

Example of critical thinking on the case for christianity

[Religion](#), [God](#)



C. S Lewis' Mere Christianity Critique

Mere Christianity refers to a theological book authored by Clive Staples Lewis. The material used to compose the book was adopted from a series of talks held by C. S Lewis over the BBC radio between 1942 and 1944 when the Second World War was being fought actively. The book is regarded a classic Christian apologetic that has had a tremendous impact on believers and nonbelievers during the twentieth century (Petrik 46). The author explains basic Anglican teachings in nontechnical language, focusing on the belief that all Christians hold one thing in common, that is 'mere Christianity.' The title is supposed to present the 'mere' characteristic of the essence of Christianity, which is to defend the religion's beliefs held commonly by all Christian faithful (Lewis 14). Lewis chose this approach to serve the majority of atheists who did not profess Jesus Christ as their savior. He believed once they converted to Christianity they would acquire knowledge about theological differences between various church denominations and they would wisely select a Christian fellowship that suits them. Perhaps for us to better understand the author's beliefs as inscribed in his writings, it is prudent for us to note that during the course of his life, Lewis converted from Christianity to atheism, and again during the later stages of his life he converted back to Christianity fully. The book is divided into four sections. The first titled "Right and Wrong as a clue to the meaning of the universe" dwells on the moral argument about existence of God. The second section is titled "What Christians believe" and talks of the essential roots of Christian theology. Section three titled "Christian Behaviour" presents various essays on aspects of leading a Christian life. The final

section titled “ Beyond Personality” centers on the doctrines of atonement and the holy trinity (Lewis 159). The ensuing paragraphs below highlight the main arguments made by Lewis to defend the common beliefs held by all Christian denominations.

Lewis defends the Christian faith basing his arguments on the subject of morality. He states that it is morality that persuaded him to abandon atheism and profess Christianity. He defends his action citing the case of moral law which is about right and wrong and is common to all human beings. For instance, he uses the example of Nazi Germany and argues that both atheist and Christians held common ground that Hitler’s actions were morally wrong (Lewis 47). He further generalizes the argument to a mundane level and states that stealing is generally unacceptable as it is a violation of morality law. Lewis compares moral law to the law of nature in that the two are not contrived by humans. He is quick to point out that unlike nature; the moral law is known intuitively and can be ignored or broken. After dwelling on morality, Lewis uses the argument of thirst to demonstrate why believers crave to serve God. He states that thirst can only be quenched by water. Similarly, earthly possession can never satisfy a human being who craves for eternal Joy, but only God can quench this eternal need. He argues that God exists because humans cannot yearn for something that is not there (Holyer 239).

Next, Lewis dwells on the rival conceptions of God. He dismisses atheism as too simple and pantheism as incoherent, and arrives at why Jesus Christ is God. In his argument, later named the Lewis Trilemma, he uses logic to

states three possibilities. The first is that Jesus was truly God; the second is that he was lying deliberately, and lastly he thought himself to be God because he was likely insane. Lewis dismisses the last two possibilities as they are inconsistent with the well documented character of Jesus Christ, and remains with the first possibility which according to him is most likely to be true. Therefore he concludes Jesus was God indeed.

Criticism

Throughout the text, Lewis continually recites the Christian dogma and tries to rationally justify irrational concepts. In the process he fails to deal with establishing validity of theism. In fact, his arguments resemble those of early Christian theologians such as Aquinas (Ebon Musings 2012). In addition, the author fails to address counter arguments to his stated facts and chooses to cleverly downplay exceptions that refute his postulations. Instead he should have confronted these counter arguments openly and honestly to justify his views. The best example is seen in the preface section of his book where he recommends information that might change prospective converts from embracing Christianity should be concealed. He contradicts his argument on moral law that depends on there being no differences between cultures through his incurious and casual dismissal of cultural differences in morality. The first section of the book that dwells on theology and Christian morality fails to demonstrate that the author has taken into account careful reflection and rational consideration. The main problem is that Lewis concentrates more on true Christianity but fails to provide intellectual argument to prove Christianity is indeed true.

In conclusion, though the text has had tremendous impact on nonbelievers during the early years of its publication, I highly doubt that the shallow argumentation is likely to be informative and to stimulate a knowledgeable person in this twenty first century to think of Christianity in the same way Lewis had intended for his readers. Such shallow argumentation cannot convert an informed and ordinary citizen who lives in this information age and professes to be an atheist to embrace Christianity as his or her religion.

Works Cited

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