**Miracles By C.S. Lewis**

**Flow of the Argument**

**Chapter 1:**
I. The Big Idea: Before we can argue for Miracles, we must answer the philosophical question as to whether miracles can exist.
   a. They either do exist or they do not.
   b. If they do exist, we must also ask if they are likely or not.
II. Flow of Reasoning:
   a. What is your presupposition about miracles?
      1. If you don’t believe they exist, even if you are confronted by one you will explain it away.
      2. If you believe that they are possible, but unlikely, you will also explain them away even if confronted by one.
   b. Because historical data is recorded by the observation of people with presuppositions, historical inquiry cannot prove the miraculous unless the initial philosophical question is answered.

**Chapter 2:**
I. The Big Idea: Defining the terms Miracle, Naturalism, and Supernaturalism.
   a. Miracle: “an interference with Nature by supernatural power” (5)
   b. Naturalist: Those who believe that nothing but nature exists (5-6)
   c. Supernaturalist: Those who believe that there exists something in addition to nature that is outside of nature (6)
II. Flow of Reasoning:
   a. Given the broad definition of a miracle, the naturalist must, by definition, deny that miracles are possible
   b. The Supernaturalist accepts the possibility of miracles by Lewis’ definition, though the supernaturalist does not necessarily think that miracles are probable.
   c. For the naturalist, nature must be the “whole show” and include whatever there is.
   d. What is “nature” or “the natural state”?
      1. the state that something would be in without outside interference
         i. the dog would be unkempt and have fleas
         ii. the wilderness would not have roads or houses in it
         iii. “The natural is what springs up, or comes forth, or arrives, or goes on, of its own accord: the given, what is there already: the spontaneous, the unintended, the unsolicited.” (7)
      2. As everything must be explainable in terms of the whole system
         i. nature must be cause and effect
         ii. any spontaneity and originality is reserved for the whole
         iii. Nature exists in its own right with nothing outside of it
         iv. Nature is independent and depends on nothing.
   e. The Supernaturalist
      1. Agrees with the naturalist that there must be something that exists in its
own right
2. this self-existing reference is the “Starting point for all explanations”
3. Supernaturalist does not identify this self-existing entity with nature, and nature is seen as being derivative from that one thing
   i. “The one basic Thing has caused all other things to be. It exists on its own; they exist because it exists. They will cease to exist if it ever ceases to maintain them in existence; they will be altered if it ever alters them.” (9)

f. the God of the naturalist
   1. a naturalist need not be an atheist if the naturalist’s god is understood to be within or part of nature, much like the gods of Ancient Greece and Rome or the Gnostic perspective
   2. the naturalist cannot accept a god who is outside of nature or one who made nature

g. the Naturalist view is a view that all things exist within the framework of nature, the supernaturalist holds that God created the framework within which nature operates

h. the possibility of a plurality of “Natures” as long as they are not interconnected in any way, nor do they influence one another.
i. a speculative view of a plurality of natures opens up two kinds of miracles
   1. God bringing two natures together for a time
   2. God interfering with one or both natures

Chapter 3:
I. The Big Idea: Naturalism rules out reasoning.
II. Flow of Reasoning:
   a. By definition, Naturalism must be explainable in terms of the whole system—no heeltaps
   b. Anything found outside of the system ruins the naturalistic argument
   c. This rejects science by statistics—everything must be calculable
      i. “The movement of one unit is incalculable, just as the result of tossing a coin once is incalculable: the majority movement of a billion units can however be predicted, just as, if you tossed a coin a billion times, you could predict a nearly equal number of heads and tails. Now it will be noticed that if this theory is true we have really admitted something other than Nature. If the movements of the individual units are events ‘on their own,’ events which do not interlock with all other events, then these movements are not part of Nature.” (19)
   d. The knowledge we have of any information is observation + inference, thus all possible knowledge depends on the validity of reasoning.
      i. our observation demands that we recognize something outside of ourselves
      ii. when we recognize that which is outside of ourselves, then we are reasoning
      iii. “It follows that no account of the universe can be true unless that account leaves it possible for our thinking to be real insight. A
e. If nature is explainable in terms of the whole system, it must, by definition, imply a cause & effect universe—cause and effect all of the way back to the beginning

f. In this view, then, reasoning must be nothing more than “one link in a causal chain which stretches back to the beginning and forward to the end of time.” (24)

g. Thus, mental events are caused by previous mental events and nothing more—“knowledge” plays no role in the progression of these mental events—also mental events came into being in the same evolutionary way that physical events came into being—mental events to the naturalist, then are nothing more than responses to stimuli.

h. Yet, the experience that things are always connected (fire burns you) is only of animal behavior, Reason comes into play when you infer something from the events

i. Nature cannot show how one turns sub-rational, animal instinct, into rational thought, thus a break in the chain occurs

j. Knowing is more than mere remembering what happened last time, but of inferring that what happened in the past will continue to take place in the future. Inference, then is determined by genuine knowledge, not by cause and effect.

k. Inference and reason are the means by which we know and understand nature and how we explain nature and cannot be explained by nature

Chapter 4:
I. The Big Idea: Acts of reasoning are not interlocked in the system of Nature as all other items are interlocked with one another.

II. Flow of Reasoning:
   a. Reasoning is not interlocked with the system of Nature but is connected
      1. the understanding of a machine is connected with the machine but not in the same way that the parts of the machine are connected with each other
      2. My understanding of the machine is outside of the functioning of the machine
   b. Reasoning affects the cause-effect process, but it is a one-way street
      1. Nature is powerless to produce rational thought
      2. Rational thought produces actions which change nature
         i. “Nature can only raid reason to kill; but Reason can invade nature to take prisoners and even to colonize” (39)
         ii. “The walls, ceiling, and furniture, the book, your own washed
hands and cut fingernails, bears witness to the colonization of Nature by reason: for none of this matter would have been in these states if Nature had her way.” (39)

c. Asymmetrical relationship (A yields B but B does not yield A)
   1. (A) is the father of (B), the reciprocal cannot be said of (B) to (A)

d. Does not follow that rational thought exists absolutely on its own (rational thought is not God)
   1. As above, rationality would become irrationality if it is dependent on nature
   2. Yet, my reason stops at night when I go to sleep or when I am unconscious
   3. Reason must come from something outside of nature that also exhibits reason

e. Objection:
   1. Rather, then of saying, “I reason,” should we not say, “God reasons through us.”
   2. “Reasoning does not happen to us; we do it.” (43)
   3. We also have false conclusions, which would be impossible if our reasoning were only God reasoning through us.

f. Objection:
   1. Could this greater reasoning, be a part of nature, having emerged or evolved as we do?
   2. Nature, by definition, cannot beget reasoning, thus that which begets our reasoning must be outside of nature

Chapter 5:
I. The Big Idea:
   a. Moral arguments are a product of reasoning and not merely a result of societal influences

II. The Flow of Reasoning:
   a. Many suggest that “morals” are merely a result of conditioning by society
   b. but “ought”, “this is good” and “this is evil” are value statements, not preferences
   c. “If the fact that men have such ideas as ought and ought not at all can be fully explained by irrational and non-moral causes, then those ideas are an illusion” (56)
   d. Yet, “A moment after they have admitted that good and evil are illusions, you will find them exhorting us to work for posterity, to educate, revolutionize, liquidate, live and die for the good of the human race.” (57)
   e. the naturalist is inconsistent—his philosophy does not match his living
   f. “If we are to continue to make moral judgments, then we must believe that the conscience of man is not a product of nature.” (60)

Chapter 6:
I. Big Idea:
   a. Our reasoning is done through the medium of the brain much like we observe
II. Flow of Reasoning:
   a. if the brain is impaired our reasoning is impaired (though the opposite does not follow)
   b. When we look at a garden through a window, we are not cognizant of the window unless we intentionally look at it or it is distorting our field of vision
   c. “The naturalists have been engaged in thinking about nature. They have not attended to the fact that they were thinking.” (65)
   d. The implication is that we ought to discover the looking glass through which we view nature and understand his character

Chapter 7:
I. Big Idea:
   a. Does nature, by its very nature, exclude the miraculous?
II. Flow of Reasoning:
   a. People of old believed in miracles because they were uneducated and knew no better
      1. Joseph understood that virgins did not get pregnant, which is why he went to send her away
      2. Bible presents these things as miracles, not as the norm
   b. People of old did not have good enough science to know better
      1. Ptolemy taught that earth was point with no magnitude in comparison to sun 1700 years ago
      2. Pythagoras (525 BC) calculated
         i. earth was round
         ii. earth revolved around a “Central Fire” (though the central fire was not the sun, and only reflected the sun’s light.
         iii. popularized base 10 mathematics
   c. Thus, there is no reason to write off miracles because of our chronological snobbery

Chapter 8:
I. The Big Idea
   a. Recognizing that there are regular laws within nature, How does God interact?
II. Flow of Reasoning
   a. 3 conceptions on the “Laws of Nature”
      1. They are “brute facts” known only by observation
         i. but observation cannot give us knowledge—knowledge requires inference (reasoning)
      2. They are applications of the law of averages
i. yet, if the Naturalist is correct, there must be no law of averages and all must be predictable down to the smallest element

3. Fundamental laws of Physics are “necessary truths”
   i. they provide meaning to the system of nature

b. Thus, God’s interaction is an interaction that in itself is a “cause” and effects come from it—God as a “cause” from which effects come

1. “a miracle is emphatically not an event without cause or without results. Its cause is the activity of God: its results follow according to the Natural law.” (95)

Chapter 9:
I. The Big Idea
   a. Recognizing a God, must he be the kind that acts and is nature any less real as a result?

II. Flow of Reasoning
   a. this line of objection (that God would not wish to act) is a purely emotional one
   b. to say nature is unreal because a God has created her is nonsense
   c. Every aspect of nature expresses the character of nature that God wished her to express

Chapter 10:
I. The Big Idea
   a. We must understand the nature of this Supernatural God through Analogy

II. Flow of reasoning
   a. we cannot understand many finite things but through analogy (imagining London)—analogies being imperfect notions
   b. Yet even an imperfect analogy does not invalidate the results (horrid red things)
   c. 3 principles
      1. Thought is distinct from the imagination that accompanies it
      2. thought may be sound even when false images accompany it
      3. anyone who talks of that which cannot be seen, touched, or heard must inevitably speak of them as if they could be seen, touched, or heard (analogy)

   d. We must then use analogy to explain the supernatural, not to explain it away