

Dear fellow pilgrims,

It was a joy to be back with you last week to delve further into Mere Christianity. We covered a lot of ground, working our way through Chapter 4, "What Lies Behind the Law," and making a foray into Chapter 5, "We Have Cause to Be Uneasy," a seminal chapter that we will unpack more tomorrow because of its deep relevance to our current cultural situation, as we wrap up the first section of Lewis's book.

Here is a summary of what we discussed last week in Chapter 4:

Ch. 4: What Lies Behind the Law

The Law of Human Nature, or of Right and Wrong, must be something above and beyond the actual facts of human behaviour. In this case, besides the actual facts, you have something else—a real law which we did not invent and which we know we ought to obey.

Two views of reality: materialist view and religious view; the role of science

Analogy: Suppose someone asked me, when I see a man in a blue uniform going down the street leaving little paper packets at each house, why I suppose that they contain letters? I should reply, "Because whenever he leaves a similar little packet for me I find it does contain a letter." And if he then objected, "But you've never seen all these letters which you think the other people are getting," I should say, "Of course not, and I shouldn't expect to, because they're not addressed to me. I'm explaining the packets I'm not allowed to open by the ones I am allowed to open."

Inside information: The only packet I am allowed to open is Man. When I do, especially when I open that particular man called Myself, I find that I do not exist on my own, that I am under a law; that somebody or something wants me to behave in a certain way. I do not, of course, think that if I could get inside a stone or a tree I should find exactly the same thing, just as I do not think all the other people in the street get the same letters as I do. I should expect, for instance, to find that the stone had to obey the law of gravity—that whereas the sender of the letters merely tells me to obey the law of my human nature, He compels the stone to obey the laws of its stony nature. But I should expect to find that there was, so to speak, a sender of letters in both cases, a Power behind the facts, a Director, a Guide.

A Something. Do not think I am going faster than I really am. I am not yet within a hundred miles of the God of Christian theology. All I have got to is a Something which is directing the universe, and which appears in me as a law urging me to do right and making me feel responsible and uncomfortable when I do wrong

Life-Force: When you are feeling fit and the sun is shining and you do not want to believe that the whole universe is a mere mechanical dance of atoms, it is nice to be able to think of this great mysterious Force rolling on through the centuries and carrying you on its crest. If, on the other hand, you want to do something rather shabby, the Life-Force, being only a blind force, with no morals and no mind, will never interfere with you like that troublesome God we learned about when we were children. The Life-Force is a sort of tame God. You can switch it on when you want, but it will not bother you. All the thrills of religion and none of the cost. Is the Life-Force the greatest achievement of wishful thinking the world has yet seen?

Tomorrow night, we will dive more deeply into Chapter 5, looking at the reasons we have cause to be uneasy. In our culture today, the idea that we are sinful and that we have no good in ourselves to help ourselves is (to say the least) unwelcome and unpopular. It is no accident that the diseases of despair are growing exponentially in such an environment, while we fail to realize that the Gospel is the only antidote.

I commend to you the article on Epiphany below, as well as the information on the role of science in relation to faith, plus some sad data on what is besetting our culture at this moment.

Here is the link for class tomorrow, Wednesday, January 13, at 7:15 p.m. ET--please feel free to share the link with any friends who may be interested:

<https://zoom.us/j/99307536525>

I look forward to "seeing" you tomorrow in class on Zoom!

Further up and further in,

Brian+

Music link from last week:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TPgKstvEeBo>

Video link to last week's class:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UbCTp57LdPQ>

Audio link to last week's class:

<https://www.stphilipschurchsc.org/mediaPlayer/#/episodeaudio/395>

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-8-chapter-4-what-lies-behind-the-law/id1537579476>

Science--Dr. John Polkinghorne

<https://www.pbs.org/wnet/religionandethics/1998/05/08/may-08-1998-sir-john-polkinghorne-on-science-and-theology/15143/#:-:text=Sir%20POLKINGHORNE%3A%20Both%20science%20and,in%20science%20or%20in%20theology>

<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/11/201109184933.htm>

Diseases of despair

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2020/11/23/covid-pandemic-rise-suicides/>