



C.S. LEWIS INSTITUTE

Reflections

February 2018 – **THE CHANGE I MOST NEED TO UNDERGO**

In one of the last chapters of *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis discusses one of the key themes of the New Testament:

And now we begin to see what it is that the New Testament is always talking about. It talks about Christians “being born again”; it talks about them “putting on Christ”; about Christ “being formed in us”; about our coming to “have the mind of Christ.”

Put right out of your head the idea that these are only fancy ways of saying that Christians are to read what Christ said and try to carry it out — as a man may read what Plato or Marx said and try to carry it out. They mean something much more than that. They mean that a real Person, Christ, here and now, in that very room where you are saying your prayers, is doing things to you. It is not a question of a good man who died two thousand years ago. It is a living Man, still as much a man as you, and still as much God as He was when He created the world, really coming and interfering with your very self; killing the old natural self in you and replacing it with the kind of self He has. At first, only for moments. Then for longer periods. Finally, if all goes well, turning you permanently into a different sort of thing; into a new little Christ, a being which, in its own small way, has the same kind of life as God; which shares in His power, joy, knowledge and eternity...

And if (as I said before) what we are matters even more than what we do — if, indeed, what we do matters chiefly as evidence of what we are — then it follows that the change which I most need to undergo is a change that my own direct, voluntary efforts cannot bring about. And this applies to my good actions too. How many of them were done for the right motive? How many for fear of public opinion, or a desire to show off? How many from a sort of obstinacy or sense of superiority which, in different circumstances, might equally had led to some very bad act? But I cannot, by direct moral effort, give myself new motives. After the first few steps in the Christian life we realise that everything which really needs to be done in our souls can be done only by God.¹

If we are Christians, God is in the process of conforming us to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. Let us be thankful that the outcome is not dependent on our ability to carry this out, but it is God working in us.

“And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 (ESV)

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (Touchstone, 1996), pp.165-166.

