



C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE

Reflections

January 2018 – WE LOVE THIS WORLD EVEN BETTER

In the late 1940's, C.S. Lewis wrote a short essay at the request of the Medical Missionaries of Mary who founded Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital at Drogheda, Ireland. In the essay, Lewis discusses the seeming paradox between the Christian focus on the next life, while, as a matter of historical fact, a person would find that Christianity had:

been the agent which preserved such secular civilization as survived the fall of the Roman Empire; that to it Europe owes the salvation, in those perilous ages, of civilized agriculture, architecture, laws, and literacy itself... this same religion has always been healing the sick and caring for the poor; ... has, more than any other blessed marriage; and ... arts and philosophy tend to flourish in its neighbourhood.¹

A portion of Lewis's discussion of this paradox follows.

The world, knowing how all our real investments are beyond the grave, might expect us to be less concerned than other people who go in for what is called Higher Thought and tell us that 'death doesn't matter'; but we 'are not high minded,' and we follow one who stood and wept at the grave of Lazarus – not surely, because He was grieved that Mary and Martha wept, and sorrowed for their lack of faith (though some thus interpret) but because death, the punishment of sin, is even more horrible in His eyes than in ours. The nature which He had created as God, the nature which He had assumed as man, lay there before Him in its ignominy; a foul smell, food for worms. Though He was to revive it a moment later, He wept at the shame; if I may here quote a writer of my own communion, 'I am not so much afraid of death as ashamed of it.' And that brings us again to the paradox. Of all men, we hope most of death; yet nothing will reconcile us to – well, its *unnaturalness*. We know that we were not made for it; we know how it crept into our destiny as an intruder; and we know who has defeated it. Because Our Lord is risen we know that on one level it is an enemy already disarmed; but because we know that the natural level also is God's creation we cannot cease to fight against the death which mars it, as against all those other blemishes upon it, against pain and poverty, barbarism and ignorance. Because we love something else more than this world we love even this world better than those who know no other.²

As Christians, it is only natural that we will want to follow His example and feed the hungry, heal the sick, care for the poor, share the Gospel with others, and do other good works. And as we grow in Christ, our lives will become more fruitful. Have you considered whether God might be calling you to do something in one or more of these areas?

"For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

EPHESIANS 2:10 (ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, "Some Thoughts" in *God in the Dock* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1998), 147.

² Ibid., 149-150 (footnotes omitted).

