



HÁSKÓLI ÍSLANDS

Hugvísindasvið

Stealing Past the Watchful Dragons

A Christian Aspect of The Chronicles of Narnia

B.A. Essay

Anna Lilja Einarsdóttir

May 2011

University of Iceland
School of Humanities
Department of English

Stealing Past the Watchful Dragons

A Christian Aspect of The Chronicles of Narnia

B.A. Essay

Anna Lilja Einarsdóttir

Kt.: 020887-2229

Supervisor: Anna Heiða Pálsdóttir

May 2011

Summary

C. S. Lewis is an author who has brilliantly managed to attract readers all over the world with his vivid imagery and descriptive narrative, especially in the fantasy genre. His understanding of the enchantment and possibilities that consist in this realm of writing has enabled him to communicate ideas and truths he considered to be important for the human soul. One of his most celebrated works is *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a series of seven novels which invite the reader to explore the wonder of an imaginative world of Talking Beasts while picking up little moral treasures along the way. Lewis was a man of great faith and he spent his adult years writing about Christianity and sharing his own journey towards it. When writing *The Chronicles*, he mixed various ingredients into them to support what he called the real story behind the story, namely the story of Christ.

Some readers may disapprove of the Christian element while others may hold it in high esteem and even though *The Chronicles* can certainly be read simply as good fantasy stories, it is a fact that Lewis wanted the stories to evoke longing and desire towards Christ. This essay explores how Lewis weaves his faith and theological beliefs into the core of *The Chronicles* and how he finds the story mode a crucial instrument in sharing the story of Christ and kindling the appropriate emotional response without mentioning religion. It further examines how Lewis portrays the great lion Aslan as Christ, how his writing in relation to Aslan manages to give the reader an experience of the numinous and it considers the similarities between Aslan and Christ, revealing clearly Lewis's intention with the lion. Lastly, it reviews how Lewis displays the spiritual conversion of an unbeliever, how he relates it to his own experience and how the "undragoning" of Eustace reveals people's need for salvation.

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	5
1. Christianity in Relation to Fantasy	7
2. Aslan as the Manifestation of Christ.....	12
2.1. Aslan as a Spiritual Being.....	12
2.2. Aslan and Jesus Christ	15
3. Eustace and the Spiritual Conversion.....	19
3.1. Lewis and Eustace	19
3.2. Spiritual Blindness	21
3.3. How Eustace Stopped Being a Dragon.....	24
Conclusion	31
Works Cited	32

Introduction

The realm of fantasy literature is a world full of wonder and captivating adventures lurking around every corner. It has the power to touch a reader's heart where it matters and bring life to dreams, stir hope when it is needed and ignite the sparks of faith and belief (Timmerman, par. 1). Authors of this genre understood this truth and there was one in particular who saw the magic in the effect. His name was Clive Staples Lewis and he was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland on the 29th of November in 1899. Lewis's thirst for creation and need to write started early in his childhood and in his autobiography, *Surprised by Joy*, he says:

I longed to make things, ships, houses, engines. Many sheets of cardboard and pairs of scissors I spoiled, only to turn from my hopeless failures in tears. As a last resource . . . I was driven to write stories instead; little dreaming to what a world of happiness I was being admitted. You can do more with a castle in a story than with the best cardboard castle that ever stood on a nursery table. (12)

He was right. During his lifetime he climbed the literary stairs towards prominent renown and "his volumes of fairy tales, science fiction, Christian theology, and literary criticism were devoured by people all over the world" (Dorsett and Mead 3).

His influence can be traced through the various fibres that weave the history of English literature and it is interesting to see how his own spiritual journey and religious conversion had profound effect on his writing. By the time he died in 1963, C. S. Lewis was a firm believer in Christ but it was not always so. In *Surprised by Joy*, he relates this spiritual journey that led him "there and back again," and how his search for joy led him along the arduous path from his childhood faith into atheism and then back to Christianity.

Among his acclaimed achievements is *The Chronicles of Narnia*, a series of fantasy novels, which take place in the magical land of Narnia. As his most celebrated work it has enchanted children and adults all over the world since it emerged before the eyes of the reading public in 1950. Despite its international renown as a children's story, *The Chronicles* were not inspired by the author's association with children, for C. S. Lewis had a very limited contact with them and his understanding of them came not from personal experience but from within himself (Dorsett and Mead 4-5). "He remembered well the fears, questions, and joys of childhood" (Dorsett and Mead 6) so

he could easily understand his young readers and relate to their view of the world. His gift as a writer “gave his books an enduring appeal” (Belmonte) and the magic evoked by his imagery and wording of events manages to give readers a feeling of religious experience without mentioning religion (Giardina 40), which is exactly what Lewis wanted *The Chronicles of Narnia* to do. He wanted his readers to experience the essence of Christianity first, “to have their own feelings spontaneously and then become aware that this meaning is fact” (Ford 13).

With two of the *Chronicles* in the forefront, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, the objective of this essay is to explore how C. S. Lewis saw *The Chronicles of Narnia* as a way of introducing the message of the Gospel to his readers, especially children, by studying his view of Christianity in relation to fantasy, how he portrays Aslan as the manifestation of Christ in the world of Narnia and finally how he displays the spiritual conversion of an unbeliever.

1. Christianity in Relation to Fantasy

C. S. Lewis managed to create a world where biblical truths and fairy tales unite with pagan legends and mythology, generating an unusual and yet fascinating appeal. The strongest of these elements however, is the Christian element and even though the story maker did not start his writing process with that in mind, his faith began to “slip quietly into his story” (Dorsett and Mead 6). In one of the many essays he wrote about the subject he says:

Some people seem to think I began by asking myself how I could say something about Christianity to children; then fixed on the fairy tale as an instrument . . . then drew up a list of basic Christian truths and hammered out ‘allegories’ to embody them . . . I couldn’t write in that way at all. Everything began with images: a faun carrying an umbrella, a queen on a sledge, a magnificent lion. At first there wasn’t even anything Christian about them; that element pushed itself in of its own accord. (*On Stories* 46)

The idea of the story first came to him when he was sixteen with the picture of Mr. Tumnus, the faun that Lucy meets in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, “carrying an umbrella and parcels in a snowy wood” (*On Stories* 53). It was not until his fifties when Lewis set his pen to that paper again to try and make a story about this picture without knowing where it would lead him: “But then Aslan came bounding into it . . . I don’t know where the Lion came from or why He came. But once He was there He pulled the whole story together, and soon He pulled the six other Narnian stories in after Him” (*On Stories* 53). Alongside Aslan, the Christian element came “bounding into” the story as well and in a letter Lewis wrote to a young girl named Anne Jenkins he says:

The whole Narnian story is about Christ. That is to say, I asked myself “Supposing that there really was a world like Narnia and supposing it had (like our world) gone wrong and supposing Christ wanted to go into that world and save it (as He did ours) what might have happened?” The stories are my answer. (*Collected Letters* 1244-1245)

He explains his intention further in his essay “Sometimes Fairy Stories May Say Best What’s to Be Said” where he reflects on his own feelings towards God and Jesus Christ when he was a child:

I thought I saw how stories of this kind could steal past certain inhibition which had paralyzed much of my own religion since childhood. Why did one find it so hard to feel as one was told one ought to feel about God or about the sufferings of Christ? I thought the chief reason was that one was told one ought to. An obligation to feel can freeze feelings . . . But suppose by casting all these things into an imaginary world, stripping them of their stained-glass and Sunday school associations, one could make them for the first time appear in their real potency? Could one not thus steal past those watchful dragons? I thought one could. (*On Stories* 47)

Considering these “supposals,” as Lewis called them, many critics and readers argue that he was simply writing allegories to personify Christian truths, using the fairy tale as an instrument (*On Stories* 46) in order to force them onto innocent children. Lewis was truly convinced however that he was not writing an allegory and stated adamantly that these assumptions were “pure moonshine” (*On Stories* 46) and in a letter to a woman called Mrs. Hook, he clearly explains the difference between allegory and “supposals,” taking Bunyan’s *The Pilgrim’s Progress* as an example:

If Aslan represented the immaterial Deity in the same way in which the Giant Despair represents Despair, he would be an allegorical figure. In reality, he is an invention giving an imaginary answer to the question, “What might Christ become like, if there really were a world like Narnia and He chose to be incarnate and die and rise again in *that* world as He actually has done in ours?” This is not an allegory at all . . . (*Collected Letters* 1004-1005)

He goes on by saying that:

Allegory and such supposals differ because they mix the real and the unreal in different ways. Bunyan’s picture of Giant Despair does not start from supposal at all. It is not a supposition but a *fact* that despair can capture and imprison a human soul. What is unreal (fictional) is the giant, the castle, and the dungeon. The Incarnation of Christ in another world is mere supposal; but *granted* the supposition, He would really have been a physical object in that world as He was in Palestine and His death on the Stone Table would have been a physical event no less than his death on Calvary. (*Collected Letters* 1004-1005)

Thus, in *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis's Aslan is a corporeal existence. He is real and the spiritual situation of his children is also real, whereas Bunyan's Giant Despair in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is unreal while the despair itself is real. He is an "immaterial Deity" that is merely given a physical appearance (Ford 3). Therefore, like Steve Tomkins notes in his article "The Secret of the Wardrobe," Aslan does not represent Christ but rather Aslan is Christ. He comes to Narnia, "the world of talking animals as a lion, just as he came to earth as a human" (Tomkins) and the fairy tale mode is Lewis's medium of choice because he found fantasy or rather fantasy for children the perfect form for what he had to say (*On Stories* 36). In his article, Tomkins continues by saying that Lewis "was not concerned with teaching children the Christian story in disguise, as he expected them to know it already. Rather he wanted them to feel it," which is the key to the *Chronicles* and their charm.

As stated above, when Lewis was a child he knew the story of Jesus' suffering on the cross and his resurrection and although he knew it was rich with meaning, the importance of it was never clear to him (Tomkins). He thought "if he could retell it in the terms of a fairy story, it might make [more] sense to children and they might grasp the nobility, tragedy and power of it" (Tomkins). Devin Brown also mentions this fact in the introduction to his book *Inside Narnia* where he states, that "clearly Lewis understood the need for a creative format rather than a discursive one in order to address life's most fundamental questions" (17) and Lewis expresses his own idea about the story mode, saying that the objective of it is to place "before our imagination something that has always baffled the intellect" (*On Stories* 15). This understanding of the human psyche is what lies behind the success of *The Chronicles of Narnia* for they manage to stir the spirit in a way that many people have not experienced, be they Christians or not. The true message of the Gospel comes through and it touches a reader's heart in a different way than a direct study of the Bible would do. For Christians, it encourages a deeper and better understanding of the Gospel. For those who have not heard or thought about the Gospel, the story may be enjoyed simply as a fantasy story but it may also sow the relevant seeds in their hearts, laying the foundation for deeper understanding and knowledge of its meaning.

In the introduction to his *Companion to Narnia*, Paul F. Ford discusses Lewis's view of "the story," explaining that he "saw story as the bridge between the two ways of

knowing reality: thinking about it and experiencing it. Thinking is incurably abstract; experiencing is always concrete” (12) and “a good story” is the place where the two come together in helping people to do both, “to contemplate and to enjoy either an aspect of reality they already know or something that they don’t know and that the author of the story thinks would be good for them to know” (12-13). He further quotes an essay where Lewis explains how the organ of truth is reason and the organ of meaning is imagination (13) and because of that, Ford says, “one can reason about or *look* at another’s experience all day and be able only to abstract about it; it is only when we look along the person’s experience (if not actually, at least in our imagination) that we can see, touch, taste, smell, and hear what that person is experiencing” (13). Ford continues by saying that this is exactly how many ordinary people and scholars in the field approach Christianity, they contemplate it but they fail to enjoy it. In *The Chronicles of Narnia*, Lewis allows people and children especially, Ford says, to “look along Christianity without, perhaps, knowing Christ explicitly. He wants people to experience the meaning of the Christian facts first, to have their own feelings spontaneously, and then to become aware that this meaning is fact” (Ford 13). However, Lewis’s concern dwells with “well-meaning Christians” who “short-circuit this process by decoding the Chronicles for their children,” because by doing so, “the watchful dragons” he mentions in this relation “resume their sentry posts outside the Sunday school door” (Ford 13) and consequently demolish the magic the story is to evoke.

Thus, it was highly important to Lewis that his stories were not decoded for his young readers. He did not write them for that purpose and he was very careful not to do so himself when children wrote him about their meaning. He wanted them to use their imagination and connect the dots on their own. In one of his letters, to a girl named Hila Newman, he answers her enquiries about Aslan’s other name with the following reply:

As to Aslan’s other name, well I want you to guess. Has there never been anyone in this world who (1) Arrived at the same time as Father Christmas. (2) Said he was the son of the Great Emperor. (3) Gave himself up for someone else’s fault to be jeered at and killed by wicked people. (4) Came to life again. (5) Is sometimes spoken of as a Lamb (see the end of the Dawn Treader). Don’t you really know His name in this world? Think it over and let me know your answer! (*Letters to Children* 32)

The sensation behind Lewis's thought is in direct relation to this. While he wanted his readers to feel Christ and experience the numinous through the narrative, he also wanted *The Chronicles of Narnia* to "re-enchant a disenchanted world" (Brown, *Inside* 16), which they certainly do. They help to wipe "away the film of the ordinary from our world," make "the events of our daily lives and the people we encounter more special" (Brown, *Inside* 16) and they "cast a spell over our world" making "all robins and wardrobes a little marvelous, a little more wonderful than before" (Brown, *Inside* 16). Lewis says about this kind of children books that the reader "does not despise real woods because he has read of enchanted woods: the reading makes all real woods a little enchanted" (*On Stories* 38). Through his narrative, Lewis manages to give the reader the feeling of the supernatural, from the richness of the wood to the marvel of the talking animals, especially in his creation of Aslan.

2. Aslan as the Manifestation of Christ

Out of the seven Narnian stories, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is definitely enriched with the clearest biblical atmosphere, centring upon the great lion, Aslan, as Christ. For the rest of his life, after returning to Christianity, Lewis was a passionate Christian and his commitment to “rehabilitate people’s conception of God” never ceased (Downing 63). Lewis was aware of the various perceptions or misconceptions many people and Christians have of God, how some find Him to be solely terrible or fearful while others have an image of Him as solely safe and comforting. In his writings and lectures he would remind people that God is both at the same time and when it came to *The Chronicles of Narnia* and Aslan, “Lewis hoped to portray a God who is both awe-ful and good, inspiring equally a wholesome fear and a wholehearted love” (Downing 63).

As stated above, when Aslan became the center of the story Lewis had no idea where he came from or why he came (*On Stories* 53), but when he realized who Aslan really was it all came together. In the letter to Anne Jenkins he explains why he portrayed Aslan as a lion:

Since Narnia is a world of Talking Beasts, I thought He would become a Talking Beast there, as He became a man here. I pictured Him becoming a lion there because (a) the lion is supposed to be the king of beasts; (b) Christ is called “The Lion of Judah” in the Bible; (c) I’d been having strange dreams about lions when I began writing the work.” (*Collected Letters* 1244-1245)

In this same letter, he stated that *The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe* is about the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ. In addition, “aslan” is the Turkish word for “lion,” which Lewis found in the notes to Edward Lane’s translation of *Arabian Nights* (*Letters to Children* 29). Evidently, all roads lead to the lion as the manifestation of Christ and it certainly is the most befitting since nature possesses few animals as magnificent as the king of beasts.

2.1. Aslan as a Spiritual Being

In his book *Into the Wardrobe*, David C. Downing begins his chapter on the spiritual vision of Narnia by focusing on Aslan and the sense of the “numinous,” a term originally invented by the theologian and scholar Rudolf Otto to define the concept of

the holy (65). Lewis used this concept in *The Problem of Pain* to explain his own understanding of spiritual revelation and he frequently recommended Otto's work *The Idea of the Holy* to those who wanted to gain "a fuller understanding of the divine" (Downing 65). According to Downing, "Otto identified six common features of numinous experiences," which he came across in his studies of, for example, the Bible:

- Fear, awe, holy dread
- Fascination, attraction, yearning
- A sense of unspeakable magnitude and majesty
- Energy, urgency, intense dynamism
- Wonder, astonishment, stupefaction
- Mystery, Otherness, incomprehensibility. (Downing 65)

Most of these features can be found in *The Chronicles of Narnia* where Lewis wrote many passages precisely to "evoke the sense of the numinous" (Downing 66), mainly in relation to Aslan, his presence and influences. When Aslan's name is spoken for the first time in *The Lion, the Witch and Wardrobe*, Peter, Susan, Edmund and Lucy all experience a feeling of the numinous without even knowing who Aslan is and Lewis's captivating passage allows the reader to share in their experience:

Perhaps it has sometimes happened to you in a dream that someone says something which you don't understand but in the dream it feels as if it had some enormous meaning – either something which turns the whole dream into a nightmare or else a lovely meaning too lovely to put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life and are always wishing you could get into that dream again. (*The Lion* 65)

When the Beaver mentions Aslan's name, each of the children "felt something jump" inside of them:

Edmund felt a sensation of mysterious horror. Peter felt suddenly brave and adventurous. Susan felt as if some delicious smell or some delightful strain of music had just floated by her. And Lucy got the feeling you have when you wake up in the morning and realize that it is the beginning of the holidays or the beginning of summer. (*The Lion* 65)

Later, when the children are dining at the Beaver's house and he explains to them the nature of Aslan, their feelings indicate further the numinous quality of him. The Beaver

tells them that Aslan is “the Lord of the whole wood . . . the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-sea . . . the King of Beasts . . . a lion – *the* Lion, the great Lion” (*The Lion* 75). Susan feels “rather nervous about meeting a lion” and asks if he is “quite safe” and the Beaver replies: “Who said anything about safe? ‘Course he isn’t safe. But he’s good.” Peter admits that he is longing to see him, “even if I do feel frightened when it comes to the point” (*The Lion* 75). A few chapters later when they finally meet Aslan, the reader is told that they “didn’t know what to do or say when they saw him. People who have not been in Narnia sometimes think that a thing cannot be good and terrible at the same time. If the children had ever thought so, they were cured of it now” (*The Lion* 115-117). The narrator continues, explaining that “when they tried to look at Aslan’s face they just caught a glimpse of the golden mane and the great, royal, solemn, overwhelming eyes; and then they found they couldn’t look at him and went all trembly” (*The Lion* 117). When Aslan raises his voice in greeting they feel how it “was deep and rich and somehow took the fidgets out of them. They now felt glad and quiet . . .” (*The Lion* 117). As Ford mentions in his chapter on the lion in the *Companion*, Aslan’s golden face and eyes reflect “the full range of his feelings” (56) and due to “the calming quality” of his voice, the children are able to “stand in his awesomely beautiful presence” (56). He further indicates, that “no one has ever seen anything more terrible or beautiful than Aslan . . . he is the epitome of the majestic, the glorious, and the numinous. He is towering in size . . . and always growing bigger with respect to the person who sees him; in this respect, he is the very figure of the greatness of God” (55).

Ford continues by gathering a few of Aslan’s characteristics, which reflect those of God and Jesus Christ as presented in the Gospel and as he says, “this Lion comes straight from the heart of Lewis’s contemplation and enjoyment of God and of the world God made” (Ford 55): “The very hearing of his name is an experience of the numinous . . . for those who are for a time or forever under the spell of evil . . . his name is filled only with horror” (Ford 55). This can be seen in the episode where Peter, Susan and Lucy all experience joy, encouragement and heart warming feelings by the mentioning of Aslan’s name while Edmund, corrupt by the witches Turkish Delight and evil mastery, feels only horror (*The Lion* 65). “The beholding of his beautiful face sustains one all one’s days, and the recognition of that face with love and awe at the end of time opens out onto an eternity of joy” (Ford 55). According to Ford, this applies to

those who have a personal relationship with Christ and he points out the importance of Lewis's theology of trusting in the providence of God and how it helps to "sustain" people through all the joys and trials life throws at them (86). Through experience, Christians may recognize the "love and awe" of God and how it helps them to remember that all is well, independent of circumstances. Lewis draws a clear image of this in *The Magician's Nephew* where Digory and Polly are looking up into Aslan's face after all they have been through and they realize that because of Aslan nothing will be the same from that moment:

. . . the face seemed to be a sea of tossing gold in which they were floating, and such a sweetness and power rolled about them and over them and entered them that they felt they had never really been happy or wise or good . . . before. And the memory of that moment stayed with them always, so that as long as they both lived, if ever they were sad or afraid or angry, the thought of all that golden goodness, and the feeling that it was still there, quite close . . . would come back and make them sure, deep down inside, that all was well." (165)

"To be addressed by him as 'dear heart' or 'little one' or by name is a lasting, cherished blessing . . . Whom he praises with an earthshaking 'Well done' remains forever favoured; whom he blames or punishes is humbled in the hope of an enduring change of heart" (Ford 55). This can, for example, be seen in people who once were lost but then found salvation in Christ. They are thankful and humbled by God's grace and long to change their way of living and try to make amends for their transgressions and Lewis shows this, for example, in Edmund and his change of heart after being rescued from the witch. His intimate talk with Aslan helps him to see the error of his ways, he feels ashamed and humbled and he is truly sorry for his betrayal (*The Lion* 126). The following events are a turning point in the book and the chapter on Aslan's sacrifice is probably the most emotional one in the whole *Chronicles* and it aligns clearly with Christ's sacrifice in reality. They both suffer and give their life in order to save the life of the sinner and they both rise again, victorious over evil.

2.2. Aslan and Jesus Christ

The events before, during and after Aslan's execution reflect the passion of Christ in a powerful and moving way and Ford compiles six features that show how Lewis truly

does “accentuate the parallels between” the passion of each (Ford 59). To begin with, they “both seek the comfort of close friends;” Aslan with the Sons-of-Adam and Daughters-of-Eve and he is also glad of the company that Lucy and Susan provide him on the way to the Stone Table (*The Lion* 135). Jesus Christ has a circle of twelve apostles around him who follow him wherever he goes and he spends his last meal with them (*NIV*, Luke 22:7-20). Then, they both have to “suffer ridicule and torture at the hands of their enemies” and “both are cruelly tied down and savagely executed” (Ford 59). Aslan allows the witch’s wicked followers to attack him and “they rolled the huge Lion over on his back and tied all his four paws together . . . the enemies, straining and tugging, pulled the cords so tight that they cut into his flesh” (*The Lion* 138-139). They further degrade him by shaving his mane, “snip-snip-snip went the shears and masses of curling gold began to fall to the ground” (*The Lion* 139), they laugh at him, shout at him, ridicule him and finally they muzzle him and drag him onto the Stone Table where the witch kills him with her knife. Similarly, the people of Jerusalem attack Christ and condemn him to die. They strip him of his clothes, “twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head” and mock him (Matthew 27:29). They spit on him, strike him and finally they crucify him (Matthew 27:27-44). Subsequently, “the bodies of both are ministered to by friends” (Ford 59): the mice nibble away the ropes that tie Aslan down, releasing his body from its prison (*The Lion* 144). Comparably, a disciple of Jesus asks to have his body taken from the cross in order to bury it respectfully. He “wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and placed it in his own new tomb . . . [and] rolled a big stone in front of the entrance” (Matthew 27:57-61). They both rise again “out of sight of anyone” (Ford 59) at the break of dawn: the girls are looking away from the Stone Table when it breaks in “two pieces by a great crack that ran down it from end to end; and there was no Aslan” (*The Lion* 146), but then the girls turn around and “there, shining in the sunrise, larger than they had seen him before, shaking his mane (for it had apparently grown again) stood Aslan himself” (*The Lion* 147). Parallel to the girls are the women who go to Jesus’ grave “at the dawn on the first day of the week” and witness a “violent earthquake” when an angel of the Lord “came down from heaven and . . . rolled back the stone,” he tells them that Jesus is risen from the dead (Matthew 28:1-10). Finally, they “both must reassure their loved ones that they are indeed alive, and alive in a new way” (Ford 59). When the girls look upon Aslan after his resurrection

they can hardly believe that he is real, they are “almost as much frightened as they were glad” and when Susan asks in “a shaky voice” if he is a ghost, “Aslan stooped his golden head and licked her forehead. The warmth of his breath and a rich sort of smell that seemed to hang about his hair came all over her” and they both know that he is real and cover him with kisses (*The Lion* 147-148). When Jesus appears to his disciples “they were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost. He said to them, ‘Why do doubts rise in your minds? Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see’” (Luke 24: 37-39) and they are overjoyed to know he is alive.

Although this comparison perfectly reveals the truth about Lewis’s Aslan, there are also a few more relatively evident indications of Aslan being Christ. Firstly, after the ecstatic and playful romp “all three finally lay together panting in the sun” and “the girls no longer felt in the least tired or hungry or thirsty” (*The Lion* 149). This is a reference to John 6:35 where Jesus says: “I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.” He is enough. Secondly, as Ford mentions, “Aslan’s roar, his run to the castle of the White Witch, and his leap over its walls are all Narnian supposals of what Christ’s ascension would look like in this imaginary world” (Ford 60). The most significant is the release of the creatures the witch had turned into stone and how Aslan “revives them by his breath,” which is a definite image of the Holy Spirit (Ford 60). The narrative of this chapter in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* is dazzling and its power and beauty makes the reader feel present. When each of the animals has been saved, they praise Aslan and shower him with their joy and thankfulness and he gathers them around him, explaining that he needs their help in finding every one of the victims: “Leave no corner unsearched. You never know where some poor prisoner may be concealed” (*The Lion* 155). Also, he encourages the revived lion with the phrase “us lions,” he asks the giant “to break down the castle walls and the sheepdog to organize the creatures into a [battle] force” (Ford 60). These are all instances of “Lewis’s profound belief” that one of the most significant reasons for the incarnation is that Jesus wants our help in “the process of transforming the world” (Ford 60).

This resonates in Christ’s request to his disciples, to “go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit,” to tell the world the good news of Christ’s redemption so his children will believe in

him and have eternal life in him (Matthew 28:19-20). Lastly, and most importantly, is the scene at the end of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*, in which Lewis most explicitly reveals his “chief concern in writing the *Chronicles*” (Ford 8). Lucy and Edmund are despairing over the fact that they will never return to Narnia and Aslan explains to them and the reader:

‘You are too old, children,’ said Aslan, ‘and you must begin to come close to your own world now.’

‘It isn’t Narnia, you know,’ sobbed Lucy. ‘It’s you. We shan’t meet you there. And how can we leave, never meeting you?’

‘But you shall meet me, dear one,’ said Aslan.

‘Are – are you there too, Sir?’ said Edmund.

‘I am,’ said Aslan. ‘But there I have another name. You must learn to know me by that name. This was the very reason why you were brought to Narnia, that by knowing me here for a little, you may know me better there.’

(*The Voyage* 188)

Knowing Aslan for a while in Narnia has certainly influenced the children in a significant way and judging by the hundreds of letters Lewis received from young readers, Aslan has indeed influenced children and their parents all over the world, either as a fantasy figure of Jesus Christ or merely a moving character in a fairy tale.

Whichever the case may be, it is clear that Lewis did write Aslan as Christ redeeming the world of Narnia and through the series the lion subtly makes himself known to the characters, though never as powerfully and clearly as he does in the spiritual conversion of Eustace.

3. Eustace and the Spiritual Conversion

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” This message of 2 Corinthians 5:17 is at the heart of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* and it is portrayed through the insufferable character of Eustace Clarence Scrubb. As news reporter Kelley Kent notes in her review of the book, it is indeed brimful of themes and biblical imagery that define or should define “the spiritual life” of a Christian individual (Beloved Lily). Lewis said so himself in the letter he wrote to Anne Jenkins, where he explained that *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* is about “the spiritual life (especially in Reepicheep)” (*Collected Letters* 1245). Marilyn J. Stewart says in her article “Reepicheep’s Desire: A Signpost to God,” that it is in this “high seas adventure” that Lewis gives the reader “some of his most powerful imagery of the journey of faith” and “through the valiant mouse Reepicheep’s quest, a moving depiction is painted of the joy that waits at journey’s end.” Certainly, the mouse’s quest is a precedent worth observing and assuredly one of the most powerful ones in the book. However, there are other journey’s that Lewis found to be of no less importance and as Stewart mentions, “the Christian’s steps, and stumbles, along the road to maturity are captured in the journeys of Prince Caspian, Lucy, and Eustace.” It is through the spiritual journey of Eustace, that Lewis paints a rather explicit picture of salvation and the spiritual conversion of an unbeliever.

3.1. Lewis and Eustace

In his book *The Keys to the Chronicles*, Marvin D. Hinten notes that the opening line of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* “contains an oblique personal reference” (32): “There was a boy called Eustace Clarence Scrubb, and he almost deserved it” (*The Voyage* 7). This statement is an indication that the poor boy in question was christened with an unfortunate and grievous name, which nonetheless is *almost* befitting his character. When the story continues and the reader becomes more acquainted with Eustace, the first sentence seems true, to say the least, and the word “almost” could easily be omitted. However, it is possible that Lewis held on to it for a reason to imply that even though the boy deserves his “pretentious sounding name” (Brown, “Further Up”) and no compassion, mercy or grace from anyone, that is exactly what befalls him. Eustace is an obnoxious and conceited little nine-year-old who Lewis found a conceivable

resemblance with for he went through a similar period in his own childhood. In his autobiography *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis recalls his education at “a preparatory school” he went to when he was thirteen (56). During his time there something happened to him that changed his life drastically: He ceased to be a Christian (58). Along with his “slow apostasy” (66) there was a degrading change in his personality and his attention was turned to “the World: the desire for glitter, swagger, distinction, the desire to be in the know” (68). He describes “his descent into a world of self-centeredness” (Brown, “Further Up”) with a tone of regret and while watching “certain humble and childlike and self-forgetful qualities” (68) slip away from him, he confesses, “I began to labor very hard to make myself into a fop, a cad, and a snob” (68).

His alteration increased when he was accepted to Wyvern College, a school he embraced with open arms (83) but later grew to hate: “As I grew more and more tired, both in body and mind, I came to hate Wyvern. I did not notice the real harm it was doing to me. It was gradually teaching me to be a prig; that is, an intellectual prig or (in the bad sense) a Highbrow” (100). This character trait is one of the first the reader observes in Eustace and on the first page of *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* it is made clear that he does not share his cousins’ love for adventures for he “had read none of the right books” (*The Voyage* 67). He preferred “books if they were books of information and had pictures of grain elevators or of fat foreign children doing exercises in model schools” (*The Voyage* 7). On Eustace’s character in *Companion to Narnia*, Ford notes that Eustace “is a victim of his parents’ untraditional ways of child raising and of his schooling” (199) and even though Lewis did not suffer from his upbringing he was immensely influenced to the worse through his schooling with considerable aid from his superiors during that time, be it a matron, master or seniors (*Surprised* 66-100).

Eventually, Lewis recovered and his return to Christianity was a painful process and in *Surprised by Joy* he explains how God steadily revealed to him the error of his ways and how He broke down the “pretentious” world he was living in, so He might be able to heal and restore him (216-229). He finally “gave in, and admitted that God was God” and later, when his conversion was complete he was in awe over

the most shining and obvious thing; the Divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms. The Prodigal Son at least walked home on his own feet. But who can duly adore that Love which will open the high gates to a

prodigal who is brought in kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance of escape? (229)

Lewis had to realize that God was the only answer to his problems and Eustace would have to realize the same thing about Aslan for his whole conversion depends on it. The divine grace of God is unfathomable and having been a “snobbish little prig” Lewis had a hard time understanding why he was granted that grace even though he did not deserve it. God’s “compulsion” was his “liberation” (229). It is therefore clear that Lewis draws on his own experiences when it comes to the intolerable character of Eustace and the character’s spiritual blindness and recovery from it is what makes Eustace “almost” deserve his name.

3.2. Spiritual Blindness

By taking a closer look at Eustace and the nature of his character as it is when the reader first engages in the story, it is made clear that he is a true “record stinker,” like Edmund resolves to call him (*The Voyage* 8). He is a friendless, “puny little person” (*The Voyage* 7) who is controlled by the desire to dominate others, especially those inferior to him and his quarrelsome and self-centred nature is revealed to the reader fairly quickly. In addition, he does not approve of anything he does not understand, like making up stories or anything of the sort for himself (*The Voyage* 10) because his “imagination and sense of adventure have been stunted by his upbringing” (Ford 199). It is therefore relatively easy to imagine his reaction to the engulfing painting of the ship, which brings him into Narnia, a place he does not believe in or care for. After being rescued and taken aboard the royal ship of king Caspian, the *Dawn Treader*, Eustace is nothing but miserable and greets the king by crying his eyes out and commanding his release at once (*The Voyage* 14). To their comfort, after the “dip” into the ocean, a warm drink is brought to them and “as Lucy and Edmund sipped it they could feel the warmth going right down to their toes. But Eustace made faces and spluttered and spat it out . . . and insisted on being put ashore at the next station” (*The Voyage* 15). This whole episode reminds one of Lewis’s second entrance into the realm of Christianity because he was “brought in kicking, struggling, resentful, and darting his eyes in every direction for a chance of escape,” (*Surprised* 229) exactly like Eustace is brought into Narnia.

In accordance with his need or impulse to intimidate others, the first “relationship” he establishes on board is with Reepicheep: “Oh! Ugh! What on earth’s *that!* Take it away, the horrid thing” (*The Voyage* 16). Thus is the heartfelt greeting of their first encounter and Eustace continues: “I hate mice. And never could bear performing animals. They’re silly and vulgar and – and sentimental” (*The Voyage* 17). Reepicheep’s comment on Eustace being a “singularly discourteous person” should not be surprising to anyone at this point. Their quarrel continues as the days go by and when Eustace has approximately recovered from his seasickness, a desire deep down inside him to bully those who are smaller than him (*The Voyage* 7) or if he believes his victim can not or will not strike back (Brown, “Further Up”), is awakened. The reader is told that “he thought it would be delightful to catch hold of it [Reepicheep’s long tail], swing Reepicheep round by it once or twice upside-down, then run away and laugh” (*The Voyage* 30). His idea of entertainment is perfectly in agreement with his nature.

One of Lewis’s main objectives with the first half of Eustace’s story is for the reader to receive a clear sense of how intolerable Eustace really is and how completely blind he is to his own character defects. Ford points out that in Eustace’s first diary entry (*The Voyage* 27-28) there are many clues to this. For instance, he exaggerates the perfectly “fair weather” and magnifies it into a “frightful storm” (*The Voyage* 24, Ford 199); he completely ignores the fact that he has been healed of his terrible seasickness (Ford 199), pretending he never was sick; he diminishes the royal ship, proclaiming that he is “the only one aware of what he supposes to be their alarming condition” (Ford 199); he upgrades himself and degrades the others’ “dense” (*The Voyage* 28) way of thinking and accuses them of either conceited or cowardice behaviour (*The Voyage* 27), something he himself is very guilty of. Ford concludes his account of the diary entry by stating that Eustace is not only ungrateful but also “patronizing, arrogant, jealous, and complaining ” (Ford 199). The important thing here is that despite all of his evil traits, Aslan’s heart goes out to Eustace and as Brown notes in his article “Further Up and Further In,” “Eustace’s sorry status cries out for mercy and redemption,” he is a sinner in a desperate need of a saviour. Further, the reader learns that “Eustace of course would be pleased with nothing” (*The Voyage* 27) and as Edmund has noticed: “I don’t think we can do anything for him. It only makes him worse if you try to be nice to him,” (*The Voyage* 19) he is on a dangerous path towards “putting himself beyond Aslan’s aid”

(Brown, "Further Up"). So Brown continues by summing up Eustace's "sorry status" as follows:

Because of the way his parents have raised him, because of the school he has gone to, and most of all because of the patterns he has chosen to think and act in until he can no longer break free of them, it has become impossible for anyone to help Eustace or for any good thing to please him. No one can free him from his overly critical way of looking at everyone and everything around him.

Because Eustace has no compassion of his own, any show of kindness towards him is viewed with distrust. ("Further Up")

In order for Eustace to change and literally turn his life around he must acknowledge his flaws and he "needs to receive the self-knowledge that only Aslan can give to be able to see how dragonish his attitudes truly are" (Brown, "Further Up"). Aslan is the only one who can bring sight to his spiritual blindness. In *The Screwtape Letters*, Lewis approaches this topic from the other side as to show how the devil works. In one of the letters, Screwtape offers the following advice to his nephew Wormwood who "has been assigned to secure the damnation of a young man who has just become a Christian":

You must bring him to a condition in which he can practice self-examination for an hour without discovering any of those facts about himself which are perfectly clear to anyone who has ever lived in the same house with him or worked in the same office. (20-21)

According to Lewis, the process of salvation begins with the realization of the misdeeds related to the road a person has deliberately or unwittingly chosen. In another letter from Screwtape he tries to make his nephew understand the importance of "shoving all the virtues outward till they are finally located in the circle of fantasy, and all the desirable qualities inward into the Will" (36). If the virtues reach the circle of the will "and are there embodied in habits" (37) they become fatal to the devil, that is, if a person's heart becomes alive with the truth of Christ and he or she realizes the good and desirable virtues above the lies of the devil, redemption is at hand and salvation to follow. In addition to this, Brown mentions that in *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis notes that to bring the doctrine of spiritual alteration "into real life in the minds of modern men, and even of modern Christians, is very hard" and "before the good news of Christ's healing power can be accepted, people must first be convinced of the bad news

of their spiritual state” (*Problem 43*; Brown, “Further Up”). Eustace Clarence Scrubb does certainly fall under this category and he is truly reformed when “the outer form of his inner disposition” (Ford 199) is spelled out for him, black on white, by his transformation into a dragon. Through that experience he is offered a chance to be free from “the dragonish life he has been leading” and even though he does not deserve it, the grace of God (or Aslan) is shed upon him (Brown, “Further Up”) as Aslan calls him and he listens. Like God, Aslan does not leave Eustace as he is. He calls on his heart and offers him the chance of a better life that comes of knowing Him. “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions – it is by grace you have been saved” (Ephesians 2:4-5).

3.3. How Eustace Stopped Being a Dragon

The Bible tells of Paul the apostle, who used to persecute the followers of Jesus Christ until he was confronted by Christ and through grace transformed (Acts 9): “I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God’s grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God’s people, this grace was given me” (Ephesians 3:7). In *Surprised by Joy*, Lewis points out that “the hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men” (229) and by that he is referring to his spiritual conversion and how it entirely changed his life for the better. The spiritual conversion of Eustace has a similar tone to it.

In one entry of Eustace’s diary, the distorted image he has of himself is made clear when he writes: “Heaven knows I’m the last person to try to get any unfair advantage” (*The Voyage* 59) and it is further confirmed when he decides to “simply slip away” when he hears about the group’s work plans for their first day on Dragon Island and the delightful idea occurs to him to “take a stroll inland, find a cool, airy place up in the mountains, have a good long sleep, and not rejoin the others till the day’s work was over” (*The Voyage* 62-63). Like any reader of the Narnia novels knows, the mere stay in Narnia has a positive impact on a person and when Eustace reaches the ridge of the mountain “he didn’t enjoy himself [as he had expected to do], or not for very long. He began, almost for the *first time* in his life, to feel lonely” (*The Voyage* 64, emphasis added) and with that, the walls around his heart begin to break.

In the next chapter, the walls keep on giving way and Eustace is faced with the beastly creature he has been parading as up until that moment: “The dragon face in the pool was his own reflection” and he realizes that “he had turned into a dragon while he was asleep. Sleeping on a dragon’s hoard with greedy, dragonish thoughts in his heart, he had become a dragon himself” (*The Voyage* 73). As Hinten notes in his book, Lewis was “fascinated by possibilities of interior thought shaping external appearance” (36) and in that respect, this combination of heart and treasure points directly to Matthew 6:21: “For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The pain of this revelation is associated with the golden bracelet which fitted perfectly on Eustace’s arm before the transformation and is now a great torment to him: “He tore at the place with his dragon’s teeth but could not get it off” (*The Voyage* 73). In relation to this, Brown points out that in *The Problem of Pain*, Lewis describes how God uses affliction “as an instrument in our salvation” (“Further Up”). In a chapter called “Human Pain”, Lewis states the following:

The human spirit will not even begin to try to surrender self-will as long as all seems to be well with it. Now error and sin both have this property, that the deeper they are the less their victim suspects their existence; they are masked evil. Pain is unmasked, unmistakable evil; every man knows something is wrong when he is being hurt. (80)

Later on, he continues: “But pain insists upon being attended to. God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pain: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world” (81). It does not mean that God causes pain to teach us a lesson but he uses our suffering to direct our hearts to Him, for in Him we can truly find peace. Further, Lewis mentions, “God, who has made us, knows what we are and that our happiness lies in Him. Yet we will not seek it in Him as long as He leaves us any other resort where it can even plausibly be looked for. While what we call ‘our own life’ remains agreeable we will not surrender it to Him” (84). According to Lewis, many people who do not know God, experience emptiness in their hearts and seek to fill that void with what the world calls Joy. However, God knows what is good for his children and when they seek Him in the wrong places it inevitably leads to suffering of some kind. Eustace’s realization is symbolized by the golden bracelet, which “has become Aslan’s megaphone, his tool to rouse someone who has been deaf to all other attempts

to get his attention and blind to the reality of his inner condition” (Brown, “Further Up”).

The reader follows the gradual change in Eustace as he slowly tries to adjust to life as a dragon and “it was . . . clear to everyone that Eustace’s character had been rather improved by becoming a dragon. He was anxious to help” (*The Voyage* 80) and “the pleasure (quite new to him) of being liked and, still more, of liking other people, was what kept [him] from despair” (*The Voyage* 81). However, he also “realized more and more that since his first day he came on board he had been an unmitigated nuisance and that he was now a greater nuisance still. *And this ate into his mind, just as that bracelet ate into his foreleg*” (*The Voyage* 82, emphasis added). This sentence indicates the connection between the pain from his increasing self-awareness and the pain from the bracelet and the fact that neither can be healed but for the grace of Aslan. Along with the realization of his hideous nature and growing self-hatred, this is a testimony to the fact that he is ready to meet Aslan and be open to his life-changing offer to help him. One morning, Edmund wakes early and sees “a dark figure moving on the seaward side of the wood” and for a minute he thinks it is Caspian but then realizes it is Eustace in his original form as a boy but so changed that Edmund fails to recognize him (*The Voyage* 83). As Brown observes in his article, this small detail of Edmund confusing the new Eustace with the young king says a great deal about his transformation: “he is not the boy he was but instead the boy he was meant to be” (“Further Up”) and he says to Edmund: “I won’t tell you how I became a – a dragon . . . I want to tell you how I stopped being one” (*The Voyage* 84).

The scene where Eustace gradually relates his meeting with Aslan and how he was “undragoned” is one of the strongest theological scenes in the novel and it is filled with various parallels and implications to Christianity. To start with, Eustace shares his feelings about meeting the great lion for the first time and how it impacted him spiritually:

I looked up and saw the very last thing I expected: a huge lion coming slowly towards me. And one queer thing was that there was no moon last night, but there was moonlight where the lion was. So it came nearer and nearer. I was terribly afraid of it. You may think that, being a dragon, I could have knocked any lion out easily enough. But it wasn’t that kind of fear. I wasn’t afraid of it

eating me, I was just afraid of *it* – if you can understand. Well, it came close up to me and looked straight into my eyes. And I shut my eyes tight. But that wasn't any good because it told me to follow it. (*The Voyage* 84)

The fear he experiences is not the ordinary fear usually felt when a person is standing opposite a normal “huge lion,” because Aslan is not a normal lion but the parallel of Christ. Therefore, it is a godly fear that fills Eustace and the light surrounding the lion is a further indication to its holiness: “He wraps himself in light” (Psalm 2). Eustace continues and tells how the lion spoke to his soul without using actual words and how he was compelled to follow it, for he knew he had to do what the lion told him (*The Voyage* 85). This resembles the way Gods speaks to his children, not with direct words but through the heart. Aslan leads Eustace to a beautiful paradise-like garden on a mountaintop with “trees and fruit and everything” (*The Voyage* 85) where they find a well with “bubbling” living water, “but it was a lot bigger than most wells – like a very big, round bath with marble steps going down into it. The water was as clear as anything . . .” (*The Voyage* 85). The bubbles in the water represent the living water only Christ can give and the association with a well points to the biblical story of the Samaritan woman who Christ meets at the well and offers her “living water” that will “become in him [or her] a spring of water welling up to eternal life” (John 4:10, 14). Referring to the normal water Christ continues: “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst” (John 4:13-14) and this leads to the next chapter of Eustace’s conversion: his acceptance of Christ.

When Eustace sees the water he longs to dive in and bathe his leg to ease the pain but the lion tells him that he “must undress first” (*The Voyage* 85). Figuring that dragons are “snaky sort of things and snakes can cast their skins,” he starts scratching himself until his scales begin to come off and scratching a little deeper, his “whole skin started peeling off beautifully” and eventually he is able to step out of it. He describes how he saw it “lying there beside [him], looking rather nasty” and how “it was a most lovely feeling” (*The Voyage* 85). Thinking he is ready, he starts to descend into the healing water but notices that his skin has become exactly like before, “hard and rough and wrinkled and scaly” (*The Voyage* 85). He gives it another try but only to find that there is yet another layer of dragon skin beneath the layer he has just removed:

Well, exactly the same thing happened again. And I thought to myself, oh dear, how ever many skins have I got to take off? For I was longing to bathe my leg. So I scratched away for the third time and got off a third skin, just like the two others, and stepped out of it. But as soon as I looked at myself in the water I knew it had been no good.

Then the lion said – but I don’t know if it spoke – “You will have to let me undress you.” (*The Voyage* 86)

This is a critical point in this scene because here, Lewis shows his readers that no matter how hard he tries, Eustace is not able to “undress” himself, that is, make the necessary changes in himself – to repent for his faults or sins and be disposed to change his life. Lewis writes about this in *Mere Christianity*, on our own we are unable to achieve the results we want of a better life: “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” (193). When people realize their faults, the desire to change becomes the heart of the matter and they try again and again to achieve it in their own might, only to fail as before. On this, Lewis writes: “All this trying leads up to the vital moment at which you turn to God and say, 'You must do this. I can't'” (146). The rest of Eustace’s account shows this surrender, he has to stop trying and allow Aslan to do the job. He will not do it without Eustace’s consent, which implies the choice every converter confronts, to change for the better or to remain in the shadows as before:

I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So I just lay flat down on my back to let him do it.

The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I’ve ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off. (*The Voyage* 86)

This time, the undressing is for real and it has permanent impact on Eustace. His dragon skin lies beside him “much thicker, and darker, and more knobbly-looking than the others had been” and he is “smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than [he] had been” (*The Voyage* 86). When Aslan throws him into the water, he is healed of his pain, transformed into a boy again and given “new clothes” (*The Voyage* 87). This act

of Aslan throwing Eustace into the water may suggest baptism but as Hinten notes, Lewis perceived the issue of baptism to be “likely to divide Christians rather than promote ‘mere Christianity’” (38). Therefore, it is preferable to associate this whole chapter simply with the spiritual conversion of an individual when he or she becomes a Christian.

Therefore, Eustace’s experience of Aslan’s cleansing resonates deeply in the Bible verse put forth before: “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!” (2 Corinthians 5:17). This verse makes three vital points and the decoding of them in relation to Eustace’s conversion is as follows, put forth by Young Life Foundation:

1. *God Makes Us New* – When a person becomes a Christian, he or she goes through the kind of transformation that Eustace experienced when Aslan removed the dragon skin to reveal the real boy in Eustace. A “new creation” is not a reworked “old creature” – it is something that hasn’t existed before.
2. *We Can’t Do It On Our Own* – What Eustace said is true, “No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn’t do it myself.” We cannot make significant changes in ourselves. That kind of transformation can only be done from the inside out – and only God can do that. No matter how hard we try, we cannot change who we are. But, God can!
3. *Everything Changes* – What used to define us is no longer there. The “old” has gone, this verse says, and the “new” has come. Note, though, that there is one part of us that doesn’t change: our bodies. God does not miraculously make us more attractive, intelligent, or talented. The transformation that we experience happens on the inside – we become *new* people, even though we have the same body. And, our relationships with others change too. *Everything* changes when God makes us new!

The “new clothes” represent the new Eustace and as the story continues, he does have some relapses like every new Christian does while learning to walk with Christ, but his radically changed nature is what catches the attention of his companions. It is even revealed through little details like laughter: “Eustace laughed – a different laugh from any Edmund had heard him give before” (*The Voyage* 84). Through Eustace’s ordeal and redemption, the reader is given a remarkably moving portrayal of salvation and as

Brown states in his article, through him “Lewis powerfully communicates the bad news about our sinful state and the good news of God’s grace and his cure for us” (“Further Up”).

Conclusion

The fantasy realm of C. S. Lewis's imagination has truly left its mark on the literate world for travelling through Narnia on the wings of enchanting narratives, engaging in exhilarating adventures and diving in the pool of spiritual refreshment leaves no reader untouched.

Each of the seven novels portray various areas of Lewis's life and education but the spiritual element is one of the strongest and *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* and *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* are the two stories that reveal this element in a clear and relatively concise way. However, Lewis did not write them as allegories or teaching tools in order to tell people about God. Rather, he wrote them to help his readers to feel the truth and power of Christ simultaneously and realize it in their own way.

Lewis understood the potency of the fantasy genre to communicate Christianity and in *The Chronicles of Narnia* his approach and use of it is brilliantly handled. His ability to show Christ appearing in Aslan is subtle and yet potent, leading Christians into a deeper perception of Christ and the Gospel while at the same time inviting those who do not believe to take a step closer to faith. In the same way, he depicts an explicit account of a spiritual conversion so that the reader understands the character's need for salvation and hopefully his own in the process.

The Chronicles are fascinating stories that readers turn to over and over again as they go through their daily lives. They always leave something new in their hearts and as Ford says so precisely, "each reader brings to the *Chronicles* his or her own story and comes away with expanded horizons and renewed vision" (1). Such fairy tales are worth reading at least once in a lifetime.

Works Cited

- Belmonte, Kevin. "Who is C. S. Lewis?" *C. S. Lewis Foundation*. C. S. Lewis Foundation, 2011. Web. 16 Mar. 2011.
- Beloved Lily [Kelly Kent]. "*The Voyage of the Dawn Treader: 'The Spiritual Life'.*" *Beloved Lily*. WordPress.com, 12 July 2010. Web. 18 Mar. 2011.
- Brown, Devin. "Further Up and Further In: The Undragoning of Eustace: Lewis's View of Divine Grace Part I & II." *Narnia Faith*. Grace Hill Media, n. d., n. pag. Web. 20 Mar. 2011.
- . Introduction. *Inside Narnia: A Guide to Exploring The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. By Brown. Michigan: Baker Books, 2005. 10-18. Print.
- Dorsett, Lyle W., and Marjorie Lamp Mead. Introduction. *C. S. Lewis: Letters to Children*. By Lewis. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. 3-7. Print.
- Downing, David C. *Into the Wardrobe: C. S. Lewis and the Narnia Chronicles*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005. Print.
- Ford, Paul F. *Companion to Narnia: A Complete Guide to the Magical World of C. S. Lewis's The Chronicles of Narnia*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005. Print.
- Giardina, Natasha. "Elusive Prey: Searching for Traces of Narnia in the Jungles of the Psyche." *Revisiting Narnia: Fantasy, Myth and Religion in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles*. Ed. Shanna Caughey. Dallas: BenBella Books Inc., 2005. 33-43. Print.
- Hinten, Marvin D. *The Keys to the Chronicles: Unlocking the Symbols of C. S. Lewis's Narnia*. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2005. Print.
- The Holy Bible, New International Version*. NIV Thinline Reference Bible. Michigan: Zondervan. 2002. Print.
- Lewis, C. S. *The Collected Letters of C. S. Lewis, Volume 3: Narnia, Cambridge, and Joy, 1950-1963*. Ed. Walter Hooper. San Francisco: HarperCollins, 2007. Print.
- . *Letters to Children*. Eds. Lyle W. Dorsett and Marjorie Lamp Mead. New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995. Print.

- . *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*. London: Grafton, 2002. Print.
- . *The Magician's Nephew*. London: Grafton, 2002. Print.
- . *Mere Christianity*. San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 2001. Print.
- . *On Stories and Other Essays on Literature*. Ed. Walter Hooper. New York: Harvest, 1982. Print.
- . *The Problem of Pain*. London: Fontana Books, 1957. Print.
- . *The Screwtape Letters*. London: Fount Paperbacks, 1977. Print.
- . *Surprised by Joy*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1955. Print.
- . *The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*. London: Grafton, 2002. Print.
- Stewart, Marilyn J. "Reepicheep's Desire: A Signpost to God." *The Christian Broadcasting Network*. The Christian Broadcasting Network, 2010. Web. 7 May 2011.
- Timmerman, John. H. "Fantasy Literature's Evocative Power." *Christian Century* 17 May 1978: 533-537. *Religion Online*. Web. 16 Mar. 2011.
- Tomkins, Steve. "The Secret of the Wardrobe." *BBC News Magazine*. BBC, 18 Nov. 2005. Web. 18 Mar. 2011.
- Young Life Foundation. "'The Voyage of the Dawn Treader' Youth Leader Guide." *Narnia Faith*. Grace Hill Media, n. d., n. pag. Web. 22 Mar. 2011.