



A THOUGHT FOR THE WEEKEND

31st March 2023

Blessed are those ... who walk in the light of your presence, LORD.
Psalm 89:15

Like many others I am an admirer of the writings of C.S. Lewis. He was one of the foremost Christian thinkers and communicators of the 20th Century, having become a Christian in later life after much thought, struggle and heart-searching. He became a brilliant apologist for (defender and explainer of) Christian faith, and his many works on this and other subjects are still widely read. As a 'non-theologian' he had a wonderful ability to put Christian truth into simple but powerful images. But he was complex too; the deeper you go into his work the more is to be found.

One thought-provoking thing Lewis said was this: *"I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen: not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else."*

We cannot look at the sun; even if our eyes would allow it there would be danger in doing so. As it sets and can be watched with unprotected eyes, it is colourful, mysterious and beautiful; greater than we can imagine and well beyond even the latest scientific understanding. Even more so, God is dazzling, frightening, mysterious; it would be fearful to behold him, as Isaiah felt (Isaiah 6:5). Yet he pervades the world like the life-giving, light-shedding, warmth-bringing sun, and by him Christians *see everything else*. Lewis puts his finger on something unique and challenging about our faith and about God: that apart from all the mystery and infinite wonder of gazing at him (see 2 Corinthians 3:18), there is a sense in which only in him, the *"Father of heavenly lights"* (James 1:17), do we 'see' everything else in the right perspective, in true colours and shades, ...*by his light*.

So the things that dazzled may become dim in the light of God; things that attracted and took our time and attention, things that seemed big and impressive, frightening or fascinating, are shown as they truly are in that greater light. Some will become more beautiful, others will no longer seem so.

Perhaps Psalm 89:15 sums up this spiritual principle: *"Blessed are those who have learned to acclaim you, who walk in the light of your presence, Lord."* It is as we gaze on God and *learn* to acclaim him that our walk through life's journey is illuminated by his light (Psalm 119:105). It is by that light we discern the firm rock and level path on which to place each step (Hebrews 12:13), -and the shifting sands and rough places are revealed as treacherous.

So our paths and perspectives, leadings and life-choices as God's children, may not seem wise in the world's eyes, but as we focus more on our Father, and less on our own understanding (Proverbs 3:5-6), we will find it so. Then, as St. Paul put it: *"...the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 4:7).

In our information-filled world I don't find that easy, but *"in that light of life I'll walk 'til travelling days are done"*. (Horatius Bonar, 'I heard the voice of Jesus say...')

