



C·S· LEWIS INSTITUTE

Reflections

August 2016 – **THE IMPLICATIONS OF GOD'S LOVE**

When people hear that God loves them, they may assume this means He is content with the way they are. As C.S. Lewis explains in *The Problem of Pain*, however, the opposite is true:

When Christianity says that God *loves* man, it means that God loves man: not that He has some 'disinterested' ... concern for our welfare, but that, in awful and surprising truth, we are the objects of His love. You asked for a loving God: you have one. The great spirit you so lightly invoked, the 'lord of terrible aspect', is present: not a senile benevolence that drowsily wishes you to be happy in your own way, not the cold philanthropy of a conscientious magistrate, nor the care of a host who feels responsible for the comfort of his guests, but the consuming fire Himself, the Love that made the worlds, persistent as the artist's love for his work and despotic as a man's love for a dog, provident and venerable as a father's love for a child, jealous, inexorable, exacting as love between the sexes. How this should be, I do not know: it passes reason to explain why any creatures, not to say creatures such as we, should have a value so prodigious in their Creator's eyes. It is certainly a burden of glory not only beyond our deserts but also, except in rare moments of grace, beyond our desiring...



Man does not exist for his own sake. 'Thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.'¹ We were made not primarily that we may love God (though we were made for that too) but that God may love us, that we may become objects in which the Divine love may rest 'well pleased'. To ask that God's love should be content with us as we are is to ask that God should cease to be God: because He is what He is, His love must, in the nature of things, be impeded and repelled by certain stains in our present character, and because He already loves us He must labour to make us lovable... What we would here and now call our 'happiness' is not the end God chiefly has in view: but when we are such as He can love without impediment, we shall in fact be happy.²

God loves us not because we are loveable but because He is love. And because He is love, He can only will what is best for us, which is to be transformed into a being of holy love like Himself. He will settle for nothing less. As we meditate on God's love for us, especially in the cross of Christ, our love for God and our neighbor will increase, and our hearts will become more and more like God's — filled with love.

**"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.
The old has passed away; behold, the new has come."
2 CORINTHIANS 5:17 (ESV)**

¹ Rev. 4:11.

² C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (Touchstone: New York, 1996), pp. 41-43.