

JULY 2006 — *Better Things Ahead*

“There will come a day for all of us when ‘it is finished,’” said C.S. Lewis. He was referring, of course, to death. Few people today wish to think or speak of death. It’s a morbid idea. Yet for the follower of Christ, death need not be the depressing idea that many imagine.

In a letter to a friend, C.S. Lewis asks, “What a state have we got into when we can’t say ‘I’ll be happy when God calls me’ without being afraid one will be thought ‘morbid’. After all, St. Paul said just the same. If we really believe what we say we believe—if we really think that home is elsewhere and this life is a ‘wandering to find home’, why should we not look forward to the arrival. There are, aren’t there, only three things we can do about death: to desire it, to fear it, or to ignore it. The third alternative, which is the one the modern world calls ‘healthy’ is surely the most uneasy and precarious of all.”<sup>1</sup>

Sometime later, Lewis said this to the same friend, who was in declining health: “What is there to be afraid of? You have long attempted (and none of us does more) a Christian life. Your sins are confessed and absolved. Has this world been so kind to you that you should leave it with regret? There are better things ahead than any we leave behind.”<sup>2</sup>

As we face the reality of our own death, we do well to remember Lewis’s words, “There are better things ahead than any we leave behind.” Lewis captures this very poignantly in the final scene of *The Last Battle*:

“There *was* a real railway accident,” said Aslan softly. “Your father and mother and all of you are—as you used to call it in the Shadowlands—dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream has ended: this is the morning.”

And as He spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.<sup>3</sup>

This perspective will help us to live our lives with a joyful, wholehearted commitment to the God who loves us and whom we will soon meet.

*For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain.*

PHILIPPIANS 1:21 NIV

<sup>1</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Letters to an American Lady* (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1967), pp. 83-84.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 117.

<sup>3</sup> C.S. Lewis, *The Chronicles of Narnia: The Last Battle* (New York: HarperCollins, 1956), pp. 210-211.