



DAVID O. HARRISON

A COMPENDIUM OF
C.S. LEWIS CLASSICS
IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

MERE CHRISTIANITY
THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS
SURPRISED BY JOY
THE GREAT DIVORCE
THE PROBLEM OF PAIN
A GRIEF OBSERVED

MERE CHRISTIANITY IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

DAVID O. HARRISON

A COMPENDIUM OF
C.S. LEWIS CLASSICS
IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

MERE CHRISTIANITY

THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

SURPRISED BY JOY

THE GREAT DIVORCE

THE PROBLEM OF PAIN

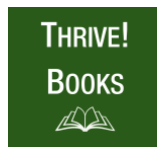
A GRIEF OBSERVED

ISBN: 979- 8270550165

© David O. Harrison 2025

Published By Thrive! Books

thrivebooks.shop





DAVID O. HARRISON

#1 Best Seller

amazon

C. S. Lewis

MERE CHRISTIANITY
IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

MERE CHRISTIANITY IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

DAVID O. HARRISON

C.S. LEWIS

MERE CHRISTIANITY
IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

ISBN: 979-8396258051

© David O. Harrison 2024

Published By Thrive! Books

thrivebooks.shop



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About the Author	9
Dedication	11
Why This Book?	12
C. S. Lewis	14
Introduction by C.S. Lewis	17
Book I - Right and Wrong as a Clue to the Meaning of the Universe	25
The Law of Human Nature	26
Some Objections	30
The Reality of the Law	34
What Lies Behind the Law	36
We Have Cause to Be Uneasy	40
Book II What Christians Believe	44
The Rival Conceptions Of God	45
The Invasion	49
The Shocking Alternative	55
The Perfect Penitent	60
The Practical Conclusion:	65
Book III Christian Behaviour	70
The Three Parts of Morality	71
Social Morality	79
Morality and Psychoanalysis	83
Sexual Morality	87
Christian Marriage	92

Forgiveness	96
The Great Sin	101
Charity	107
Hope.....	110
Faith—Part One.....	114
Faith—Part Two	118

Book IV Beyond Personality: First Steps in the Doctrine of the Trinity122

Making and Begetting.....	123
The Three-Personal God	128
Time and Beyond Time	133
Good Infection.....	136
The Obstinate Toy Soldiers.....	140
Two Notes	144
Let’s Pretend.....	147
Is Christianity Hard Or Easy?	153
Counting The Cost.....	158
Nice People Or New Men	161
The New Men	165
Endnotes and Personal Afterthoughts	172

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Born and raised in England, David Harrison immigrated to Canada in 1973 at the age of 21. Life took a decisive turn when, at 35, he became a follower of Jesus Christ—a shift that would shape everything to come.

For 25 years, David was active at a Brethren Bible Chapel in Scarborough, serving ten of those years as an elder. At the same time, he ran a thriving audiovisual integration business in Toronto, equipping universities, law firms, and financial institutions with cutting-edge communication technology.

In 2006, David launched Bus Stop Bible Studies, a national outreach that placed Scripture-based messages on public transit systems across Canada—it's estimated that those messages were seen more than 1.25 billion times, each offering the hope of God's Word. He also served as Board Chair for Daystar Native Christian Outreach on Manitoulin Island for a decade.

"Retired" in name only, David and his wife Wendy host guests at their award-winning Airbnb in Muskoka, Ontario—recognized as Ontario's Most Hospitable Hosts in both 2021 and 2023. They attend Muskoka Community Church in Port Sydney.

The man who once failed English in school has since discovered a calling he never expected: writing. To date, David has authored ten original titles and published six group study guides. He is also passionately working on a lifelong project to "translate" the entire library of C.S. Lewis into everyday English—seven volumes completed and counting, three of which became Amazon bestsellers. Yet among all his works, he considers FRESH START—CHURCH, GOD'S WAY, to be his most important to date; a heartfelt call for the Church to recapture the simplicity, clarity, and vitality of the early believers.

MERE CHRISTIANITY IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to those whom God has chosen
to make my life complete, my wife Wendy, our
children, Krista and Daniel, our son-in-law Dan, and
our grandchildren Jack, Levi and Sophie Joy

Praise God from whom all blessing flow!

WHY THIS BOOK?

C.S. Lewis, the renowned Professor of English at Oxford University, was a literary giant.

Clive Staples Lewis authored many famous novels including the Chronicles of Narnia series and The Screwtape Letters. The most recent estimate for sales of his books is in excess of 200 million copies.

Lewis was born in 1898 in Belfast, Ireland, while I came into the world fifty-three years later in Worcester Park, England. Lewis endured the horrors of trench warfare at the Somme during World War I. I was conceived six years after the end of World War II. Lewis found solace in Christ at the age of 33, deeply influenced by his dear friend J.R.R. Tolkien and other spiritual companions. Similarly, it wasn't until I reached the age of 35, also influenced by friends, that God broke through my hard, prideful shell and radically changed my life.

In 1973, I embarked on a new chapter by emigrating to Canada. It was there that I encountered the captivating Canadian accent, which I grew fond of during my time working with friends in London. Upon arriving in Canada, I diligently shed my English accent and embraced this "new language" as my own. Sometimes, when we throw a party, I delight in presenting a list of thirty everyday words from my native tongue and watching people try to guess their meanings.

Now here I am, someone who flunked high school English, daring to revise C.S. Lewis' most significant work, which has practically become a sacred text. Why, might you wonder? Let me explain.

When I first read *MERE CHRISTIANITY*, I couldn't help but ponder if the average North American reader could fully grasp the essence of this book without an English-to-"English" dictionary at their side. I even

found myself Googling the meaning of some of Lewis's colloquialisms from the 1940s. Even Lewis acknowledged the shifting nature of language and word usage over time, and I've taken the liberty to present you with an original paragraph of his work, alongside my own "simple English" interpretation. I have also added several footnotes for further clarity.

ORIGINAL TEXT:

The word gentleman originally meant something recognisable; one who had a coat of arms and some landed property. When you called someone "a gentleman" you were not paying him a compliment, but merely stating a fact. If you said he was not "a gentleman" you were not insulting him but giving information.

A gentleman, once it has been spiritualized and refined out of its old coarse, objective sense, means hardly more than a man whom the speaker likes. As a result, gentleman is now a useless word. We had lots of terms of approval already, so it was not needed for that use; on the other hand, if anyone (say, in a historical work) wants to use it in its old sense, he cannot do so without explanations. It has been spoiled for that purpose.

REVISED TEXT:

The word "gentleman" originally had a clear meaning. It referred to someone who had a coat of arms and owned land. When you called someone "a gentleman," you were not complimenting them but stating a fact. If you said someone was not "a gentleman," you were not insulting them but providing information.

A gentleman, once it has been spiritualized and refined beyond its original, objective sense, becomes little more than a person the speaker likes. Consequently, "gentleman" is now a meaningless word. We already had plenty of terms for approval, rendering it unnecessary for that purpose. On the other hand, if someone wishes to use it in its original sense (e.g., in a historical work), they would require explanations because the word has lost its significance.

Please note, I have taken *poetic licence* in a few instances to bring clarity to certain of Lewis's arguments. I hope that this does not diminish the essence of his work in any way.

The motivation behind my effort to rework the original manuscript of *MERE CHRISTIANITY* aligns with what I believe inspired Lewis to write his book in the first place: to help readers discover their ultimate purpose and engage in a personal relationship with the living God.

Despite over seventy years passing since its initial publication, *MERE CHRISTIANITY* continues to grace the best-seller lists, standing the test of time. It's worth noting that the original text is now in the public domain in some countries.

I received the ultimate compliment when a friend of mine read my book, *IF GOD, THEN...*, and told me, "I could hear your voice as I was reading it." With that in mind, I'd like to share a link to an original BBC recording¹ featuring C.S. Lewis. Having his voice in the background while reading can be a truly enriching experience.

If C.S. Lewis and I were able to meet today, I believe we would become fast friends. Both he and I delight in logical arguments, of which Lewis is a master.

Using superscript Roman numerals, I have referenced a few endnotes and afterthoughts.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David Hamis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

¹ bit.ly/cslewisrecording

C. S. LEWIS

C.S. Lewis was an atheist for many years and described his conversion in *SURPRISED BY JOY*: “In the Trinity term of 1929, I gave in and admitted that God was God. Perhaps the most dejected and reluctant convert in all of England.” This experience helped him understand not only apathy but also active unwillingness to accept religion. As a Christian writer, Lewis possessed an exceptionally brilliant and logical mind, and his writing style was lucid and lively. He was unrivaled in his works, which include *THE PROBLEM OF PAIN*, *THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS*, *MERE CHRISTIANITY*, *THE FOUR LOVES*, and the posthumous *PRAYER: LETTERS TO MALCOLM*. In addition to his bestselling works, Lewis also wrote delightful books for children, most notably *THE CHRONICLES OF NARNIA* series, starting with *THE LION THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE*. He also explored science fiction, along with numerous works of literary criticism. His writings have been translated and read by millions of people worldwide. Lewis passed away on November 22, 1963, at his home in Oxford.

MERE CHRISTIANITY IN EVERYDAY ENGLISH

INTRODUCTION BY C.S. LEWIS.

The contents of this book were originally presented on the airwaves and later published in three separate parts: *THE CASE FOR CHRISTIANITY* (1943)², *CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR* (1943), and *BEYOND PERSONALITY* (1945). While preparing the printed versions, I made a few additions to what I had spoken into the microphone but largely preserved the original text. When delivering a radio talk, I believe it should resemble genuine conversation rather than a recitation of an essay. Therefore, in my talks, I used contractions and colloquialisms that I typically employ in everyday discussions. In the printed edition, I maintained this approach by using “don’t” and “we’ve” instead of “do not” and “we have.” Additionally, I italicized words to convey the emphasis I had given them through my voice during the talks.

I now believe that it was a mistake, an undesirable blend of spoken and written art. When speaking, one should use vocal variations for emphasis since the medium naturally lends itself to that method. However, a writer should not rely on italics for the same purpose. A writer has different means of highlighting key words and should utilize them. In this edition, I have expanded contractions and replaced most of the italics by rephrasing the sentences in which they appeared, while preserving the intended “popular” or “familiar” tone. I have also made additions and deletions where I believe I now have a better understanding of certain aspects of my subject compared to ten years ago or where I know that the original version was misunderstood by others.

² [*] Published in England as Broadcast Talks.

I must warn the reader that I provide no guidance for those who are undecided between different Christian denominations. I will not advise whether one should become Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, or Roman Catholic. This omission is deliberate (even the listing I provided is in alphabetical order). My own position is not mysterious. I am an ordinary layperson³ of the Church of England, not particularly “high” or “low,”⁴ or anything else in particular. However, in this book, I am not attempting to convert anyone to my own position.

Since I became a Christian, I have believed that the best, perhaps the only, service I can offer to my non-believing neighbors is to explain and defend the beliefs that have been common to almost all Christians throughout history. I had more than one reason for this belief. Firstly, the questions that divide Christians often involve matters of deep theology or ecclesiastical history that should only be addressed by true experts. I would be out of my depth in such discussions and would need help myself rather than being able to assist others. Secondly, it seems that discussing these disputed points does not tend to attract outsiders to the Christian faith. As long as we write and talk about these disagreements, we are more likely to discourage them from joining any Christian community rather than drawing them in. Our divisions should only be discussed in the presence of those who have already come to believe in one God and that Jesus Christ is His only Son. Lastly, I had the impression that many more talented authors were already engaged in such controversial matters rather than defending what Baxter refers to as “mere” Christianity. The area where I believed I could be of greatest service also seemed to be the thinnest. And so, I naturally gravitated towards it.

To the best of my knowledge, these were my only motives, and I would appreciate it if people would not make fanciful assumptions based on

³ Layperson: a person without professional or specialized knowledge in a particular subject.

⁴ anglican.ca/ask/faq/high-low-church/

my silence regarding certain disputed matters. For instance, such silence does not necessarily mean that I am sitting on the fence. Sometimes I am, as there are questions among Christians to which I do not have the answers. There are even some questions to which I may never know the answer. Even in a better world, if I were to ask them, I might receive a response similar to that given to a greater questioner: "What is that to you? Follow Me."⁵ However, there are other questions where I clearly take a position but choose not to express it. I did not write this book to explain "my religion" but to elucidate "mere" Christianity, which is what it is and has been long before my time, whether I like it or not.

Some people may draw unwarranted conclusions from the fact that I do not say more about the Blessed Virgin Mary beyond asserting the Virgin Birth of Christ. However, isn't the reason for this omission obvious? Saying more would immediately plunge me into highly controversial territory. And no controversy among Christians needs to be handled with as much delicacy as this one. Roman Catholic beliefs on this subject are not only fervently held, as with any sincere religious belief, but also defended with a sense of honor and chivalry that one feels when the honor of their mother or beloved is at stake.

It is extremely difficult to dissent from these beliefs without appearing not only a heretic⁶ but also a cad⁷. Likewise, the opposing Protestant beliefs on this subject stir emotions that touch the very core of Monotheism. Radical Protestants believe that the distinction between the Creator and the creature, no matter how holy, is jeopardized and that Polytheism has resurfaced. Thus, it is challenging to express dissent in a way that does not make one seem worse than a heretic – an idolater, a pagan. If any topic could undermine a book about "mere" Christianity

⁵ John 21:22

⁶ Heretic: one whose beliefs or opinions are contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine.

⁷ Cad: a man who behaves dishonorably, especially toward a woman.

and render it unhelpful to those who do not yet believe that the Virgin's son is God, it is surely this one.

Interestingly, one cannot conclude from my silence on disputed points whether I consider them important or unimportant. That in itself, is a disputed point among Christians. Disagreements arise about the significance of these disagreements. When two Christians of different denominations engage in arguments, it usually doesn't take long for one to question whether such-and-such a point "really matters," and the other responds, "Matter? Why, it's absolutely essential."

I mention all of this to clarify the type of book I have attempted to write, not to conceal or evade responsibility for my own beliefs. As I mentioned earlier, there is no secret about my beliefs. To quote Uncle Toby⁸, "They are written in the Common-Prayer Book."

The danger was that I might present as common Christianity something that was specific to the Church of England or, worse yet, specific to myself. To guard against this, I sent the original script of what is now *BOOK II* to four clergymen (Anglican, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic) and requested their criticism. The Methodist felt that I hadn't discussed Faith enough, and the Roman Catholic felt that I had gone too far in downplaying the importance of theories in explaining the Atonement. However, all five of us were in agreement. I did not subject the remaining books to similar scrutiny since any differences would arise among individual Christians or schools of thought rather than between denominations.

Based on reviews and the numerous letters I have received, it seems that the book, despite its flaws, has successfully presented an agreed-upon, common, central, or "mere" Christianity. In this way, it may help dispel the notion that omitting the disputed points leaves only a vague and

⁸ Uncle Toby is a fictional character created by the Irish author Jonathan Swift in his novel *"Tristram Shandy."* The character of Uncle Toby appears in the book as a kind-hearted and benevolent military officer who is known for his gentle and sentimental nature.

lifeless H.C.F.⁹ The H.C.F. proves to be not only positive but also potent, distinguishing itself from all non-Christian beliefs by a chasm that the worst divisions within Christendom cannot compare to.

While I may not have directly aided the cause of reunion, I have perhaps made it clear why we should seek unity. I have encountered little of the fabled *odium theologicum*¹⁰ from convinced members of different communions. Hostility has mainly come from individuals on the fringes, both within and outside the Church of England, who do not precisely align themselves with any particular communion¹¹. I find this somewhat comforting. It is at the core of each communion, where its most devoted followers reside, that every communion is closest in spirit to every other, if not in doctrine. This suggests that at the center of each communion, there is something—or Someone—who, despite diverging beliefs and temperaments, speaks with the same voice. This covers my omissions on doctrine.

In *BOOK III*, which deals with morals, I have also chosen not to address certain matters, but for a different reason. Ever since I served as an infantryman in the First World War, I have harbored a strong aversion to those who, safe and comfortable, issue exhortations to those on the front line. As a result, I am reluctant to speak extensively about temptations to which I myself am not exposed. No man is tempted by every sin, and the inclination that drives men to gamble is absent from my nature. Undoubtedly, this deficiency comes at the cost of lacking some virtue associated with it. Therefore, I do not consider myself qualified to offer advice on permissible and impermissible gambling, if

⁹ HCF: Highest Common Factor.

¹⁰ *Odium theologicum*: bitterness developed during or typical of controversy about religion and giving rise to an unyielding refusal to continue a discussion.

¹¹ (In this instance) Communion can describe a sense of sharing, fellowship, or intimate connection with others, often based on common beliefs, experiences, or interests. It signifies a close bond or unity among individuals or a group.

there is such a thing, as I do not claim to possess that knowledge. I have also refrained from discussing birth control. I am neither a woman, nor a married man, nor a priest. I did not believe it was my place to take a definitive stance on matters concerning pains, dangers, and expenses that I am shielded from, as I do not hold a pastoral position that would compel me to do so.

Deeper objections may arise – and have been expressed – against my use of the word Christian to denote someone who accepts the common doctrines of Christianity. People ask, “Who are you to decide who is and who is not a Christian?” or “Isn’t it possible for someone who cannot believe these doctrines to be more truly a Christian, closer to the spirit of Christ, than those who do?” In one sense, this objection is justified, charitable, spiritual, and sensitive. It possesses every admirable quality except usefulness. We simply cannot use language as these objectors propose without disastrous consequences. I will illustrate this with the history of another, much less significant, word.

The word “gentleman” originally had a clear meaning. It referred to someone who had a coat of arms and owned land. When you called someone “a gentleman,” you were not complimenting them but stating a fact. If you said someone was not “a gentleman,” you were not insulting them but providing information.

It was not contradictory to say that John was a liar and a gentleman, just as it is not contradictory today to say that James is a fool and holds a Master’s Degree. However, some people came along – rightly, charitably, spiritually, sensitively – suggesting that the important aspect of being a gentleman is not the coat of arms and land, but rather behavior. They argued that the true gentleman is one who conducts himself in a manner befitting a gentleman. In that sense, Edward is considered far more genuinely a gentleman than John.

Their intentions were good. Honorable, courteous, and brave behavior is undoubtedly superior to owning a coat of arms. However, they are not the same thing. What’s more, not everyone agrees on this point. Using the term “gentleman” in this new, refined sense becomes a way of

praising someone rather than providing information about them. Denying that someone is “a gentleman” becomes an insult. When a word ceases to describe and becomes solely a term of praise, it no longer conveys factual information about the object; it only reveals the speaker’s opinion of that object (e.g., calling a meal “nice”¹² only indicates that the speaker enjoyed it).

A gentleman, once it has been spiritualized and refined beyond its original, objective sense, becomes little more than a person the speaker likes. Consequently, “gentleman” is now a meaningless word. We already had plenty of terms for approval, rendering it unnecessary for that purpose. On the other hand, if someone wishes to use it in its original sense (e.g., in a historical work), they would require explanations because the word has lost its significance.

If we allow people to spiritualize and refine, or as they might say, “deepen,” the meaning of the word Christian, it, too, will rapidly become meaningless.

Christians themselves will no longer be able to apply it to anyone. It is not our place to determine who, in the deepest sense, is or is not aligned with the spirit of Christ. We cannot see into people’s hearts, and we are forbidden from passing judgment. Using a word that we can never apply effectively renders it useless. Unbelievers, on the other hand, will happily adopt the word in its refined sense as a term of praise. Calling someone a Christian will simply mean that they are deemed a good person. However, this usage adds no value to the language since we already have the word “good.” Consequently, the word Christian will have lost any meaningful purpose it might have served.

¹² In the late 13c., *nice* meant “foolish, ignorant, frivolous, senseless,” from Old French *nice* (12c.) “careless, clumsy; weak; poor, needy; simple, stupid, silly, foolish. By 1926, *nice* was said to be “too great a favorite with the ladies, who have charmed out of it all its individuality and converted it into a mere diffuser of vague and mild agreeableness.” [Fowler]

Therefore, we must adhere to the original, obvious meaning of the word. The term Christians was first used in Antioch (Acts 11:26) to refer to “the disciples,” those who accepted the teachings of the apostles. It is not restricted to those who fully embodied those teachings. It is not extended to those who, in a refined, spiritual, inward sense, are “far closer to the spirit of Christ” than some of the less exemplary disciples. This distinction is not a theological or moral one. It simply concerns using words that everyone can understand. When someone who accepts Christian doctrine lives in a manner unworthy of it, it is far clearer to say that they are a bad Christian rather than to deny their Christianity altogether.

I hope no reader assumes that “mere” Christianity is presented here as an alternative to the creeds of existing denominations. It is more akin to a hallway with doors leading to various rooms. If I can guide anyone into that hallway, I will have accomplished my objective. However, it is in the rooms themselves, not the hallway, that one finds warmth, chairs, and meals. The hallway is a place to wait, a place from which to explore the different doors, not a place to settle. In this regard, even the worst room (whichever that may be) is preferable.

It is true that some may find themselves waiting in the hallway for an extended period, while others quickly discern which door they must knock on. I do not know the reason for this discrepancy, but I am certain that God does not keep anyone waiting unless He sees it as beneficial. When you finally enter your room, you will discover that the long wait has conferred some form of good upon you, which you would not have gained otherwise. Nevertheless, you must regard it as waiting, not as setting up camp. Continue to pray for enlightenment, and even in the hallway, begin to abide by the rules that apply throughout the house. Most importantly, inquire as to which door is the true one – not which door pleases you most due to its appearance and decorations.

In simple terms, the question should never be, “Do I like this type of service?” Instead, it should be, “Are these doctrines true? Is holiness present here? Does my conscience draw me towards this? Is my

hesitation to knock on this door rooted in pride, personal preference, or a mere dislike of the doorkeeper?"

Once you have reached your own room, be kind to those who have chosen different doors and those who remain in the hallway. If they are mistaken, they need your prayers even more. And if they are your enemies, you are under orders to pray for them. This is one of the rules that applies throughout the entire house.

**BOOK I - RIGHT AND WRONG AS A CLUE
TO THE MEANING OF THE UNIVERSE**

THE LAW OF HUMAN NATURE

Everyone has heard folks quarrelling. Sometimes it sounds funny, sometimes it's simply unpleasant; but regardless of how it sounds, I believe we can glean something quite significant from listening to what they're saying. They'll say things like: "How'd you like it if someone did the same to you?" – "That's my seat, I was here first" – "Leave him be, he's not bothering you" – "Why should you be the first to barge in?" – "Give me a piece of your orange, I gave you a piece of mine" – "Come on, you promised." Every day, people utter such phrases, the educated and the uneducated, children and adults alike. What piques my interest about these remarks is that the individual making them isn't just stating their displeasure with the other's behaviour. They're invoking a certain standard of behaviour that they expect the other to recognise. The other person rarely retorts: "To hell with your standard." They'll usually attempt to argue that their actions don't really contradict the standard, or if they do, there's a special exception. They'll pretend there's a specific reason in this particular instance that the person who nabbed the seat first should not keep it, or that things were completely different when they were handed a piece of orange, or that an unexpected event exempts them from keeping their promise. It appears, in fact, as though both parties are mindful of some sort of Law or Rule concerning fair play, decent behaviour, morality, or whatever else you want to call it, about which they genuinely concur. And they do. If they didn't, they might resort to animalistic fighting, but they wouldn't be able to quarrel in the distinctly human sense. Quarrelling entails attempting to demonstrate that the other person is in the wrong. This endeavour would make no sense unless you and they had some sort of consensus on what constitutes Right and Wrong, just

like it would make no sense to claim that a soccer player committed a foul without an agreed-upon set of soccer rules.

The Law or Rule about Right and Wrong used to be referred to as the Law of Nature. Nowadays, when we discuss the “laws of nature”, we typically refer to things like gravitation, heredity¹³, or chemical laws. But when older thinkers labelled the Law of Right and Wrong “the Law of Nature,” they were genuinely referring to the Law of Human Nature. The idea was that, just as all objects are governed by the law of gravitation and living organisms by biological laws, so too is the creature known as man subject to his own law—albeit with one significant difference: a physical body doesn’t have a choice whether to obey the law of gravitation or not, but a man or woman can choose either to obey the Law of Human Nature or to flout it.

We can express this in a different way. Every man is constantly subjected to multiple sets of laws, but there’s only one of these which he can freely disregard. As a physical body, he’s subjected to gravity and cannot defy it; if you leave him unsupported in mid-air, he has as little choice about falling as a stone does. As a living organism, he’s subjected to various biological laws, which he can’t disobey any more than an animal can. That is to say, he can’t disobey those laws which he shares with other entities; but the law unique to his human nature, the law he doesn’t share with animals, plants, or inorganic things, is the one he can disobey if he so chooses.

This law was called the Law of Nature because it was believed that everyone knew it by nature and didn’t need to be taught it. They didn’t mean, of course, that you couldn’t find a lone individual here and there who didn’t know it, just like you can find a few folks who are colour-blind or have no musical ear. But considering the human race as a whole, they believed that the concept of decent behaviour was evident to

¹³ genetics

everyone. And I reckon they were right. If they weren't, then all the things we've said about the war¹⁴ would be nonsense. What's the point

¹⁴ Lewis' 'talks' were broadcast during the darkest days of World War Two.