

Dear fellow pilgrims,

Last week we ventured forth into Chapter 2 of Book 2 of *Mere Christianity*, "The Invasion," which deals with misinformed views purporting to be Christianity, as well as some profound truth about the nature of reality and the nature of good and evil.

Here is a summary of what we covered last week:

Chapter 2--The Invasion

A. Simplistic views

--Atheism is too simple because it discounts too much evidence.

--Christianity-and-water, which simply says there is a good God in Heaven and everything is all right—leaving out all the difficult and terrible doctrines about sin and hell and the devil, and the redemption, is too simple.

--Real things are not simple. They look simple, but they are not.

Analogy: The table I am sitting at looks simple: but ask a scientist to tell you what it is really made of—all about the atoms and how the light waves rebound from them and hit my eye and what they do to the optic nerve and what it does to my brain—and, of course, you find that what we call "seeing a table" lands you in mysteries and complications which you can hardly get to the end of.

B. Destructive simplicity. People...who, consciously or unconsciously, want to destroy Christianity, put up a version of Christianity suitable for a child of six and make that the object of their attack...Notice, too, their idea of God "making religion simple": as if "religion" were something God invented, and not His statement to us of certain quite unalterable facts about His own nature.

C. Characteristics of Reality. Besides being complicated, reality, in my experience, is usually odd. It is not neat, not obvious, not what you expect...Reality, in fact, is usually something you could not have guessed. That is one of the reasons I believe Christianity. It is a religion you could not have guessed.

D. Goodness and Badness

You can be good for the mere sake of goodness: you cannot be bad for the mere sake of badness. You can do a kind action when you are 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 cannot succeed even 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.

E. Intelligence and Will

To be bad, he [the Dark Power] must exist and have intelligence and will. But existence, intelligence and will are in themselves good. Therefore he must be getting them from the Good Power: even to be bad he must borrow or steal from his opponent. And do you now begin to see why Christianity has always said that the devil is a fallen angel? That is not a mere story for the children. It is a real recognition of the fact that evil is a parasite, not an original thing. The powers which enable evil to carry on are powers given it by goodness. All the things which enable a bad man to be effectively bad are in themselves good things—resolution, cleverness, good looks, existence itself. That is why Dualism, in a strict sense, will not work.

F. The Dark Power

One of the things that surprised me when I first read the New Testament seriously was that it talked so much about a Dark Power in the universe—a mighty evil spirit who was held to be the Power behind death and disease, and sin. The difference is that Christianity thinks this Dark Power was created by God, and was good when he was created, and went wrong. Christianity agrees with Dualism that this universe is at war. But it does not think this is a war between independent powers. It thinks it is a civil war—a rebellion, and that we are living in a part of the universe occupied by the rebel.

G. The Story of the Invasion

Enemy-occupied territory—that is what this world is. Christianity is the story of how the rightful king has landed, you might say landed in disguise, and is calling us all to take part in a great campaign of sabotage. When you go to church you are really listening in to the secret wireless from our friends: that is why the enemy is so anxious to

prevent us from going. He does it by playing on our conceit and laziness and intellectual snobbery. I know someone will ask me, "Do you really mean, at this time of day, to reintroduce our old friend the devil—hoofs and horns and all?" Well, what the time of day has to do with it I do not know. And I am not particular about the hoofs and horns. But in other respects my answer is "Yes, I do." I do not claim to know anything about his personal appearance. If anybody really wants to know him better I would say to that person, "Don't worry. If you really want to, you will. Whether you'll like it when you do is another question."

IMPLICATIONS

- The cultural movement to say that there is no such thing as evil, as right or wrong: it is Pantheism in sheep's clothing.
- We have an Enemy—the Dark Power is real, and one of his chief aims is to **stop us from going to church and being involved in it** (by playing on our conceit and laziness and intellectual snobbery). Another of his chief aims is to have us disbelieve in his existence.

We listened to some of Howard Shore's marvelous soundtrack for *The Lord of the Rings* movies; Tolkien's epic work is one of the great treatments in literature of the battle between Good and Evil understood through the lens of a Christian worldview. We also talked about the sermon from St. Philip's about discipleship, which ties in well with what Lewis says about "Christianity-and-water," a diluted sort of feel-good faith that is not Biblical Christianity. Links to both are below.

Here is the link for class tomorrow, Wednesday, February 3, at 7:15 p.m. ET--please feel free to share the link with any friends who may be interested:

Join Zoom Meeting

<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=h2ocBnraYhc>

Video link to last week's class:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hiGYZvtjPp4>

Audio link to last week's class:

<https://www.stphilipschurchsc.org/mere-christianity-/episode/2021-01-27/episode-11-book-2-chapter-2:-the-invasion>

Podcast link to last week's class:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/episode-11-book-2-chapter-2-the-invasion/id1537579476?i=1000506901040>

Link to sermon on discipleship:

<https://www.stphilipschurchsc.org/sermons/sermon/2021-01-24/the-cost-of-discipleship>