in the usual are the real signs that the author is concerned with a deeper unity of his subject than mere artificial rules and regulations.

If the unusual event is really the subject about which you are writing a ghost story, the introduction of such beings will be very much in place. If, however, we are writing about a very normal

---

58. Ibid., p. 117.

situation, it is not permissible to bring in a ghost to solve a situation just because we are in a tight place. Some people put this kind of interpretation on the story of the Resurrection. It seems to be a last minute move to save the hero of a story. Here comes the point of the matter.

Death and Resurrection are what the story is about. . . . If you have hitherto disbelieved in miracles, it is worth pausing a moment to consider whether this is not chiefly because you thought you had discovered what the story was really about?--that atoms, and time and space and economics and politics were the main plot?<sup>59</sup>

The writer suggests that if we saw that not Nature but that Death and Resurrection are what the story was about, the apparent irregularities would disappear. It is when we try to maintain that the story or poem is written about the regular lines and not about those which superficially appear to break the rhythm that confusion about the propriety of miracles arises. It's a matter of detecting and separating the sub-plots from the main theme. This entire objection seems to rest on the old thesis that Nature is the whole show. It betrays a hesitancy to remove that conception from the pathways of thought. And as Mr. Lewis intimated it may be caused by the discovery of the real plot behind the universe. the fact that something outside of man is at the center of things.<sup>60</sup>

Could it be?

With the previous evidence as a background we have to set out to find out what criterion we should establish for the probability of any miracle. Modern historians will accept the most improbably 'natural' explanation of any event before they will say that a miracle has occurred.

---

59. *Ibid.*, p. 120.

60. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

Collective hallucination, hypnotism of unconsenting spectators, widespread instantaneous conspiracy in lying by persons not otherwise known to be liars and not likely to gain by the lie—all these are known to be very improbable events: so improbable that, except for the special purpose of excluding a miracle, they are never suggested. But they are preferred to the admission of a miracle.<sup>61</sup>

In a sense all events before they have happened are improbable; but when they have once happened they do not at all appear incredible. It is highly improbable that a certain man should win a lottery. Once he has won it, we don't say that it is incredible. When we consider the many number of meetings and fertile unions of our ancestors that were necessary before we individually appeared on the scene, the fact that we should be born at all seems improbable. Once we have been born, there doesn't seem to be anything incredible about it at all. Our problem rests not so much with this kind of antecedent probability but with historical probability.<sup>62</sup>

Hume's Essay has made it appear that miracles are the most improbable of all historical events. Hume suggests that a miracle depends on a kind of majority vote. If a thing is known to happen often before, than it is more probable that it will happen again in the future. That assumption is true if there is uniform experience against miracles. But that uniform experience can only be maintained if all reports about miracles are regarded as false. All of these reports can be regarded as false only if we know that miracles have never occurred. And as Mr. Lewis aptly indicated this is arguing in a circle.<sup>63</sup>

Hume's entire argument regarding probability depends on the

---

61. Ibid., pp. 121 - 122.

62. Ibid., p. 122.

63. Ibid., pp. 122 - 123.

principle of the Uniformity of Nature. Unless we assume that Nature goes on in a uniform fashion the fact that something has happened many thousands of times gives us no reason to believe that it will happen that way again. We don't see that it will be uniform from our experience because we have seen only a fraction of all the events that have occurred. In our observation of Nature we have noted a few regularities. These observations would be useless unless we felt or knew that Nature was uniform in her behaviour. Sheer length of experience in observation is of no help. It does not help us to say that every new experience confirms our belief in the Uniformity of Nature, for we are then going on the assumption that the future is going to resemble the past which is the same as the assumption of the Uniformity of Nature. We are in no position even to assume that Uniformity is probable because probabilities depend on it.

Unless Nature is uniform, nothing is either probable or improbable. And clearly the assumption which you have to make before there is any such thing as probability cannot itself be probable.<sup>64</sup>

The type of thing Hume was dealing with was probability within a framework which assumes a Uniformity of Nature. The question of miracles, however, asks whether the frame itself is valid and perfect. No study of the things inside the frame will tell us whether or not the frame itself can be tampered with. If you take for granted that you have a schedule that calls for French the second period on Tuesday, and take for granted that you do not prepare for that particular period, you can also take it for granted that you will run into some difficulty during

---

64. *Ibid.*, p. 124

that period. This entire process says nothing, however, about the probability of the time-table or schedule being changed.<sup>65</sup>

How do we then explain that men do believe in the Uniformity of Nature? Mr. Lewis advances three causes. One is that we are people of habit. We expect the new to resemble the old. In our plans for tomorrow we let out the possibility that Nature might behave differently because we could not do anything about it anyhow. The last statement forms the basis for the second reason. The third is couched in the words of Sir Arthur Eddington,

'In science we sometimes have convictions that we cherish but cannot justify; we are influenced by the innate sense of the fitness of things.'<sup>66</sup> It is really the apparent irregularities that prompt the new discoveries not the regularities. We are not satisfied until what appears to be an irregularity has been made to fit into the pattern. To all manner of irregularities we bring a faith in the uniformity of things that cannot readily be shaken. Life would be a repugnant for us if we could not count on the regularity of events.<sup>67</sup>

If, however, our belief is one that makes Nature everything and behind it no mind, that our own convictions are merely products of this irrational process, then our conviction about the seeming Uniformity of Nature will not offer us any firm knowledge about the world which is external to ourselves.

But if the deepest thing in reality, the Fact which is the source of all other facthood, is a thing in some degree like ourselves--if it is a Rational Spirit and we derive our rational spirituality from It--then indeed our conviction can be trusted. Our repugnance to disorder is derived from Nature's Creator and ours. The disorderly world which we cannot endure to believe in is the disorderly world He would not have endured to create. Our conviction that the

---

65. *Ibid.*, pp. 124 - 125.

66. *Ibid.*, p. 126.

67. *Ibid.*

time-table will not be perpetually or meaninglessly altered is sound because we have (in a sense) eavesdropped in the Masters' common-room.<sup>68</sup>

Mr. Lewis would suggest that the belief in an irrational creation gives us no room to trust the conclusions of our mind which are then of necessity the products of this irrational process. His suggestion then is this. If the Fact behind all facts is in a measure like us having a Rational Spirit, then our own judgment about the world around us and our repugnance for disorder is something we share with the Creator because He Himself has a repugnance for disorder.<sup>69</sup>

The entire scientific outlook came into being because men expected Law in Nature, and they expected that Law because they believed in a Legislature. Most modern scientists have abandoned this trust. How long their faith in uniformity will endure no one knows. But already two developments are taking place. One is a belief in a lawless sub-nature, the other is that science is no longer true. As a sidelight Mr. Lewis suggest that we may be nearer to the end of the Scientific Age than we think.

But if we admit God, must we admit Miracle? Indeed, indeed, you have no security against it. That is the bargain. Theology says to you in effect. 'Admit God and with Him the risk of a few miracles, and I in return will ratify your faith in uniformity as regards the overwhelming majority of events.' The philosophy which forbids you to make uniformity absolute is also the philosophy which offers you solid grounds for believing it to be general, to be almost absolute. The Being who threatens Nature's claim to omnipotence confirms her in her lawful occasions. . . The alternative is really much worse. Try to make Nature absolute and you find that her uniformity is not even probable. By claiming too much, you get nothing. You get the deadlock, as in Hume. Theology offers you a working arrangement, which leaves the

---

68. Ibid., p. 127.

69. Ibid.

scientist free to continue his experiments and the Christian to continue his prayers.<sup>70</sup>

There we have the alternatives stated the way Mr. Lewis sees them.

At a certain point reason and logic fail. The Christian suggestion seems to be the only one which seems to satisfy. Reason herself shows us that Nature as the whole does not stand up logically. The phenomena of Reason itself shows that Nature is not the ultimate reality. Mr. Lewis does not on the other hand say that sheer logic brings a man to Christianity. But when everything else has been shattered as inadequate, he presents Christianity as the solution to the problem. From the point of view of the Supernatural we are able to get the picture of the inner unity. Theology shows that in the vast majority of cases Nature is uniform in her behaviour, but theology challenges the supremacy of Nature. When seen from the point of view of the Supernatural, certain contradictory events in Nature are cleared up. She is a creature, not the 'whole show'.

The criterion whereby we can judge the intrinsic probability of a miracle is that 'innate sense of the fitness of things'; it is the same thing which leads us to anticipate the world as an orderly universe. It is the same sort of thing we do every day. Both believers and unbelievers place the Resurrection and some pious story about Mother Egaree being helped by St. Anthony to find a good thimble in two different categories. Even people who think that all miracles are absurd think that some of them are much more absurd than others. The point to remember is this that

. . .the historical evidence cannot be estimated unless

---

70. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

unless we have first estimated intrinsic probability of the recorded event. It is in making that estimate as regards each story of the miraculous that our sense of fitness comes into play.<sup>71</sup>

#### The Incarnation: The Miracle

The central miracle is the Incarnation. God did not invade nature at irregular intervals but in a strategic fashion. The Incarnation is just that. Now as to its probability and meeting the sense of fitness.

Since it only happened once, according to Hume's standards it was improbable. The entire history of the earth only happened once, and therefore could be considered improbable on the same basis. The great historical difficulty of giving a better explanation to the life and sayings of Jesus than that of Christianity is well known.

The discrepancy between the depth and sanity and (let me add) shrewdness of His moral teaching and the rampant megalomania which must lie behind His theological teaching unless He is indeed God, has never been satisfactorily got over.<sup>72</sup>

The above statement is still a hurdle that outside of the Christian explanation does not admit of a great deal of feasibility. The everlasting campaign to solve the difficulty posed above speaks somewhat for the fear that the central theme of the universe has been reluctantly discovered and it has not turned out to be the article sought. Its credibility can be compared to the discovery of a lost portion of a symphony of poem. If the recently discovered portion sheds new light, makes clearer the portion that was already known, then it can be accepted. No matter how beautiful it may be in itself, if it does not make the previous mass of material more intelligible, we will be

---

71. Ibid., p. 129.

72. Ibid., p. 132.

forced to abandon it.

The credibility will depend on the extent to which the doctrine, if accepted, can illuminate and integrate that whole mass. It is much less important that the doctrine itself should be fully comprehensible. We believe that the sun is in the sky at midday in summer not because we can clearly see the sun (in fact, we cannot) but because we see everything else.<sup>73</sup>

The first objection that most critics will advance is that regarding the statement of God becoming man. But again the same notion in a minor key has been carried out in every man. A wholly supernatural entity has already united with a part of Nature, so much so that we call the composite 'I' or 'Me'. In men the supernatural creature becomes united with the natural. In the person of Christ we say that the Supernatural Creator Himself did so.

If we did not know by experience what it feels like to be a rational animal—how all these natural facts, all this bio-chemistry and instinctive affection or repulsion and sensuous perception, can become the medium of rational thought and moral will which understand necessary relations and acknowledge modes of behaviour as universally binding, we could not conceive, much less imagine, the thing happening. The discrepancy between a movement of atoms in an astronomer's cortex and his understanding that there must be a still unobserved planet beyond Uranus, is already so immense that the Incarnation of God Himself is, in one sense, scarcely more startling. We cannot conceive how the Divine Spirit dwelled within the created and human spirit of Jesus: but neither can we conceive how His human spirit, or that of any man, dwells within his natural organism. What we can understand, if the Christian doctrine is true, is that our own composite existence is not the sheer anomaly it might seem to be, but a faint image of the Divine Incarnation itself—the same theme in a minor key.<sup>74</sup>

In this process of the Incarnation a principle of the universe itself is discovered. It is the power of the higher and greater to in-

---

73. Ibid., p. 133.

74. Ibid., p. 134.

clude the less in the degree to which it is greater and higher. It is done in somewhat the same fashion in geometry. Solid geometry exemplifies the truths of plane geometry, but not vice-versa. In a way Montaigne became kittenish when he spoke to his kitten, but the kitten on no occasion discussed philosophy with him.

Death and Re-birth--go down to go up--it is a key principle. Through this bottleneck, this belittlement, the high road nearly always lies. . . The doctrine of the Incarnation, if accepted, puts this principle even more emphatically at the centre. The pattern is there in Nature because it was first in God.<sup>75</sup>

The entire pattern of nature exhibits this death and rebirth every year. The seed must die to produce new fruit. The objection might then be raised that this pattern makes the thing too easy. Christ may just be another corn-king, such as Osiris. But the crux is that the only historical, dying God appears on the scene among a people to whom the whole religion surrounding a dying God is totally absent. On the occasion when you would have expected Him to make a connection between the corn and Himself, when He held bread and said, 'This is My body', he made none, even seemed completely unaware of it.

The records, in fact show us a person who enacts the part of the Dying God, but whose thought and words remain quite outside the circle of religious ideas to which the Dying God belongs. The very thing which the Nature-religions are all about seems to have really happened once: but it happened in a circle where no trace of Nature-religion was present. It is as if you met the sea-serpent and found that it disbelieved in sea-serpents: as if history recorded a man who had done all the things attributed to Sir Launcelot but who had himself never apparently heard of chivalry.<sup>76</sup>

Furthermore, the Christians do not claim that 'God' was incarnate

---

75. Ibid., p. 136.

76. Ibid., p. 138.

in Jesus. They say that Jaweh whom the Jews worshipped was incarnate in Christ.

On the one hand He is the God of Nature, her glad Creator . . . On the other hand, Jaweh is clearly not a Nature-God. He does not die and come to life each year as a true Corn-King. . . He is not the soul of Nature nor of any part of Nature. He inhabits eternity: He dwells in the high and holy place: heaven is His throne, not His vehicle, earth is His footstool, not His vesture. One day He will dismantle both and make a new heaven and earth. He is not to be identified even with the 'divine spark' in man. He is 'God and not man': His thoughts are not our thoughts: all our righteousness is filthy rags. . . Jaweh is neither the soul of Nature nor her enemy. She is neither His body nor a declension and falling away from Him. She is His creature. He is not a nature-God, but the God of Nature—her inventor, maker, owner, and controller. To everyone who reads this book the conception has been familiar from childhood; we therefore easily think it is the most ordinary conception in the world. 'If people are going to believe in a God at all,' we ask, 'what other kind would they believe in?' But the answer of history is, 'Almost any other kind.' We mistake our priveleges for our instincts: just as one meets ladies who believe their own refined manners to be natural to them. They don't remember being taught. . . Now if there is such a God and if He descends to rise again, then, we can understand why Christ is at once so like the Corn-King and so silent about Him. He is like the Corn-King because the Corn-King is a portrait of Him.<sup>77</sup>

The role of the Hebrews in God's plan has been questioned. The charge of favouritism has been brought, God choosing a special people to the exclusion of others. Christianity does not attempt to beg off in this situation. It does not deal with man's search for God, but it is the story of what God does for, to, and about man. After man fell, God used a selective process but not a process like we had in mind. It is a far cry from favouritism. It seems to allow for enormous wastage. Out of all people God chose Abraham who is asked to leave his native country. Of his great-grandchildren, Judah is selected. Then the chosen people are

---

77. Miracles, pp. 138 - 139; Case, p. 44.

housed in the desert for many miserable years while God was trying to get them to have the right understanding and feeling about Him. Many humiliating exiles followed a brief flash of glory. Finally it was narrowed down to a humble Jewish girl. A thorough study of the Jewish people will show that the hardships and humiliations they suffered could hardly be called favouritism.<sup>78</sup>

In this procedure the principle of selectiveness comes to the fore. It is not an uncommon process in Nature. Think of the countless spermatozoa that are emitted and only one is finally used to fertilize. Among all the species only one is rational. This process which looks quite undemocratic to us is in Nature neither good or evil. This selectiveness is of a peculiar sort. Abraham is not chosen for his own sake but to bear the burden for all people. All people were to be blessed in him. The woman who became the mother of Christ had to suffer the utmost depth of anguish. The only Man who can genuinely be adored is noted for His suffering.<sup>79</sup>

After a presentation of the above information many may think that the Jews were in God's disfavour rather than in His favour. Mr. Lewis says with a smile that both charges cannot be maintained forever.<sup>80</sup>

The principle which the coming and suffering of Christ vividly portrays is that of Vicariousness. It is the sinless man suffering for those who have sinned. This principle is also found in Nature.

Self-sufficiency, living on one's own resources, is a thing impossible in her realm. Everything is indebted to everything else, sacrificed to everything else, dependent

---

78. Miracles, pp. 140 - 141.

79. Ibid., pp. 141 - 142.

80. Ibid., p. 143.

on everything else. And here too we must recognize that the principle is in itself neither good nor bad. The cat lives on the mouse in a way I think bad: the bees and the flowers live on one another in a more pleasing manner. The parasite lives on its 'host': but so also the unborn child on its mother. In social life without Vicariousness there would be no exploitation or oppression; but also no kindness or gratitude. It is fountain both of love and hatred, both of misery and happiness. When we have understood this we shall no longer think that the depraved examples of Vicariousness in Nature forbid us to suppose that the principle itself is of divine origin.<sup>81</sup>

Mr. Lewis alludes to the theological implications of the Redemption as it touches man in his daily living in his Problem of Pain, The Great Divorce, The Case for Christianity, Beyond Personality, and The Screwtape Letters.

Four principles have come to our attention in the study of the great miracle: the composite nature of man, the pattern of descent and reascension, selectiveness, and vicariousness. When these principles in Nature are discovered, the reaction of various religions vary. Some may re-affirm, give them a certain amount of prestige, negate them, or they promise release from Nature altogether. Christianity takes a course separate from all of them.<sup>82</sup>

If we should think that Jaweh's being the God of fertility gives us license to be morally loose, or if we think that the principles of vicariousness and selectiveness can be used to poach on the lower life as parasites, we find that the Christian standard demands chastity, humility, justice, service, and mercy. The death re-birth pattern does not give us permission to think that the anticipated goal is an 'enlightened' spirituality. The system of mutual interdependence does not let the way

---

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

open to think that it is an odious necessity of an evil cosmos.<sup>83</sup>

We shall be told that, in one sense, and despite enormous differences, it is 'the same way all the way up': that hierarchial inequality, the need for self surrender, the willing sacrifice of self to others, and the thankful and loving (but unashamed) acceptance of others' sacrifice to us, holds sway in the realm beyond Nature. It is indeed only love that makes the difference: all those very same principles which are evil in the world of selfishness and necessity are good in the world of love and understanding . . . Here, at last, we find (as we do not find either in the Nature religions or in the religions that deny Nature) a real illumination: Nature is being lit up by a light beyond Nature.<sup>84</sup>

### Death

Mr. Lewis indicates that not only man will be in the picture of Redemption, but his rebirth will be the signal that the whole creation shall be released from her travailing. Mr. Lewis gives greater scope to this aspect of redemption in another work.<sup>85</sup> But if that is the case, we are in a position to ask how Nature ever got into the present depraved state. In answer to this query Mr. Lewis says that sin was the cause of it, the sin of both man and of powerful creatures of a supernatural sort.<sup>86</sup>

Man is the central figure of the redemption because he is the one who has fallen. His is the position of utter misery and evil. In the process God is not merely restoring the status quo, for the greater the sin, the greater the mercy. The universal redemption is not very compatible with human minds.

But it is in reality far more philosophical than any theory which holds that God, having once entered Nature, should leave her, and leave her substantially unchanged, or that the glorification of one creature could be realised without the glorification of the whole system. God never undoes anything

---

83. Ibid., p. 144.

84. Ibid., p. 145.

85. C. S. Lewis, Problem of Pain, pp. 117 - 131.

86. Miracles, p. 146; Pain, pp. 57 - 76.

but evil, never does good to undo it again. The union between God and Nature in the Person of Christ admits no divorce. He will not go out of Nature again and she must be glorified in all ways which this miraculous union demands.<sup>87</sup>

What is the Christian view of death, since it plays such a prominent part in the story of the redemption? For the Christian neither the stoic nor a totally evil concept of death fits the picture.

We are baptized into the death of Christ, and it is the remedy for the Fall. Death is, in fact, what some modern people call 'ambivalent'. It is Satan's great weapon and also God's great weapon: it is holy and unholy: our supreme disgrace and our only hope: the thing Christ came to conquer and the means by which He conquered.<sup>88</sup>

Human death came because of sin. Redeemed man will be free from death once again. This of course will not stand up if man is only a Natural being. But earlier we explained how man is a composite being. He is a natural creature that has a supernatural spirit for a tenant. We may call it a symbiosis. As long as the spirit maintained supremacy, there was no death. The whole process of reasoning and rational thought shows this type of existence. When we force the atoms of our body to move in a certain direction because of the spiritual insistence, we are forcing the body to do something it would not do naturally. In a sense there is a war going on. When the spirit is in control, even the sensual pleasures as sensual pleasures are better than they are in a debauch who has let the nature control the spirit. A truer picture would be that of a rebellion where the lower fights against the higher and in the end destroys the higher and itself. Here Mr. Lewis presents a spiritual and psychological insight into the happenings of man after he has fallen into

---

87. Miracles, p. 149.

88. Ibid., p. 151.

sin.<sup>89</sup>

But it (death) is also the means of redemption from sin, God's medicine for Man and His weapon against Satan. In a general way it is not difficult to understand how the same thing can be a masterstroke on the part of one combatant and also the very means whereby the superior combatant defeats him. Every good general, every good chess-player, takes what is precisely the strong point of his opponent's plan and makes it the pivot of his own plan. Take the castle or mine if you insist. It was not my original intention that you should--indeed, I thought you would have had more sense. But take it by all means. For now I move thus...and thus... and it is made in three moves. Something like this must be supposed to have happened about Death.<sup>90</sup>

Mr. Lewis depicts what happened after the fall in this manner.

The devil persuaded man to sin. After the sin came man could not even control the rebellion that had been incited in his psychical and physical organism against his spirit. God made man with such a constitution,

. . .that, if the highest part of it rebelled against Himself, it would be bound to lose control over the lower parts: i.e. in the long run to suffer Death. This provision may be regarded equally as a punitive sentence, as a mercy, and as a safety device.<sup>91</sup>

Whereas from one point of view death could be looked upon as a terror and a tragedy, it was also a guarantee that man would not of necessity have to live forever in a world where sin was in control. Death would release him from it. This is merely a suggestion as to the way death comes about and what part it plays in the drama of the life story of every man.

Before this death can become a victorious entrance into eternal life, it must be accepted and embraced with humility.

But only a Man who did not need to have been a Man at all unless He had chosen, only one who served in our sad

---

89. *Ibid.*, pp. 152 - 153.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 155.

91. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

regiment as a volunteer, yet also only one who was perfectly a Man, could perform this perfect dying; and thus (which way you put it is unimportant) either defeat Death or redeem it. He tasted death on behalf of all others. He is the representative 'Die-er' of the universe; and for that very reason the Resurrection and the Life. . . Because Vicariousness is the very idiom of the reality He has created, His death can become ours. The whole Miracle, far from denying what we already know of reality, writes the comment which makes that crabbed text plain: or rather, proves itself to be the text on which Nature was only the commentary. In science we have been reading only the notes to a poem: in Christianity we find the poem itself.<sup>92</sup>

There we have a statement of the Vicarious Atonement in all of its boldness. The complete helplessness of man and God's complete concern for the miserable man. The statement of this doctrine is in vigorous unmistakable terms.

#### Miracles that look back

We turn our attention to some of the other miracles that are supposed to have occurred in addition to the Incarnation. The difference between miracles of mythology and those of the Christians is that the latter occur as an invasion of a power that is not foreign, a power that does as it might be expected to do. This power comes as the King. He does not come as a god, but as the God. The immoral and sometimes silly tales of the miracles performed by the pagan gods, aside from the lack of historical evidence, could only be accepted if we accepted a universe which had no meaning.<sup>93</sup>

The credibility of some miracles are in an inverse proportion to the credibility of the particular faith proposing them. In the religion of Buddha you would not think miracles very credible because the teacher

---

92. Miracles, p. 157; Pain, p. 141.

93. Miracles, p. 160.

came to teach that Nature was an illusion and man must seek release from it. In Christianity the more we understand the kind of God we are dealing with and the purpose for which He came to earth the more credible the miracles become.<sup>94</sup>

Mr. Lewis divides miracles into two classes, Miracles of the Old Creation and Miracles of the New Creation. Mr. Lewis says that the following happens in a miracle; God performs locally and suddenly something that He has done or will do in the future on a large scale. Miracles of the Old Creation reflect something that has happened in the past, and Miracles of the New Creation, of course, reflect something that is yet to come. The miracles "do in small and, as it were, in focus what God at other times does so large that men do not attend to it."<sup>95</sup>

To illustrate, as a natural thing God every year turns water into wine through the use of soil, sunlight under proper conditions. Now at one specific time the Incarnate God made water into wine in a moment. He short-circuited. The short-cut is involved in the miracle. Mr. Lewis suggests that Christ found Satan's idea of changing the stones into bread quite out of the style of things. A brief reflection will recall to your mind that Christ's other miracles are also taken up with a short-cut.<sup>96</sup>

In the great miracle the same process is involved. A human father is merely the instrument in a long line of carriers. Now in one particular instant God by-passed all the preceding interlocking events and

---

94. Ibid.,

95. Ibid., p. 163.

96. Ibid.

touched a woman directly so that she would conceive; He had a special reason for it. God was not just making a man, "but the Man who was to be Himself: was creating Man anew; was beginning at this divine and human point, the New Creation of all things."<sup>97</sup> Mr. Lewis's insight into the background of Miracles and its connection with Nature is feasible and helpful in understanding what occurs when God invades Nature.

#### Miracles that look ahead

In the scene of the Walking on the Water we have an instance where Nature was completely obedient to spirit. Never to be forgotten is the fact that this was possible because it was connected to the Father of all Spirits. Mr. Lewis suggests that magic dreams too get this same power, but it does not want to pay the price. That principle of magic is changing much of Nature to disorder and sterility.<sup>98</sup>

Lazarus rising from the dead is different from that of Christ in this that Lazarus again took up his old kind of life whereas Christ continued in a glorious mode.<sup>99</sup> The Transfiguration of Christ is another miracle that points to the future.

We may be inclined to believe that everything said about the New Creation is to be taken metaphorically. But the local appearances of Christ after the Resurrection immediately shatter that picture. Christ claims to be corporeal. Yet we are tempted to think that the future is only one of spirituality. That is also shattered by the local appearances of Christ.

A new Nature is being not merely made but made out of an

---

97. Ibid., p. 166.

98. Ibid., p. 179.

99. Ibid., p. 180.

old one. We live amid all the anomalies, inconveniences, hopes, and excitements of a house that is being rebuilt. Something is being pulled down and something going up in its place.<sup>100</sup>

Mr. Lewis has a few comments to make on the Ascending Christ.

The picture that the early believers had and the one many of us have is that of Christ going up into Heaven. That is the way it appeared to those who were present at the Ascension. It is not unusual for people to get their ideas of God and Heaven and the blue sky intertwined. Light and heat come from above. The sun seems to do the begetting. The sky more than anything else has the appearance of infinity. It would be quite a common thing to expect that God and Heaven should be closely connected with the sky above.<sup>101</sup>

Mr. Lewis says quite strikingly that a man who thinks that Heaven is in the sky may have in his heart a truer picture and spiritual conception of it than a great logician who is able to demolish that picture of it with a stroke of the pen. Once more it is the doing of the will of the Father that reveals the doctrine.<sup>102</sup>

A distinct discussion of heaven will follow in chapter six of this thesis. Mr. Lewis has a final comment to make on the relation of the Spirit and Nature which is quite fitting.

The fact that the body, and locality and locomotion and time, now feel irrelevant to the highest reaches of the spiritual life is (like the fact that we can think of our bodies as 'coarse') a symptom. Spirit and Nature have quarrelled in us; that is our disease. Nothing we can yet do enables us to imagine its complete healing. Some glimpses and faint hints we have: in the Sacraments, in the use made of sensuous imagery by the great poets, in the best instances

---

100. Miracles, p. 185; Personality, pp. 49 - 50.

101. Miracles, pp. 186 - 187.

102. Ibid., p. 188.

of sexual love, in our experiences of the earth's beauty. But the full healing is utterly beyond our present conceptions. Mystics have got as far in contemplation of God as the point at which the senses are banished: the further point, at which they will be put back again, has (to the best of my knowledge) been reached by no one. The destiny of redeemed man is not less but more unimaginable than mysticism would lead us to suppose; because it is full of semi-imaginables which we cannot at present admit without destroying its essential character.<sup>103</sup>

#### Summary

The underlying theme of Mr. Lewis' presentation of Nature and Supernature is to show the probability of miracles. He wants to clear away any debris that might be littering the mind of people who think it is fashionable to reject Christianity. If they wish to reject miracles, let them do so on the proper grounds.

The writer shows that the validity of thought must be granted from the outset before any discussion can be entered upon. In his discussion of miracles Hume made the mistake of asking the same question in two different ways and using the answer he got for the first to refute the contention of the second. The question of the uniformity of Nature and the possibility of miracle are one and the same.

Mr. Lewis shows that ignorance of the Laws of Nature did not make miracles possible. It was and is only such knowledge which makes it possible to perceive miracles. The example of Joseph the Carpenter clarified his point effectively.

In his study of Nature, Mr. Lewis comes up with the principles of Selectiveness, Vicariousness, the composite nature of man, and the pattern of Descent and Reascension. These are found in Nature because they are principles or at least reflections of the way God works toward

---

103. Ibid., p. 190.

his creatures and especially man, in the drama of the Redemption.

A miracle is defined as a local, sudden event, the like of which has taken place or will take place in the future. When we wish to decide whether an event is a miracle or not, we follow the principle of 'the innate sense of the fitness' of things. Even if a miracle is not understood in itself, it must illuminate the story, the symphony, the poem, the drama of the universe.

The use of metaphor and imagery in daily speech and in theology is a contribution that will find a warm welcome among all who have run into difficulties just because of lack of understanding of language and speech on this level. Mr. Lewis's use of logic is devastating to sluggish minds. He uses it to annihilate faulty thinking. He doesn't draw an ergo to Christianity. He just presents the case for Christianity after he has indicated the inadequacy of other ways of life and lets his readers make a decision.

### III. Some Odd Ways of Thinking

#### What do I want?

Mr. Lewis touched on many other types of thinking beside that of naturalism. He does not always do so in the extended form given to the previous topic. Some of it is done in story form, principally in Pilgrim's Regress. This book tells the story of a man who was a Christian or thought he was a Christian when he was a young boy, gave up the faith for a time, and then returned to Christianity. In his heart he has a longing desire; he sees an Island that he wants. In an attempt to prove Christianity false and to satisfy his desire, he examines a wide variety of philosophies and religions. Some he embraces with enthusiasm at the outset but finds that after a time they do not answer the longing he has in his heart.

In one of his searches Mr. Lewis probes into the modern machine age. This machine age is heavily covered with a psychology of wish-fulfillment and subsidiary theories. These ideas are pictured in the Spirit of the Age. One of the factors involved is a pseudo-scientific mode of thinking. The author mentions the fallacy of this sort of thinking, particularly in regard to the theories behind the presence of the religious beliefs of some villages. These theorist knows that an escaped elephant is behind the trunk story because a snake must be behind the snake story in the next village and so it goes on.

Hypothesis, my dear young friend, established itself by a cumulative process; or, to use popular language, if you make

the same guess often enough it ceases to be a guess and becomes a Scientific Fact.<sup>1</sup>

True science can and does only work with facts that it can secure. It makes periodic observations of events or actual evidence that it has in hand and draws a conclusion. It is not in a position to advance theory as fact. It only deals with fact.

Mr. Lewis uses the term Brown Girls to depict sensuality and sex. When he first thought he had something he could put his trust in, he found that at the bottom it often turned out to be a Brown Girl. On the basis of the wish-fulfillment theory he was advised that that is what he really always wanted.

I know you are wrong there. . . I grant you, that--that sort of thing--is what I always get if I think too long about the Island. But it can't be what I want. . . If it is what I wanted, why am I so disappointed when I get it? If what a man really wanted was food, how could he be disappointed when the food arrived?<sup>2</sup>

According to the wish-fulfillment theory you always get what you want no matter how deviously it may be disguised. But the unanswered question is, "Why the disappointment when the supposedly wished-for object is at hand?" When a pointed question is put to the Spirit of the Age, jargon is always employed to confuse and retaliate. A straightforward answer is lacking.<sup>3</sup>

When the pilgrim was confronted with satire in music, which its promoters said was the real thing, insisting that art of today must be brutal because of the wars, he said that the fathers who went through the first Great War had settled down. That reply on the part of the pilgrim was greeted with, "Puritanian! Bourgeois! Humanitarianism is

---

1. C. S. Lewis, Pilgrim's Regress, p. 36.

2. Regress, p. 56.

3. Ibid., p. 51.

dead!" Always the reply was jargon.<sup>4</sup>

The pilgrim was once a prisoner of the Spirit of the Age. When the jailer brought the food one day, he began to give a lecture on the wish-fulfillment theory. Milk was the bill of fare for the day. The jailer said that it was just habit that people drank the milk instead of the other secretions of the cow. The pilgrim replied.

You are trying to pretend that unlike things are like. You are trying to make us think that milk is the same sort of thing as sweat or dung. . . Are you a liar or only a fool, that you see no difference between that which Nature cast out as refuse and that which she stores up as food? . . . I am talking of what happens. Milk does feed calves and dung does not.<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Lewis even goes to greater lengths in the following quotation. The jailer was putting his puils through their catechisms regarding his teaching.

'You, there, . . . what is argument?'

'Argument is the attempted rationalization of the arguer's desires.'

'What is the proper answer to an argument proving the existence of the Landlord?'

'You say that because you are a Steward.'

'And what is the answer to an argument proving Mr. Phally's songs just as brown as Mr. Halfways?'

'There are two only generally necessary to damnation. The first is, "You say that because you are a Puritan," and the second is, "You say that because you are a sensualist."'

'What is the answer to an argument turning on the belief that two and two make four?'

'The answer is, "You say that because you are a mathematician."<sup>6</sup>

Here in very vivid form Mr. Lewis shows what the wish-fulfillment theory can do for everyday living and thinking. When he was in a quandary as to just how to find the error of this type of thinking, the pilgrim met

---

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 57 - 59.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

6. *Ibid.*, pp. 69 - 70.

Reason.

Reason proceeds to explain. The author touches on the limitations of Reason in another work.<sup>7</sup> People around the pilgrim noticed that when he was thinking of his desire of his Island, he frequently ended up with a Brown Girl. For that reason they say that the Island is the copy of the Brown Girl. That might be true. But the question which must be answered is this, "Which is the copy of the other?" You can't keep going on in a circle. Whenever two things are alike, we have a right to ask which is a copy of the other, or are they both copies of a third? Some suggested that these desires were copies of the Landlord (God).<sup>8</sup>

Science has not disproved this contention, as some might imagine. They seemingly disproved it but did so only by assuming that the fair one is a copy of the foul. Thus they have decided that the pilgrim's desire, his Island, even the Landlord are copies of this earth. First they pretend that their researches lead to this conclusion and then interpret their researches with this conclusion as the guide. It is arguing in a circle once more.

The Spirit of the Age wishes to allow argument and not to allow argument. . . You heard what they said, if anyone argues with them they say that he is rationalizing his own desires, and therefore need not be answered. But if anyone listens to them they will then argue themselves to show that their own doctrines are true. What is the cure? You must ask them whether any reasoning is valid or not. If they say yes, then they will refute them on their merits: for if some reasoning is valid, for all they know, your bits of reasoning may be one of the valid bits.<sup>9</sup>

---

7. Miracles, p. 110; p. 25-26 of this thesis.

8. Regress, p. 76.

9. Ibid., p. 82.

### The Middle Road

What about people who say that the sensible way is the best to follow, don't let Reason get into the way too much. The man who was enjoying contentment was called Sensible. He maintained, that sense stops when something is a pleasant inconsistency. Sense only wants comfort and is successful; Reason is looking for truth and is still searching. To Sensible's contention that the middle way was the best, the pilgrim replied that you cannot go too far in the direction of the good. You can't go too far in the right direction. Sensible's philosophy breaks down when the going becomes difficult or a person is reduced to mean circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

### Half a man

The pilgrim encounters three pale men who have been driven together because they have common antagonisms. They are Neo-Classical, Mr. Humanist, and Neo-Angular. Neo-Angular does things not because he has any convictions or feelings about the matter. He does them because the rules say he should. The Humanist explains their present trying circumstances in the barren north country by saying they are in the process of building a new community. They are importing food only until their own garden produces enough for them to practice temperance. The three are opposed to the modern age each in a different way and therefore become friends. Humanist does not care for any kind of romanticism. Neo-Classical is interested in seeing that all kinds of humanitarian or egalitarian principles are abandoned. Neo-Angular who is identified with the Anglo-Catholic only asks that no questions be asked but only simple

---

10. Regress, pp. 101 - 112; C. S. Lewis, Christian Behaviour, p. 57.

acceptance of the dogmata that his church has laid down. Rules are rules and no questions are to be asked. All the advice the pilgrim gets is to abandon his desire. Neither one of the three pale men was able to tell him why he should abandon his longing when it was the longing alone which brought him to his present place.<sup>11</sup>

#### Thirty miles a day

Virtue is also traveling with the pilgrim. Mr. Lewis depicts him as a man who is not particularly concerned with the direction in which he is traveling just as long as he does his thirty miles a day. Upon meeting the three pale men virtue begins to see his resemblance to them. His principle is to travel hopefully rather than to arrive. Although Virtue is to be admired, he stops short in his quest of the why and wherefor.<sup>12</sup>

#### Are we human?

No holds are barred when the pilgrim has an opportunity to meet Marxism. Mr. Lewis calls them the men from the North, dwarfs, real dwarfs, trolls. Their conception of the human life is well-phrased in the following quotation.

I felt all the time that if they killed me it wouldn't be murder, any more than if a crocodile or a gorilla killed me. It is a different species.<sup>13</sup>

As to their method of thinking, Mr. Lewis has this to say. The Marxist always says that all thoughts are the result of class conditioning--except of course the thought that the Marxist is thinking at the present moment.<sup>14</sup> Their thinking about the poor is by no means consistent. They

---

11. Regress, pp. 118 - 127.

12. Ibid., pp. 40 - 42; 110 - 113.

13. Ibid., p. 129.

14. Miracles, p. 30.

at one time state that the poor are the only ones who are worthy to be spared. Yet if they are the only worthy ones, the effects of poverty cannot be wholly evil. In this manner it agrees with Christianity that the poor are not to be regarded lightly, and at the same time efforts are to be made to see that the poverty is to be removed.<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Lewis further characterizes Marxist followers as reactionary people who have taken up a philosophy that has been tried before and abandoned. In his meeting with the head man of the dwarfs on the top of a cold and windy mountain the pilgrim got the impression that fighting was an end in itself. The head man muttered something about his preferring being the agent rather than the patient in a world of destruction.<sup>16</sup>

There we have a picture plus the implications of the Marxist thought. The lowered evaluation of the dignity of the individual has been instrumental in making people sub-species to the human. It appears to be a revival of a system of thinking that has been tried before and failed. . . give people food and raiment and they will have all their needs supplied. The air of hopelessness about the whole system seemed to answer none of the questions regarding the desire the pilgrim had.

#### I like religion

The next type of thinking he encounters is that of Mr. Broad, a clergyman who has thrown all shackles overboard. We meet a very similar character in another publication.<sup>17</sup> Mr. Broad has some of the characteristics of Vertue. He doesn't want to be too definite about anything. The slow pageant of the countryside is enough to bind the human race together.

---

15. Pain, pp. 96 - 97.

16. Regress, pp. 131 - 133.

17. C. S. Lewis, The Great Divorce, pp. 30 - 40.

He would acclaim that being definite in religious things has been the great fault of the clergy. Every age needs its own reinterpretation. His way of thinking can be pretty well summed up in the statement, "The seeking is the finding,"<sup>18</sup> The pilgrim was unable to come to grips with this type of thinking at all because Mr. Broad shifted his position so often in the conversation. Popular religion which permits every man to find his own key to the mystery of life is unsatisfactory.

A big help, but--

The pilgrim then finds himself at the abode of Wisdom. Wisdom is of some service in helping him find what he wants but also stops short of answering his problems. Wisdom says that neither superstition nor materialism, at opposite poles from the other, will satisfy. The pilgrim is on the edge of a great canyon while at the house of Wisdom. They tell him that the mountain and the forest appearing on the other side of the canyon is not exactly an illusion but an appearance and a true appearance in a way. But Wisdom advises that it would be folly to turn away from looking at the mountain and the forest, it would be equal folly to think you could ever arrive there.

I would not have you cease to fix all your desires on the far side, for to wish to cross is simply to be a man, and to lose that wish is to be a beast. It is not desire that my father's doctrine kills: it is only hope.<sup>19</sup>

The whole question of why people who have abandoned the rules of the Landlord and yet make up some of their own is handled in this fashion by Wisdom. People want to abandon rules; but as soon as they have done so, they set some up of their own. The people with the wish-fulfillment

---

18. Regress, p. 147.

19. Ibid., p. 157.

idea say that it is only a disguise for the desires of the people. The question is which desires do they fulfill? Something like self-approbation destroys that kind of thinking. Why should we approve of our actions unless we already thought that the rules were good? A man takes pleasure in the fact that he is stronger than someone else, but only if he already before this has approved of strength. Wisdom comes to the conclusion that man does not make the rules, he finds them. Some theologians would call that the law written in the heart.<sup>20</sup>

The Island itself cannot be a device to conceal lust. The Spirit of the Age, Wisdom explains, is interested in emphasizing the dark part of the mind until nothing escapes its deceptions. No person or no nation who has been capable of seeing the Island has not experienced how easy it is for that Island to end in lust. At the same time, those who have not been corrupted, have felt a keen disappointment when it ended in that fashion. The ending in lust did not consummate the vision but only broke it. If a thing does not satisfy, it cannot be the thing that is being desired. This again is a reaffirmation of the demolition of the wish-fulfillment theory.<sup>21</sup>

Wisdom then continues that the desire cannot be a state of mind, a feeling, for concentration on it makes it vanish. It's a light flutter of the heart at best. Wisdom concludes then that the desire is something Outer and Other from that very reason. After this brilliant discourse, giving the pilgrim a clearer picture of what he is seeking, Wisdom also fails. His advice.

That the thing should be, is so great a good that when you

---

20. Ibid., pp. 159 - 160.

21. Ibid., pp. 161 - 163.

remember "it is" you will forget to be sorry that you can never have it. . . Wanting is better than having.<sup>22</sup>

This philosophy in action is described as Mr. Lewis speaks of Wisdom's children. . . "so quiet and yet so alert, as though they waited in hourly expectation of something that would never happen."<sup>23</sup>

Wisdom's explanation for man, as he is, gives us the pattern of one and the same being making the laws and subjecting itself to those laws. His principle is an impersonal Eternal Mind that flows through its perishable forms called man. The conflicts in any man are simply the battle of mortal with the eternal self. Wisdom says that the crux lies in the ambiguous sense in which "I" must always be taken.

"I ought but I do not wish"--how meaningless the words are, how close to saying, "I want and I do not want." But once we have learned to say "I, and yet not I, want", the mystery is plain.<sup>24</sup>

The answer that the appearance of the trees across the canyon is real but all hope of arriving there should be abandoned leaves the pilgrim without a satisfactory answer. The explanation of the essence of the Eternal Mind as a picture of an everlasting conflict between the mortal and eternal self forces the pilgrim to asceticism, an asceticism of both body and mind.

#### The Landlord and His Son

In the agony of asceticism which he has taken seriously, he begins to call out for help to something that he chooses to call a metaphor. The thought comes to him that if the help that he wants of the metaphor

---

22. *Ibid.*, p. 163.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 164.

24. *Ibid.*, pp. 171, 172.

is real, then possibly its commands are real also. In taking the extreme step philosophically, he found himself dangerously close to the old story of the Landlord. He pictures it in this fashion. Upon the advice of Wisdom he thought that he was making his own rules and keeping his own rules, as part of the Eternal Mind. He tried his best to keep them, but—. It's as if you had a sliver in your finger. You fully intend to remove it no matter how great the pain, but in the back of your mind is always the idea that you can stop if you want to. But if you go to a physician, you know that he will remove the sliver and will not stop, no matter what the pain. What the pilgrim began to notice was that he was gradually slipping away from his own treatment to that of the physician who looked suspiciously like the Landlord. He himself wished to keep the treatment under control. but he saw it being put into the hands of another.<sup>25</sup>

His first impression at this stage of the game is that he is Caught. History gives him the story of how from time to time the Landlord sent pictures to pagan peoples to stimulate their desire. These pictures were supposed to help the pagans back to God. They mistakenly tried to retain the same picture all the time instead of trying to see what that picture represented. But to the Shepherds were given the Rules because they could read.

Do you not see that the Pagans, because there were under the enemy, were beginning at the wrong end! They were like lazy school boys attempting eloquence before they learn grammar. They had pictures for their eyes instead of roads for their feet, and that is why most of them could do nothing but desire and then, through starved desire, become corrupt in the imaginations, and so awake despair, and so

---

25. Regress, p. 185.

desire again. Now the Shepherds, because they were under the Landlord, were made to begin at the right end. Their feet were set on a road: and as the Landlord's Son once said, if the feet have been put right the hands and the head will come right sooner or later. It won't work the other way.<sup>26</sup>

The coming of the Landlord's Son also brought the Pagans and the Shepherds together again. Here Mr. Lewis has depicted in brief fashion the presence of God among the Hebrew people and his absence among the pagans with the resultant effects in both cases. It was only because the Hebrews had the true God that they managed to do the right things in part. Occasional moral philosophers would arise among the pagans, but they made the mistake of not trying to see what was behind these philosophies. Consequently, they never had or got the power to keep the rules.<sup>27</sup>

Mr. Lewis inserts a note for the defense of Romanticism as a picture that God inserted. Previous pictures had, by their very nature of being composed of something that was not common in the world around people, been mistaken for the thing they had been sent to inspire. This was not possible with Romanticism. A landscape, for example, would inspire this desire. Yet, everyone knew that it was not the landscape that was wanted. For that reason idolatry was not possible. Belittling was. People who did not get the picture welcomed any explanation which would remove its significance. It becomes quite obvious that Mr. Lewis is not writing for children. We might be inclined to say that the sort of thing which Mr. Lewis arrives at are possible through hindsight and a very keen and insightful imagination.<sup>28</sup>

---

26. Ibid., p. 197.

27. Ibid., p. 198.

28. Ibid., p. 203.

### Moderation Unveiled

After his conversion he got a clearer picture of Sensible. Mr. Sensible appeared to be hardly a man at all, just a synthetic man. He did not really learn from great men.

He learned only catchwords from them. He could talk like Epicurus of spare diet, but he was a glutton. He had from Montaigne the language of friendship, but no friend. He did not even know what these predecessors had really said. He had never worked through a page of Horace in his life. And for his Rabelais, he can quote Do what you will. But he has not notion that Rabelais gave that liberty to his Thelemites on the condition that they should be bound by Honour, and for this reason alone free from laws positive. Still less does he know that Rabelais himself was following a great Steward of the olden days who said Habe caritatem et fac quod vis; and least of all that this Steward in his turn was only reducing to an epigram the words of his Master, when He said, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."<sup>29</sup>

### Summary

In the above section Mr. Lewis touched upon a number of philosophies. They proved unsatisfactory because they could not give an effective answer to the desire that he found in himself. Some told him to forget about it. The Spirit of the Age said that it was only the result of a wish-fulfillment. Some modern clergyman warned him about being too definite about anything. Reason showed him the fallacy of the reasoning of the Spirit of the Age. Since nothing definite could be determined, Sensible advised enjoying what could be definitely determined. Marxism was only an old time theory bubbling up once more which denied the rights of the individual to such an extent that people become almost a sub-species of humanity. A thorough investigation brings him to understand that his desire is outside of himself, but at the same time Wisdom advises him

---

29. Ibid., p. 229.

to abandon any idea of satisfying that desire, while at the same time not giving up the wanting.

An attempt to put his confidence in the Eternal Mind, that he is part of it, only leads him to call for help. Here also Mr. Lewis is careful in pointing out logic and philosophy themselves do not bring you to Christianity. They only refute the satisfactory quality of any other type of philosophy. Even when brought to that point the individual must abandon himself and trust to the God of Christianity. There is no final proof, logically, that Christianity is the way. You can only tell by trying.

1. *Ibid.*, p. 34.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 40.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 45.

4. *Ibid.*, pp. 57 - 70.

5. C. S. Lewis, *Philosophy*.

6. C. S. Lewis, *Christianity and Literature*, p. 77.

#### IV. Have you thought about This?

##### Where did I come from?

Mr. Lewis does not treat evolution or evolutionism at any great length in his theological works. A few comments might be in place. He himself holds that the earth gradually reached perfection from the stage of being 'without form and void'.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Lewis does say that he has no objection to the statement that man is physically descended from animals. But to him that does not infer that man had developed morally, for animals do not have moral conduct.<sup>2</sup> Somewhere along this line of development God intervened in a special manner to give him what we call a soul.<sup>3</sup> At this point he was the same as the man described in Genesis who was formed out of the dust of the ground. Mr. Lewis is not insistent on this belief for others; he states it as his own. A reading of his works shows that he in no way minimizes man's responsibility dealing with it at length in one chapter of his Problem of Pain.<sup>4</sup> and giving some attention to it in a novel.<sup>5</sup> On still another occasion he indicates the evil of the doctrine of Creative Evolution because it is one of the best ways to get people to concentrate on the future rather than the present.<sup>6</sup>

---

1. Miracles, p. 146.

2. Pain, p. 60.

3. Ibid., p. 65.

4. Ibid., pp. 57 - 76.

5. C. S. Lewis, Perelandra.

6. C. S. Lewis, Screwtape Letters, p. 77.

He employs evolution in quite a different manner in the Christian life. Mr. Lewis employs the evolutionary way of thinking to help people understand what happens when a man becomes a Christian. At first there were very large creatures on earth. They were not overcome by creatures which were still larger but by a small being who was superior to them in brain power. In other words, the evolutionary process took an unexpected turn.<sup>7</sup>

Now people are looking for this man to become a superman, getting more and more brain power all the time. But says Mr. Lewis the next step in this process can be just as unexpected as the previous development. In fact Evolution as a process will be superceded. In fact Christians maintain that the next step has already occurred.

And it is really new. It isn't a change from brainy men to brainier men: it is a change that goes off in a totally different direction—a change from being creatures of God to being sons of God. The first instance appeared in Palestine two thousand years ago. In a sense, the change isn't 'Evolution' at all, because it is not something arising out of the natural process of events but something coming into Nature from outside.<sup>8</sup>

The above evidence shows that Mr. Lewis's concept of evolution is a far cry from what we normally expect of evolutionists. In Mr. Lewis's writings it does not play a prominent part. His great insistence on the guilt of man in the fall, his complete inability to help himself back to God, and his reliance on the Incarnate Christ as the connecting link between man and God immediately show the relative position that Christianity and evolution hold in his thinking. He sees in it another possibility in the pattern of descent and reascension we spoke of earlier.

---

7. Personality, pp. 60 - 62.

8. Ibid., pp. 60, 61, 62.

The quotation above shows that the turn he gives to that particular step in, what can hardly be called evolution anymore, depicts rather accurately how differently he thinks of evolution.

#### Dualism

Dualism as a concept of the world in its essence runs into difficulties. The forces are supposed to co-exist and at the same time have no relation with each other. That is alright until you realize that they do not exist side by side as picture them but they live in a common space, or time, or any medium. If they are independent of each other, to prefer one to the other would be no more of a momentous even than preferring tea to coffee.<sup>9</sup>

Good can only be good in relation to something and the same is true of evil. Dualism is false because the forces are called good and evil by some outside standard. Consequently, there must be something behind that standard.

If Dualism is true, then the Bad Power must be a being who likes badness for its own sake. . . Badness consists in pursuing them by the wrong method, or in the wrong way, or too much. . . I do mean wickedness, when you examine it, turns out to be the pursuit of some good in the wrong way. . . You can do a kind action when you're not feeling kind and when it gives you no pleasure, simply because kindness is right; but no one ever did a cruel action simply because cruelty is wrong—only because cruelty was pleasant or useful to him. In other words badness can't succeed in being bad in the same way in which goodness is good. Goodness is, so to speak, itself: badness is only spoiled goodness. And there must be something good first before it can be spoiled.<sup>10</sup> Christianity agrees with Dualism that the world is at war. But it doesn't think that it is a war between independent powers. It thinks it's a civil war, a rebellion and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by a rebel.<sup>11</sup>

9. Miracles, pp. 39 - 40; Case, p. 37.

10. Case, pp. 38 - 39; Letters, p. 146.

11. Case, p. 40.

### Things

Regarding materialism typified by machines Mr. Lewis asserts that the commonness of machines makes many people believe that everything must work like they do. Mr. Lewis takes issue with the machine age. Speed, efficiency, ruthlessness, austerity have replaced the pagan gods. They are the pagan gods of today. The more expensive something is the more it is worshipped.<sup>12</sup> The curious belief that machines and materialism will abide forever, that is it looks too solid to pass away, comes about in this way.

That idea depends on a curious disease which they have all caught--an inability to disbelieve advertisements. To be sure, if the machines did what they promised, the change would be very deep indeed. Their next war, for example, would change the state of their country from disease to death. They are afraid of this themselves--though most of them are old enough to know by experience that a gun is no more likely than a toothpaste or a cosmetic to do the things its makers say it will do. It is the same with all their machines. Their labour-saving devices multiply drudgery; their aphrodisiacs make them impotent; their amusements bore them; their rapid production leaves half of them starving, and their devices for saving time have banished leisure from the country. There will be no radical change. And as for permanence--consider how quickly all machines are broken and obliterated.<sup>13</sup>

#### Fear and obligation combined

Mr. Lewis sees a kind of development in religion. One of the strands is the presence of what Prof. Otto called the Numinous. We can call it awe, or dread, or the uncanny. The second strand that he sees is that all human beings wherever they are acknowledge some kind of morality. They say, "I ought," and, "I ought not." The third strand is the identification of one with the other. It would appear that the two would be

---

12. Regress, p. 49.

13. Ibid., p. 240.

combined, the power which inspires awe in a man as the same one which condemns his guilt. Perhaps another case of wish-fulfillment.

The actual behaviour of that universe which the Numinous haunts bears no resemblance to the behaviour which morality demands of us. The one seems wasteful, ruthless, and unjust; the other enjoins upon us the opposite qualities. Nor can the identification of the two be explained as a wish-fulfillment, for it fulfils no one's wishes. We desire nothing less than to see that Law whose naked authority is already un-  
portable armed with the incalculable claims of the Numinous.<sup>14</sup>

#### The presence of morality

From the pen of this author there is a word or two for those who by one means or another try to deny the presence of a basic morality among the peoples of the earth. In daily arguments of every sort people appeal to some sort of standard. Seldom does anyone deny the standard. They always try to show that they have lived up to a standard or that they have a special excuse for not doing so. Quarrelling has its very basis on the supposition that there is a standard. It means trying to show the other fellow that he is wrong.<sup>15</sup>

For example, people have disagreed as toward which persons you should act unselfish. There has been agreement that you should not put yourself first.

If we didn't believe in decent behaviour, why should we be so anxious to make excuses for not having behaved decently? For you notice that it's only for our behaviour that we find all these explanations. We put our bad temper down to being tired or worried or hungry; we put our good temper down to ourselves.<sup>16</sup>

Wherever you go you will find these two things: that people have a standard of behaviour, and that they admit they don't live up

---

14. Pain, p. 10.

15. Casa, pp. 3 - 5.

16. Ibid., p. 7.

to it.

All moralities agree in prescribing a behaviour which their adherents fail to practice. All men stand condemned not by alien codes of ethics, but by their own, and all men therefore are conscious of guilt. The second element in religion is the consciousness not merely of a moral law, but of a moral law at once approved and disobeyed. This consciousness is neither a logical nor an illogical inference from the facts of experience; if we did not bring it to our experience we could not find it there. It is either inexplicable illusion, or else revelation.<sup>17</sup>

Another thing that cannot be explained away is that all impulses are not always encouraged or discouraged. One set of them is not always bad. If the cause is the fluctuation of "forces" within us, how can we explain that we are often prompted and encouraged to do the thing we dislike the most? In a dangerous situation when common sense tells us to get out of the troubled area, something tells us to stay back and help those whose handicaps will not permit them to make a speedy escape.<sup>18</sup>

Some have said that because the moral standards of different people differed, you could say that there is no basic Moral Law. But through the differences you can see the law running. Some groups say that a man may have more than one wife. You will not find them saying that they can have anyone they want.

When you think about these differences between the morality of one people and that of another, do you think that the morality of one people is ever better or worse than that of another? Have any of the changes been improvements? If not then of course there could never be any moral progress. Progress means not just changing, but changing for the better. If no set of moral ideas were truer or better than any other there would be no sense in preferring civilized morality to savage morality, or Christian morality to Nazi morality. . . The moment you say that one set of moral ideas can be better than another, you are in fact, measuring them both to a

---

17. Pain, pp. 9 - 10.

18. Case, p. 8.

standard, saying that one of them conforms to that standard more nearly than the other. But the standard that measures two things is something different from either. . . You are, in fact, comparing them both with some Real Morality.<sup>19</sup>

The above statement having been made in war time is especially effective. Mr. Lewis says it might have been necessary to fight the Nazis, but no moral reason for it could be called upon if the theory of no standard is upheld. The Rule of Decent Behaviour is not answered by saying it is just what nations approve. If that were the case, we could not say that one nation's approval were any better than that of any other nation.<sup>20</sup>

The Moral Law is something different from the Law of Nature. In Nature the Law is merely a description of what happens to a stone, for example, when it falls over a cliff. The Law of Human Nature advises what we ought to do, and it tells us when we fail to do so. To say that it is convenience does not answer the question because bad behaviour isn't always inconvenient. In war, countries may find use for a traitor from the other side. Although they use such a man, neither side will regard him very highly.<sup>21</sup>

The good of society has been advanced as an explanation for the Rule of Decent Behaviour. We are told to be unselfish for the good of society. We ask why we should do what is good for society unless it benefits us personally. The answer given is that we should be unselfish. That's like saying that the point of playing football is to score goals. But scoring goals is the game itself. Our statement has been true, but

---

19. Case, p. 11.

20. Ibid., p. 12.

21. Ibid., p. 13 - 15.

we have said nothing.<sup>22</sup>

Many men have said that you can get a good idea of what God is like from observing the universe. Mr. Lewis contends that the best idea of God can be gotten from the Moral Law which we find in ourselves. It's getting inside information. The difference could be illustrated in this way. We get more ideas of what a man is like by having a conversation with him than by looking at a house he built. From that study you come to the conclusion that God is good, not in the sense that He is indulgent, but that he demands right action no matter how painful the treatment may be. If the universe is not governed by such goodness, there is no point to our trying to be good. If it is, we are in a bad way again because we constantly find ourselves in direct opposition to that goodness. Some people are thrilled by the idea of meeting goodness. Mr. Lewis suggests that such people are at the Munich stage of religion, for goodness can be a safety device or a danger. Our reaction to it decides that. And the author suggests that we have reacted in the wrong way.<sup>23</sup>

This going back to the Moral Law may appear to many to be turning the hands of the clock backwards which disturbs us a great deal.

Would you think I was joking if I said that you can put a clock back, and that if the clock is wrong it's often a very sensible thing to do? But I would rather get away from the whole idea of clocks. We all want progress. But progress means getting nearer to the place where you want to be. And if you've taken a wrong turning, then to go forward does not get you any nearer. If you're on the wrong road, progress means doing an about-turn and walking back to the right; and in that case the man who turns back soonest is the most progressive man.<sup>24</sup>

---

22. Ibid., p. 16.

23. Ibid., pp. 20 - 21.

24. Ibid., p. 24.

### Psychoanalysis and Morality

A misunderstanding of psychoanalysis has given some people false ideas about morals and right conduct. One of the words that has caused this is the technical term "repression". Mr. Lewis reminds his readers that "repression" means being so afraid of some impulse that it is not permitted to rise to the surface of the consciousness but stays hidden in the unconscious and there causes difficulty. It does not mean resisting a conscious desire.<sup>25</sup>

Psychoanalysis has been one of the causes of the public's great disregard for human wickedness. It has left the impression that Shame is a dangerous and mischievous thing. It has led the public to believe that it should get these things out into the open because they are not of such a nature to promote Shame. They are really quite natural. But shamelessness has been recognized by the pagan world as a low point for a man's soul. The peculiar difficulty into which this has placed those who would once more instill a sense of shame is this.

It is mad work to remove hypocrisy by removing the temptation to hypocrisy: the "frankness" of people sunk below shame is a very cheap frankness.<sup>26</sup>

That is the quandary into which psychoanalysis has placed us. It has encouraged people to be free to talk about the "evil" things they have done, but it has led to a loss of a sense of shame. To encourage this sense of shame for evil deeds embodies that fact that people must be willing to admit that they have done evil.. That is part of the dilemma.

One other point regarding the position of psychoanalysis and morality. Both claim to be able to put the human machine in proper running

---

25. Behaviour, pp. 28 - 29.

26. Pain, p. 45.

order. A man making a moral choice is presented with two things. One is the act of choosing. The other is his psychological make-up, feelings, impulses and so on at the time he makes a particular choice. We could call it the raw material for the choice. It may be normal or abnormal.

What psychoanalysis undertakes to do is to remove the abnormal feelings, that is to give the man better raw material for his acts of choice: morality is concerned with the acts of choice themselves. . . However much you improve the man's raw material, you've still got something else: 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 morality is concerned with.<sup>27</sup>

#### Summary

Mr. Lewis does believe in an evolution of his own kind. At least he would not quarrel with anyone who maintained that man physically developed from the animals. The imparting of a soul was only by special intervention of God. To say that Mr. Lewis believed in an evolutionary development would have to be qualified very carefully. His emphasis on man's degeneration and absolute inability to get back to God is in the opposite stream of thinking than that which is held by most true evolutionists.

Dualism is rejected as a faulty explanation of the forces behind the universe because we would have no way of knowing what was good or bad unless we had some third standard to judge by. Badness cannot succeed in being bad to the same extent that goodness can succeed in being good, because evil must use some good quality to achieve its ends. Two forces can only be thought to exist side by side if we think of them as we

---

27. Behaviour, p. 20 - 21.

think of two men occupying space side by side. Two forces such as dualism presents, however, are occupying the same space and yet have no relation to each other. Evil of this sort would have to like badness for its own sake for wickedness examined, shows that evil is good pursued in a wrong way.

The presence of morality cannot be explained away as habit, as action for the sake of convenience, or as something that is pursued just in the interest of the public good. In every day life and in argument people are constantly appealing to some standard. Even those who absolutely deny such a standard will immediately appeal to it if they find themselves coming out at the short end of a bargain. Wherever you go you will find a standard of behaviour which its adherents will admit they do not keep. They stand condemned by their own laws.

Psychoanalysis has the job of straightening out the raw material within the individual, to make him as able as possible to make a decision under normal circumstances. It is the concern of morality as to what he will choose to do after he has all the raw material straightened up and in good working order.

## V. Something for Christians

### Kerygma and John the Baptist

Mr. Lewis has a beneficial statement to make regarding present day preaching of the Christian message which will in part account for his round about approach to morality.

My reason was that Christianity simply doesn't make sense until you've faced the sort of facts I've been describing. Christianity tells people to repent and promises them forgiveness. It therefore has nothing (as far as I know) to say to people who don't know they've done anything to repent of and who don't feel that they need any forgiveness. It's after you've realized that there is a real Moral Law, and a Power behind the law, and that you have broken that law and put yourself wrong with that Power—it's after all that that Christianity begins to talk.<sup>1</sup>

John the Baptist could preach repentance immediately because the people had a sense of sin and guilt. That same attitude has to be recovered before a message of repentance will have any meaning for people. You have to establish a feeling of guilt before people will find any need for a message of repentance or forgiveness.<sup>2</sup>

### Christ as Saviour

There is a great deal of insipid thinking on the part of people who consider themselves religious or even Christian. "Who is Christ?" is still the question that puts a man into one camp or another. The author's attitude in this matter is brilliantly portrayed in the following excerpt.

---

1. Case, p. 27.

2. Pain, p. 45.

I'm trying here to prevent anyone from saying the really silly 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's the one thing we mustn't say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of thing Jesus said wouldn't be a great moral teacher. He'd either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he's a poached egg--or else he'd be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a mad man 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 don't let us come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great moral teacher. He hasn't left that open to us. He didn't intend to.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Lewis has stated before that even though we may consider the principles of Christ the best, that doesn't make us want to follow them with more enthusiasm than we would any other man's principles. In fact, their perfection encourages disobedience for man can see that he does not have the power to live up to those principles.<sup>4</sup>

#### Necessity for Doctrine

After some people have accepted religion or Christianity, they may still object to doctrines, the Trinity for example. Think of studying a map. If we just study them, it will not prove to be very exciting. The point is, however, we want to get somewhere. Just strolling on the beaches of England will not help one to get to America, although undoubtedly those walks give you a better idea of what the sea is like than does the map. Remember, the doctrines are not God. The reason something like feeling God in Nature is so popular is that it involves a great many thrills but no responsibility. Just feeling the presence of God will not give us eternal life, and that's our goal.<sup>5</sup>

---

3. Case, p. 45.

4. Personality, p. 3.

5. Ibid., p. 23.

### The self and God

When we turn ourselves over to Christ we submit to the whole treatment. Some of us perhaps have been afraid that we were losing our personality and individuality by so doing. Strangely enough, we become ourselves for the first time when we turn ourselves over to Him, give ourselves up. Until that time ourselves have been the mere meeting places of events which we did not start nor are able to stop. Look for a second at men who are most 'natural' around us and during the course of history. All tyrants have been monotonously like each other. It is the saints who have portrayed true individuality.

The very step is to try to forget about the self altogether. Your real, new self (which is Christ's and also yours, and yours just because it is His) won't come as long as you're looking for it. It will come when you are looking for Him.<sup>6</sup>

It may be well to get a clear cut picture of what Mr. Lewis means by the 'natural' life and the life of a Christian. The natural life is just biological, and like everything else we see around us it tends to run down and decay. It keeps going for a time because it takes in subsidies like food, air, and water. This kind of life the author calls Bios. The life of the Christian is from all eternity, from God Himself. It is the same force that made all things. This particular life is called Zoe. The individual man gets this life through Christ.

Bios has to be sure, a certain shadowy or symbolic resemblance to Zoe: but only the sort of resemblance there is between a photo and a place, or a statue and a man. A man changed from having Bios to having Zoe would have gone through as big a change as a statue which changed from being a carved stone to being a real man. And That is just precisely what Christianity is about. This world is a great sculptor's shop. We are the statues and there is a rumor

---

6. Ibid., p. 67.

going round the shop that some of us are some day going to come to life.<sup>7</sup>

The self is related to God in a particular way, a way that the Christian admits but finds difficult to keep uppermost in his mind. Mr. Lewis reflects the old statement that God doesn't want something we have, but He wants us. In his Screwtape Letters he has the master tempter advise his nephew in this way regarding the Christian patient.

You must therefore zealously guard in his mind the curious assumption "My time is my own". Let him have the feeling that he starts each day as the lawful possessor of twenty-four hours. Let him feel as a grievous tax that portion of this property which he has to make over to his employers, and as a generous donation that further portion which he allows to religious duties. But what he must never be permitted to doubt is that the total from which these deductions have been made was, in some mysterious sense, his own personal birthright. . . The humans are always putting up claims of ownership which sound equally funny in Heaven and Hell and we must keep them doing so. Much of the modern resistance to chastity comes from men's belief that they "own" their bodies.<sup>8</sup>

The satanic tempter says that the trick is to get the humans to think that the possessive adjective "my" has the same meaning whether you say, "My boots," or "My wife". Even a child in a nursery can be taught that the term "My teddy-bear" doesn't just mean the object upon which affection is lavished, but rather the bear that can be pulled to pieces if the child so desires.

And all the time the joke is that the word "mine" in its fully possessive sense cannot be uttered by a human being about anything. In the long run either Our Father or the Enemy will say "Mine" of each thing that exists.<sup>9</sup>

The strategy of promoting the idea that we belong to ourselves

---

7. Ibid., p. 7.

8. Letters, pp. 107 - 108.

9. Ibid., p. 109.

is the top goal of Satan. Therein lies the very factor that made man fall into sin. The fact that he wanted to be on his own. Christians are constantly battling the hope that after all the demands the Christian lifeplaces on them they'll still have time for their own selves, a time in which no one can tell them what to do. It's something like the honest man who pays his taxes. After he has paid them in full, he is still hoping that there will be some money left over for himself.<sup>10</sup>

Christ mentioned that figs could not produce thistles. That is what some of us are trying to do. If Christ is not in us, we can't move ahead in the job of forgetting self. We may conduct ourselves in a pleasant way, but the change must go deeper than that. We might be compared to a field sown completely with grass seed. With a mower we can keep the grass short. We will not be able to produce wheat in that way. In order to do that we may have to plow up the field and be resown.

We're like eggs at present. And you can't go on indefinitely being just an ordinary, decent egg. We must hatch or go bad.<sup>11</sup>

Christianity demands that we turn ourselves over lock, stock, and barrel to Christ. We are not in a position to dictate how far the change will go. If we commit ourselves, it will undoubtedly go farther than we ever dreamed.

#### Moment to moment living

The problem in the Christian life is not always associated with great dramatic events and temptations. It begins the very moment we wake up in the morning. Immediately there are a hundred things that crowd around and into our minds asking for permission to take over the

---

10. Case, p. 43; Personality, p. 39; Letters, p. 150.

11. Personality, p. 41 - 42.

command. The job is to get away from all kinds of frettings and fussings and make clear cut decisions from moment to moment throughout the day. Here is a genuine contribution to Christian living. The moment to moment living is really all that God is asking of any of us. What are we doing with the moment? If it is not used in concentrating on God's help for the present, or using the present to plan how you can serve your neighbour, then time is being wasted.<sup>12</sup>

#### On perfection

The injunction in the New Testament that we Christians are to be perfect is not idle chatter. The fact that we fail every day to reach that goal need not discourage us. God is there to pick us up after every failure if we but let Him. He knows that we can do nothing by our own efforts. God does want us to get clear from the outset that He is guiding us down the pathway of absolute perfection. Nothing can stop Him except we ourselves. That is the treatment He has ready for us.<sup>13</sup>

We are not being humble by protesting that we only wanted to be decent people and not saints. It's a case of laziness. Megalomania is not our disease if we follow God's plan, it is only obedience. As George Macdonald put it. We are in the process of a house being torn down and rebuilt. We can understand that some of the work had to be done, but it appears to be getting out of hand.

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.<sup>14</sup>

---

12. Letters, pp. 76 - 80.

13. Personality, pp. 45 - 49.

14. Ibid., p. 49.

### Good conduct of Heathen, poor conduct of Christians

A great problem that has bothered both Christians and non-Christians alike is that of the discrepancy between the conduct of certain believers and non-believers. Why are some Christians more ill-behaved than certain others who profess no God? It is true that the ill-behaviour of the Christians does make Christianity unbelievable for the non-believers. Mr. Lewis says that this comes about in this way. Usually people are not thinking about specific cases but about general ideas when they speak in this vein. The other reason is this. People illogically suppose that at any given moment all people are noticeably in one of two sharply divided camps. The fact is that any one given moment everyone is at a given point on a moving scale which is taking them further into Christianity or taking them in the opposite direction. The camps are never that sharply divided, at least not to the human gaze.<sup>15</sup>

The real proposition is this. If Christianity is true, any given person who is a Christian will be a nicer person than if he were not a Christian. Secondly, anyone who does become a Christian will be a nicer person than he was before.<sup>16</sup> The following quotation expresses the solution to our problem in an effective way.

A live body isn't one that never gets hurt, but one that can to some extent repair itself. . . In the same way a Christian isn't a man who never goes wrong, but a man who is enabled to repent and pick himself up and begin over again after each stumble--because the Christ-life is inside him, repairing him all the time.<sup>17</sup>

People who have a friendly disposition have that because they

---

15. Ibid., pp. 50 - 59.

16. Ibid., p. 52.

17. Case, p. 54.

have been created with a good constitution with a body that functions well. In order to convert men God paid the price of the crucifixion. Because they are men with wills, they can resist—it makes no difference whether those men are nice or nasty. You recall that Christ got a bad reputation because he associated with such bad people. Christ mentioned that those kind of people would have a better chance of getting into the kingdom of God. Why? Not many of them would mistake the kind of thing they were doing as the goal in life; they could not easily become self-sufficient. People who are satisfied with niceness, thinking it is their own making are still in need of salvation.

For mere improvement is not redemption, though redemption always improves people even here and now and will, in the end, improve them to a degree we cannot yet imagine. God became man to turn creatures into sons: not simply to produce better men of the old kind but to produce a new kind of man.<sup>18</sup>

#### The Devil uses jargon, not logic

The Devil gets to the individual by the use of jargon. He does not have too difficult a time because of the Spirit of the Age we talked about. Modern man has come to think of things as "outworn", "conventional", or "ruthless", "academic", or "practical". People do not often ask whether something is "true" or "false". It is jargon more than it is real solid thinking that keeps people away from the church. Get people to think of the stream of thought that goes through their minds, but don't let them concentrate on genuine issues, the Devil advises. It is helpful to get people in the habit of thinking that something outside of clear thinking is "real" life, particularly in the area of sense

---

18. Personality, p. 58.

experiences.<sup>19</sup>

Teach him to call it "real life" and don't let him ask what he means by "real". . . I had got into him an unalterable conviction that, whatever odd idea might come into a man's head when he was shut up alone with his books, a healthy dose of "real life" (by which he meant the buds and the newsboy) was enough to show him that all "that sort of thing" just couldn't be true. He knows he had a narrow escape and in later years was fond of talking about "that inarticulate sense for actuality which is our ultimate safeguard against the aberrations of mere logic". He is now safe in Our Father's house.<sup>20</sup>

The "I" and "Our Father" refer to the Devil.

What is your reaction?

Mr. Lewis is anxious to counteract the general opinion or loose thinking that certain things are intrinsically good or bad. The church itself can be a weapon in the hands of Satan. He does this by setting up the contrast "between what the hearer regards as the body of Christ" and the greasy faces, the double chins, the peculiar clothes of the people that a hearer sees about him in church. This confusion comes from the image that the hearer has in his mind. He is under the impression that it is spiritual but it is really pictorial.<sup>21</sup>

War itself may not be of too much use, at least, it is not necessarily so. In war, people are brought face to face with death and for that reason may do some real thinking. If the odds are too great, some may even turn to religion and Christianity.

And how disastrous for us is the continual remembrance of death which war enforces. One of our best weapons, contented worldiness, is rendered useless. In wartime not even a human can believe that he is going to live forever.<sup>22</sup> Murder is no

---

19. Letters, pp. 154 - 155; 119; 73.

20. Ibid., p. 12, 14.

21. Ibid., p. 16.

22. Ibid., p. 32.

better than cards if cards can do the trick. Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one--the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts.<sup>23</sup>

It is generally conceded that gluttony is a weapon of the Devil.

Mr. Lewis says that the habit of Gluttony of Delicacy is more deceptive.

It is a kind of gluttony which doesn't concentrate on the amount of anything desired but in securing the desired object at whatever cost. The label given that type of person is the "All I want" type. She doesn't ask for much, but her demands must be met exactly. If the idea should ever arise that she is at fault, the thought will soon rise that she is not concerned about herself but about "her little son who should have things nice". This type of thinking can be developed to the point where it becomes a habit and any interference, however small, will upset the person.<sup>24</sup> Situations are constantly thrown before us. God is always interested in what we learn from them, what our reaction to them is. We could put it another way by saying, "It is not what happens to you but your reaction to it that makes the difference."

#### Prayer

Here are some keen insights that the author presents regarding prayer. He suggests that Satan is attempting to direct our attention away from problems close at hand because we all have a horror for the obvious. We can readily get to the point where we can examine ourselves for an hour without discovering some pretty obvious facts about ourselves, facts which anyone else would notice in a moment. We can do this by gearing our prayers in a "spiritual" direction.

---

23. Ibid., p. 65.

24. Ibid., pp. 87 - 88.

Make sure that they (prayers) are always very "spiritual", that he is always concerned with the state of her soul and never with her rheumatism. Two advantages will follow. In the first place, his attention will be kept on what he regards as her sins, by which with a little guidance from you, he can be induced to mean any of her actions which are inconvenient or irritating to himself. . . In the second place, since his ideas about her soul will be very crude and often erroneous, he will, in some degree, be praying for an imaginary person, and it will be your task to make that imaginary person daily less and less like the real mother—the sharp-tongued old lady at the breakfast table. . . I have had patients of my own so well in hand that they could be turned at a moment's notice from impassioned prayer for a wife's or son's "soul" to beating or insulting the real wife or son without a qualm.<sup>25</sup>

It is of course useful if we are kept away from praying at all. We may be in favour with the irregular, the spontaneous, or informal in prayer life. If that is not guarded carefully, it will soon produce only a vague devotional mood because no will or effort will be involved. Serious intention can often be lacking without recognition on the part of the man who offers prayer. Mr. Lewis refers to a man, later a famous Christian who recognized after some years the discrepancy of his praying for chastity.

While his lips were saying, "Oh, God, make me chaste," his real wishes were secretly adding, "But please don't do it for a few years yet."<sup>26</sup>

The Devil has used another clever device to make our prayers useless. He has encouraged praying Christians to look away from God to themselves. We are kept busy trying to produce feelings by our will power. When we pray for charity, we are really trying to manufacture charitable feelings. When we pray for forgiveness, we try to manufacture feelings of being forgiven. We measure the success of prayer by the

25. Ibid., pp. 21; 22; 137.

26. Behaviour, p. 28.

amount of feelings that were manufactured. All this time many of us are not aware that feelings are often due to the amount of sleep we've had, the condition of our livers.<sup>27</sup>

The Devil suggests that keeping God a vague thing can be quite a help in making the prayers of Christians quite harmless.

I have known cases where what the patient called his "God" was actually located--up and to the left at the corner of the bedroom ceiling, or inside his own head, or in a crucifix on the wall. . .keep him praying to it. . .For if he ever comes to make the distinction, if ever he consciously directs his prayers "Not to what I think thou art but to what thou knowest thyself to be", our situation is, for the moment, desperate.<sup>28</sup>

Theologically Mr. Lewis explains prayer in this fashion.

An ordinary Christian kneels down to say his prayers. He is trying to get into touch with God. But if he is a Christian he knows that what is prompting him to pray is also God: God, so to speak, inside him, But he also knows that all his real knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God--that Christ is standing beside him, helping him to pray, praying for him. You see what is happening. God is the thing beyond the whole universe to which he is praying--the goal he's trying to reach. God is also the thing inside him which is pushing him on--the motive power. God is also the road or bridge along which he is being pushed to that goal. So that the whole threefold life or the three-personal Being is actually going on in that ordinary little bedroom where an ordinary man is saying his prayers. The man is being caught up into the higher kind of life--what I called Zoe or spiritual life: he is being pulled into God, by God, while still remaining himself.<sup>29</sup>

#### The Law of Undulation

Closely connected with prayer life and the role of feelings in life is, what Mr. Lewis calls, the Law of Undulation. It can be employed by the Devil to good effect on all Christians, especially on

---

27. Letters, pp. 24 - 26.

28. Letters, p. 27; Behaviour, p. 53.

29. Personality, p. 11.

new converts. The newly-won convert is often filled with emotion and enthusiasm. It doesn't last forever. The convert sinks into a trough. He then begins to have ideas that because he no longer has the feelings about Christianity that he did before, Christianity must not be capable of doing the things it said it would. This sort of thinking results from an inadequate, personal knowledge that every individual has peaks and troughs in his life-time. It is at the time of a trough that temptation to sensual pleasures, sex and drink are difficult to overcome. Satan attempts to have us believe that the troughs are permanent and that the "religious" phase is passing away just like any other phase that we've experienced.

Talk to him about "moderation in all things". If you can once get him to the point of thinking that "religion is all very well up to a point", you can feel quite happy about his soul. A moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all--and more amusing. . . Of course there is no conceivable way of getting by reason from the proposition "I am losing interest in this" to the proposition "This is false". But, as I said before, it is jargon, not reason, you must rely on. The mere word phase will very likely do the trick. . . (You keep him well fed on hazy ideas of Progress and Development and the Historical Point of View, I trust, and give him lots of modern Biographies to read? The People in them are always emerging from Phases, aren't they?) You see the idea? Keep his mind off the plain antithesis between True and False. Nice shadowy expressions--"It was a phase"--"I've been through all that". . . and don't forget the blessed word "Adolescent".<sup>30</sup>

One of the senses in which Mr. Lewis uses the word faith is important at this point. In one sense he says it is a virtue. He says that it is the art of holding on to certain beliefs which your reason has accepted in spite of moods. The problem arises because some people think that their minds are ruled completely by reason and forget that

---

30. Letters, p. 51; 52.

emotions and imaginations also play a part. We can see what is meant by the example of a boy learning to swim. His reason tells him that a body unsupported in a body of water will float. Yet, when it comes time for him to get into the water, he hesitates. Emotion has destroyed his faith. That is why Christianity in one sense talks of faith as a virtue. It is important for Christians to know that they do have moods. That is where faith as a virtue comes into the picture.

Unless you teach your moods "where to get off," you can never be either a sound Christian or even a sound atheist, but just a creature dithering to and fro, with its beliefs really dependent on the weather and the state of its digestion. Consequently one must train the habit of Faith.<sup>31</sup>

This faith is to be nurtured by Church going and the use of the Sacraments. Investigation will show that most people do not leave the church because of argument carried on honestly, but they just simply drift away.<sup>32</sup>

Satan is also quick to understand just when his case is most serious. It deals with the true Christian approach to the problem of feelings, a true recognition of the Law of Undulation. A true understanding of that law brings this reply from Satan.

Our case is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.<sup>33</sup>

#### "Christianity And"

If people insist on taking up Christianity, the Devil devises methods to corrupt it. The borderline that exists between politics and Christianity is a fruitful source. This has been done in part by the

---

31. Behaviour, pp. 61 - 62.

32. Ibid., p. 62.

33. Letters, p. 47.

development of the "Historical Jesus". He was first made just a teacher, now Marxism has made him a revolutionary. The trick is that men's devotion has been turned away from the Christ that actually exists to something that is quite "unhistorical". The trick of Satan is to divert man's attention from what Christ is to what He did.<sup>34</sup>

The ruse is complete when men come to regard Christianity as a means to an end. They may value social justice because it is something that Christ demands, and then get to the point where they value Christianity because it produces social justice. Mr. Lewis read an article by one writer who recommended his own brand of Christianity because he thought only such a faith could last longer than any civilizations that would appear on the scene. Mr. Lewis's criticism; this belief was advanced not because it was true but for some other reason.<sup>35</sup>

This type of thinking is dubbed "Christianity And".

You know—Christianity and the Crises, Christianity and the New Psychology, Christianity and the New Order, Christianity and Faith Healing, Christianity and Psychical Research, Christianity and Vegetarianism, Christianity and Spelling Reform. If they must be Christians let them at least be Christians with a difference. Substitute for the faith itself some Fashion with a Christian coloring. Work on their horror of the Same Old Thing.<sup>36</sup>

#### Change and novelty

Closely connected with the horror of the Same Old Thing is the role that "change" plays in our lives. God set up a pattern of rhythm. The Devil has introduced a demand for novelty.

In the first place it diminishes pleasure while increasing

---

34. Ibid., pp. 117 - 119.

35. Ibid., p. 120.

36. Ibid., p. 126.

desire. . . And again, the more rapacious this desire, the sooner it must eat up all the innocent sources of pleasure and pass on to those the Enemy forbids. . . Finally, the desire for novelty is indispensable if we are to produce Fashions or Vogues. The use of Fashions in thought is to distract the attention of men from their real dangers. We direct the fashionable outcry of each generation against those vices of which it is least in danger and fix its approval on the virtue nearest to that vice which we are trying to make endemic. The game is to have them all running about with fire extinguishers whenever there is a flood, and all crowding to that side of the boat which is already nearly gunwale under. Thus we make it fashionable to expose the dangers of enthusiasm at the very moment when they are all really becoming worldly and lukewarm; a century later, when we are really making them all Byronic and drunk with emotion, the fashionable outcry is directed against the dangers of the mere "understanding". Cruel ages are put on their guard against Sentimentality, feckless and idle ones against Respectability, lecherous ones against Puritanism; and whenever all men are really hastening to be slaves or tyrants we make Liberalism the prime bogey. . . For the descriptive adjective "unchanged" we have substituted the emotional adjective "stagnant". We have trained them to think of the Future as a promised land which favoured heroes attain-- not as something which every one reaches at the rate of sixty minutes an hour, whatever he does, whoever he is.<sup>37</sup>

Herein we have an accurate insight into our own age where novelty has become the daily fare. It gives a brief historical glance into the same sort of thing that has happened in the past. The comments on "unchanged" and "stagnant" show Mr. Lewis's keen insight into language.

#### Humility

In passing the author reminds the reader that all virtues are less formidable when they are recognized to be such. Strangely enough Satan may try to get us to concentrate on our virtues. Humility is one of these. In practising this virtue God wants us to concentrate our time and energy on Himself or on our neighbours. Abjection and self-hatred are of no value unless they lead to this sort of thing. Satan's

---

37. Ibid., pp. 128 - 130.

object is to get us to think of humility not as self-forgetfulness but merely as a low opinion of our talents and characters. He wants us to value an opinion not because it is the truth but for some other reason. Using this distorted formula, beautiful women have gone around trying to think that they are ugly, and wise men have gone around trying to believe that they are fools. Mr. Lewis gives humility its proper estimate. The old concept has been that some highly talented individual is being humble when he successfully hides his great abilities from those around him. This is what Satan has to say.

The Enemy wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more (or less) or otherwise glad at having him in the end, to be so free from any bias in his own favour that he can rejoice in his own talents as frankly and gratefully as in his neighbour's talents--or in a sunrise, an elephant, or a waterfall. . . He would rather the man thought himself a great architect or a great poet and then forget about it, than that he should spend much time and pains trying to think himself a bad one. . . Even of his sins the Enemy does not want him to think too much: once they are repented, the sooner the man turns his attention outward, the better the Enemy is pleased.<sup>38</sup>

#### Christianity side-tracked

The Devil is untiring in his efforts after a man has accepted membership in a church. He attempts to get the individual people split up into cliques of various sorts. Groups which argue about terminology in theology are common. Any little cause will be an opportunity for some to band together and begin a fight for the truth. This sort of ruse is one of the best because the topic at hand is of a religious nature, and people will not quickly realize what is happening. It is very possible that they are being driven farther and farther from God

---

38. Ibid., pp. 73, 74, 75.

while still outstanding members of a church. Mr. Lewis is constantly trying to make people examine their actions and their conversation and determine whether or not it is concerned with God or the welfare of their neighbors. It is in just such ruses as the one mentioned above that the Devil uses to secure the souls of people. In all the above instances we begin to see an emphasis that the author is making. It is the continuous battle that the individual Christian is waging against the forces of evil led by Satan. It is a battle that does not cease when one becomes a member of a church organization. In fact, it looks as if it is then that the battle begins in earnest.<sup>39</sup>

#### You're guilty

The author does not show much hesitancy in placing guilt on the individual person.

We are deceived by looking on the outside of things.  
How far Y's appearance is deceptive, is between Y and God.  
His may not be deceptive, you know that yours is.<sup>40</sup>

Even in the act of confessing great sins and wrongs the tone may be wrong. A dash of humor thrown in, a sly glance all help to undermine the real purpose of confession. The expression of our guilt should not deceive us into thinking that that has given us a full account of the great evil that is inside of us.<sup>41</sup>

One of the modern devices can readily throw us off the trail. It is the idea of corporate guilt. We can be caught up in bemoaning the sins of society and all the time have no recognition that we are part of that society. Even if we did feel a share of that corporate guilt,

---

39. Ibid., p. 85.

40. Pain, p. 47.

41. Ibid., pp. 47 - 48.

it can not be as strong as a sense of personal guilt. We have made reference before to the fact that time itself does not cancel guilt. No matter how long ago it may have been perpetrated, it still stands on the ledger if God has not forgiven it.<sup>42</sup>

Guilt cannot be escaped by saying there are so many who do evil things, consequently, it cannot be too bad. Have you thought of it in this way? Think of two pockets of society. In a particular section of society, say, school, an attitude prevailed that a certain test could not be passed unless the students cheated. This cheating was considered the normal thing. Yet, it was a surprise to find that that sort of conduct was completely out of the question at another school where the same examinations were given. Numbers or the common prevalence of a certain evil relieve us of no responsibility.

If then, you are ever tempted to think that we modern Western Europeans cannot really be so bad because we are comparatively speaking, humane--if, in other words, you think God might be content with us on that ground--ask yourself whether you think God ought to have been content with the cruelty of cruel ages because they excelled in courage or chastity. You will see at once that this is an impossibility. From considering how the cruelty of our ancestors looks to us, you may get some inkling how our softness, worldliness, and timidity would have looked to them, and hence how both must look to God.<sup>43</sup> Theoretically, I suppose, we might say "Yes: we behave like vermin, but then that is because we are vermin. And that, at any rate, is not our fault." But the fact that we are vermin, so far from being felt as an excuse, is a greater shame and grief to us than any of the particular acts which it leads us to commit.<sup>44</sup>

#### Past Sinai

God may be something greater than just moral goodness. We can't count Him as less. The pathway to the promised land runs past Sinai.

42. Ibid., p. 48.

43. Ibid., p. 52.

44. Ibid., p. 73.

Perhaps the moral law is to be transcended. It will not be for those who do not first admit its claims on them, and in attempting to carry out its commands find themselves to be utter failures. For those finally who feel their guilt the emotion of shame is not enough.

My own idea, for what it is worth, is all sadness which is not either arising from the repentance of a concrete sin and hastening towards concrete amendment or restitution, or else arising from pity and hastening to active assistance, is simply bad; and I think we all sin by needlessly disobeying the apostolic injunction to "rejoice" as much as by anything else.<sup>45</sup>

### Pride

A little later on we shall review Mr. Lewis's statements on hell and heaven. We can aptly discuss one of the things perhaps the thing which made hell possible also from a little different point of view. It fits in well with the necessity of correct thinking for the Christian. The great danger for living of any kind is pride. Danger of pride becomes apparent as soon as a person is aware of God and aware of himself as separate entities. It was pride that was the basis of the Fall, says Mr. Lewis.

This act of self-will on the part of the creature, which constitutes an utter falseness to its true creaturely position, is the one sin that can be conceived as the Fall. For the difficulty about the first sin is that it must be very heinous, or its consequences would not be so terrible, and yet it must be something which a being free from the temptations of fallen man could conceivably have committed. The turning from God to self fulfills both conditions.<sup>46</sup> The process was not, I conceive, comparable to a mere deterioration as it may now occur in a human individual; it was a loss of status as a species. What man lost by the Fall was his original specific nature. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return". . . It was the emergence of new kind of man—a new species, never made by God, had sinned itself into existence.<sup>47</sup>

45. Ibid., p. 55.

46. Ibid., p. 68.

47. Ibid., pp. 70 - 71.

It was Pride itself that made the Devil the Devil. We can call it the anti-God state of mind. The basic element in pride is competition. Pride does not get any particular joy out of having something. It always wants to have more than the next person. It wants to have the satisfaction of being above the rest.

If I am a proud man, then, as long as there is one man in the whole world more powerful, or richer, or cleverer than I, he is my rival and my enemy. . . Other vices may sometimes bring people together: you may find good fellowship and jokes and friendliness among drunken people or unchaste people. But Pride always means enmity--it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God.<sup>48</sup>

Pride is dangerous because it is a spiritual thing. Frequently it is used to down smaller vices. We appeal to a small boy's pride when we encourage him to wash his hands regularly. Satan is quite happy to see us get rid of all kinds of small vices as long as Pride is developing in its footsteps. We could call Pride the spiritual cancer.

The sins of the flesh are bad, but they are the least bad of all sins. All the worst pleasures are purely spiritual: the pleasure of putting other people in the wrong, of bossing and patronizing and spoiling sport, and back-biting; the pleasures of power, of hatred. You see, there are two things inside me, competing with the human self which I must try to become. They are the Animal self, and the Diabolical self. The Diabolical self is the worse of the two. 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.<sup>49</sup>

#### Faith

The author speaks of Faith in two different ways. One we have mentioned in connection with the fluctuating moods of the Christian. We spoke of Faith in that instance as a virtue. The author uses the

---

48. Behaviour, pp. 46, 47.

49. Ibid., p. 29.

term Faith in the second sense to denote the total commitment of an individual man to God through Christ. This Faith involves more than a mere academic recognition of our own evil and our consequent dependence on the mercy and charity of God. To make no mistake about the thoroughness of this declaration Mr. Lewis has a suggestion.<sup>50</sup>

In order to learn of our own evil Mr. Lewis would suggest that we try to practice all the virtues for a period of six weeks. He maintains that no man can know how bad he is until he has tried quite seriously to be good.

Only those who try to resist temptation know how strong it is. After all, you find out the strength of the German army by fighting against it, not by giving in. . . Bad people have lived sheltered lives. . . We never find out the strength of the evil impulse inside us until we try to fight it: and Christ, because He was the only man who never yielded to temptation, is also the only man who knows to the full what temptation means--the only complete realist. . . The main thing we learn from a serious attempt to practise the Christian virtues is that we fail.<sup>51</sup>

He further suggests that until we have really given it a try, we will always have the idea in the back of our minds that we could have succeeded if we had tried harder.

What God is interested in is not so much our individual actions as that He wants people of a particular quality. People who are related to Him in a specific way. This whole process of trying to be good on our own is to lead us to the point where we turn to God and admit we need his help.

And what matters is the nature of the change in itself,

---

50. *Ibid.*, pp. 66 - 70.

51. *Ibid.*, p. 63.

not how we feel while it is happening. It is the change from being confident about our own efforts to the state in which we despair of doing anything for ourselves and leave it to God.<sup>52</sup>

When we have finally admitted that we are bad people, we still find ourselves in a kind of dilemma.

Only a bad person needs to repent: only a good person can repent. The worse you are the more you need it and the less you can do it. The only person who could do it perfectly would be a perfect person—and he wouldn't need it. Remember, this repentance, this willing submission to humiliation and a kind of death, isn't something God demands of you before He'll take you back and which He could let you off if He chose: it's simply a description of what going back to Him is like. . . . But the same badness which makes us need it, makes us unable to do it.<sup>53</sup>

That means we have to let everything in the hands of God.

The term "leaving everything to God" has been misconstrued by Christian and non-Christian alike.

The sense in which a Christian leaves it to God is that he puts all his trust in Christ: trusts that Christ will somehow share with him the perfect human obedience which He carried out from His birth to His crucifixion: that Christ will make the man more like Himself and, in a sense, make good his deficiencies. If you like to put it that way, Christ offers something for nothing: He even offers everything for nothing. In a sense, the whole Christian life consists in accepting that very remarkable offer. But the difficulty is to reach the point of recognising that all we have done and can do is nothing.<sup>54</sup>

The Christian doesn't do things to be saved but does things because he is saved already. Faith in Christ involves taking notice of what He says. If faith does not involve this, it is not Faith in the true sense.

It can only be called the acceptance of an intellectual theory about Him.<sup>55</sup>

---

52. Ibid., p. 67.

53. Same, p. 49.

54. Behaviour, p. 68.

55. Ibid., p. 68.

### Summary

In this last section Mr. Lewis has given some insights into Christianity, principally for Christians and for people who are interested in religion. He maintains that Christ must be regarded as the Son of the true God, as God himself, or as a lunatic. There is no middle road. His high moral standards will not make us want to follow them any more than any other kind of standard; in fact, it would be discouraging. In becoming a Christian the obstacle to be overcome is self. It is such a big obstacle that only Christ Himself can overcome it for us.

Mr. Lewis says that our great opponent is the Devil. He has many ruses. One is to have us spend our time thinking about the future instead of the present or about eternity. Living is a moment to moment process. Satan also uses jargon. He will mix up the facts instead of dealing with the absolute true or false. He is constantly trying to have people get the idea that part of their time is still their own even after becoming Christians.

People should not be misled to think that certain things are of themselves free from any possibility of being contaminated. Satan can use the church itself to confuse. War is not necessarily more useful to him than a game of cards. One of his best tricks is to get people within the church to argue about meaningless ecclesiastical affairs. Many can be led to spend their time in argumentation rather than in spreading the gospel. Another Diabolical device is to get people to combine Christianity with some other element. If a combination is employed, it is not too difficult to get all the attention centered on the "And" rather than Christianity.

The author makes a fine contribution on the subjects of prayer and humility. In the first place he warns us that our prayers frequently are out of complete harmony with the actual problems that are facing us. To keep this discrepancy out of the level of consciousness is one of the aims of the Devil. Mr. Lewis is inclined to believe that many people have the wrong kind of idea regarding humility. People are given to think that humility implies that you are to belittle the talents you have. The author maintains that that kind of procedure is satanic, because it introduces the concept of dishonesty. A humble person is one who recognizes his talents for what they are and then forgets about it. A humble architect is one who can build a great cathedral but is no more happy about it than if someone else had built it, no more happy than when he sees a sunrise.

Personal guilt is given new impetus. Time does not diminish it. The prevalence of guilt does not excuse. We can't escape it by talking of the great sins of society. Of all sins pride is the greatest because it is spiritual. It is used to overcome smaller vices. It caused the first sin that man committed according to Mr. Lewis. Its terror lies in this that it is basically competitive. It never wants something. It always wants something more.

In a higher sense Mr. Lewis thinks of faith as the total commitment of the self to Christ. It is not the intellectual acceptance of a theory but recognition of personal bankruptcy and complete dependence on God. He suggests a plan whereby one can determine the extent of personal evil. His program is to attempt to practice the Christian virtues for a period of six weeks. Only after you have attempted to be good can

you realize how bad you are. Finally in answer to the problem of the poor conduct of some Christians and the good conduct of non-Christians, he replies: both Christians and non-Christians have been given Bios, natural life, by God; some of the natural systems operate better than others; some of the better systems belong to unbelievers; even that is a gift of God; a bad liver condition or indigestion would soon change the outlook of the behaving unbeliever. With that as a basis, the real question to ask is this, "How much worse would the conduct of irate, believing Miss Smith be if she were not a Christian? Or how much better would be the conduct of already personable, non-believing Mr. Jones if he were to become a Christian?"

## VI. Old Areas of Emphasis

### Trinity, Heaven, Hell, The Devil

In this chapter we shall deal with areas of Christianity which Christian writers emphasized and Mr. Lewis reemphasizes. He speaks of heaven and hell principally in his Pilgrim's Regress, The Great Divorce, and The Problem of Pain. Discussions on the role of a personal Devil is dealt with principally in The Screwtape Letters. He gives renewed emphasis to the doctrine of the Trinity in Beyond Personality. The role of suffering in human life is recorded in The Problem of Pain. Since the first three contain much of Mr. Lewis's own unique presentation, we shall deal with them in a specific chapter in order to avoid needless repetition. Regarding a personal Devil the author says very aptly:

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.<sup>1</sup>

Many of the Devil's techniques have been dealt with in an earlier presentation when we discussed Mr. Lewis's insight into the happenings of the individual mind and heart. Suffice it to say at this point that the author is not hesitant in restating the existence of Satan.

---

1. Letters, p. 9.

### Why do I suffer?

Our chief concern in this chapter will be to discuss the author's presentation on the role of suffering in human life, particularly in the life of a Christian.

"If God were good, He would wish to make His creatures perfectly happy, and if God were almighty He would be able to do what He wished. But the creatures are not happy. Therefore God lacks either goodness, or power, or both." This is the problem of pain in its simplest form. The possibility of answering it depends on showing that the terms "good" and "almighty", and perhaps also the term "happy" are equivocal: for it must be admitted from the outset that if the popular meanings attached to these words are the best, or the only possible meanings, then the argument is unanswerable.<sup>2</sup>

Omnipotence is the power to do everything. The absolutely impossible and the intrinsically impossible may be called the same thing. It would mean that a specific thing would be impossible under all conditions and for all agents. Intrinsic impossibilities are really non-entities. For that reason, Mr. Lewis suggests that we might attribute miracles to God, but nonsense is nonsense whether we use the name of God in speaking of it or not.<sup>3</sup>

In order to recognize ourselves as individuals there must be a background of "other". We have to notice one another through some neutral medium. That neutral medium is nature. It is fixed for the most part. For that reason a beam can be used to build a house and for hitting a man over the head. While I'm having an easy time of it going down hill, a man coming in the opposite direction must of necessity have a difficult time coming up hill. It is only pure chance therefore that any given

---

2. Pain, p. 14.

3. Ibid., p. 16.

object should at one and the same time be convenient for two different persons. This is not evil in itself for it can lead to charity and courtesy, but, of course, it can also lead to competition and hatred.<sup>4</sup>

Nature then in a sense limits life, and yet it is the sole condition under which life can exist. If you then add free-will to this picture, the problem of suffering cannot be avoided.

Whatever human freedom means, Divine freedom cannot mean indeterminacy between alternatives and choice of one of them. Perfect goodness can never debate about the means most suited to achieve it. The freedom of God consists in the fact that no cause other than Himself produces His acts and no external obstacle impedes them—that His own goodness is the root from which they all grow and His own omnipotence the air in which they all flower.<sup>5</sup>

God's ideas of goodness are somewhat like our own and yet different. When new moral ideas enter our mind, they are never just reversals of the standards we have held. They seem to be the expected thing. When the Divine ethics enter our mind, we are in no doubt that they are in the direction termed "better".<sup>6</sup>

Goodness has often been confused with kindness. Kindness is a part of goodness but it should never be permitted to rule. Kindness is only interested in removing suffering; it doesn't ask the question whether or not its object is good or bad. It is only for people that we care little about that we ask happiness at any price. An example of a man and his dog may help. When a man picks a stray off the street, he doesn't let the stray remain as it is. He bathes it, housebreaks it, trains it, and brushes its coat. Many of these procedures probably are quite uncomfortable for the dog. He may wish that they were never done.

---

4. Ibid., pp. 17 - 21.

5. Ibid., p. 23.

6. Ibid., p. 26.

He preferred his former status. It is only because the man loves the dog that he takes this keen interest in it. If he were only kind to the animal, he would only be interested in not seeing it suffer.<sup>7</sup>

In the same way God loves the Church. Although the Church looks bedraggled, he still loves it. He doesn't love it because it is in that condition but in spite of it. While He keeps on loving it, He never ceases to will the removal of its infirmities. It is not a sign of love that a man is disinterested in the looks of his wife. Although her beauty may be gone, he still loves her; but he does not love her because she no longer retains her former beauty. He is always desiring the removal of all blemishes. God individually is interested in us the same way. He wants to give us what we need, not just what we want. To ask for any kind of happiness except the kind God wants to give us is to ask for something that does not exist.<sup>8</sup>

In the world today after man has fallen and taken up allegiance to his own self, that very allegiance is a problem.

In the world as we now know it, the problem is how to recover this self-surrender. We are not merely imperfect creatures who must be improved; we are, as Newman said, rebels who must lay down our arms. The first answer, then, to the question why our cure should be painful, is that to render back the will which we have so long claimed for our own, is in itself, wherever and however it is done, a grievous pain.<sup>9</sup>

That calls for a daily dying as the New Testament mentions. Mortification without pain cannot be thought of very long. Think of its context. It is made easier by the presence of pain. This

---

7. Ibid., p. 28, 31 - 32.

8. Ibid., p. 34.

9. Ibid., p. 79.

happens in three ways. The human being does not think of surrender as long as things are going along quite well. Sin and error are masked evil. The deeper they are, the less we are aware that they are in existence. Pain is evil unmasked. No matter what a man's past may be, when pain arrives on the scene, he is forced to draw the conclusion that something is wrong. It can be recognized as evil, and it can't be ignored. A bad man who is enjoying life can have no indication that his actions are in any way accountable. The human race has felt that a bad man should suffer.

Some enlightened people would like to banish all conceptions of retribution or desert from their theory of punishment and place its value wholly in the deterrence of others or the reform of the criminal himself. . . They do not see that by so doing they render all punishment unjust. What can be more immoral than to inflict suffering on me for the sake of deterring others if I do not deserve it? And if I do deserve it, you are admitting the claims of "retribution". And what can be more outrageous than to catch me and submit me to a disagreeable process of moral improvement without my consent, unless (once more) I deserve it?<sup>10</sup>

Another clue is given in detailed plans of revenge that one man makes against another. The avenger not only wants to kill the other person and have him suffer, but he wants his victim to know why he is suffering.<sup>11</sup>

Until man is confronted with pain, he is living a life of illusion. When pain has entered, he knows he is up against it one way or another. Pain may look to be a terrible instrument that God uses, but it is the one sure way that God can plant a flag of truth in the soul of a man who has rebelled. It can also make us reevaluate the ownership of the

---

10. Ibid., p. 82.

11. Ibid.

things we have.

Everyone has noticed how hard it is to turn our thoughts to God when everything is going well with us. We "have all we want" is a terrible saying when Ball does not include God. We find God an interruption. As St. Augustine says somewhere "God wants to give us something, but cannot, because our hands are full--there's nowhere for Him to put it".<sup>12</sup>

Even if the thing we are doing is the thing God wants us to do, but that is not the reason for doing it, it is only a coincidence. In to that situation God injects pain so that our self-surrender may be complete. We must surrender even if this comes in the teeth of inclination.<sup>13</sup>

Only if a man gives himself completely up to God can he ever become his own. Martyrdom shows the perversion of Christianity. Christ was the great example of this. Even when His Father forsook Him, He still carried through with His sacrifice. When you see the place of suffering in human living, and the great result of the suffering on Calvary, the question could well shift from asking why pious people suffer to why so many do not suffer.<sup>14</sup>

For the few hours we suffer pain God is able to get to us. The minute the pain ceases we are much like the puppy which shakes himself after his bath and rolls around in the earth once more. It feels good to be back in the old way of thinking. For this reason--the readiness to return to the old ways--God must keep on sending tribulation until He sees that we are remade or that it is no longer worth trying.<sup>15</sup>

---

12. Ibid., p. 84.

13. Ibid., p. 87.

14. Ibid., pp. 90, 92.

15. Ibid., p. 95.

Pain in itself is not beneficial if it does not lead the patient to God. It is only valuable for those who observe one in pain if it leads them to fear or pity. Pain can easily make a tyrant of someone if the reaction to it does not produce the results mentioned above, either in the sufferer or in the observers.<sup>16</sup>

Suffering in itself is not good.

Now the fact that God can make complex good out of simple evil does not excuse—though by mercy it may save—those who do the simple evil. And this distinction is central. Offences must come, but woe to those by whom they come; sins do cause grace to abound, but we must not make that an excuse for continuing to sin. The crucifixion itself is the best, as well as the worst, of all historical events, but the role of Judas remains simply evil. We may apply this first to a problem of other people's suffering. A merciful man aims at his neighbour's good and so does "God's will", consciously co-operating with "the simple good". A cruel man oppresses his neighbour, and so does simple evil. But in doing such evil, he is used by God, without his own knowledge or consent, to produce the complex good—so that the first man serves God as a son, and the second as a tool. For you will certainly carry out God's purpose, however you act, but it makes a difference to you whether you serve like Judas or like John.<sup>17</sup>

Christian renunciation is not to be construed as stoic apathy. It means that God is preferred above some minor ends, things which in themselves may be lawful. The picture of Christ is helpful. He brought to Gethsemane a strong will that was prepared to resist suffering if it fit into the pattern of God's will. If this will was not to fit into God's pattern, perfect obedience was present to do that will of the Father. It would not be proper to isolate the picture of Judgment from all the rest of the Gospel. We do, however, get a pretty good picture of Christian ethics at that point. Active beneficence is the picture

16. Ibid., p. 98.

17. Ibid., p. 99.

that is painted for us in that scene. Renunciation therefore, does not mean that the Christians are not busy trying to make things better while they are here on earth.<sup>18</sup>

From the picture of Christ we gain the impression that tribulation is part of the redemption drama. It will be a part of the story until all the world is redeemed or is no longer redeemable. That is why Christians do not believe that certain social, political, or economic reform will make a heaven on earth. But that factor does not deter a Christian from doing social good as is supposed. Hungry men look for food and men who are sick look for a cure even though they know that after the immediate need is solved the changing moods of life still await them.<sup>19</sup>

The presence of pain probably explains why we have joy, pleasure, and merriment in this life but no security or settled happiness. The purpose of it is to make us conscious that we do not have any rest in this world.<sup>20</sup>

It is somewhat inaccurate to say that there is more pain in the world at one specific time than at another. If every patient in a dentist's waiting room has an X of pain, we might say that there was 3X of pain in the room because of the presence of three patients. But not one of the patients is suffering 3X worth of pain. The great amount of suffering that one person might undergo may be quite horrible, but that is the maximum of pain that anyone ever suffers. The addition of numerous fellow-sufferers does not add more to the pain. To talk of the sum of

---

18. *Ibid.*, pp. 101 - 102.

19. *Ibid.*, p. 102.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 103.

human misery may therefore lead to a distortion of the facts involved.<sup>21</sup>

There is one interesting feature about the evil of pain that other evils do not have.

Now pain, like the other evils, may of course recur because the cause of the first pain (disease, or any enemy) is still operative: but pain has no tendency to proliferate. When it is over, it is over, and the natural sequel is joy. After an error you need not only to remove the causes (the fatigue or bad writing) but also to correct the error itself: after a sin you must not only, if possible, remove the temptation, you must also go back and repent the sin itself. In each case any "undoing" is required. Pain requires no such undoing. . . . When I sin publicly, every spectator either condones it, thus sharing my guilt, or condemns it with imminent danger to his charity and humility. But suffering naturally produces in the spectators (unless they are unusually depraved) no bad effect, but a good one—pity. Thus that evil which God chiefly uses to produce the "complex good" is most markedly disinfected, or deprived of that proliferous tendency which is the worst characteristic of evil in general.<sup>22</sup>

#### Summary

In summary we may say this. Pain and suffering come into human living because man's sin has introduced the possibility of disharmony. The fixity of nature of necessity involves the possibility that any one thing cannot suit two persons at the same time except by coincidence. Because that situation exists, there is the possibility of charity but also of pain and suffering.

Christ's suffering is a notice that redemption involves tribulation. It is because God loves us and is the author of true goodness that we have suffering and pain. If a man loves an object, he will love it in spite of its ugly features; but because he loves it, he can never cease willing the removal of those ugly features. God in His love for

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 103 - 104.

22. *Ibid.*, pp. 104 - 105.

for us shows us the concern of true love. He wants to give us the happiness that he has, and that may not always involve what we always want.

As long as we are bad and happy, we have no way of knowing that we are in any way accountable for our actions. The presence of pain makes us realize that there is something wrong, a wrong that cannot be overlooked, it must be attended to immediately. It is one sure way that God can employ to get in touch with the most reprobate. The individual is forced to make a definite decision about himself and about God. Pain has one feature that other evils lack. It is sterilized in character. When it is over, it is over. Nothing remains to be made up, and joy usually follows closely on its trail. Whereas we may have pleasure and merriment, we don't find security or lasting happiness in this world because we are to be reminded that this world is not our place of rest.

The fact that there will be suffering until the end of time does not deter the Christians from doing social good. The scene at Judgment Day spoken of by Christ shows that the true Christian program of action is one of active mercy and charity. Mr. Lewis uses this analogy. Despite the fact that the sick man knows there will be ups and downs in his life after recovery from an immediate illness, he will not hesitate to seek help for his immediate difficulty. Mr. Lewis has some very apt words to describe the purpose of his writing about human suffering.

I must add, too, that the only purpose of the book is to solve the intellectual problem raised by suffering; for the far higher task of teaching fortitude and patience I was never fool enough to suppose myself qualified, nor have I anything to offer my readers except my conviction that when pain is to be borne, a little courage helps more than much knowledge, a little human sympathy more than much courage, and the least tincture of the love of God more than all.<sup>23</sup>

---

23. Ibid., p. vii.

## VII. New Areas of Emphasis

### Cosmic battle of good and evil

In this chapter we shall discuss several topics that Mr. Lewis gives special emphasis. We may call them new areas of emphasis. In his novels, Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, and That Hideous Strength, C. S. Lewis gives us a view of our own moral condition on earth. In his own manner he depicts the eternal battle that is going on between good and evil. He gives true cosmic significance to this great war. As one of my classmates said after he had finished That Hideous Strength, "I'm beginning to see now what it means that we fight not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The setting of the first novel is on Mars, the second on Venus, and the third takes place on our own earth. The hero of the three novels is a philologist who brings the Christian philosophy to bear on all situations. The villain is a high-ranking scientist, probably an indication of Mr. Lewis's feelings and an indictment against the materialistic outlook of the modern day. The scientist becomes more evil until the Devil himself takes full possession of his soul.

### The Communion of Saints

Mr. Lewis contends that the communion of saints, the church is the best place to learn of Christianity. He would call the body of Christians the physical organism through which Christ does his work. It is the only real adequate instrument through which the message of Christ can be

carried. The Lord was interested in seeing Christians work together in a body.<sup>1</sup> To make the force of this statement more comprehensible we might say that when two Christians are together we do not have twice as much Christianity present, but rather sixteen times as much. This is a brief description of that society as Mr. Lewis gets it from the New Testament.

The New Testament, without going into details, gives us a pretty clear hint of what a fully Christian society would be like. Perhaps it gives us more than we can take. It tells us that there are to be no passengers or parasites: if man doesn't work, he oughtn't to eat. Every one is to work with his own hands, and what is more, every one's work is to produce something good: there will be no manufacture of silly luxuries and then of sillier advertisements to persuade us to buy them. And there is to be no "swank" or "side," no putting on airs. To that extent a Christian society would be what we now call Leftist. On the other hand, it is always insisting on obedience--obedience (outward marks of respect) from all of us to properly appointed magistrates, from children to parents, and (I'm afraid this is going to be very unpopular) from wives to husbands. Thirdly, it is to be a cheerful society: full of singing, rejoicing, and regarding worry or anxiety as wrong. Courtesy is one of the Christian virtues; and the New Testament hates what it calls "busybodies."<sup>2</sup>

C. S. Lewis regards it as most advantageous if a person can live in a Christian society from his youth, for then confusion is not likely to result between morality and the source of those moral pronouncements.<sup>3</sup> While we are looking at Christianity through the Church, we should not stop at the individual Christian but see what is behind him. We have to see Christ behind them otherwise all is folly. If we rely completely on human beings, we are going to be let down. The best of the Christians make mistakes. We should be thankful for these people who can show us

---

1. Personality, pp. 12, 22; Case, pp. 54, 55.

2. Behaviour, p. 15.

3. Regress, p. 194.

Christ, but our faith should not be staked on them alone. Many fine things can be done with sand; it is not wise to build a house on it.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Lewis reminds his readers that by the Church the clergy is not meant. Many people in insisting that the Church do something about a certain thing frequently mean that the clergy should take the lead in some movement or make some kind of pronouncements. Mr. Lewis says that that is not their job. They have been trained to look after the things that concern people by virtue of the fact that they are to live forever. When we ask the Church to do something about a social condition, we should mean that Christians with specific talents in economics, in politics and so on should be putting Christian principles to work. In that sense we can rightly ask the Church to take the lead in a social program.<sup>5</sup>

#### Sex, marriage, and "being in love"

There is no compromising tone in Mr. Lewis's restatement of the Christian view on marriage. "Either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence".<sup>6</sup> Contrary to popular opinion Mr. Lewis says that the sex drive has been distorted more than the others. Perversions in this field exceed those of any other. One public contention has been that sex has been messed up because it wasn't brought out into the open. The history of the past several decades has demonstrated that bringing it out into the open has not helped any. Sex in itself is not wrong; it is one more of the many things that man has perverted. Christianity is one of the few of the great religions which approves of

---

4. Personality, p. 36.

5. Behaviour, p. 14.

6. Ibid., p. 25.

body. The fact that God Himself at one time took on a human body is evidence of this. What little we know of heaven we do know that we shall have some kind of body.<sup>7</sup>

It is completely misleading to say that there is nothing to be ashamed of regarding the present status of sex. We are not ashamed of enjoying food. Mr. Lewis suggests that there would be, if half of the world spent the major portion of their lives looking at pictures of food and smacking their lips while doing so. The inference is quite apparent. An abnormal proportion of printed material and conversation is devoted to sex.<sup>8</sup>

And now more specifically on marriage itself.

The monstrosity of sexual intercourse outside marriage is that those who indulge in it are trying to isolate one kind of union (the sexual) from all the other kinds of union which were intended to go along with it and make up the total union. The Christian attitude doesn't mean that there is anything wrong about sexual pleasure, any more than there is anything wrong about the pleasure of eating. It means that you mustn't isolate that pleasure and try to get it by itself, any more than you ought to try to get the pleasures of taste without swallowing and digesting, by chewing things and spitting them out again.<sup>9</sup>

Sexual relations outside of marriage is attempting to get thrills without any responsibility. That kind of sexual pleasure is not to be enjoyed or indulged in by a man and a woman without the bond that knits the hearts close together by daily living, being happy together, suffering the sorrow of tragedy together, finding a common solution for problems. If the hearts of a man and a woman are not welded together spiritually, even the pleasure of physical relations will begin to pale

---

7. Behaviour, pp. 25 - 26; Miracles, pp. 192 - 193.

A great deal of the difficulty in marriage has come in the misunderstanding of the meaning of the word "love". Easy divorce is based on the idea that love is the most important thing in marriage, and by love people mean "being in love". When two people are no longer "in love", a divorce is regarded as a legitimate way out of the difficulty. But love and "being in love" are not the same thing. A great deal of this confusion has been caused by movies and books which always give the impression that if the right person is found the "being in love" will go on forever. Poets and novelists have made "being in love" the only respectable ground for being married. People have been led to believe that a combination of fear, affection, and desire, "being in love", is the only thing that can make marriage happy or holy. So long as any sexual infatuation has the intention of marriage it is regarded as "love", and it supposedly excuses a man from any kind of guilt or the consequences of marrying a heathen, a fool, or a wanton. Loyalty to a partnership, for preservation of chastity, and for transmission of life has come to be regarded as something less than the strong emotion of "being in love".<sup>8</sup>

With all that has been said we do not mean to say that "being in love" has no part in marriage or courtship. Mr. Lewis says it is like the explosion that gets a motor started. It is the pie crust, but not the pie. The initial thrill of anything dies away. That doesn't mean that it shouldn't be enjoyed. In fact it is the people who are willing to submit to the loss of an initial thrill, that are likely to find new thrills coming from different directions. Prolonging of thrills in an

---

8. Letters. p. 95.

artificial fashion will only make them weaker and finally produce a bored dissullusioned old man. It is better to learn to swim than to try to retain the thrill that we had the first time we went paddling when we were children.<sup>9</sup>

Do you not know how it is with love? First comes delight: then pain: then fruit. And then there is joy of the fruit, but that is different again from the first delight. And mortal lovers must not try to remain at the first step: for lasting passion is the dream of a harlot and from it we wake in despair. You must not try to keep the raptures: they have done their work. Manna kept, is worms.<sup>10</sup>

According to Mr. Lewis the following is the background from the Devil's point of view of how both sexes have been led to concentrate on the physical in choosing a marriage partner.

It is the business of these great masters to produce in every age a general misdirection of what may be called sexual "taste". This they do by working through the small circle of popular artists, dressmakers, actresses and advertisers who determine the fashionable type. The aim is to guide each sex away from those members of the other with whom spiritually helpful, happy and fertile marriages are most likely. Thus we have now for many centuries triumphed over nature to the extent of making certain secondary characteristics of the male (such as the beard) disagreeable to nearly all the females--and there is more in that than you might suppose. As regards the male taste we have varied a good deal. At one time we have directed it to the statuesque and aristocratic type of beauty, mixing men's vanity with their desires and encouraging the race to breed chiefly from the most arrogant and prodigal women. At another, we have selected an exaggeratedly feminine type, faint and languishing, so that folly and cowardice, and all the general falseness and littleness of mind which go with them, shall be at a premium. At present we are on the opposite track. The age of jazz has succeeded the age of the waltz, and we now teach men to like women whose bodies are scarcely distinguishable from those of boys. Since this is a kind of beauty even more transitory than most. We thus aggravate the female's chronic horror of growing old (with many excellent results) and render her less willing and less able to bear children. And that is not

9. Behaviour, pp. 33, 34.

10. Regress, p. 207.

all. We have engineered a great increase in the license which society allows to the representation of the apparent nude (not the real nude) in art, and its exhibition on the stage or the bathing beach. It is all a fake, of course; the figures in the popular art are falsely drawn; the real women in bathing suits or tights are actually pinched in and propped up to make them appear firmer and more slender and more boyish than nature allows a full-grown woman to be. Yet at the same time, the modern world is taught to believe that it is being "frank" and "healthy" and getting back to nature. As a result we are more and more directing the desires of men to something which does not exist—making the role of the eye in sexuality more and more important and at the same time making its demands more and more impossible.<sup>11</sup>

The author reaffirms the Christian principle that the husband is to be the head of the house. The simple thing that there are times when a dead-lock is reached between husband and wife calls for someone to cast a deciding vote. The other reason Mr. Lewis arrived at by observation. He asks whether anyone has ever seen a woman, who wanted to be head of her own household, admire any other woman if she were head of hers. Wives themselves are ashamed if they are leaders. Since the wife is tied very closely to home, she is usually much more zealous in guarding her own and her family's rights. The husband acts more in the capacity of foreign ambassador for his family. If difficulty involves two families, Mr. Lewis suggests that the husband usually acts in a more equitable fashion, tempering his wife's extreme patriotism. That is why Mr. Lewis sees the man in the natural role as the head of the family.<sup>12</sup>

A final note. It speaks of God's statement as to what constitutes marriage and the length of its duration. It is mentioned that God

. . .described a married couple as "one flesh". He did not say "a happily married couple" or "a couple who married because they were in love". . .The truth is that whenever

---

11. Letters, pp. 102 - 103.

12. Behaviour, pp. 36 - 37.

a man lies with a woman, there, whether they like it or not, a transcendental relation is set up between them which must be externally enjoyed or eternally endured.<sup>13</sup>

### Love and God's love

Very closely connected with sexual morality and marriage is the subject of love. We have already indicated that there is a difference between love and "being in love". The author shows that we can get a fairly clear picture of true love if we know what is going on when we love ourselves. We get some of these insights when we are asked to forgive our neighbors and even our enemies. Even though we love ourselves we don't always enjoy being by ourselves nor do we find all our actions attractive. When we are asked to love our neighbor, it doesn't mean that we are to find him attractive or that we are to feel fond of him.<sup>14</sup>

It may just be the other way around. Because we love ourselves, we think ourselves to be nice people. In fact, just thinking ourselves to be nice people doesn't make us love ourselves. Applying this to our neighbour means that we don't necessarily have to think him to be nice. When we forgive enemies it doesn't mean that we must think that they are not bad fellows, when all the evidence indicates that they are. When we are quite honest with ourselves, we see that we are very nasty persons. There are some things about us that we detest and abhor. That would again point out that there are some things about our enemies that we can also detest and abhor.<sup>15</sup>

We begin to see how true it is that we are to hate the sin but

---

13. Letters, pp. 93. 94.

14. Behaviour, p. 39.

15. Ibid., pp. 39 - 40.

love the sinner. Despite the hatred we have for our cowardice, we still go on loving ourselves. In fact, the reason we kept on hating this cowardice was that we loved the man even then. It is because we love ourselves that we are sorry to find out that we are still people who do cowardly acts. Love of an enemy does not exclude punishing him if that necessity arises. Looking once more at self, if I commit a murder, I would be doing the Christian thing, if I turned myself into the police for execution.<sup>16</sup>

If we have to condemn the act of an enemy, we find this difference between Christian morality and the ordinary view. Christians maintain that people live forever. Therefore, the thing that really matters is the turn or twist that is given to the central part of a man's being, the thing which finally will become a heavenly or a hellish creature. It may be necessary for us to kill, but to hate and to enjoy hating is not in our province.

Even while we kill and punish we must try to feel about the enemy as we feel about ourselves--to wish that he were not bad, to hope that he may, in this world or another, be cured: in fact, to wish his good. That is what is meant in the Bible by loving him: wishing his good, not feeling fond of him nor saying he's nice when he isn't. . . Perhaps it makes it easier if we remember that that is how He loves us. Not for any nice, attractive qualities we think we have, but just because we are the things called selves. For really there is nothing else in us to love: creatures like us who actually find hatred such a pleasure that to give it up is like giving up beer or tobacco. . .<sup>17</sup>

Love in the Christian sense is not an emotion. It is a state of the will. We have it naturally about ourselves. Natural affection does play into the picture of love. It makes being "charitable" easier for

16. *Ibid.*, pp. 40 - 41.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 43.

us. We must always be careful that our liking someone does not make us uncharitable toward someone else. Sometimes our liking for a person may cause us to be uncharitable towards that very person.<sup>18</sup> We don't sit around trying to manufacture feelings. We don't ask ourselves whether we love our neighbour, we act as if we did. Frequently when we act as if we love someone, we do come to love them. It also works the other way around. The more cruel we are the more we hate, and we become more cruel as our hate increases. We should ask ourselves what we would do if we loved God, and then do it.<sup>19</sup>

No natural feelings are high or low, holy or unholy, in themselves. They are holy when God's hand is on the rein. They all go bad when they get up on their own and make themselves into false gods.<sup>20</sup>

In an effective way Mr. Lewis depicts a case of distorted love, love with a defect. In this instance it was mother-love that had gone wrong. The mother had become so interested in her son that she neglected the rest of her family; it became an indulgent love. When questioned as to the genuineness of her love for her son, the mother replies that she even tried to live in the past memory of her departed son. She is advised that that is a poor way to deal with a sorrow. It is Egyptian, just like embalming the dead.

What about natural affections? Are some to be regarded more highly than others?

There's something in natural affection which will lead it on to eternal love more easily than natural appetite could be led on. But there's also something in it which makes it easier to stop at the natural level and mistake it for the heavenly. Brass is mistaken for gold more easily than clay is. And if it finally refuses conversion its

---

18. Divorce, p. 90 - 99.

19. Behaviour, pp. 50 - 53.

20. Divorce, p. 93.

corruption will be worse than the corruption of what ye call the lower passions. It is a stronger angel, and therefore, when it falls, a fiercer devil. . . That love, as mortals understand the word, isn't enough. Every natural love will rise again and live forever in this country (heaven): but none will rise again until it has been buried. . . There is but one good; that is God. Everything else is good when it looks to Him and bad when it turns from Him. And the higher and mightier it is in the natural order, the more demoniac it will be if it rebels. It's not out of bad mice or bad fleas you make demons, but out of bad archangels. The false religion of lust is baser than the false religion of mother-love or patriotism or art: but lust is less likely to be made into a religion.<sup>21</sup>

Natural affections are capable of doing marvelous things and appear to be higher than base appetites. For that reason, however, there is the danger that the natural affections may be mistaken for the eternal and thus become a religion of itself. In the case mentioned above, mother-love, a very noble affection, was distorted to such a degree that the mother no longer could see clearly what she was doing and in the process destroyed her own soul. At the bottom of it appears the lack of distinction between kindness and love.

In our day we have often mistaken kindness for love. We want to see others happy, not in a particular way, but just happy. Kindness is a part of love but is not coterminous with it. Kindness by itself is only interested in removing suffering. It is one in whom we have no interest that we wish to see happy no matter how.

What would really satisfy us would be a God who said of anything we happened to be doing, "What does it matter so long as they are contented?" We want, in fact, not so much a Father in Heaven as a grandfather in heaven—senile benevolence who, as they say, "liked to see young people enjoying themselves" and whose plan for the universe was simply that it might be truly said at the end of each day, "a good

---

21. *Ibid.*, pp. 97 - 99.

time was had by all".<sup>22</sup>

Since God is existence Itself it is difficult to comprehend the distance that lies between Him and us. But since He supplies us with all the power we have, that relation is closer than any that we form with each other. Several analogies might help us to comprehend the love of God for His creatures. The first is the love an artist has for an artefact. Over a sketch that an artist has made hurriedly to amuse a child, he spends little time and does not bother to correct the many poor lines. Over a great painting he will work and work. He will be scraping and rubbing and refashioning until the painting is as he wants it to be. We are a work of art at the hands of God. God is constantly bothering about us, taking an edge off here, adding something there. If the picture were sentient, it probably would not appreciate all this attention. Since God has paid us the intolerable compliment of loving us, He does bother about us. To wish that it were not so would not be wishing for more love but for less.<sup>23</sup>

Another analogy is the love of a man for a beast. We have spoken elsewhere of the example of the attention a man gives to a stray dog that he wants to go about with him. The creature may not appreciate all the attention; but once more not to wish for it would be desiring less love not more.

A nobler analogy is that of God's love for man and a father's love for a son. It should be kept in mind that when we pray the Lord's Prayer that prayer was given in a day when parental authority was more highly

---

22. Fain., p. 28.

23. Ibid., pp. 30 - 31.

regarded than it is today. The parental symbol had some meaning. We should remember that in this Father-Son relationship Christ surrendered His will wholly to His Father. "Love between father and son, in this symbol, means essentially authoratative love on the one side, and obedient love on the other."<sup>24</sup>

The fourth useful analogy is that of God's love for a man and a man's love for a woman. The Church is the Lord's bride. Scripture often speaks of Israel as a bride which had committed adultery, who had betrayed Him. This relationship emphasizes that Love in its very nature demands the perfecting of the beloved. After we have fallen in love with a woman we do not cease to care whether she is clean or dirty. Really it is then that we first begin to care. Even after beauty has disappeared, love of the woman will continue. But it will not continue because that beauty has been lost. It may forgive imperfections and love in spite of them, but its constant will is that those imperfections be removed from the beloved.

Love is more sensitive than hatred itself to every blemish in the beloved. . . Of all powers he forgives most, but he condones least: he is pleased with little, but demands all. When Christianity says that God loves man, it means that God loves man. . . You asked for a loving God: you have one. The great spirit you so lightly invoked, the "lord of terrible aspect", is present: not a senile benevolence that drowsily wished you to be happy in your own way, not the cold philanthropy of a conscientious magistrate, nor the care of a host who feels responsible for the comfort of his guests, but the consuming fire Himself, the Love that made the worlds, persistent as the artist's love for his work and despotic as a man's love for a dog, provident and venerable as a father's love for a child, jealous, inexorable, exacting as love between the sexes.<sup>25</sup>

---

24. Ibid., p. 258

25. Ibid., pp. 34 - 35.

By his very nature God is repelled by the stains He finds in our present character. Since He loves us already, it is His labour to make us lovable. "Happiness" is not the end that God has directly in view. Once He can love us without any hindrance we shall be truly happy. We were not made chiefly that we might love God, but that God might shower us with His love. He is in the center of the universe, not we.<sup>26</sup>

It may appear that God's love is just as selfish as human love. God does not have any needs. Human love presupposes that the lover sees some good in the beloved which he needs and wants. God's love is not caused by any goodness in the object because He has given all the goodness to the object which that object has. It is God's love that has made its existence possible. Any goodness which the object possesses is a derived love. Our relation to God is that of the wooer to the wooed.

Our highest activity must be response, not initiative. To experience the love of God in a true, and not an illusory form is therefore to experience it as our surrender to His demand, our conformity to His desire.<sup>27</sup>

Actually if we desire to be something different from what God has in mind for us, we are desirous of something that will not make us happy. We have been asked to "put on Christ" which speaks of a compliment that has too much love, not too little. The only thing God can give us is what He has. He gives the happiness that is genuine. We have a choice of three things. To be God, to be one of His creatures and share some of His goodness in a creaturely fashion, or to be miserable. We have no other choice.

---

26. Ibid., p. 36.

27. Ibid., p. 39.

### Summary

In this chapter we have taken particular note of areas of Christian thinking where Mr. Lewis has placed special emphasis. He sees the entire universe as the battle ground of the war waged between good and evil. He gives particular emphasis to this in his three novels and in the discussion John had with History in Pilgrim's Regress.<sup>28</sup> God is trying incessantly to bring people back to Him. Mr. Lewis once more brings out the information in Scripture that all creation is to be redeemed.

The Church or Christian society is the best place to learn of Christianity, says the author. There you can see working out in practice, what you have heard about in theory. When two Christians are together, you don't have twice as much Christianity but sixteen times as much. The Church is the physical organism that Christ employs to get his work done. A word of warning is in place. Outsiders are asked not to stop with the Christians but are asked to get to the power behind the Christians. Even the best of Christians will fail. You must get to Christ who stands behind them.

Mr. Lewis is quite insistent that there are to be no physical relations between man and woman outside of marriage. Scripture restricts it to that. Contrary to public opinion the writer states that the sex drive has been distorted more than any of the others. The numerous perversions point to that. Bringing sex out into the open has not helped matters as is evidenced by the history of the past decades. The writer points to the great amount of space given in publications and the large portion of conversations devoted to sex as an indication that all is not

---

28. Regress, pp. 188 - 208.

well. Mr. Lewis says very aptly that there is nothing to be ashamed of in sex, but there is something to be ashamed of in the present status of sex today.

His analysis of the difficulties in marriage is very much in place for our day. Marriage is a state to be externally enjoyed or eternally endured. Scripture is firm in this emphasis. Difficulties arise in marriage because people confuse "love" with "being in love". Poets, artists, actresses, advertisers have gotten people to believe that "being in love" is the only sound basis for marriage; its disappearance is just cause for divorce. People have also been led to concentrate their sexual taste on secondary characteristics. The pleasure of the eye has been stimulated beyond its just deserts. We have been led to believe that unless the eye is fully satisfied marriage is not to be contemplated. Mr. Lewis does not hesitate to mention that the man is to be the head of the household. That is a hard saying for modern womanhood.

Christian love is a state of the will not just an emotion. Natural affections, liking someone, makes the work of being "charitable" easier, but that is not the cause of our loving people. You can get a clear picture of this by examining the statement, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." We don't like certain characteristics about ourselves, but we still love ourselves; in fact, we hate those things because we love ourselves. A man cares about a woman after he begins to love her. Love for our enemies does not imply that we are to say they are good when they are bad. We love them because they are people like ourselves. You get the most accurate picture of this when you examine the manner in which God loves us. Four analogies help us to

get a picture of Divine Love: the love of an artist for an artefact, the love of a man for a beast, the love of a father for a son (particularly of the Father for His Son), the love of God for man and the love of a man for a woman. Because of the very nature of divine love, it demands perfecting of the beloved. To neglect this means to confuse love with kindness. Kindness is a part of love but is not coterminous with it. The Christian road sometimes seems difficult because the happiness that God wants His people to enjoy is not always what they want. God can only give them what He has. There is no happiness apart from the happiness He gives.

Without a doubt Mr. Lewis does have a powerful message for the world and for Christians when he speaks of the constant cosmic warfare of good and evil. In his insights into the subjects of sex, marriage, and love he strikes to the root of the matter and clears away faulty thinking that is common today, the very heart of the problem of the high rate of divorces and broken homes. One of his greatest contributions is on the subject of divine love and the implications of true love between human beings.

### VIII. This Is Unique

#### The Three-Personal God

In this chapter we shall be reviewing some familiar topics of Christianity, but they have been reserved for this chapter because of the unique fashion with which Mr. Lewis deals with them. The subjects will be the Trinity, Heaven and Hell, and some thoughts which the author has regarding time and beyond time.

The writer begins his discourse with a phrase taken from the creeds. It is said of Christ that He was begotten, not created, that He was begotten before all worlds. Much of our understanding of the relation of the three persons can come from the definition of the word "begotten". It means to become the father of something. Creation means to make. When you beget something, you beget something like yourself. When you make something, that product is different than yourself.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore when God begets something, that something is God in the way that what man begets is man. That is why we are sons of God but in a different way than Christ is the Son of God. We are sons in this way that God made us. In a manner of speaking we could say that a good sculptor could make a very life-like figure of a man which could be easily mistaken for a man. We might say it is his son.<sup>2</sup>

In the same way man is something like God. He has the likeness of God but does not have His kind of life. Really everything that God

---

1. Personality, pp. 4 - 5.

2. Ibid., pp. 5 - 6.

has made resembles Him in some fashion. Space in its hugeness; matter in its energy; the vegetable world in its being alive; activity and fertility of insects resemble God's unceasing activity and creativeness. Man has the completest resemblance to God that we know of. But even then man has only biological life. Man does not have the life of God, Spiritual life. The term life is used in both cases but means different things. From previous quotations we know that Mr. Lewis calls biological life Bios and Spiritual life Zoe. The biological runs down and decays. The other kind lasts forever because it comes from the always existent.<sup>3</sup>

Many people feel a mysterious something beyond personality that is behind everything and that it must be more than a person. Though they may contend that this something is a person actually they think of it as something less personal. Something that is more than a person is the Christian idea of God. After this life some people believe that all human souls are going to be absorbed into God as a drop of water is absorbed when it falls into the ocean. The Christians maintain that they are going to be taken into the life of God and still remain very much themselves, in fact, even more so. It is the purpose of the Christian life to be taken into the life of God.<sup>4</sup>

Although we can't comprehend the Three-Personal God we may be able to imagine what He is like by the following example.

You know that in space you can move in three ways-- to left or right, backwards or forwards, up or down. Every direction is either one of these three or a compromise between them. They are called the three dimen-

---

3. Ibid., pp. 6 - 7.

4. Ibid., pp. 8 - 9.

sions. Now notice this, if you're using only one dimension, you could draw only a straight line. If you're using two, you could draw a figure: say a square. And a square is made up of four straight lines. Now a step further. If you have three dimensions, you can then build what we call a solid body: say, a cube--a thing like a dice or a lump of sugar. And a cube is made up of six squares.<sup>5</sup>

The analogy is carried on in this way.

Just as, in two dimensions (say on a flat sheet of paper) one square is one figure, and any two squares are two separate figures. On the Divine level you still find personalities; but up there you find them combined in a new way which we, who don't live on that level, can't imagine. In God's dimension, so to speak, you find a being who is three Persons while remaining one Being, just as a cube is six squares while remaining one cube. Of course we can't fully conceive a Being like that: just as, if we were so made that we perceived only two dimensions in space we could never properly imagine a cube. But we can get a sort of faint notion of it. And when we do we are then, for the first time in our lives, getting some positive idea, however faint, of something super-personal--something more than a person. It is something we could never have guessed, and yet, once we have been told, one almost feels one ought to have been able to guess it because it fits in so well with all the things we know already.<sup>6</sup>

It may seem unprofitable to speak of a three-personal Being if we can't imagine what He is like. Just talking is not very helpful. The thing that matters most is that we get drawn into the life of this Being as quickly as possible. The working of the Trinity in the process of Christian prayer is aptly explained by Mr. Lewis on page 85 of this thesis. He is praying to God knowing that He is prompted by God inside of Him, the Holy Spirit, and that his knowledge of God comes through Christ, the Man who was God, standing at his side.

The eternal aspect of the Son's existence is pictured this way. Imagine two books which are lying on a table, one on top of the other.

---

5. Ibid., p. 9.

6. Ibid., p. 10.

The bottom book is causing the top one to rest an inch or two above the table. Now imagine that they have been that way forever. You then may be able to see a little of what is meant when it says the Father begot the Son from all eternity. Neither one existed before the other. The simultaneity of their existence might be pictured in another way.<sup>7</sup>

When asked to imagine something, as the picture of the two books, you got a picture as a result of the imagining. We wouldn't say that we first imagined and then got the picture. The moment we imagined the picture was there.

Your will was keeping the picture before you all the time. Yet that act of will and the picture began at exactly the same moment and ended at the same moment. If there were a Being who had always existed and had always been imagining one thing, his act would always have been producing a mental picture; but the picture would be just as eternal as the act.<sup>8</sup>

In that way the Son was always streaming from the Father. He is what God wanted to say to the world, His self-expression. Many people don't realize what they are saying when they insist that God is love. It does not have any real meaning unless there are at least two persons involved. Love is something that one person has for another person. If God were a single person, that would mean that before the world was created He was not love. That statement 'God is love' means that God has been forever a dynamic activity of loving.<sup>9</sup>

Of all persons the Holy Spirit seems most vague. In Christianity we aren't usually looking at Him, but He is acting through us. The Holy Spirit is the result of the union of the activity that is going

---

7. *Ibid.*, p. 19.

8. *Ibid.*, p. 20.

9. *Ibid.*, pp. 20 - 21.

on between the Father and the Son. That can be imagined best if we look at a club or a family or an athletic team. When a group of this sort is together, we say they develop a 'spirit'. Perhaps you could call it a communal personality. We know that it is not a real person, but it certainly is something like one. The Holy Spirit is a real person which grows out of the joint life of the Father and the Son.<sup>10</sup>

The importance of the Trinity is that we have to get in on the drama that is taking place in God. As natural creatures we were made by God not begotten. Christianity says, however, that if we can somehow get to share this life of Christ. We shall then be sharing a life which is eternal, which was begotten and not made. As we get the infection from Christ, so we are to infect people around about us.

Christ is the Son of God. If we share in this kind of life we also shall be sons of God. We shall love the Father as He does and the Holy Ghost will arise in us. He came into this world and became 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 that: nothing else.<sup>11</sup>

In his discussion of the Trinity and its relation to the individual, the author has added his own touch of imagery in an attempt to make something more meaningful. Since the imagery here presented is quite vivid, it may make someone's understanding of the three-personal God something more than an abstract doctrine. His clarification of the difference between something that is begotten and something that is made is an important contribution. The linking together of the 'made' to the 'begotten' through Christ is a unique way of expressing the old

10. Ibid., pp. 20 - 22.

11. Ibid., pp. 23, 24.

Christian statement that through Christ we have eternal life. References to the relationship within the Trinity can be found in two of Mr. Lewis's other works.<sup>12</sup>

#### Time and beyond time

The problem of time and beyond time appear to offer some difficulty because of such Christian acts as prayer. We wonder how God can find time to answer all the prayers that are addressed to Him at the same moment. The crux is in the phrase the same moment. We are trying to imagine that God has to fit many things into one moment of time. But God doesn't live in time. His life is not made up of moments that follow each other. He doesn't have to listen to a million prayers at 10:30 tonight. He has all eternity to listen to the prayer of a pilot who is about to crash to his death.

With Him it is, so to speak, still 1920 and already 1950 . . . If you picture Time as a straight line along which we have to travel, then you must picture God as the whole page on which the line is drawn. We come to the parts of the line one by one: we have to leave A behind before we get to B, and can't reach C, till we leave B behind. God, from above or outside or all round, contains the whole line, and sees it all.<sup>13</sup>

Reality for human beings is successive. In order to experience much of it they must have change.

Time is a kind of lens through which we look at the gift of freedom. Through it we get a picture of one moment following the other in which we have to make a choice or have made a choice that might have been different. If we attempt to look at eternity except through the lens of time, we shall destroy our knowledge of freedom. The doctrine

12. Pain, pp. 139, 140; Letters, p. 92.

13. Personality, p. 16; Pain, pp. 111, 112.

of Predestination shows that reality is not now waiting for some future time in which to be real.<sup>14</sup>

Another problem that is raised is that of the place of prayer and freedom to choose in daily living since God knows everything in His eternal Now.

If God foresaw our acts, it would be very hard to understand how we could be free not to do them. But suppose God is outside and above the Time-line. In that case, what we call 'tomorrow' is visible to Him in just the same way as what we call 'today'. All the days are 'Now' for Him. He doesn't remember you doing things yesterday; He simply sees you doing them, because, though you've lost yesterday, He has not. He doesn't forsee you doing things tomorrow; He simply sees you doing them: because, though tomorrow is not yet there for you, it is for Him. . . In a sense, He doesn't know your action till you've done it: but then the moment at which you have done it is already 'Now' for Him.<sup>15</sup>

Do our prayers change anything? What is their relation to the eternal Now? When an event has happened a person asks himself, "Did that come about because I prayed or because it was just a part of the natural course of events?" Mr. Lewis refers to Shakespeare's Hamlet. In one scene Ophelia climbs out too far on a branch overhanging a river, the branch breaks, she falls into the river and drowns. The question is, "Did Ophelia fall into the river because the branch broke, or because Shakespeare wanted her to die at that moment?" Mr. Lewis would reply 'For both reasons'.

Every event in the play happens as a result of other events in the play, but also every event happens because the poet wants it to happen. . . The event certainly has been decided—in a sense it was decided 'before all worlds'. But one of the things taken into account in deciding it and therefore one of the things that really cause it to happen, may be this very prayer that we are now offering.

14. Divorce, p. 129.

15. Personality, p. 18; Letters, p. 139; Pain, pp. 89 - 90.

. . .The imagination will ask 'Then if I stop praying can God go back and alter what has already happened?' No. The event has already happened and one of its causes has been the fact that you are asking such questions instead of praying. It will ask, 'Then if I begin to pray can God go back and alter what has already happened?' No. The event has already happened and one of its causes is your present prayer. Thus something does really depend on my choice. My free act contributes to the cosmic shape. That contributing reaches me at a particular point in the time series.<sup>16</sup>

Mr. Lewis would say that all events have been laid in eternity. 'before all worlds', but that does not deter us from praying because part of those events have been my prayers.

But then to God (though not to me) I and the prayers I made in 1945 were just as much present at the creation of the world as they are now and will be a million years hence. God's creative act is timeless and timelessly adapted to the 'free' elements within it: but this timeless adaptation meets our consciousness as a sequence of prayer and answer.<sup>17</sup>

It is because time is a successive thing for us that God wants us to pray.

The relation of the past, the present, the future, and eternity to daily Christian living has been discussed on page 78 of this thesis.

Time as Mr. Lewis sees it is the lens through which we look at the entire process of human living which involves choice of one thing in preference to another. There is really no difficulty in God's listening to more than one prayer at any specific moment because He lives in the eternal Now. If our life is a line on a page, God is that entire page. The fact that God knows all should not deter us from praying because into that 'all' He is taking into account our praying. It is part of that 'all'. Prayer is important to us because our life is a

---

16. Miracles, p. 214.

17. Ibid., p. 213.

succession of moments which is quite different from God's viewing of everything at once. Yesterday is as much with him as tomorrow, God has no history because history means losing part of reality and coming to more of it, the former is the past, the latter is the future. Mr. Lewis doesn't believe that God deals with men other than in miracles or natural events. They must be one or the other. Consequently, in the very basic sense of the word he would not accept the idea of 'special providence'. He would credit God with a far superior degree of skill than a novelist exhibits when he is constructing a new plot. The author's thinking is governed by the note of Scripture which says that every sparrow is in the hands of God's care. Mr. Lewis's thinking on time and beyond time cannot easily be cast aside and may prove of some genuine help to people who are bothered by the question of prayer and action under a God who knows all.

#### Be yourself then

We turn our attention to a topic common among Christians. The topic is Hell. Mr. Lewis says at the outset that Christ's pronouncements on Hell were made to our conscience and will and not for the benefit of our intellectual curiosity. The problem arises because we speak of the boundless mercy of God, and still we are confronted with a Hell. Ask yourself, "What about the rich man who laughs at the world, who has fleeced his own partners, doesn't experience remorse, eats like a school-boy, sleeps like a healthy infant, and will not be converted? Should a man like that be permitted to live in that sort of an illusion, not to know that his life has been a mistake?" To be ignorant of that would be manifestly bad.<sup>17</sup>

---

17. Pain, pp. 108 - 110.

The demand that God should forgive such a man while he remains what he is, is based on a confusion between condoning and forgiving. To condone an evil is simply to ignore it, to treat it as if it were good. But forgiveness needs to be accepted as well as offered if it is to be complete: and a man who admits no guilt can accept no forgiveness.<sup>18</sup>

The character of a lost soul is that he has rejected everything that is not himself. Hell is not a sentence that is passed on him but is simply being what he is. Self-giving is the rhythm of the Word of God. What is not of this system is neither earth, or nature, nor ordinary life, but simply and solely Hell. Hell could be called a state of mind because every time a creature shuts itself within its own mind it is Hell. Everything that is of reality is Heavenly. Hell is the realization of an egoist's wish. He wants to live entirely in himself and make the best of it. Hell is the thing that he finds there.<sup>19</sup>

For a damned soul is nearly nothing: it is shrunk, shut up in itself. Good beats upon the damned incessantly as sound waves beat on the ears of the deaf, but they cannot receive it. Their fists are clenched, their teeth are clenched, their eyes fast shut. First they will not, in the end they cannot open their hands for gifts, or their mouths for food, or their eyes to see.<sup>20</sup>

The author cautions that the imagery of Hell is not to be mistaken for what Hell actually is. Christ speaks of it under three symbols: 1) punishment, 2) destruction, 3) privation or banishment. We are told that the saved go to a place prepared for them, but that the damned are banished from humanity into "outer darkness". It is only the "remains" of a man that go to Hell. Those that go to Heaven become more human. The imagery that Christ used is, of course, to convey the idea that Hell is something very horrible. The image of torture need not predominate

18. Ibid., p. 110.

19. Pain, pp. 111, 140; Divorce, p. 65; Letters, p. 92.

20. Divorce, p. 127.

the image of privation. This thought is in the same vein that Mr. Lewis expressed in his contention that the first sin of man was pride, the self asserting itself in opposition to God. That process continued uninterruptedly would finally be Hell.<sup>21</sup>

Some have said that no charitable man could be blessed in Heaven so long as he knew that there was someone in Hell. Behind that sort of thinking is

The demand of the loveless and the self-imprisoned that they should be allowed to blackmail the universe: that till they consent to be happy (on their own terms) no one else shall taste joy: that theirs should be the final power: Hell should be able to  veto  Heaven. . . It must be one way or the other. Either the day must come when joy prevails and all the makers of misery are no longer able to infect it; or else forever and ever the makers of misery can destroy in others the happiness they reject for themselves. I know it has a grand sound to say Ye'll accept no salvation which leaves even one creature in the dark outside. But watch that sophistry or ye'll make a Dog in a Manger the tyrant of the universe.<sup>22</sup>

A further basis for that sort of reasoning, says Mr. Lewis, comes from a mental picture that Heaven and Hell co-exist in unilinear time as do England and America. But the writer notes that the Lord did not stress duration when He spoke of Hell, but He stressed finality. It is thought of as the end of a story, not the beginning. That the attitude of a lost soul is fixed for eternity cannot be doubted but that that necessarily implies duration cannot be definitely deduced. Heaven was made for man. The "outer darkness" is something on the edge that appears to fade into nonentity.<sup>23</sup>

21. Pain, pp. 112 - 113.

22. Divorce, p. 124.

23. Pain, pp. 114 - 115.

The following quotation shows the emphasis that Mr. Lewis places on God's concern for mankind.

The Landlord doesn't make the blackness. The blackness is there already wherever the taste of mountain-apple has created the vermiculate will. What do you mean by a hole? Something that ends. A black hole is blackness enclosed, limited. And in that sense the Landlord has made the black hole. He has put into the world a Worst Thing. But evil of itself would never reach a worst: for evil is fissiparous and could never in a thousand eternities find any way to arrest its own reproduction. If it could, it would be no longer evil: for Form and Limit belong to the good. The walls of the black hole are the tourniquet on the wound through which the lost soul else would bleed to a death she never reached. It is the Landlord's last service to those who will let him do nothing better for them.<sup>24</sup>

In conclusion to his discussion of the doctrine of Hell, Mr. Lewis ventures this reply.

In the long run the answer to all those who object to the doctrine of hell, is itself a question: "What are you asking God to do?" To wipe out their past sins and, at all costs, to give them a fresh start, smoothing every difficulty and offering every miraculous help? But He has done so, on Calvary. To forgive them? They will not be forgiven. To leave them alone? Alas, I am afraid that is what He does. . . . In order to arouse modern minds to an understanding of the issues, I ventured to introduce in this chapter a picture of the sort of bad man whom we most easily perceive to be truly bad. But when the picture has done that work, the sooner it is forgotten the better. In all discussions of Hell we should keep steadily before our eyes the possible damnation, not of our enemies nor our friends (since both these disturb the reason) but of ourselves. This chapter is not about your wife or son, nor about Nero or Judas Iscariot; it is about you.<sup>25</sup>

One of the more important thoughts in Mr. Lewis's discussion is his picturization of Hell as the final culmination of man's living on self. That is Hell itself. It is something that God never prepared for man; that is why one of the figures that Christ uses for Hell is "outer

24. Regress, p. 233.

25. Fain, p. 116.

darkness", privation. In a sense man ceases to be man when he enters Hell. To maintain that one soul in Hell denies Heaven is to say that there is no such thing as justice. It is a demand that evil conquer good. It is a complete neglect of Calvary. Mr. Lewis emphasis on the part that the self plays in the doctrine of Hell makes it impossible for the individual to escape this issue. Hell had its beginning in the Fall. The Fall came about because man exerted self. An insistence to maintain the new program of self exertion results in Hell. And where self is master a man becomes less and less a human. The distinction that the author makes between duration and finality of the fixed status of lost souls might be of help to some who have the picture of a co-existence of Heaven and Hell on a unilinear time basis. Mr. Lewis says that Christ emphasizes Hell as the end not the beginning of a story.

#### We are God's

Our attention is now turned to the opposite of Hell. Mr. Lewis has written one book specifically on the eternal breach between Heaven and Hell entitled The Great Divorce. He mentions that people will always believe that if they are given enough time they can with skill and patience finally embrace and reconcile the "either or" of Heaven and Hell. That belief is really based on the contention that there is no "either or". Life is usually pictured as the radii of a circle; it doesn't matter which one you are on, they all lead to the center. Mr. Lewis has a counter proposal. Life is more like a road which has forks every few miles where the traveler has to decide which one he is going to follow because both do not go to the same place. If a wrong fork is chosen, that doesn't mean all is lost. Rescue, however, consists in being put back on the right once again. You can undo evil, but evil can-

not develop into good.<sup>26</sup>

Both good and evil will seem to work backward on judgment day. It is retrospective. Those who are saved will see that their lives always had the quality of Heaven; the lost will realize that they always were in Hell. People do not realize this when they request but one sinful pleasure and are willing to take the consequences. What really happens to the saved is best pictured as the opposite of a mirage on the desert. Misery appears to be everywhere at the start, but it turns into a well.<sup>27</sup>

Contrary to Hell, Heaven is not a state of mind, a life of the spirit. Many great religions teach that but not Christianity. God created Nature and called it good. The teaching of the resurrection of the body tells us that Heaven will also be a state of the body as well as the state of the spirit.

Christ, it is true, told His hearers that the Kingdom of Heaven was 'within' or 'among' them. But His hearers were not merely in 'a state of mind'. . . We desire, like St. Paul, not to be un-clothed but to be re-clothed.<sup>28</sup>

Although we shall have glorified bodies in Heaven, there will be no sexual life. That may make us think that our bodies will hardly be bodies at all or that we shall be on a perpetual fast. In regard to the last point Mr. Lewis has an analogy that may help. If a young boy was told that the sexual act was the highest bodily pleasure that mortals can experience, he might be prone to ask if you ate chocolates at the same time. When he received a negative reply, he would probably reason that the prime characteristic of sexuality is the absence of chocolates. It would not help much to tell him that the lovers are concerned with

---

26. Divorce, pp. v, vi.

27. Ibid., pp. 64, 65.

28. Miracles, p. 193.

something that is far better than chocolates. Chocolates are the thing that the boy knows; he has no knowledge of the very positive thing that excludes it. Our notion of the status of sexuality in Heaven is much like that.

We know sexual life; we do not know, except in glimpses, the other thing which, in Heaven, will leave no room for it. Hence where fulness awaits us we anticipate fasting. In denying that sexual life, as we now understand it, makes any part of the final beatitude, it is not of course necessary to suppose that the distinction of sexes will disappear. What is no longer needed for biological purposes may be expected to survive for splendour. Sexuality is the instrument both of virginity and of conjugal virtue; neither men nor women will be asked to throw away weapons they have used victoriously. It is the beaten and the fugitives who throw away their swords. The conquerors sheathe theirs and retain them. 'Trans-sexual' would be a better word than 'sexless' for the heavenly life.<sup>29</sup>

Still some of us may be

. . . afraid that heaven is a bribe, and that if we make it our goal we shall no longer be disinterested. It is not so. Heaven offers nothing that a mercenary soul can desire. It is safe to tell the pure in heart that they shall see God, for only the pure in heart want to. There are rewards that do not sully motives. A man's love for a woman is not mercenary because he wants to read it, nor his love of exercise less disinterested because he wants to run and leap and walk. Love, by definition, seeks to enjoy its object.<sup>30</sup>

As has already been intimated in our discussion of the nether world, the principle of ownership is entirely absent in Heaven. There the principle of the abandonment of self has reached perfection. Should anyone in heaven chance to call something his own, he would be thrust into Hell and become an evil spirit.<sup>31</sup>

In Heaven, in opposition to Hell, individuality and the unique-

---

29. *Ibid.*, p. 193.

30. *Pain*, p. 133.

31. *Ibid.*, pp. 139 - 140.

ness of the individual soul is brought out in all its distinctiveness. Revelation 2, 17 speaks of this. Each one of the redeemed will worship God in one aspect of his divine beauty in a little different and a little better way. For this reason the song of the Church is a symphony instead of one note. God created us individually.

Heaven is a city, and a Body, because the blessed remain eternally different: a society, because each has something to tell all the others—fresh and ever fresh news of the "My God" whom each finds in Him whom all praise as "Our God". For doubtless the continually successful, yet never completed, attempt by each soul to communicate its unique vision to all others (and that by means whereof earthly art and philosophy are but clumsy imitations) is also among the ends for which the individual was created.<sup>32</sup>

In a trip of fantasy in the Great Divorce, we get some idea of the men who shall inhabit Heaven and those who will go below. It depends on the kind of choice made during the journey of life. This choice can take on innumerable forms, some which we least suspect. But at the bottom of them all seems to stand the principle of Milton.

Milton was right. . . The choice of every lost soul can be expressed in the words 'Better to reign in Hell than serve in Heaven.' There is always something they insist on keeping, even at the price of misery. There is always something they prefer to joy—that is, to reality. Ye see it easily enough in a spoiled child that would sooner miss its play and its supper than say it was sorry and be friends. Ye call it the Sulks. But in adult life it has a hundred fine names—Achilles' wrath and Coriolanus' grandeur, Revenge and Injured Merit and Self-Respect and Tragic Greatness and Proper Pride.<sup>33</sup>

On this trip of fantasy there are people who have already been in Hell and are getting a chance to view heaven; some tourists have not yet met death. One is attempting to steal a golden apple and take it back to Hell:<sup>34</sup> a woman is hesitant to enter Heaven because she doesn't

32. Ibid., p. 138.

33. Divorce, p. 66.

34. Ibid., p. 46.

have the proper clothing;<sup>35</sup> a research man got so interested in proving the existence of God that he forgot why Christ came into the world;<sup>36</sup> another woman was still trying to use sex appeal to attract attention;<sup>37</sup> another woman had a defective picture of mother-love, she wished to join her son in Heaven but on her terms;<sup>38</sup> another domineering woman was ready to forgive her husband (already in Heaven) but she still wanted the prerogative of handling all his affairs (even in Heaven);<sup>39</sup> a famous artist who could not enjoy the vista of Heaven before his eyes but insisted on painting it.<sup>40</sup> The artist is told.

Ink and catgut and paint were necessary down there, but they are also dangerous stimulants. Every poet and musician and artist, but for Grace, is drawn away from love of the thing he tells, to love of the telling till, down in Deep Hell, they cannot be interested in God at all but only in what they say about Him. For it doesn't stop at being interested in paint, you know. They sink lower--become interested in their own personalities and then in nothing but their own reputations.<sup>41</sup>

There is a murderer in Heaven. When he is greeted by the man he murdered, he explains to his victim that the murder was the least of his sins. The big sin was the hatred he bore against him for those many years. The victim protests that all he wants is his rights, what is coming to him. The murderer says it is fortunate that in heaven they don't get what they deserve; they get much more. The only requisite is to accept Bleeding Charity.<sup>42</sup>

35. Ibid., pp. 55 - 59.

36. Ibid., p. 68.

37. Ibid., p. 73.

38. Ibid., pp. 90 - 99.

39. Ibid., pp. 83 - 89.

40. Ibid., pp. 76 - 82.

41. Ibid., p. 79.

42. Ibid., pp. 23 - 29.

One tourist is bothered by a habit, typified by a pet lizard on his shoulder. He was very reluctant to get rid of the lizard even though it was causing him difficulty. When he finally permitted the lizard to be killed, it turned into a stallion. This emphasizes how important little decisions are in the journey of life.<sup>43</sup>

One of the most interesting tourists was a clergyman of the liberal school. He was a man who was more interested in traveling hopefully than in arriving at any definite truth. He was afraid that Heaven would limit his talents and opportunities. He wanted to exert a promise that his intellect and spirit of inquiry would be given full scope. Talk of a literal Heaven and Hell sounded profane to him. He was promised that his freedom be that of a man who is drinking. While drinking he does not have the freedom to be dry. During the discussion the cleric remembered that he had a paper to deliver before a small Theological Society. Here Mr. Lewis's satire is superior.

"I'm taking the text about growing up to the measure of the stature of Christ and working out an idea which I feel sure you'll be interested in. I'm going to point out how people always forget that Jesus (here the Ghost bowed) was a comparatively young man when he died. He would have outgrown some of his earlier views, you know, if he'd lived. As he might have done, with a little more tact and patience. I am going to ask my audience to consider what his mature views would have been. A profoundly interesting question. What a different Christianity we might have had if only the Founder had reached his full stature! I shall end up by pointing out how this deepens the significance of the Crucifixion. One feels for the first time what a disaster it was: what a tragic waste. . .so much promise cut short. Oh, must you be going? Well, so must I. Goodbye, my dear boy. It has been a great pleasure. Most stimulating and provocative. Goodbye, goodbye."

The Ghost nodded its head and beamed on the Spirit with a bright clerical smile—or with the best approach to it

---

43. Diverge, pp. 99 - 105; Regress, pp. 249 - 250.

which such unsubstantial lips could manage--and then turned away humming softly to itself "City of God, how broad and far".<sup>44</sup>

Who are some of the people we find in the abode of Heaven? There suddenly appeared a brightness which almost necessitated turning away to keep the eyes from injury. A great hero of some sort was expected; such was not the case. At the very center of this procession was a housewife by the name of Sarah Smith who lived at Golders Green. On earth she had not gotten much publicity. She fed all beggars who came to her door; she was kind to animals of all kinds. Above all she endured a husband who was always acting and never sincere. By encouraging pity he managed to dominate her life. She bore all this with Charity.<sup>45</sup>

She meets her husband who is pictured as a Dwarf with a Tragedian at the end of a chain. He attempts to use the same approach with his wife in Heaven as he had on earth. As the conversation continues and he refuses to change his tactics despite the pleading of his wife, he gradually gets smaller until only the Tragedian with the chain was left and it too disappeared. It would appear that the woman no longer had any pity for her wretched husband, the same pity that she had while she was on earth. This is the answer.

The action of Pity will live for ever: but the passion of Pity will not. The passion of pity, the pity we merely suffer, the ache that draws men to concede what should not be conceded and to flatter when they should speak the truth, the pity that has cheated many a woman out of her virginity and many a statesman out of his honesty--that will die. It was used as a weapon by bad men against good ones: their weapon will be broken.

The action

---

44. Divorce, pp. 40, 41.

45. Ibid., pp. 108 - 123.

. . . is a weapon on the other side. It leaps quicker than light from the highest place to the lowest to bring healing and joy, whatever the cost to itself. It changes darkness into light and evil into good. But it will not, at the gunning tears of Hell, impose on good the tyranny of evil.<sup>46</sup>

The persons that the author visualizes in heaven make very vivid his statement that the thing God is really concerned about is the attitude of the heart. Actions are not discontinued but again they are important for the peculiar turn or twist that they give to the central self. As Hell is the complete assertion of self, Heaven is the complete abandonment of self, a constant self-giving. The individuality that will be achieved there is in direct contrast to the picture we get of the lost thrown into outer darkness which indicates a final denial of the human being. The interesting note he has on the retrospective aspect of good and evil, the saved already enjoying bliss of a heavenly quality, the lost already living in Hell makes more vivid the Scripture which says that those who believe in Christ have eternal life now, and those who reject Him are judged already. The problem of mercy in regard to the existence of Hell, Mr. Lewis answers with two points. God has already shown mercy on Calvary, and there is such a thing as justice in the concept of love. The second point that Mr. Lewis advances is his impression that Christ's pronouncements on Hell emphasize that it has more the quality of finality than duration. In a sense it does not co-exist with Heaven. As the author himself mentions nothing final can be said on this last contention.

#### Summary

In this chapter the Trinity, time and beyond time, Heaven and Hell

---

46. *Ibid.*, pp. 124, 125.

were discussed. The relation of the begotten to the made, the necessity of God to love someone from all eternity, the imagery of one book on top of another from all eternity to illustrate the eternal existence of the Son, the illustration of a cube composed of many simple lines compared to the Trinity of three persons in one, are the outstanding contributions of Mr. Lewis in clarifying the relation of the Trinity within itself and to us.

Time is represented as the lens through which we view life from moment to moment. God's knowing and seeing all doesn't mean that prayers are not to be uttered because part of God's knowing and seeing all is our prayer. The doctrine of Predestination shows that reality does not have to wait for the future in which to be real. The important thing for us in relation to God and eternity is the path we are taking every successive moment. For the moment is most comparable to the eternal Now for the past is unalterable and the future is non-existent.

The figures which Christ employs indicate that Hell is horrible beyond the imagination. The most horrible, according to Mr. Lewis, is the picture of privation. For in Hell man is completely on his own, the self has conquered. Hell is the culmination of the story that began at the Fall which did not permit Christ to interrupt. There is such a thing as retributive justice for it would be evil for a bad man never to know that he had been evil.

The theme of Heaven, in contrast to that of Hell, is one of constant self-giving, the theme of Calvary. The saved are those who have given themselves over to Christ and have denied that they could rest their case on self. Individuality is retained in Heaven with everyone worshipping Christ in a little different and a little better way than anyone else. Every believer is constantly telling the other about the unique

vision that he has seen of the Father and His Son. Contrary to many religions Christianity maintains there will be a resurrection of the body. While there will be no sexual life in Heaven, we cannot say that there will be something negative to take its place but something positive. Since we do not know what that is, we would do better to speak of a 'Trans-sexual' life rather than a 'Sexless' life in Heaven.

*[The following text is extremely faint and illegible, appearing to be bleed-through from the reverse side of the page. It contains several lines of text, possibly including a list of numbers or a table of contents.]*

## IX. Mr. Lewis's method. Conclusion

Much of Mr. Lewis's method will by this time have become clear. He employs analogies with absolute freedom to illustrate a point.<sup>1</sup> His application of what appears to be gold dogma to everyday life is accurate and penetrating.<sup>2</sup> His facility with the English language itself makes his writing extremely vivid.<sup>3</sup> His percentage of saying what he has in mind and conveying that precise idea into the readers mind is unsurpassed. We might say that he never makes the mistake of calling something 'beautiful' if a more accurate description would be the adjective 'exquisite'.<sup>4</sup>

He wastes little time on matters that are beside the point. He goes to the heart of the matter. In other words, in a field where straw men are prevalent the author disposes of them in record time and comes to grips with the real problem.<sup>5</sup> Throughout his writings there is an undertone of genuine humility, a constant request that the listener or the reader who may be better informed be ready to correct him since he is only a beginner in Christianity and Theology.<sup>6</sup> This feature alone

---

1. Examples in Thesis, pp. 10, 13, 15, 16, 19, 26, 27, 32, 35, 36, 43, 76, 78, 80, 90, 92, 119, 122, 127, 128, 131.

2. Examples in Thesis, pp. 6, 9, 11, 16, 20, 26, 34, 40, 41, 43, 46, 68, 71, 74, 82, 84, 94, 106, 117, 135.

3. Examples in Thesis, pp. 11, 14, 16, 26, 35, 37, 40, 46, 47, 60, 86, 101, 129, 140, 141.

4. Examples in Thesis, pp. 4, 12, 14, 22, 30, 36, 37, 65, 77, 85, 95, 118, 132.

5. Examples in Thesis, pp. 5, 12, 17, 21, 29, 30, 34, 35, 42, 54, 60, 66, 67, 74, 85, 90, 91, 113, 136, 142.

6. Examples in Thesis, pp. 20, 25, 70, 87, 91, 93, 96, 103, 105, 109, 120, 123.

is one that wins the reader almost immediately. Although his writings bear evidence of the most accurate logic throughout, you seldom get the feeling that you are reading a case prepared by a lawyer because his logic is combined with a beauty of language and an imagination that is rarely reached in a book of any kind.<sup>7</sup> To get a clear picture of his imagination one can not afford to pass up his novels, Out of the Silent Planet, Perelandra, That Hideous Strength.

His background of language, philosophy, and literature have only increased his insight into the problems of people. As you read you are constantly aware that he is speaking of some problem that is bothering you. His attention is focused on the reader throughout. A man who disagrees with the author feels uncomfortable in the path of such eloquent persuasion that never smacks of preaching from the pulpit.<sup>8</sup>

Add to his knowledge of logic, philosophy, literature, and psychology a satirical wit and a profound sense of humor.<sup>9</sup> In the first pages of his famous Screwtop Letters he quotes Luther's statement that scorn is the best way to drive away the Devil if no other method works successfully. He has a note about people who get facetious about the symbolism which is employed in Scripture to describe Heaven. Anemic creatures playing harps is a common picture of heaven. To that kind of people one might as well say that Christ's admonition to His followers to be like doves, meant that they were to lay eggs!<sup>10</sup> This sort of humor pervades

---

7. Examples in Thesis, pp. 7, 15, 17, 24, 31, 42, 51, 52, 61, 68, 72, 104, 111, 132, 144.  
 8. Examples in Thesis, pp. 3, 5, 8, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 28, 29, 32, 40, 51, 67, 68, 69, 70, 75, 81, 89, 93, 115, 116, 135, 137, 141, 145.  
 9. Examples in Thesis, pp. 18, 36, 49, 50, 66, 75, 77, 78, 85, 88, 143.  
 10. Behaviour, p. 58.

his writing throughout. In the Screwtape Letters he discusses the difference between joy, fun, the joke proper, and flippancy.<sup>11</sup> The very notion of this last named publication is humorous. In this book Mr. Lewis publishes some correspondence which he intercepted coming from the master tempter Screwtape to his nephew tempter Wormwood. Wormwood for the most part is botching his job of securing another soul for Hell. Screwtape's advice to his nephew is always given with the threat that failure means he shall be eaten for the principle of Hell is absorption; individuality shall be destroyed.

Mr. Lewis is not hesitant to bring out the old Christian doctrines; Trinity, the Redemption, sexual morality, man's utter sinfulness. He doesn't tone them down. In fact, under his facile pen they become more vivid and make it still more difficult for Christian and non-Christian alike to avoid facing the issue. His use of analogies helps to make many of the Christian doctrines more vivid and useful than ever before. He very accurately and inspiringly shows the Trinity at work while a Christian is saying his evening prayer in his bedroom.<sup>12</sup> He has succeeded admirable in connecting Theology to daily living without losing step for a moment.

Throughout there is vigor in his writings. From time to time he will mention that a particular doctrine doesn't appeal to him particularly; and if he were constructing a religion, he would let it out. His reply to his reader and to himself is always, "That's what Christianity says." That sort of thing is quite disarming for the reader who is anxious to

---

11. Letters, pp. 57 - 60.

12. Example in Tesis, p. 85.

avoid facing an issue by attributing an idea solely to the author's making.

When he is dealing with some topic in great detail as he did Naturalism and Supernaturalism, he not infrequently anticipates the next objection that a reader has in mind. At such times you have no alternative but to go with him in his argument.

Mr. Lewis has done a great service for people who were already Christians. For people who managed to keep going to church from sheer 'faithfulness' or dogged loyalty, the author has pointed the way with renewed insight into daily living. Life becomes what it was supposed to be, close contact with God and the fellowman. Mr. Lewis is helpful because he recognizes a situation for what it is. While recognizing that social and political reform are not the salvation of a nation or a world because they were not the Saviour's program, he is quite firm in insisting that the Christian is the man who is most concerned with just those things. The Christian is the one who can do a better job because he hasn't confused his means and ends.

The Oxford don has a way of examining the personal life of an individual without becoming petty. You and the decision you make from moment to moment are the thing which the writer makes quite clear are the concern of the Almighty and His Son. After a little perusal of Mr. Lewis's works you can not escape the eyes of God watching constantly what is happening to your central self. In all of this searching of self in its relation to God Mr. Lewis does not become moody or lean toward the morbid. This balanced approach can probably be credited in part to the man who was most influential in bringing Mr. Lewis back to Christianity, George Macdonald.

Mr. Lewis's manner of approaching any problem accounts for much of the ease with which a reader finds himself engrossed in one of his works. His approach is informal without being disorganized or slovenly. Even in the most intricate arguments you still have the impression that he is engaged in a conversation with you over a pint of ale. Mr. Lewis himself stated that he does not care to nor does he have the talent to organize a theological subject in the conventional manner. He recalls that the easiest way to silence the voice of one who is appealing to the conscience is to place him under some Ism. Hence he pursues this very conversational style.

Few if any writers have managed to put in print such profound yet captivating statements of Christian doctrine in such brief form. Mr. Lewis's works almost without exception are small in size and in the number of pages. The Trinity he investigates in five short pages. Two hundred pages are almost the maximum he has reached in any specific work on Christianity. Many of his publications do not reach a hundred pages. The modern reader who has so many labour-saving devices that he finds no time for leisure will still have time to read a few pages of C. S. Lewis.

## Bibliography

- Anonymous, "Don v. Devil," Time, Vol. L No. 10, (September 7, 1947),  
65-74.
- Lewis, C. S., Beyond Personality, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1945.
- , Christian Behaviour, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1944.
- , George Macdonald: An Anthology, New York, The Macmillan  
Company, 1947.
- , Miracles, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1947.
- , Out of the Silent Planet, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1944.
- , Perelandra, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1946.
- , Pilgrim's Regress, New York, Sheed and Ward Inc., 1944.
- , That Hideous Strength, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1946.
- , The Abolition of Man, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1947.
- , The Case for Christianity, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1944.
- , The Great Divorce, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1946.
- , The Problem of Pain, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1944.
- , The Screwtape Letters, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1944.