



C·S· LEWIS INSTITUTE

Reflections

January 2017 – *THE SEEING EYE*

In February 1963, C.S. Lewis published an essay exploring a number of topics related to space-travel, including the idea of finding God in space. He wrote:

The Russians, I am told, report that they have not found God in outer space... Looking for God—or Heaven—by exploring space is like reading or seeing all Shakespeare's plays in the hope that you will find Shakespeare as one of the characters or Stratford as one of the places. Shakespeare is in one sense present at every moment in every play. But he is never present in the same way as Falstaff or Lady Macbeth. Nor is he diffused through the play like a gas...

Now of course this is only an analogy. I am not suggesting at all that the existence of God is as easily established as the existence of Shakespeare. My point is that, if God does exist, He is related to the universe more as an author is related to a play than as one object in the universe is related to another.

If God created the universe, He created space-time, which is to the universe as the metre is to a poem or the key is to music. To look for Him as one item within the framework which He Himself invented is nonsensical...

How, then, it may be asked, can we either reach or avoid Him?... in our own time and place, [avoiding God] is extremely easy. Avoid silence, avoid solitude, avoid any train of thought that leads off the beaten track. Concentrate on money, sex, status, health and (above all) on your own grievances. Keep the radio on. Live in a crowd. Use plenty of sedation. If you must read books, select them very carefully. But you'd be safer to stick to the papers. You'll find the advertisements helpful; especially those with a sexy or a snobbish appeal.

About the reaching, I am a far less reliable guide. This is because I never had the experience of looking for God. It was the other way round; He was the hunter (or so it seemed to me) and I was the deer...

Space-travel really has nothing to do with the matter. To some, God is discoverable everywhere; to others, nowhere. Those who do not find Him on earth are unlikely to find Him in space. (Hang it all, we're in space already; every year we go a huge circular tour in space.) But send a saint up in a spaceship and he'll find God in space as he found God on earth. Much depends on the seeing eye.¹



If we are Christians, we know and are known by the God who created the universe and have many reasons to give Him thanks. On a cautionary note, however, Lewis's insight into how easy it is to avoid God has applicability to Christians as well as non-believers. Christians can avoid God by living their lives concentrating on money, sex, status and the like, and consequently remain spiritually immature and experience little of the transforming power of Christ. Let us keep our focus on Jesus as Lord and Savior, and pursue a life of holiness and righteousness.

"The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork."

PSALM 19:1 (ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, *The Seeing Eye*, from *Christian Reflections*, edited by Walter Hooper, Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1995, pp. 167-169, 171.