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The Case For Christianity By Cs Lewis

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Introduction: Why C.S. Lewis Still Matters

Few thinkers of the 20th century have shaped the way modern believers articulate their faith quite like Clive Staples Lewis. An Oxford don, a close friend of J.R.R. Tolkien, and a former atheist who converted to Christianity in his early thirties, Lewis dedicated much of his later life to defending the intellectual and emotional credibility of Christian belief. His book *Mere Christianity*, along with works such as *The Problem of Pain* and *Miracles*, forms what many now refer to as **The Case For Christianity By CS Lewis**—a layered, rational, and deeply humane argument that continues to resonate with seekers, skeptics, and lifelong believers alike.

What makes Lewis's approach so compelling is not merely the force of his logic but the generosity of his tone. He writes not as a preacher delivering a sermon but as a fellow traveler who has wrestled with doubt and arrived at a reasoned conclusion. In an age where faith is often dismissed as irrational or purely subjective, Lewis offers a sturdy framework for thinking through the central claims of Christianity. This article explores the key components of his case, examines how each argument holds up under scrutiny, and considers why his voice remains essential more than seventy years after his most famous works first appeared.

The Argument from the Moral Law

Perhaps the most famous pillar of **The Case For Christianity By CS Lewis** is his argument from the Moral Law, which he lays out in the opening chapters of *Mere Christianity*. Lewis begins with a simple observation: human beings universally appeal to a standard of right and wrong that transcends personal preference or cultural convention. When one person says to another, "That's not fair," they are not merely expressing a personal dislike; they are invoking a standard of fairness that they expect the other person to recognize as valid.

Lewis argues that this universal moral awareness cannot be adequately explained by evolutionary biology, social conditioning, or individual psychology. While evolution might account for instinctive behaviors such as survival or cooperation, it does not explain why we feel a sense of obligation to do the right thing even when it conflicts with our instincts. Nor does it explain why we feel genuine moral guilt when we violate that sense of duty—not merely fear of punishment, but an internal conviction that we have failed to live up to a standard we did not create.

For Lewis, the Moral Law points beyond itself. Just as the existence of a reflection implies an original, the existence of a universal moral standard implies a Moral Lawgiver. He is careful to note that this argument does not prove the entirety of Christian doctrine on its own. Rather, it establishes a foundation: there is a real, objective moral order that stands over and above human opinion, and that order is best explained by the existence of a transcendent personal reality—what Christians call God.

Objections and Responses

Skeptics often counter that moral norms vary widely across cultures, suggesting that what Lewis calls the Moral

Law is merely a projection of social agreements. Lewis acknowledges variation in moral codes, but he insists that the underlying principles are remarkably consistent. For example, nearly every society has condemned murder, theft, and betrayal, even if they have disagreed about which beings count as persons worthy of protection. The variation lies in application, not in the fundamental sense of justice.

Another common objection is that moral feelings can be explained by evolutionary psychology: we call things "good" that promote group survival and "bad" that threaten it. Lewis replies that this account confuses causation with justification. Even if we can explain *why* we have moral instincts, that does not tell us whether those instincts are true. If evolution has wired us to believe certain moral propositions, we still need an independent standard to judge whether those propositions are correct. The evolutionary account, in other words, cannot itself supply the standard of good and evil; it can only describe how we came to have certain preferences.

The Trilemma: Liar, Lunatic, or Lord

Another cornerstone of **The Case For Christianity By CS Lewis** is his famous trilemma argument concerning the identity of Jesus Christ. Lewis presents this argument in its most accessible form in *Mere Christianity*, though it appears in earlier works as well. The argument is disarmingly simple: Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be the Son of God, the unique source of salvation, and the judge of all humanity. Given the magnitude of these claims, Lewis argues that we have only three logical possibilities. Either Jesus was a deliberate liar, a madman who genuinely believed he was divine, or he was telling the truth.

What makes this argument powerful is the way it eliminates the common middle-ground position that Jesus was merely a great moral teacher. Lewis famously writes that a man who says the sort of things Jesus said cannot be "a great moral teacher." If He was not divine, He would be either "on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg" or "the devil of Hell." The option of dismissing Jesus as a wise but mistaken prophet is, for Lewis, intellectually incoherent.

Evaluating the Options

Could Jesus have been a liar? The moral character of Jesus as portrayed in the Gospels is one of profound integrity, compassion, and self-sacrifice. It is deeply implausible that a man who taught the highest ethical standards, who condemned hypocrisy in others, and who willingly went to a brutal death would be perpetrating a conscious fraud. Moreover, the disciples and early Christian martyrs were so convinced of His resurrection that they faced persecution and death rather than deny it. It is difficult to believe that so many people would die for something they knew to be a lie.

Could Jesus have been a lunatic? It is possible to imagine someone suffering from delusions of grandeur, but the Gospels present Jesus as remarkably composed, wise, and perceptive. His teachings are not the ramblings of a disordered mind; they are coherent, penetrating, and psychologically astute. The idea that a person who produced the Sermon on the Mount, the Parable of the Prodigal Son, and the command to love one's enemies could be sincerely mistaken about His own identity strains credibility.

This leaves the third option: that Jesus is who He claimed to be. Lewis does not present this as a proof in the mathematical sense, but as an inference to the best explanation. The trilemma forces the reader to take the claims of Jesus seriously, rather than dismissing them as irrelevant or merely symbolic.

The Problem of Pain: A Reasoned Defense

No case for Christianity can ignore the most persistent objection to belief in a good God: the existence of suffering. Lewis addresses this directly in *The Problem of Pain*, and later in his more personal reflection *A Grief Observed* after the death of his wife, Joy Davidman. In these works, Lewis does not attempt to minimize the reality of pain or offer cheap comfort. Instead, he seeks to show that suffering, far from disproving the existence

of God, may actually be consistent with a coherent Christian worldview.

Lewis begins by noting that the problem of pain only makes sense within a theistic framework. If the universe is purely material and purposeless, then suffering is simply a brute fact to be endured or managed; it poses no intellectual problem. The problem arises only if we assume that the world ought to be good—a assumption that, Lewis argues, presupposes a transcendent standard of goodness. In other words, the very outrage we feel at injustice and suffering points to a moral order that atheism cannot explain.

Soul-Making and Free Will

Lewis offers several interlocking arguments. The first involves free will. A genuine relationship of love requires free creatures who are capable of choosing both good and evil. A world in which humans were automatically forced to do the right thing would be a world without authentic love, courage, or virtue. The possibility of moral evil—and the suffering it produces—is the unavoidable cost of creating beings with real freedom.

Second, Lewis develops what has been called the “soul-making” theodicy. Character traits such as patience, courage, compassion, and humility cannot be developed in a world without difficulty and challenge. A life of constant ease and pleasure would produce shallow, self-centered individuals. Suffering, while genuinely terrible, can be the occasion for growth in virtues that would otherwise remain dormant. Lewis is careful to say that this does not justify every instance of suffering, nor does it mean that God causes suffering for the sake of growth. Rather, it suggests that a world in which suffering occurs is not incompatible with divine goodness, because that same suffering can be redeemed and used for a greater purpose.

The Deeper Question

Ultimately, Lewis acknowledges that the problem of pain cannot be fully solved by intellectual arguments. The deepest comfort, he suggests, is not an explanation of why suffering exists, but the knowledge that God Himself has entered into human suffering in the person of Jesus Christ. The cross is not a distant deity looking down on our pain from a safe distance; it is God experiencing betrayal, torture, and death from the inside. For Lewis, this is the most profound answer to the problem of pain: not a logical deduction, but a personal encounter with a God who suffers with us and for us.

The Argument from Desire

Another thread running through **The Case For Christianity By CS Lewis**is the argument from desire, which he articulates most fully in his sermon “The Weight of Glory” and in various passages throughout his works. Lewis observes that human beings are marked by a persistent, haunting longing—a sense that something is missing, that we were made for another world. This longing, which he calls “Joy” or “Sehnsucht,” is not the same as ordinary happiness or pleasure. It is a bittersweet ache that arises in response to beauty, nature, music, or even memory.

Lewis argues that this desire cannot be fully satisfied by any finite object. We chase after success, romance, possessions, and experiences, but even when we attain them, the longing remains. This is not, he says, because we have not yet found the right object within the world; it is because the object of our deepest desire is not in the world at all. Every earthly satisfaction is a signpost pointing beyond itself to a reality that can fully satisfy—and that reality, Lewis argues, is God.

Critics sometimes object that the argument from desire proves too much: we can desire things that do not exist, such as the ability to fly or to live forever in a state of perpetual pleasure. Lewis anticipates this objection by distinguishing between natural desires and supernatural ones. A natural desire, such as hunger or thirst, has a corresponding object that can satisfy it. If we experience a desire that nothing in this world can satisfy, it is reasonable to infer that we were designed for another world. As Lewis famously puts it: “If I find in myself a

desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world."

Faith, Reason, and the Modern Mind

One of the most striking features of **The Case For Christianity By CS Lewis**is his insistence that faith and reason are not enemies. Lewis was a rationalist in the best sense: he believed that the human mind, though fallen and limited, is capable of apprehending truth. He rejected the modern tendency to relegate religion to the private realm of feeling or personal preference. For Lewis, Christianity is either true or false, and it is subject to the same standards of evidence and logic as any other claim about reality.

This does not mean that faith is merely the conclusion of a syllogism. Lewis distinguishes between the act of accepting something as true (which he calls "belief") and the act of maintaining that belief in the face of emotional fluctuation or doubt (which he calls "faith"). Faith, in his view, is the virtue that holds onto the truth when our feelings or circumstances tempt us to abandon it. It is not a leap into the dark, but a commitment to walk in the light we have been given.

Lewis also addresses the relationship between reason and imagination. He was convinced that the heart and the mind must work together. Christian truth speaks to the whole person: it can be defended with arguments, but it must also be felt and imagined and lived. This is why Lewis was such a masterful novelist and poet. His fictional works, from *The Chronicles of Narnia* to *The Screwtape Letters*to his science fiction trilogy, engage the imagination in ways that argument alone cannot. They allow readers to experience the truth of Christianity from the inside, rather than merely assenting to it from a distance.

Conclusion: The Enduring Relevance of Lewis's Vision

C.S. Lewis died on November 22, 1963, the same day that Aldous Huxley and John F. Kennedy died, and yet his

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