

Mere Christianity

Wednesday Bible Study – Week 10
Our Savior Lutheran Church & School, Lansing, MI

Book 4 – Beyond Personality: Or First Steps in the Doctrine of the Trinity

Book 4 – Chapter 6 – Two Notes

God did not want to make a world of mere automata =

Can we really apply the words “could have” to God?

The whole human race is, in a sense, one thing – one huge organism, like a tree, and yet individual differences matter and individuals are real people. (think of St. Paul’s one body many members analogy)

If you want everyone to be like you, you become a _____.

If you forget we belong to the same organism, we become an _____.

A Christian should be neither.

Book 4 – Chapter 7 – Let’s Pretend

What difference does all this theology make?

When we pray the Lord’s Prayer, we are dressing up as (pretending to be) _____.

Bad pretending is when pretense is there but not the real thing. You pretend to help someone, but then you don’t.

Good pretending is when pretense leads to the real thing. You put on a friendly face to someone although you are not particularly feeling friendly.

When we ‘dress up as Christ’ or pretend to be Him, the pretense becomes reality!

This is more than your conscience. You are no longer thinking about right and wrong, but rather you are catching the ‘good infection’ from a Person.

The ‘Good Infection’ can even be carried by those who don’t have it! Have you seen this?

We see it in others, but must go on to recognize the real _____.

Two things happen.

1. We are less concerned with what we do and more with what we _____.

“Apparently the rats of resentment and vindictiveness are always there in the cellar of my soul.” p.

2. In reality, of course, it is God who does _____.

Chapter 8 – Is Christianity Hard or Easy?

If all we have is morality, we will begrudgingly try to be good for the most part. But two things will happen.

1. We will give up, because it's too hard.
2. We become very unhappy in trying to be good, because it's so hard.

The Christian way is harder – and easier. Read p.

“What we have been told is how we men can be drawn into Christ – can become part of that wonderful present which the young Prince of the universe wants to offer to His Father – that present which is Himself and therefore us in Him. It is the only thing we were made for. And there are strange, exciting hints in the Bible that when we are drawn in, a great many other things in Nature will begin to come right. The bad dream will be over: it will be morning.”

Chapter 9 – Counting the Cost

You're going to get more from God than you even want (like the dentist?). You want Him to deal with a part of your life – He's going to give you the full treatment!

George MacDonald quote, “God is easy to please, hard to satisfy” like a father pleased when his little son takes a few steps, but would not be satisfied with that until there is a manly walk.

We might think – “I never expected to be a saint, I only wanted to be a decent, ordinary chap.” And we imagine when we say this that we are being humble. But this is the fatal mistake. Of course we never wanted, and never asked, to be made into the sort of creatures He is going to make us into. But the question is not what we intended ourselves to be, but what He intended us to be when He made us.”

This is why we must not be surprised if we are in for a rough time...

Chapter 10 – Nice People or New Men

It is true that Christians should seem ‘nicer’ than non-Christians, and that a conversion to Christianity should make a noticeable difference in our lives. Our actions are part of our witness to the world (and our bad actions a detriment to that witness).

However, when broadly applied, the world does not fit neatly into 100% Christian part and 100% non-Christian parts.

1. There are people slowly ceasing to be Christians, but still have the name.
2. There are people slowly becoming Christians, but without the name.

And all this gets mixed in together. Reality is more complicated. Consequently, it's not much use to make judgements about Christians and non-Christians in the mass.

Even between two Christians, you cannot compare. It only matters how Christ has changed their lives.

Warning – if you are a nice person – if virtue comes easily to you – beware!

No class for two weeks (Spring Break & Holy Week) Bible Study resumes April 12! Titus Study.