

Mere Christianity, Book 1

Chapter 1- The Law of Human nature

- For morality to exist, there must be some standard by which we determine right and wrong.
- Although the details of this standard may differ, it has existed and been recorded for all of history.
- We don't always keep by this standard (Law of Nature), and are eager to find an excuse why we don't

Chapter 2- Some Objections

- One objection is that morality is just a 'herd instinct'

This is disputed by the fact that morality will compel people to do what is not in their best interest.

Also, morality pushes us to choose a weaker instinct over a stronger, more dominant one.

- Another objection- Morality is just a 'social convention'

If this were so, how can we compare one societies morality to another? There must be some standard by which this is held.

We also compare the morals of societies over time (slavery, race laws), as wrong, showing some outside standard that we judge by.

Chapter 3- The Reality of the Law

- Often times, there is a discrepancy in how men act and how they should act.
- 'It is not true that right and wrong are what is convenient or inconvenient for me.

This leads to the belief in some outside standard that men are judged by, as discussed earlier

- This cannot be explained by reasoning that right and wrong is only for the good of a society.

"If we ask: 'Why ought I to be unselfish?' and you reply 'Because it is good for society,' we may then ask, 'Why should I care what's good for society except when it happens to pay me personally?' and then you will have to say, 'Because you ought to be unselfish' - which simply brings you back to where we started."

Chapter 4- What Lies Beyond the Law

- There is something beyond the law, beyond the facts, that men ought to obey.
- There have always been two predominant views of the universe and where it came from

The Materialist View- The matter around us has always existed, with no real reason why. It is also by chance, not design, that everything that exists that we observe today.

The Religious View- The universe is somewhat like a mind in the sense that it is conscious, has a purpose, prefers one thing to another.

- These two views always have turned up over time
- Science cannot tell which is the correct view
- All that we have as a resource is ourselves and what we find within ourselves
- There is an in between view, something that offers the thrill of God but without the cost

Chapter 5 – We Have Cause to be Uneasy

- Although you personally may not agree with the view of a created universe, it would not keep appearing through history if it were not valid.
 - ‘Putting the clock back’
- All we really know is what we can observe from our own ‘Moral Law’ that is inside us
- What we find from our own introspective view is that there is a Somebody or Someone behind the Moral Law within us and the universe around us.
- “You find out more about God from the Moral Law than from the universe in general just as you find out more about a man by listening to his conversation than by looking at a house he has built.”
- This Somebody is all powerful, seeing this from the universe around us.
- If this power is good, it cannot accept our imperfections and will not accept anything less than himself
- We can’t help but be imperfect.

- “If the universe is not governed by an absolute goodness, then all our efforts are hopeless. But if it is, then we are making ourselves enemies to that goodness every day, and are not in the least likely to do any better tomorrow, and so our case is hopeless again.”
- This is the truth behind Christianity
- It is much easier to see that there has to be a bigger power once one understands the Moral Law within us.