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PRIMARY CHRISTIAN CONCEPTS
IN THE NARNIA CHRONICLES
BY C.S. LEWIS

By

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A Thesis
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
in
The Biblical Seminary in New York

New York, N.Y.
April 1962

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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

1. The Problem Stated and Defined

One of the most well known and widely discussed writers in the English literary world today is C.S. Lewis. Some are aghast at what they call his tricks, his bluffs, and his word - juggling.¹ Others have highly praised his work as a scholar and Christian apologist. Whatever the opinion of the critic or reader, the simple fact of Lewis's popularity witnesses to the unique quality of his work. Chad Walsh, commenting on Lewis's popularity, says this:

The most important reason for Lewis's literary appeal may simply be variety. One reader likes exposition, another prefers fiction, a third goes in for satire or fantasy. Lewis has written a small library, offering half a dozen literary roads to Jerusalem. 2

There was considerable interest when Lewis published his first children's book, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, which was an instant success.

Questions were naturally asked as to whether the books for children would be an attempt at Christian apology for his young readers, or they would be just a "good story." The series, called The Narnia Chronicles, now

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1. Walsh, Chad, C.S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics, New York, Macmillan Company, 1949, p. ix.

2. Ibid., p. 156.

completed, has been hailed both for the fine literary quality of the tales, and the clear and deep allegory which is woven throughout. Lewis as a writer of Christian literature has not failed to provide material for this needy field. It is the purpose of this study to discover the primary Christian concepts in the Narnia Chronicles.

While there is much interesting and not unimportant material that will be omitted, this study will be limited to those themes which are dominant in the whole series of books, to the truths which are of primary importance. This will be done for two reasons: to prevent overlapping of material, and to avoid the danger that is foremost in any interpretation of allegory, that of reading into the material that which the author had not intended to express. No attempt will be made to evaluate the works.

2. The Significance of the Problem

There is today an abundance and a variety of literature suitable for young readers. It is difficult, however, to find those books which have both good literary quality and a definite Christian emphasis. The Narnia Chronicles have both.

Although Lewis is well known as a writer for adults, many of his readers are unaware that he has written children's literature. Among those who have heard of the Narnia Chronicles, there are many who have not read and become acquainted with them.

The excellent quality of the books, the fact that the author is so well known for his other works, and the general lack of acquaintance with the Narnia Chronicles provide "sufficient justification for a detailed examination of these works."¹

3. Procedure of Study

After a brief discussion of facts about the author that are significant for this study, the first chapter will survey the characteristics of the Chronicles as a series and then present them individually, giving the main message of each, and acquainting the reader with the plot and main characters. The following chapters will deal with three dominant themes of the series, the concept of God, of evil, and the relationship between God and man. A conclusion will draw together the findings of this study.

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1. Montgomery, John W., "The Chronicles of Narnia and the Adolescent Reader," Religious Education, LIV (Sept. 1959), p. 418.

4. Sources of Study

The primary sources for this study will be Lewis's seven books for children, and two articles concerned with the Narnia Chronicles. Book reviews will be examined. Added to a general background of reading in Lewis's adult books , will be some works by George Macdonald and Chad Walsh.

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

CHAPTER I

A SURVEY OF THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

A. Introduction

In 1956, the Carnegie Medal, awarded annually for the best children's book published in the British Empire, was bestowed by the Library Association on Professor Clive Staples Lewis for his volume entitled The Last Battle. This brought to the attention of many readers of Lewis's adult books, and to many interested in children's literature, the series of books for children called The Narnia Chronicles. Those who sought them out praised them for their fine literary quality and the deeper meaning that lay behind the stories.

It is the purpose of this chapter to present facts about the author that are relevant to the subject, to discuss the characteristics of the books as a series, and then to give a sketch of the plot of each as background for a treatment of the main themes.

B. The Narnia Chronicles as a Series

I. The Author

Currently holding a position as professor of Medieval and Renaissance English at Cambridge, C.S. Lewis has been highly praised for his more scholarly writing,

the most famous example of which is The Allegory of Love, although he is better known for his Christian literature. His interest in the medieval is strongly brought out in his children's books. The fact that the author is English can also be seen in some of the expressions and words used, and other details of the stories. Lewis's popularity as a Christian writer led people to expect and seek out the Christian elements in the Narnia Chronicles.

As a boy, Lewis was fascinated by Animal Land. Both in his reading and in the stories that he wrote for his own amusement, he "had two chief literary pleasures - dressed animals and knights in armor."¹ These are both found in the Chronicles. As then he was interested in the whole history and geography of Animal Land, so now we see developed the history of the land of Narnia as well as a clear picture of the geography of that country and the surrounding area. Lewis protests that although we see similarities between Animal Land and Narnia, they have nothing in common in their real quality, for Animal Land "excluded the least hint of wonder."²

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1. Lewis, C.S., Surprised by Joy, London, Fontana Books, 1959, p.16.
2. Ibid., p.18.

Mere Christianity, a collection of earlier works, was published during the period in which the Narnia Chronicles were written, and also at that time were published Surprised by Joy, Till We Have Faces, and English Literature in the Sixteenth Century.

2. The Purpose of the Books

His first book for children, The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, Lewis wrote for his God child. At the beginning in a letter to her, he says that by the time the book is finished she will be too old for fairy tales, but some day when she is old enough to read them again she may tell him what she thinks of this one. Although written primarily for children from the ages of eight to twelve, Lewis very likely had adults in mind as well. In an essay on fairy stories he once said:

The only imaginative works that we ought to grow out of are those which it would have been better not to have read at all. A mature palate will probably not much care for creme de menthe: but it ought still to enjoy bread and butter and honey. 1

"The children's books written by C.S. Lewis appeal to adults as well as to children because of their simple charm and basic spiritual nourishment." 2

1. Lewis, C.S., Essays Presented to Charles Williams, On Fairy Stories, London, Oxford University Press, 1947, p.100, quoted by Kay Stillwell, The Lion of Judah in C.S. Lewisland, His, XIX(March 1959), p.36.
2. Ibid., Stillwell, p.36.

One of the main characters in the series, a little school girl named Lucy, in one of the stories finds a magic book in which she reads a story so lovely that it seems to be the best she has ever read. As the letters fade away from the page, she is filled with regret for she cannot even remember clearly what it is about.

"This is a very queer book. How can I have forgotten it? It was about a cup and a sword and a tree and a green hill, I know that much. But I can't remember and what shall I do?"
And she never could remember; and ever since that day what Lucy means by a good story is a story that reminds her of the forgotten story in the Magician's book. 1

In his article on the Narnia Chronicles, Montgomery suggests that Lewis's idea of a good story is that of Lucy's; one which reminds the reader of the story of

...the One who was nailed to the tree on his behalf and Who now guides the believer, expects great things of him through faith, and wants to receive him into His everlasting kingdom when his work on earth is done. 2

This is the one aim of the author, to remind and teach his readers of the things of Christ.

When the children in the stories are too old to come again into Narnia, Aslan, the lion used allegorically to represent Christ, comforts them by saying that they

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1. Lewis, C.S., The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, London, Geoffrey Bles, 1952, p.144.
2. Montgomery, op cit., p.424.

will meet him again. The real reason they were brought to Narnia was that by knowing Aslan there they would know him better (though by a different name) in their own world.¹

By having his young readers come to know Aslan in Narnia, perhaps they will learn in their own world to know Christ. This would be the author's hope.

3. Characteristics of the Series

The books contain many literary elements that delight children. There is the strong taste of magic, with spells and enchantments, magicians and witches. We meet, in an imaginary world, creatures such as dwarfs, giants, centaurs, fauns, dryads, and talking animals. The tone of the books is that of the medieval and chivalrous traditions, with fine horses, battles, swords and armor. A flash of humor appears at various points in the books.

Along with this imaginary and fairy tale element there is a reality and vitality, almost a tone of sadness, for they reflect a great deal of life here and now. This is due to the powerful and deep allegory that is woven throughout the Chronicles.²

. . . .

1. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p.222.

2. Statement from the book jacket of the Magician's Nephew, Bodley Head.

The Chronicles give the history of an imaginary country called Narnia. It is a place where spiritual issues assume clarity, reality, and a place of paramount importance, where the action and characters are all seen as they relate to the central figure of the book, Aslan. This king of the beasts, Aslan, is the figure which Lewis uses to portray Christ.

Redemption through Christ and only through Him is basic to all the books.¹ In each narrative there is a struggle between the forces of good (Aslan and his people) and the forces of evil (represented by the Witch and various other forms.) For some time the forces of evil seem almost too great, yet when Aslan chooses to act, the good overcome evil and Aslan again triumphs.

A further basic teaching throughout, usually implicit however, is that the things that can be seen and heard are not necessarily the only things which have reality. This is brought out first in the beginning of the series where one of the children comes into Narnia and the brothers and sisters think that her adventure is all in her imagination. They ask a wise old professor about it.

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1. Montgomery, op cit., p. 424.

" But do you really mean sir, " said Peter, "that there could be other worlds - all over the place, just around the corner - like that?"
"Nothing is more probable," said the professor, taking off his spectacles and beginning to polish them, while he muttered to himself, "I wonder what they do teach them at these schools." 1

This idea is picked up and carried throughout the series.

With these general comments in mind, attention will be given to the individual books which will be discussed in the order in which they were published.

C.Summary of the Content of the Chronicles

1.The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe

This magic adventure begins in a strange house with four children who are staying with a kind old professor during the war. Peter is a brave youth who is on the border of adulthood; Susan, a slightly younger sister, is very interested in trying to be grown up; Edmund, their younger brother, is of rather an unpleasant disposition as the story begins; and Lucy is the youngest of them all, but kind, cheerful and more spiritually discerning than the others. One day, by chance, Lucy discovers that she can go through the back of a wardrobe into a snowy land of pine forests where it is always winter, but where Christmas never comes. When all the

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1.Lewis, C.S., The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,
Victoria, Penguin Books, 1959, p. 49.

children come to Narnia they find that it is held under the power of a cruel White Witch. Edmund, largely out of jealousy to Peter, sides with the White Witch rather than the good folk of Narnia, and is made thoroughly miserable in his association with her. The Witch desires to capture the children to thwart an old prophecy that her reign will come to an end when the children rule in Narnia. The forces of the White Witch are finally conquered in a battle in which Aslan himself gives his life so that Edmund will not receive the rightful consequences of his treachery which is death. Aslan is miraculously restored, Narnia is set free from winter, and Father Christmas finally comes. The animals which had been turned to stone by the Witch are restored, and all is happy in Narnia where the children reign as kings and queens.

This narrative sets the stage for the later Chronicles, for in it we see the theme that is taken up and reflected in different ways in the rest of the series: the powers of evil may seem to be in control but they inevitably will be defeated by Christ. The picture of Aslan's death and resurrection is one which readers will recognize as a likeness to Christ's death, and it gives an idea of its meaning and necessity in a way that children could begin to understand.

2. Prince Caspian

Counting time as we do in our world, a year has passed, and yet when the children return to Narnia, hundreds of years have gone by for Narnia has a time all its own.¹ Again they find the land under bondage. A Telmarine has usurped the throne and under his rule no Talking Beast or any other of the mythical creatures dare to live in the open. In fact the ruler has told his nephew Caspian, the true king, that there are no such creatures and that the stories of Old Narnia are all nonsense and tales for children. Later when his life is threatened, Caspian runs away and finds that Old Narnia does exist, for he is found and taken in by the Talking Animals.

As his uncle pursues Caspian, the forces of New Narnia meet those of Old Narnia, and the latter are sorely pressed. Finally Caspian blows a magic horn that is said will bring the help of either four children (who in their absence have become almost legendary and are not believed in by all) or of Aslan himself.

The horn is sounded and under the guidance of Aslan the children reach Caspian in time, his uncle is defeated, and Caspian is crowned as the true king.

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1. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 18.

Aslan gives the Telmarines the choice of remaining in Narnia under different rule or of returning to their own land. Some choose Narnia, but some will not live in a land that they cannot rule, and return to their world. Peter and Susan are now told that they are too old to return to Narnia.

As in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, seen here is the inevitable outcome of the battle between the forces of Christ and Satan - the victorious Christ. Montgomery suggests that although the theme is redemption in each of the stories, here Narnia is being redeemed from a different evil; from that of human beings who would force themselves upon and assert control over those whom Christ has put under His own authority and that of His ministers. In the story, authority is given to the kings of Narnia whom Aslan has chosen.¹ Indeed, Narnia was made to be ruled over by men and had been that way from the beginning. The first king was a man and even the Talking Animals recognize this as right. Speaking of Caspian, Trufflehunter the Badger says: ²

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1. Montgomery, op cit., p. 424.

2. Lewis, C.S., Prince Caspian, New York, Macmillan Company, 1951, p.57.

This is the true king of Narnia we've got here: a true king coming back to true Narnia. And we beasts remember, even if dwarfs forget, that Narnia was never right except when a Son of Adam was king.

The problem of belief and unbelief is predominant in this book. First Caspian must come to believe in Old Narnia and the reality of Aslan, which finally happens. When asked by a dwarf, "Who believes in Aslan these days?" Caspian answers that he does.

And if I didn't believe in him before I would now. Back there among the humans the people who laughed at Aslan would have laughed at stories about Talking Beasts and Dwarfs. Sometimes I wonder if there really was such a person as Aslan: but then sometimes I wondered if there were really people like you. Yet, there you are. 1

Throughout there are people who believe and those who do not believe in Aslan, and they give the same reasons and excuses that we see today in believers and unbelievers in Christ. Many of them chose what was most comfortable for themselves, and others said that it does not matter what you believe as long as it works for you.

"I'll believe anyone or anything," said Nikabrik, "that'll batter these cursed Telmarine barbarians to pieces or drive them out of Narnia. Anyone or anything. Aslan or the White Witch, do you understand?" 2

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1. Ibid., p. 57.

2. Ibid., p. 63.

3. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader

As Lucy, Edmund, and their cousin Eustace stand in front of a picture of a beautiful little sailing ship on stormy sea, they are suddenly transported to it by magic. There they rejoice at finding their old friend Caspian, who has set off on a long sea voyage with the hope of finding seven lords who had gone out many years before to explore " the unknown eastern seas beyond the Lone Islands." Reepicheep, the talking mouse, has even the greater hope that they will find the country of Aslan himself, which is said to lie beyond the world's end. The narrative tells of the strange lands that they visit and the people whom they meet. They do find the answer to their question about the seven lords, but only Reepicheep goes over the world's end into Aslan's country.

Montgomery sees this as narrative which is an allegory of the perils that a man encounters in his search for Christ's kingdom. He cites the example of the seven lords who had begun their search. One of them married for security, two of them died as a result of the fascination that they had for wealth and treasure, one became enmeshed in his own dream life, and the last, there at the world's end, failed to go on because of their spiritual presumption and their lack of faith. Reepicheep

is given as a glorious example of one who seeks first the kingdom of God.¹

Closely allied with this theme is that of temptation and deliverance.² Each of the four children in the story is tempted to do something wrong that would have seriously affected their relationships with others and with Aslan. Eustace, having given into selfishness, is turned into a dragon. He becomes very miserable and sorry, and tries to free himself from the spell. Finally he has to let Aslan peel off the dragon skin so he can be a boy again. Not only is he now a boy, but through the experience his heart is changed and he is no longer the disagreeable person he had been.²

When the Dawn Treader arrives at Gold Water Island, the children find a pool of water that will turn anything to gold. When Caspian warns them to tell no one about it, Edmund challenges his right to the ownership of the island, and there is almost a duel between the two because of Edmund's thought of the gold. At that moment a huge lion, Aslan, appears and good sense returns to Edmund. Disaster almost comes upon them because of greed, but Aslan delivers them.³

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1. Montgomery, op cit., p. 424.

2. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, Chapter 7.

3. Ibid., Chapter 8.

Lucy is faced with the temptation to make herself more beautiful by magic, so that she will be as much praised and noticed as her sister Susan, an appeal to her pride. Again Aslan appears and prevents her.¹

4. The Silver Chair

Eustace, a new Eustace since his last experiences in Narnia, and his friend Jill run right into a new adventure when they run through a door in the school wall and find themselves in a different country. There they meet Aslan the lion who sends them, with the help of four clues, on a search for Prince Rilian, the son of Caspian, who has disappeared under mysterious circumstances. With the help of a marsh-wiggle they set out on their search. They have various adventures and narrow escapes (they were almost destroyed by giants, and cast under the spell of an evil enchantress). Finally they find Rilian who has been kept prisoner in a dark underground kingdom of a cruel witch. He is set free, returns to Narnia, and all ends well.

In discussing the spiritual message of this book, Montgomery says that the key lies in the insight we get into the strategy of Satan who would plunge us into a world of spiritual darkness by pretending to give us the things

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1. Ibid., Chapter 10.

to which we are already entitled by God's grace.¹ This is shown in the case of Rilian in the story. He is the true king of Narnia, yet he cannot remember that, because of the spell that the witch has put upon him. She is planning to conquer Narnia and has promised that she will let him help to rule the kingdom that is his by right.²

The problem of obedience, disobedience, and their results is also striking. The children are given four signs or instructions to follow. The first one they lose the opportunity to carry out because Eustace and Jill quarrel.³ The second is that they must travel north to the ruined city of the giants, and the third that they will find writing on a stone there which they must obey. On the way, however, they meet a beautiful lady (the witch) who tells them of the comforts they will find if they go to the giant's castle. In their concern for comfort they go to the castle and miss the signs. Because of this they are not only losing time from their search, but they are also almost destroyed by the giants. Their mistake is pointed out to them by Aslan, and the

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1.Montgomery, op cit., p. 424.

2.Lewis, C.S., The Silver Chair, New York, Macmillan Company, 1953, p.135.

3.Ibid., Chapter 3.

children and the marsh-wiggle escape. The final clue which tells them how to recognize the lost prince whom they have never met, they follow in spite of doubts and Rilian is freed.¹

At each point they had the choice to obey or disobey. In each case something different keeps them from obedience, but the disobedient acts have certain unavoidable consequences, making their task more difficult than Aslan had intended it to be. Jill and Eustace become aware of the gravity of not following Aslan's orders, for they were made to help them and are the best plan.

5. The Horse and His Boy.

In a country near Narnia, a talking horse, Bree, and a boy, Shasta, have been held in bondage. One day they chance to meet, plan their escape, and together set out for Narnia. On the way they meet another talking horse, Hwin, and a girl, Aravis, who is running away from home to escape marriage to a wicked suitor whom her father has planned that she marry. On the way, the four of them pass through a city where by chance Shasta falls in with Susan and Edmund, young rulers of Narnia visiting in the land. Learning that they are in danger,

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1. Ibid., Chapter 11.

Susan and Edmund depart stealthily, and together Shasta and Aravis learn that Rabadash, the prince of the land, plans to invade Narnia by going the shorter way across the desert and through the country of Archenland. The two children take off with the talking horses immediately in the hope that they will go more quickly than Rabadash and be in time to warn the King of Archenland, thus saving Narnia. This they manage to do, Rabadash's army is defeated, and all is well. It is discovered that Shasta is the long lost son of the King of Archenland, and the heir to the throne. Later he marries Aravis and they rule long and well.

This narrative stands a little apart from the others in that it does not contribute to the on-going history of Narnia, but comes back to fill in some detail of what went on during the reign of Peter as High King of Narnia, after the children had freed the land from the rule of the White Witch. It has more of an 'Arabian Nights' flavor than the others.

Examining the allegory we find here a picture of Christ as One Who guides and protects, and Who has a plan or purpose for the life of the individual. When Shasta was born there had been a prophecy that one day he would save his country from great danger.¹ In

1. Lewis, C.S., The Horse and His Boy, New York, Macmillan Company, 1954, p. 175.

spite of the plot of an enemy of the kingdom to get rid of him, his life was saved, although he had to live in a strange land. At the right time, under Aslan's guidance, he was brought back to his place in time to save the country from the armies of Rabadash.

Aslan appears at various points in the story in different forms. Once, it is because Shasta thinks he is being chased by lions that he changes his direction of travel and meets Aravis and Hwin.¹ Later, it is because the horses are being chased by a lion that they are able to gain the strength of fear, and reach the king of Archenland in time to warn him.² When Shasta is all alone waiting to be joined by the others, it is Aslan who comforts and protects him from wild animals.³ Later when Shasta meets Aslan face to face he realizes what has been done for him.

"Don't you think it was bad luck to meet so many lions?" said Shasta.

"There was only one lion," said the Voice.

"What on earth do you mean? I've just told you that there were at least two the first night, and--"

"There were only one: but he was swift of foot."

"How do you know?"

"I was that lion." And as Shasta gaped with open

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1. Ibid., p. 24.

2. Ibid., p. 122.

3. Ibid., p. 74.

mouth and said nothing, the Voice continued, "I was the lion that forced you to join Aravis. I was the cat who comforted you among the houses of the dead. I was the lion who drove the jackals from you while you slept. I was the lion who gave the horses the new strength of fear for the last mile so you could reach King Lune in time. And I was the lion you do not remember who pushed the boat in which you lay, a child near death, so that it came to shore where a man sat, wakeful at midnight, to receive you." **E**

6. The Magician's Nephew

Digory and his friend Polly are sent by Digory's magician uncle by means of magic rings into the "wood between the worlds." From there they enter an old dying world, Charn, where they meet a witch who accomanies them back to their own world. After causing no little trouble there, she, the children, and a cartman and his horse escape the consequences by fleeing by magic into another world. They find themselves in a strange place.

"This is not Charn," came the Witch's voice. "This is an empty world, This is nothing." And it was uncommonly like nothing. There were no stars. It was so dark that they couldn't see one another at all and it made no difference whether you kept your eyes shut or opened. Under their feet there was a cool flat something which might have been earth, and was certainly not grass or wood. The air was cold and dry and there was no wind. 2

Then they hear the voice of Aslan singing and

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1. Ibid., p. 139.

2. Lewis, C.S., The Magician's Nephew, London, Bodley Head, 1955, p. 95.

calling the new world of Narnia into existence. However, it is because the children found the witch and brought her to Narnia, that sin and evil enter this new world. As a result, Digory is given the task of going to a garden far away and bringing back an apple, from the seeds of which will grow a tree that the witch will not dare approach. This will protect Narnia for some years.¹ This is accomplished, the tree grows, the cabman and his wife (brought by Aslan's magic) rule over the land, the children return to their world, Digory taking with him an apple from the tree which miraculously cures his sick mother. Digory later becomes the professor with whom the four children stay in the first book of the series.

In one of his books for adults, Lewis says:

Very well then, atheism is too simple. And I'll tell you another view that is also too simple. It's the view that I call Christianity-and-water, a view that says there is a good God in heaven and everything is all right - leaving out all the difficult and terrible doctrines about sin and Hell and the devil, and the redemption. 2

In his books for children Lewis has not given his young readers the view that he calls Christianity-and-water. Especially in The Magician's Nephew we see pictured the far-reaching effects of sin.³

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1.Ibid., p.140.

2.Lewis C.S., Mere Christianity, London, Fontana Books, 1955, p. 45.

3.Montgomery, op cit., p.425.

The destructive power of sin is seen by the children in the old world Charn. They find the world to appear weary and dying. Only one star is left, the sun is dull, and on the earth there spreads a vast city in which no living thing could be seen. When the children question the Witch how it came to be that way, she explains that in a battle for power over this world her armies had all been slain, and the forces of her sister (forces of good) had been ready to take control. She would not be defeated and spoke the single deplorable Word which had the power of magic to destroy all living things except the one who spoke it. A moment later she was the only living creature under the sun. When the children asked her about all the innocent people who had never done anything to deserve destruction, the Witch merely replied, "But don't you understand? I was the queen."¹

Another incident which shows the far-reaching effects of sin, perhaps more within the range of experience of children, is when Digory and Polly first go to Charn and find it under a magic spell. They find a small bell under which it is written that it will break the enchantment but bring danger. The children quarrel over whether or not to ring it. Finally Digory loses his temper and

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1. The Magician's Nephew, p. 62.

does so - just to "show Polly a thing or two." The spell is broken, the Witch is awakened, and this leads to all the trouble that she causes in the real world, and to the introduction of sin and evil into the clean new world of Narnia. It all started with a quarrel.

7. The Last Battle

The Last Battle brings us to the final events in the history of Narnia. In these times, an evil ape persuades a simple donkey to wear a lion skin and pretend to be Aslan. The people will follow every order that the ape, as Aslan's supposed mediator, gives. The ape also enters into alliance with a foreign power, the Calormarines, and soon the Narnians are as good as slaves under the approval of the false Aslan. The present king of Narnia who still believes in Aslan, calls for help from the past. Jill and Eustace come to his aid. Faced with overwhelming odds the Narnia forces are finally driven back into a stable through which they enter the country of Aslan. From there, Aslan calls an end to the whole world of Narnia. The people from Narnia are gathered in and then either sent away from Aslan's country, or welcomed further into it. The children and the Narnians who remain find that all that was good in their own worlds is there, and a new life begins for them where they will be with Aslan whom they love.

This book is no doubt meant to give Lewis's young readers a graphic portrayal of the end of our own human history. In the story, Montgomery finds "the Anti-Christ, the Battle of Armageddon, death, general resurrection, and the consummation of the plan of Redemption in a new heaven and a new earth."¹ This sounds like strong meat for children but it is kept on their level, while the symbolism is clear and simple.

The story also has an answer for children who wonder what it is like for a person to leave this world, and the question of death was also a problem for Lewis when he was a child.² When the unicorn arrives in Aslan's country he expresses the feelings of them all:

I have come home at last! This is my real country!
I belong here. This is the land I've been looking
for all my life, though I never knew it till now.
The reason we love old Narnia is that it sometimes
looked a little like this. ³

For a time the children do not realize what has happened to them, and they are afraid that they will have to leave Narnia. Aslan comforts them. ⁴

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1. Montgomery, op cit., p. 425.

2. Surprised by Joy, p. 21.

3. The Last Battle, p. 162.

4. Lewis, C.S., The Last Battle, New York, Macmillan Company, 1956, p. 173.

"No fear of that," said Aslan. "Have you not guessed? There was a real railway accident," said Aslan softly, "your father and mother and all of you are- as you used to call it in the Shadow-lands- dead. The term is over: the holidays have begun. The dream is ended: this is morning." And as he spoke he no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and so beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all stories, and we can most truly say that they lived happily ever afterwards. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and title page; now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story, which no one on earth has read; which goes on forever; in which every chapter is better than the one before.

D.Summary

This chapter has discussed the Narnia Chronicles as a series of books and has viewed the individual books to indicate the plot and meaning of the basic allegory of each.

The purpose of the books as a series is to acquaint those who read them with Christ, the real center of the stories, and to give insight into what He is like and the way He works. Through allegory we see the dominant themes of redemption only through Christ, and the victory of Christ over the power of evil. The reality of things that are spiritual is an implicit teaching of the books.

As individual books, each has a central Christian theme. The first book, The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe,

shows the necessity for Christ's death to save his children from the power and consequences of sin. Prince Caspian again emphasizes the theme of redemption, but also the problem of belief and unbelief and the results of each. Temptation and deliverance by Christ are the dominant ideas of the Voyage of the Dawn Treader, a picture of the perils a man encounters in his search for Christ's kingdom. The snare of the evil one who promises the things that are rightfully ours as children of God in return for service to him, is the basic idea in The Silver Chair, although the problems of obedience and disobedience can be found throughout. The Horse and His Boy is a picture of the guiding and protecting hand of God over a person's life.

The last two books of the series deal with the beginning and the end of the history of Narnia, and, allegorically, of our world. Christ at the beginning is creator, at the end is judge, and the One to whom all things are gathered and with whom His children live. The Magician's Nephew paints a vivid picture of the far-reaching effects of sin, and the Last Battle of what happens "afterwards."

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTOLOGY IN THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

CHAPTER II

CHRISTOLOGY IN THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

A. Introduction

In his book, C.S. Lewis: Apostle to the Skeptics, Chad Walsh makes this statement:

If Christianity survives in England and America it will not be the work of one man - and perhaps not really the work of man at all. But the odds are that it will bear strong traces of the gospel according to C.S. Lewis. 1

It is certainly true that the writings of Lewis have had, and are having, a great influence on many people. A study of "the gospel according to C.S. Lewis" is then very much in order. To study his various books, it is not difficult to see that Lewis's theology is highly Christocentric."² It is the purpose of this chapter to set forth the Christology of Lewis as found in the Narnia Chronicles.

B. Christology in the Narnia Chronicles

1. Literary Device Portraying Christ

It is clear from a reading of the Chronicles that the plot of each book, and indeed the whole history of Narnia revolves around the figure of Aslan the Lion.

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1. Walsh, op cit., p. 172.

2. Ibid., p. 78.

Neither is it difficult to see that Aslan the Lion is meant to portray Christ to the young readers of these books. Outstanding among the evidence to support this statement are the following:

- (1) In the book of Hebrews we read, "In these last days He has spoken to us by a Son, whom He appointed the heir of all things, through whom also He created the world."¹ In the Magician's Nephew Lewis explains how the world of Narnia came to be: it was created through the Lion, Aslan.
- (2) There is a parallel drawn to Christ's death on the cross and His resurrection. The plot of The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe centers around the death and coming to life again of Aslan the Lion.
- (3) The central Christian belief is that Christ's death somehow put us right with God and made it possible that we should get a fresh start.² Aslan's death and resurrection had a similar meaning: it meant salvation for the people of Narnia who desired it.³

The creative power, the death and resurrection, and the principal work of Christ are seen through the literary device of Aslan the Lion.

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1. Hebrews 1:2.
2. Mere Christianity, p. 54.
3. The Last Battle, p. 33,

"Aslan is the Divine Christ - God revealed to creatures in a form which they could at least partially understand."¹

2. The Person of Christ

a. In the Trinity

Although a Trinitarian, Lewis says comparatively little about the third person of the Trinity. In a conversation with my friend, Professor David W. Soper, Lewis once explained that he regards the Holy Ghost as being, so to speak, God within us; His principal mission is to lead us to Christ. For this reason, the Third Person is singularly elusive when a prosaic description of the Trinity is attempted. ²

As in his adult books, so in those for children, Lewis says little about the Holy Spirit. There is very definitely seen in each of the characters who come to believe in and follow Aslan, a change of person that is very marked, which is attributed to their relationship with the Lion. This gradual working of a power in their lives implies, rather than explicitly states the doctrine of the Holy Spirit as "God within us." An example is the case of Eustace Scrubb who has met Aslan face to face, and been transformed from a dragon into a boy.

It would be nice, and fairly nearly true to say that "from that time forth Eustace was a different boy." To be strictly accurate, he began to be a different boy. There were still many days when he could be very tiresome. But most of these I shall not notice. The cure had begun. ³

1. Montgomery, op cit., p. 424.

2. Walsh, opcit., p.78.

3. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p.105.

There is no uncertainty about the existence of the first person of the Trinity, God the Father. Aslan, as Christ, is clearly described as the son of the great Emperor - beyond - the - sea. Though it is clearly stated that there is such a person who is the Father of Aslan, we are told nothing else about him. All we can know of him is the glimpse we get of his likeness in his son. This, however, is not mentioned. In the Chronicles, the main work of Aslan is to save, not to reveal the person of his Father.

b. His Dual Nature

Nowhere in the writings of Lewis is one allowed to think that Jesus is any other than God and man. In Him is found the unity of two natures in one personality. So it is in Lewis's presentation of Aslan as the Christ. Aslan is at once fully an animal of Narnia as the subjects of that country are. Yet he is something more than lion, for he is also the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-sea

(1) The Humanity of Christ

As Christ came to our earth in human form that we might know Him, so Aslan comes to Narnia in a form that the animals, who are his subjects, can understand. They all know him as the Lion, the King of the Beasts. However, just as there are many who think that Jesus

was not fully human, so there are animals who cannot believe that Aslan is really an animal as they are. In The Horse and His Boy the horse, Bree, who has been away from Narnia for some time and who has only heard of Aslan (and never met him), thinks that Aslan is not a real lion.

"No doubt," continued Bree, "when they speak of him as a lion they only mean he's as strong as a lion or (to his enemies of course) as fierce as a lion. Or something of that kind. Even a little girl like you Aravis, must see that it is quite absurd to suppose that he is a real lion. Indeed it would be disrespectful. If he was a lion he would have to be a beast like the rest of us. Why! (and here Bree began to laugh) "If he was a lion he'd have four paws, and a tail and WHISKERS!..... Aie, ooh, hoo-hoo! Help!" For just as he said the word WHISKERS one of Aslan's had actually tickled his ear. 1

In answer to Bree's confident statement that he is not a real lion at all, Aslan says:

"Now Bree," he said, "you poor proud, frightened Horse, draw near. Nearer still my son. Do not dare not to dare. Touch me. Smell me. Here are my paws, here is my tail, these are my whiskers, I am a true beast." 2

Not only the animals know him as a beast, but the children who come into the land of Narnia meet and know him as a beast also. At first, naturally enough, when they meet the lion they are frightened. When they come to know him, however, they are in awe of him, but no longer fear him in the sense of being afraid. Lucy,

1. The Horse and His Boy, p. 170
2. Loc cit.

perhaps the one to know and love Aslan the best of all, experiences this. Although she is still in awe of him they are very close friends. In one instance when she has not seen Aslan for quite some time, she turns and sees that he is with her.

For what stood in the doorway was Aslan himself, the Lion, the Highest of all High Kings. And he was solid and real and warm and he let her kiss him and bury herself in his shining mane. And from the low earthquake-like sound that came from inside him, Lucy even dared to think that he was purring. 1

From these and other instances found throughout the books of the series, we cannot miss the fact that Aslan is truly a beast, and that Lewis views Christ as truly human.

(2) The Divinity of Christ

Not one of the books of the series leads us to believe that Aslan is merely a beast. Clearly he is more than that. There is a certain quality about him that we might, for now, call simply "otherness." He is not like the other beasts, there is something else about him which they do not have. The animals themselves cannot put this difference into words, but they are aware of it. When the reader is first introduced to Aslan in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe the beavers

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1. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 146.

are trying to explain to the children who Aslan is.

"Is - is he a man?" asked Lucy.

"Aslan a man!" said Mr. Beaver sternly. "Certainly not. I tell you he is the King of the wood and the son of the great Emperor-beyond-the-sea. Don't you know who is the King of the Beasts? Aslan is a lion, THE Lion, the great Lion."

"Then he isn't safe?" said Lucy.

"Safe?" said Mr. Beaver; "don't you hear what Mrs. Beaver tells you? Who said anything about safe?

'Course he isn't safe. But He's good. He's the King I tell you." 1

This sense of the "otherness" of Aslan is also stressed by the often repeated truth that "He is not a tame Lion."

Whenever the story of Aslan is told, and especially told to those in the later days of Narnia when most of the subjects of that country have never met him but know of him only by the old stories that are told of him, one thing that is remembered in all the stories is the idea "Is it not said in all the old stories that he is not a Tame Lion?"²

A further detail which is found in many places is the noticeable reaction of people to the very name of Aslan, even when they have not met him and do not know who he is. This also occurs in the first book of the series where the children first hear the name of Aslan.

And now a very curious thing happened. None of the children knew who Aslan was any more than you do; but the moment the beaver had spoken these words everyone felt quite different. Perhaps it

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1. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 75.

2. The Last Battle, p.15.

has sometimes happened to you in a dream that someone says something that you don't understand but in the dream it feels as if it had some enormous meaning either a terrifying one which turns the whole dream into a nightmare or else a lovely meaning too lovely to be put into words, which makes the dream so beautiful that you remember it all your life and are always wishing that you could get into that dream again. It was like that now. At the name of Aslan each one of the children had something jump in its inside. 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 holidays or the beginning of summer. 1

The response which the very name of Aslan awakens in people speaks of this quality of his that is something more than beasthood.

There are other facts about Aslan that would lead one to conclude that he is not an ordinary beast. One of these is the fact that while the history of Narnia goes on, and the children find that friends they knew there once have gone, new ones have come, kingdoms and cities rise and are destroyed; that as the political scene changes greatly as thousands of Narnian years pass, still Aslan is always there and is always the same. There is also a recognition on the part of the animals that while their world is subject to change and will come to an end, Aslan's country is different. "All worlds draw to an end except Aslan's own Country."²

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1. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p.65.
 2. The Last Battle, p.84.

The fact of Aslan's resurrection, or coming to life again after his death, is the greatest indication that he is more than a common animal. After he came to life again he did not appear as a ghost or an apparition but was a real lion as he had been.¹

The awe with which Aslan is approached by those who meet him shows also that they sense that he is worthy of awe and worship. It is something the children knew when they meet him, but again, they cannot explain it. Shasta, the boy in The Horse and His Boy meets Aslan before he has heard about him from others. His reaction is noteworthy.

But after one glance at the lion's face he slipped out of the saddle and fell at its feet. He couldn't say anything but then he didn't want to say anything. The High King above all Kings stooped towards him. . . he lifted his face and their eyes met. Then instantly the pale brightness of the mist and the fiery brightness of the lion rolled themselves together into a swirling glory and gathered themselves up and disappeared. 2

Aslan is clearly pictured as being fully beast and yet as having another nature which is united with the other in one personality. Lewis, using Aslan to portray Christ, clearly points to Jesus as being fully human and yet fully divine, the very Son of God.

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1. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p.147.

2. The Horse and His Boy, p.140.

3. The Work of Christ

There are three aspects of the work of Christ that stand out clearly in the Narnia Chronicles. These are His work as Creator, as Saviour, as Judge. Although these are discernible throughout the whole series, each aspect is treated more thoroughly in one of the books: Christ as Creator in The Magician's Nephew, as Saviour in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, and as Judge in The Last Battle.

a. Christ as Creator

In the Narnia Chronicles these are three worlds to which we are introduced - Narnia, the old world Charn, and the world from which the children enter Narnia. Other worlds are hinted at but not specifically mentioned.¹ Although we are not told that Aslan created all these, we are given a beautiful picture of the time when Narnia comes into being. It is called into being by the great Lion, and as he sings the light, the earth, and all that makes up the world comes into existence.

All this time the Lion's song, and his stately prowl to and fro, backwards and forwards, was going on... Polly was finding the song more and more interesting because she thought she was beginning to see the connection between the music and the things that were happening. When a line of dark firs sprang up on a ridge about a hundred yards away she felt they

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1. The Magician's Nephew, p.37.

were connected with a series of deep prolonged notes which the Lion had sung a second before. And when he burst into a series of lighter notes she was not surprised to see primroses appearing in every direction. This, she felt quite certain, that all the things were coming (as she said) "out of the Lion's head." When you listened to his song you heard the things he was making up: when you looked around you, you saw them. 1

The fact of this creation shows certain facts about both the creator and the things he has created.

The obvious thing that is shown by the act of creation is that the Creator, God, is creative and original. Where once He was the only "Thing" in existence, He has now created other "things" out of His own power and existence.² Only He is perfect enough to be creative in this sense of "calling things into being." He is so brimful of existence that He can give it away, can cause things to be, and to be things really other than Himself.³

As the creatures of Narnia are called into being they are given individual lives and beings apart from Aslan, they are free creatures. The Lion says, " Narnia, Narnia, Narnia, awake. Love. Think. Speak. Be walking trees, be talking Beasts. Be divine waters. " Then he says, "Creatures, I give you yourselves."⁴

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1. The Magician's Nephew, p. 104.
2. Lewis, C.S., Miracles, London, Fontana Books, 1960, p.91.
3. Ibid., p. 92.
4. The Magician's Nephew, p. 114.

The creature must necessarily be in a certain relationship to the One who made him. The Creator must be greater than the one He has made and be in control of it. As one of the animals of Narnia put it, "He is not the slave of the stars but their Maker."¹ There is also a vast difference in the nature of one who is made and the One who makes..... one makes, the other is made; one is original, one is derivative. But at the same time, there is a closer intimacy possible between the Maker and His creature than there can be attained between any two of the creatures.²

Aslan has a plan for the land of Narnia and when the ~~time~~ comes that all his plan is accomplished, he brings the world to an end. In every decisive battle and event in the history of the country Aslan is there or sends his messengers to the aid of his people. He is a picture of one who not only makes the world but is at work in it, has a plan for it, and will bring it to an end in his own good time. The people in his creation are given a certain freedom, but he is always in control.

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1. The Last Battle, p. 15.

2. Lewis, C.S., The Problem of Pain, London, Fontana Books, 1957, p.2.

b. As Saviour

"The central Christian belief is that Christ's death has somehow put us right with God and has given us a fresh start. Theories as to how it did this are another matter." 1

The first book of the Chronicles deals primarily with this "central Christian belief." The death and resurrection of Aslan (Christ) is the climax of the whole book. The picture that he shows of this is very similar to the story of Christ's death. Lewis says the reason for Aslan's death is not that he has done anything wrong, for he has not. Edmund, however, on entering Narnia, joins the forces of the White Witch. Then when he meets Aslan he betrays the White Witch and joins the forces of Aslan the Good. The Witch approaches Aslan stating her rights.

"You at least know the magic that the Emperor put into Narnia at the very beginning. You know that every traitor belongs to me as my lawful prey and that for every treachery I have a right to kill. And so," continued the Witch, "that human creature is mine. His blood is my property." 2

It is then that Aslan says that he will die in Edmund's place. This is the reason for his death - it is for the salvation of another, is payment for the sin of Edmund. So Aslan permits himself to be bound and muzzled. Before the Witch kills him she allows her people to shave off

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1. Mere Christianity, p. 54.

2. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 129.

his mane and ridicule him, and treat him cruelly. Finally he is killed and the White Witch exults over her seeming victory. Some time later the children see Aslan and know that he is alive by the power that goes back beyond the beginning of time. Aslan comes to the aid of the country and saves them from the White Witch.

We can understand how his life saves that of Edmund. How this comes also to save others in Narnia is never explained, but that it is so is stated. We find reference in other books to the "good Lion by whose blood all Narnia was saved."¹ Later Edmund calls Aslan the Lion "who saved me and saved Narnia."²

Aslan's death has somehow given the Narnians and the children a fresh start and gives them the power and the desire to live different lives. Aslan's death has saved them not only from the punishment of sin, but from the power of sin itself.

c. As Judge

When the time has come for the world of Narnia at last to come to an end, all the creatures are gathered in. Each comes face to face with Aslan. When some look at him their faces have a look of fear and hatred. These creatures swerve to Aslan's left and disappear into his

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1. The Last Battle, p. 33.

2. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, p. 164.

big black shadow. The children never see them again. The others look at Aslan and love him, and are welcomed into his country to stay forever. On a children's level Lewis has pictured what he has expressed in one of his adult books:

God is going to invade this world all right: but what is the good of saying that you are on His side then, when you see the whole natural universe melting away like a dream and something else comes crashing in -- something it never entered your head to conceive; something so beautiful to some of us and so terrible to others that none of us will have any choice left? For this time it will be God without disguise; something so overwhelming that it will strike either irresistible love or irresistible horror into every creature. It will be too late then to choose your side. 1

C. Summary

This chapter has been concerned with the Christology in the Narnia Chronicles. Lewis used the central figure of Aslan the Lion to portray Christ throughout the series. Of the other persons of the Trinity Lewis explicitly mentions God the Father, but the teaching about the Holy Spirit is implied rather than directly stated.

It was noted that Lewis pictures with care a Christ Who was human, Who lived among His people in a form that they could understand. He clearly points out,

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1. Mere Christianity, p.63.

however, that Christ is ~~also~~ divine, the Son of God;
One Whom His people approach with reverence and awe.

There are three aspects of the work of Christ
which stand out clearly in the Narnia Chronicles.

The Magician's Nephew tells the story of the creation of
Narnia by Aslan, pointing allegorically to Christ, for
"all things were made through Him, and without Him was
not anything made that was made."¹ The Lion, the Witch,
and the Wardrobe is primarily concerned with Christ
as Saviour, while The Last Battle pictures Christ as Judge
at the end of time and our world.

1. John 1:3

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

CHAPTER THREE

THE CONCEPT OF EVIL IN THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

A. Introduction

Progress and the goodness of human nature -- until very recently they were taken for granted in most modern thought. These assumptions contradict what the main tradition of Christianity has always said. Christianity is wildly optimistic and bleakly pessimistic at the same time.¹

In the Narnia Chronicles, Lewis does not leave his readers with merely the "wildly optimistic" view of a great and triumphant God, but necessarily presents the picture of that over which He has triumphed, that from which He has saved man. It is the purpose of this chapter to set forth the main elements of the concept of evil as seen in Lewis's books for children.

B. The Concept of Evil in the Narnia Chronicles

Two of the main factors in the plot of each of the Chronicles are those of the central figure of Aslan and the opposing force of evil in the person of the White Witch and her crew. (These were "ogres with monstrous teeth, and wolves and bull-headed men; spirits of evil trees and poisonous plants ... Cruels and Hags and Incubuses, Wraiths, Horrors, Efreet, Sprites, Orknies, Wooses, and Attins".)¹ Although the personification of the evil

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1. Walsh, op. cit., p. 81.

2. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 138.

force takes various forms, in reality it is always the same evil power which we first met in the form of the Witch, and the others are those who are under her power. This White Witch and her crew are unmistakably the Devil and his crew. Lewis says in Mere Christianity:

I know someone will ask me, "Do you really mean, at this time of day, to re-introduce our old friend the devil - hoofs and horns and all?" Well, what the time of day has to do with it I don't know. And I am not particular about the hoofs and horns. But in other respects my answer is "Yes, I do." 1

This belief of Lewis's is evident in the Chronicles.

1. The Nature of Evil

In a discussion of the nature of evil it is necessary to point out the limits of this topic. The term evil here must be distinguished from that of sin and temptation. Evil is the power or force which is attempting to bring about sin, and which uses the means of temptation of various types. The nature of evil then would be distinct from its means and its goal.

There are several characteristics of the nature of evil evident in the Chronicles.

(1) One of the most noticeable of these is the anti-thesis between good and evil, shown here in the hatred of the forces of evil for Aslan and his followers. One instance of this is seen in the reaction of the Witch to

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1. Mere Christianity, p. 47.

Aslan's voice when he is singing the creation of Narnia.

But the Witch looked as if, in a way, she understood the music better than any of them. Her mouth was shut, her lips were pressed together, and her fists were clenched. Ever since the song began she felt that this whole world was filled with a magic different from her~~s~~ and stronger. She hated it. She would have smashed the whole world, or all the worlds, to pieces, if it would only stop the singing.¹

This feeling of hatred is felt not only by the witch but also by those in her service. When Edmund is giving the witch information to be used against the forces of Aslan, he too reacts in this way. "For at the mention of Aslan he had a mysterious and horrible feeling just as the others had a mysterious and lovely feeling."²

(2) In the above quotation from The Magician's Nephew, the witch recognizes that the power of Aslan was very different from hers, and also stronger. Of each of the events in the history of Narnia where the forces of evil are pitted against the powers of good, the good triumph. In the first book of the series, the triumph of Aslan comes in fulfillment of an old prophecy that the Narnians believed:

Wrong will be right when Aslan comes in sight,
At the sound of his roar, sorrows will be no more,
When he bares his teeth, winter meets its death,
And when he shakes his mane we will have spring again.³

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1. The Magician's Nephew, p.99.

2. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 82.

3. Ibid., p.75.

In the story of The Last Battle the ultimate and final triumph over evil is seen.

(3) Again in reference to the quotation from The Magician's Nephew, "But the Witch looked as if, in a way, she understood the music better than any of them," reveals another aspect of the nature of evil. This is that evil is well aware of the truth as represented here by Aslan and the forces of good, and has consciously rejected it, and is fighting it. The main tactics used by the power of evil in leading its victims away from the truth are those of suppressing, misrepresenting, and making the truth unreal. In the story of Prince Caspian, when the Prince hears of the old Narnia, the false king, afraid of losing his power, tries to suppress the truth. He says to Caspian,

Stop it. And never let me catch you talking - or thinking either - about all those silly stories. There never were those kings and queens. How could there be two kings at the same time? And there is no such person as Aslan. And there are no such animals as lions. And there never was a time when animals could talk. Do you hear? 1

Later in the history of Narnia we see the forces of evil misrepresent the truth in two ways. First, they give a false interpretation of circumstances. When the ape is trying to get Puzzle the donkey to dress up in a lion skin to deceive the other citizens of the country, Puzzle

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1. Prince Caspian, p. 35.

is uncertain. At the moment when it is being discussed there is a clap of thunder and a small earth quake. Puzzle takes this to mean that Aslan is displeased, which is the right interpretation. The Ape, however, persuades him that instead it is a sign of approval.

"No, no," said the Ape (whose mind worked very quickly). "It's a sign the other way. I was just going to say that if the real Aslan, as you call him, meant us to go on with this, he would send us a thunderclap and an earth tremor." 1

There is also a misrepresentation of the truth in regard to who Aslan is and what he is like, a calling into question of his character. This is a strategy that is also used in The Last Battle.

Would it not be better to be dead than to have this horrible fear that Aslan has come and is not like the Aslan we believed in and longed for? It is as if the sun rose one day and were a black sun. 2

This results in temporary discouragement on the part of Aslan's followers and holds back many Narnians from believing in either Aslan or the false god, Tash.

The third tactic that the evil ones use to lead people away from the truth is to make what is true seem unreasonable and unreal. In an adult book, The Screwtape Letters, Lewis has one of the senior devils say,

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1. The Last Battle, p. 11.

2. Ibid., p. 25.

For the real presence of the Enemy [God], otherwise experienced by men in prayer and sacrament, we substitute a merely probable, remote, shadowy and uncouth figure, one who spoke in a strange language and died a long time ago. 1

So we see the Witch in The Silver Chair, trying to make the children believe that there is no such person as Aslan, that her world is the real world and that their own are mere shadows of it. This she says,

Put away these childish tricks. I have work for you in the real world. There is no Narnia, no overworld, no sky, no sun, no Aslan. 2

The nature of evil in the Narnia Chronicles is seen then, as antithetic to good, as opposing the truth, as weaker than the power of Christ and ultimately to be overcome by Him.

2. The Extent of Evil.

By the extent of evil is meant the area of its influence. In Lewis's writing for adults as well as for children he shows that evil has influence in all the world and that everyone in it must decide whether to accept or reject the work that it would do in him. The country of Narnia is enemy occupied territory, and for the present the Witch is the ruler of the world. Aslan and his followers are taking part in a great campaign against it until the right time comes for the world to be brought to an end. 3

1. Lewis, C.S., *The Screwtape Letters*, London, Fontana Books, 1955, p. 118.

2. *The Silver Chair*, p. 153.

3. *Mere Christianity*, p. 47.

In the history of Narnia, after many battles and temporary triumphs, at the last evil is banished forever.¹ So it will be in the history of our world.²

3. The Origin of Sin and God's provision

There is little said in the Chronicles about the origin of evil, except that it was not created by God but was external. It came from something that was meant in God's plan to be good but which went astray. In Narnia the Witch was brought into the world as a result of the children's quarrel, and caused all the grief that was to come in later years.³ In his action to help the Narnians to meet this new and evil force in the world, Aslan made two provisions. First he had Digory plant a tree from the seed of the Tree of Life which would keep the Witch away and protect the land for some years.⁴ Much later complete provision was made by the death of Aslan. (This is noted in the second chapter of this study.) As there is a parallel between the death of Aslan and the death of Christ, so there is also a parallel between the

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1. The Last Battle, Chapter XIII.
2. Mere Christianity, p.56.
3. The Magician's Nephew, pp. 132-133.
4. Ibid., Chapter XIV

temporary provision of the Law in our own story of salvation, and the temporary one of the Treen in the story of the salvation of Narnia.

4. Sin and its Effects

A distinction has been made that evil is a force which is trying to produce sin in a life by means of temptation. Sin may therefore be defined as the "giving in" of a person to the force of evil in his life. Sin is a matter of the will. What does this do to the person? What are the effects of sin?

The Narnia Chronicles have at least three answers to this question.

(1) The first of these, which Lewis has stated explicitly in Mere Christianity, is that sin gives in to and encourages the development of the natural life.

The natural life in each of us is something self-centered, something that wants to be petted and admired, to take advantage of other lives, to exploit the whole universe. And especially it wants to be left to itself. 1

This temptation to do, not what is good, but what an individual would like, is faced by Digory at the beginning of the world of Narnia. He is to bring an apple to Aslan, the seed of which will protect Narnia from the Witch. The Witch confronts him and tempts him to

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1. Mere Christianity, p. 150.

eat it.

Are you going to carry it back untasted, to the Lion; for him to eat, for him to use? You simpleton! Do you know what that fruit is? It is the apple of youth, the apple of life. Eat it, Boy, eat it; and you and I will both live forever and be king and queen of this whole world - or of your world, if we decide to go back there. 1

Digory does not do as the Witch suggests. An example of one who finally gives in to temptation and becomes more interested in herself than in Aslan, is the person of Susan. Although she was at the beginning a true friend of Aslan, little by little as the stories develop we can see that other things become more and more important to her until at last, when the others reach Aslan's country, Susan is not among them. She is no longer a friend of Narnia.²

The development of this natural life is the effect of sin which crowds out of one's life the things that are good and true, which excludes God from the life, soon has the effect of making the individual something which he was not meant to be. Rather than a life that is good and useful and true, there is one that is unnatural and even ludicrous. The Ape who causes so much trouble in the last days of Narnia, pretending to be what he was not, nor meant to be, and carrying out evil

1. The Magician's Nephew, p. 159.

2. The Last Battle, p. 126.

purposes that bring much suffering to others, appears evil, repulsive and ridiculous.

The Ape was of course Shift himself, but he looked ten times uglier than when he lived by Caldron Pool for he was dressed up. He was wearing a scarlet jacket which did not fit him very well, having been made for a dwarf. He had jewelled slippers on his hind paws which would not stay on properly because as you know, the hind paws of an ape are really like hands. He wore what seemed to be a paper crown on his head. There was a great pile of nuts beside him and he kept cracking nuts with his jaws and spitting out the shells. And he also kept pulling up the great scarlet jacket to scratch himself. 1

How ridiculous for such a one to rule Narnia and make himself out to be the mouthpiece of Aslan.

A further instance of sin making its victim that which it was never intended to be is the case of the Talking Animals. In the beginning they are warned to follow the commands of Aslan or they will be in danger of ceasing to be Talking Animals and will become Dumb Beasts.² At the final judgment of Narnia, those animals which have ceased to be Talking Animals are banished from Aslan's country and never heard of again.

These insights into the effects of sin are not out of keeping with Lewis's adult books which picture damnation as the gradual loss of humanity.³

(2) Sin is also shown as having a darkening effect on

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1. The Last Battle, p. 27.

2. The Magician's Nephew, p. 116.

3. Walsh, op cit., p. 147.

the mind and understanding of the individual. Thus we see God revealing more of Himself to some than to others because it is impossible for Him to show Himself to one whose whole mind and character are in the wrong condition to understand. Sin prevents God's self-revelation and results in the increase of unbelief in the person concerned. A clear illustration of this is seen in the case of the dwarfs in The Last Battle who refuse to accept any of the good things offered by Aslan because of their obsession against being "taken in". They fancy that they are in a dreadful prison while in reality they are in Aslan's country.¹ At last Aslan gives them up to themselves, explaining that they have chosen cunning instead of belief.²

(3) The ultimate effect of sin is that it cuts the sinner off from the goodness of God. This is pictured in the above case of the dwarfs who could not receive the good intended for them. The judgment of the other creatures of Narnia also shows that those who have done what was wrong in Aslan's sight were cut off from fellowship with him, not only temporarily in their life in time, but forever.

Although this has pointed out the effects of

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1. The Last Battle, Chapter XIII
2. Stillwell, op cit, p. 38.

sin only in the life of the individual, it is not difficult to see the effects of one person's sin upon the world and the others around him. This is evident in the wars, slavery, and cruelty which went on in the land of Narnia throughout its history. In our world we also see the effects of man's attempt to find something other than God that will make him happy.¹

C. Summary

It has been noted in this chapter that the nature of evil as seen in the Narnia Chronicles is anti-thetic to good, is weaker than the power of Christ and ultimately to be overcome by Him, and that it seeks to bring about sin in the life of an individual by suppressing and misrepresenting the truth.

The extent of evil, its influence over all people and its temporary triumphs were discussed. Evil was not presented as having been created by God, but was the going wrong of something that God meant to be good. A parallel was seen between Aslan's provision for deliverance from evil first by the Tree and later his own death, and the provision by God for us by the Law and then through the death of Christ.

With respect to the effects of sin in the life

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1. Mere Christianity, p.50.

of an individual, it was noted that sin leads to the development of the natural life, that which thinks only of itself and its own good. As a result man is lead away from God and the mind and understanding are darkened so that truth becomes more and more difficult to discern. It leads the person to be that which he was never intended to be, to the gradual loss of his humanity.

In the world, sin brings about such evils as wars, cruelty, slavery and other sins against humanity.

CHAPTER FOUR
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN
IN THE NARNIA CHRONICLES

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A. Introduction

If God is Love, He is, by definition, something more than mere kindness. And it appears, from all records, that though He has often rebuked us and condemnad us, He has never regarded us with contempt. He has paid us the intolerable compliment of loving us, in the deepest, most tragic, most inexorable sense, ¹

It is plain from Lewis's books for adults that he considers God's love for man the motive for all His efforts to bring His wayward creatures into right relationship with Himself. This truth is also clear from a reading of the Narnia Chronicles. It is the purpose of this chapter to study various aspects of the relationship between God and man. It will note the possibility of both a right and wrong relationship and will attempt to give Lewis's view of the results of the coming into right relationship with God, the growth in the Christian life.

B. The Relationship Between God and Man

1. Man's Need and God's Desire

Although "communion with God is the one need of the soul beyond all other need,"² this fact is not widely

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1. The Problem of Pain, p. 29.

2. Lewis, C.S. (ed.), George Macdonald: An Anthology, New York, Macmillan Company, 1947, p. 52.

recognized. Of those who are aware that they have a need, many are not able to see what it is that will meet it. Looking from the outside at the lives of Eustace or the Dufflepuds¹ we can see that they have a need for the saving action of Aslan, yet they do not see it. Later Eustace recognizes his need for Aslan's deliverance and comes to him.

Some others feel not so much a need, as a great desire for something other than that which they know, and this desire drives them to seek Aslan. One such person in the Chronicles is Emeth, who, from the time he had been a boy, had longed to serve and know Tash (the name by which he knew Aslan.)²

Man has, then, a great need for God, whether or not he recognizes it. He also has an inward desire for something greater and beyond himself.

It is because of God's love that man is able to come to Him. In the Chronicles a good and loving Aslan is constantly trying to do good to his subjects and make himself known to them. He reveals himself in several ways.

As has been previously discussed,³ Aslan makes

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1. The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, Chapter XI.

2. The Last Battle, Chapter XV.

3. See Chapter Two of this study.

himself known in his act of creation. To those animals who are present at the beginning he also makes known what he requires of them. In later times, Aslan is made known as "not the slave of the stars but their maker."¹ It is this that gives the foundation for the old saying that "He is not a tame Lion."² One who had power to do such wonders, who could tell what he might do?

Thus the stories that are passed on about Aslan from generation to generation become a way that he makes himself known to later Narnians. They tell and retell the stories of the death and coming to life again of Aslan, and of his deliverance of Narnia from the power of the White Witch. History becomes a witness to the existence, power and nature of Aslan.

Also in circulation among the people are old prophecies as to what will happen in the future through the power of Aslan. One such is quoted and fulfilled in The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.³

Most important, Aslan makes himself known through the various appearances he makes to people throughout the narratives.

Through Aslan Lewis would lead us to believe in a God who takes the initiative in seeking out and revealing

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1. The Last Battle, p.15.

2. Loc. cit.,

3. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe, p. 75.

Himself to man.

2. Man Faced with a Decision

When once man is confronted by God and knows the demands that God would make of him, then he must make a decision. Either he must let God rule in his life or he will continue on in his own ways as though he has never heard God's demands or does not care to meet them. This basic decision has to be made before the more surface things can be made right. The most striking example of this truth in the Narnia Chronicles is when the traitor Edmund is saved from death and comes to meet Aslan.

As soon as they had breakfasted they all went out and there they saw Aslan and Edmund walking together in the dewy grass, apart from the rest of the court. There is no need to tell you (and no one ever heard) what Aslan was saying, but it was a conversation which Edmund never forgot. As the others drew near, Aslan turned to meet them, bringing Edmund with him.¹

After this Edmund makes things right with those whom he has wronged, and from then on he is a changed boy.

Later when he rules Narnia with the three other children, it is said of him, "Edmund was a graver and quieter man than Peter, and great in council and judgment. He was called King Edmund the Just."²

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1. Ibid., p. 126.

2. Ibid., p. 167.

That the decision has to be made is clear, as is the outcome. Those who choose not to believe in and follow Aslan are separated from him, but those who accept him are brought into fellowship with him.

Although Narnians are all saved in principle by the death of Aslan, from the forces of evil, yet each must appropriate this deliverance for himself. It is also to be noted that everyone does not begin his relationship with Aslan in the same way or at the same level. Lucy, the most spiritually discerning, meets and loves Aslan almost at once. Emeth has always desired to serve and meet Aslan, but learns to know him by a different name. He eventually does find what he seeks. He says of his meeting with Aslan,

Then I fell at his feet and thought, Surely this is the hour of death, for the Lion (who is worthy of all honor) will know that I have served Tash all my days and not him. Nevertheless, it is better to see the Lion and die than to be Tisroc of the world and live and not see him. But the Glorious One bent down his golden head and touched my forehead with his tongue and said, Son, thou art welcome. 1

The cabby who is the first king of Narnia has the similar experience of having known Aslan by a different name.²

Jill meets him when she is all alone in a strange country, and has to come to the Lion not knowing whether or not he will devour her. She comes to trust him after she had taken that difficult step. 3

1. The Last Battle, p.33.

2. Ibid., p. 156.

3. The Magician's Nephew, p.134

As there is a difference in the way that each one comes to know Aslan, so there is a difference in what he asks of each. It is clear, however, that responsibility goes along with the privilege of knowing him. The cabby and his wife are to rule the land wisely and well as the later rulers are required to do; Jill and Eustace are sent on a special mission to rescue Rilian from the power of the Witch; the Talking Animals are to carry out the commands of Aslan lest they cease to be Talking Animals and become Dumb Beasts. So in man's relationship with God - he must make his decision and accept the responsibility for it.

3. The Results of a Decision

Along with the fact that they must accept the responsibility that their privilege brings them, other results come to those who choose to follow Aslan.

(1) One of these is that Aslan is with them to deliver them in time of need. In many situations the need is a national one. Prince Caspian and his forces, when defending Narnia from foes, call on Aslan for help and he comes to their aid. Also in the first story of the series, Aslan saves them in time of national disaster.

Aslan also brings, to those who will accept it, personal deliverance. Foremost, he delivers them from the power of death. Prince Caspian, having ruled Narnia

long and well, dies and is restored to life by Aslan. Of course then, after his physical death, he is no longer in Narnia but in his true home which is Aslan's country.¹

Individuals are also saved from sin and the effects of sin in their lives. An example is the case of Lucy. Once she is tempted to say a magic spell which would make her beautiful "beyond the lot of mortals." A magic book shows her the things that will happen to her and to her relationships to others if she says this spell, and although she knows that the consequences would be wrong, "I will say the spell," said Lucy. "I don't care, I will." But Aslan appears and growls so that she is afraid to do so.² What she was saved from we do not see at the time, but later we see that her sister Susan failed to enter Aslan's country because of this very attitude and set of false values(counting the praise of people above that of Aslan) from which Lucy had been saved.

We see then, that by the power of Aslan people are saved from what they might have been, to what Aslan plans and knows is best for them. They are not only saved from sin, but are saved to a new life. The

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1.The Silver Chair, Chapter XVI

2.The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, Chapter XIV.

salvation of Edmund and Eustace from selfish, useless lives has been discussed in other parts of this study.

Although we see that Aslan delivers his people, we also see that their obedience is a condition for this. As long as the will of a person is set against receiving that which Aslan would impart, Aslan cannot give it.

Digory's Uncle Andrew refuses to trust Aslan, and the Lion says of him,

I cannot tell that to this old sinner, and I cannot comfort him either; he has made himself unable to hear my voice. If I spoke to him he would hear only growlings and roarings. Oh Adam's sons, how cleverly you defend yourselves against all that might do you good! But I will give him the only gift he is still able to receive. 1

Lewis pictures for us, through Aslan, a Christ Who is able to deliver people from sins, from themselves, from false desires and values. He is also able to save in situations beyond these, those of community and national need if people would only call on Him to do so.

(2) A further result of being in right relationship to Aslan shows itself in the new characters of the individuals who are trusting him. In no case in the Chronicles do we see a sudden and drastic change in character, but as with Eustace, the encounter with Aslan marks the time when there begins to be a change for the better. The picture presented here of the process of gradual

1. The Magician's Nephew, p. 168.

growth in the new life is well expressed by George Macdonald:

As the world must be redeemed in a few men to begin with, so a soul is redeemed in a few of its thoughts and works and ways to begin with: it takes a long time to finish the new creation of His redemption. 1

In addition to being slow, the learning of the ways of Aslan is not always easy - in fact the followers of Aslan are never promised that it will be. Aravis, through thoughtless treatment of a slave, causes her much suffering. She learns a lesson in being caused by Aslan to suffer in the measure that the slave had suffered. "The scratches on your back, tear for tear, throb for throb, blood for blood, were equal to the stripes laid on the back of your stepmother's slave because of the drugged sleep you cast upon her."²

The process of learning to obey is not easy in that the characters are tempted to do that which they desire, or seems to them most reasonable at that moment, in opposition to what Aslan has asked. Misery is the result when temptation is not resisted.

In The Magician's Nephew Digory is tempted to take an apple, which would cure his sick mother, from the Tree of Life. He resists, and after earning Aslan's "well done",

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1. Macdonald, op cit., p. 62.

2. The Horse and His Boy, p. 65.

he learns from Aslan that people get what they seek but it isn't what they thought it would be. Aslan says of the apple,

Understand that it would have healed her; but not to your joy or hers. The day would come when both you and she would have looked back and said it would have been better to die in that illness. ¹

The Witch has not resisted the temptation, but has eaten an apple from the Tree, and she gets what she desired - length of days. "But the length of days with an evil heart is only length of misery and already she begins to know it. All get what they want: they do not always like it."²

All is not sorrow and difficulty, however, for Aslan desires the happiness of those who follow him. He shows this in his great concern for Digory's mother. Although he does not want Digory to take the apple in disobedience, when he has passed the test, Digory is given an apple with the words, "What I give you now will bring you joy."³ It does, for his mother is healed. Nowhere in the narratives do the creatures find true happiness apart from Aslan. He cannot give happiness apart from himself for it does not exist.

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1. The Magician's Nephew, p. 173.

2. Ibid. cit.

3. Ibid., p. 174.

When an individual comes face to face with Aslan and determines to follow, immediate action is expected of him. There begins at once a chain of decisions which lead the person to be that which Aslan intended him to be. His decisions as to what to do in particular situations are crucial because they affect the central core of his being. Each choice he makes brings him a little nearer Aslan or pushes him a little farther away.

After Shasta has met Aslan, he finds himself in the midst of a battle between foreign invaders and Narnians. Deciding whether to join in, though frightened, he says to himself, "If you funk this you'll funk every battle all your life. Now or never."¹ His attempt at warfare is clumsy, but the decision to do what he knows he should is a step which helps him to acquire the set of character which will make right decisions a part of his nature.

The type of character that is acquired by those who follow Aslan is exemplified in Reepicheep the mouse. No one in the narrative is more considerate, brave, noble, quick to defend the right, more whole-hearted in his allegiance to Aslan than he. He finds his reward in being allowed to sail over the edge of the world into Aslan's country.

1. The Horse and His Boy, p.157.

In the presence of Aslan the animals find themselves face to face with the truth. Aslan knows all, and there is no point in their trying to pretend that they are unaware of the truth. In one situation ¹ Lucy knows what Aslan wants the four children to do, and she tries to get the other three to see it as she does. When they do not, she gives up and follows them. They make a mistake that costs them much time and trouble. Lucy, when she next meets Aslan, protests that this was the fault of the others for not believing her. Aslan makes it plain to her that her duty is to follow what she knows is the truth no matter what the others do. When next faced with a similar situation she chooses to follow Aslan.

The Narnia Chronicles present clearly the change that comes upon an individual when he begins to sincerely follow Aslan. Allegorically, Lewis shows us a God Who longs to make lovely those whom He loves, and does so when they put their trust in Him.

(3) To those who follow him, Aslan offers guidance. Narnians believe that Aslan is in the control of history and will lead them to their place in its events. In preparing for the last battle of Narnia, Tirian allows Jill and Eustace to stay and take their chance along with the rest in battle, or, as he more sensibly put it, they are to

1. Prince Caspian, Chapter X.

stay and find "the adventure that Aslan would send them."¹
In a difficult place later, Tirian reminds them, "But
courage, child; we are all between the paws of the true
Aslan."²

In matters of guidance, obedience is the opener
of eyes. When taking what they know to be the right
first step, the children are not always sure what will
happen next, or how things will work out. They only know
that they must trust that Aslan knows best. In one
instance Lucy knows that she must follow Aslan over
rough and strange country. When she decides to go she
has no way of knowing that the other children will come
with her. It must also be noted that although Lucy is the
only one who can actually see Aslan walking before them
here, the others, knowing that they must go with Lucy,
gradually come to see Aslan as they go. At first they
think they catch a glimpse of him in the shadows, then
they see his shadow, and finally himself. Their eyes
are opened as they are obedient.³

In the case of Shasta and Aravis, they are
guided by Aslan before they know him at all, and later
are brought to trust and know him.

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1. The Last Battle, p. 89.

2. Ibid., p. 101.

3. Prince Caspian, Chapter XI.

(4) A fourth result of the decision to follow Aslan is that those who so decide are brought into a fellowship with him. Things wrong must be made right with Aslan and with others before this relationship can be a clear and happy one. When his children come before him to admit their wrong, Aslan in turn forgives and comforts and strengthens, and they find their greatest joy in his presence. They are granted a certain closeness to him, yet, "although Aslan occasionally granted familiarity to his followers, his awesome majesty was never diminished."¹ The great majesty and tender love of Aslan are beautifully pictured throughout the Chronicles. His goodness to them when they reach his country at last is beyond their highest expectations, for they find there the people and the places that they have loved in other worlds, and they find their true happiness in his presence.

Lewis, in describing the relationship between Aslan and his followers has painted a lovely picture for children of the walk of a Christian with his Master.

C. Summary

This study of the relationship between God and man as found in the Narnia Chronicles has shown Lewis's emphasis to be this: that man can never be what

1. Stillwell, op cit., p.37.

2.

he was intended to be, what is his highest and best, unless he comes into such a right relationship with God that His Spirit will be able to work and bring about the desired transformation.

Lewis also points out man's need for God, and God's desire to do what is best for His creatures. In order to make His way known to man, God, in His love, showed Himself to them in a form they could understand, and died to make their fellowship with Him possible. Man, then, must decide whether or not he will accept God's provision for this fellowship and follow Him, or to go his own way. If he chooses the former he finds deliverance from sin and its effects; he is gradually changed into the kind of person he was meant to be, finding his place in life. He finds guidance and the joy of close fellowship with God, and an overwhelming abundance of His good gifts.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY

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SUMMARY

The Narnia Chronicles by C.S. Lewis are noteworthy both for their fine literary quality and their definite Christian emphasis. Because of the excellent quality of the books, the fact that their author is so well known for his other works, and the general lack of acquaintance with the Narnia Chronicles, this study was intended to discover the primary Christian concepts in Lewis's books for children.

A survey of the seven Chronicles revealed the central theme of the series to be this: there is redemption through Christ alone, Who is the victor over the power of evil. It was also noted that each book treated a different aspect of this theme. The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe shows the necessity of Christ's death to save people from the power of sin, while Prince Caspian treats the theme of redemption by emphasizing belief and unbelief and the results of each. A picture of the perils a man encounters in his search for Christ's kingdom is drawn for us in The Voyage of the Dawn Treader, temptation and deliverance by Christ being dominant ideas. The Silver Chair shows the snare set by the powers of evil to lead people away into disobedience to God. The

guiding and protecting hand of God over a person's life is the theme of The Horse and His Boy. Christ is seen as the One "through Whom the world was made" in The Magician's Nephew, but this narrative also paints a vivid picture of the far-reaching effects of sin. The Last Battle shows the end of the world with Christ as Judge.

Throughout the Narnia Chronicles Lewis uses the central figure of Aslan the Lion allegorically to portray Christ. Through Aslan we see carefully pictured a Christ Who was both human and divine; One Who came to His people in a form they could understand, and yet was something more than they. It was also noted that three aspects of the work of Christ are dealt with at some length in the Chronicles - Christ as Saviour, as Creator and as Judge.

In Chapter Three the concept of evil in the Narnia Chronicles was discussed. The nature of evil was seen to be antithetic to good, weaker than the power of Christ and ultimately to be overcome by Him. In order to bring about sin in the lives of individuals it uses the tactics of suppressing and misrepresenting the truth. An examination of Aslan's provision for deliverance from sin in the Chronicles revealed a parallel drawn to God's provision through the Law and the death of Christ. It was seen that sin develops in a person the natural life-

that which thinks only of itself and its own good. The mind and understanding are gradually darkened so the individual becomes less and less able to discern the truth and respond to it.

The relationship between God and man was the problem dealt with in Chapter Four. It was indicated that Lewis emphasizes the necessity of a right relationship between God and man if man is to be what he was intended, for this can only be attained by the Holy Spirit of God at work in a life. It was made clear that God takes the initiative in seeking out and providing for such a relationship, but that man is free to accept or reject Him. Those who accept God and His provision are delivered from sin and its effects, and their lives are gradually transformed to be more like that of Christ. They also find guidance and joy in the presence of God.

In conclusion it can be said that the Narnia Chronicles contain a great deal of Christian teaching. As Lewis's theology as seen in his other works is "highly Christocentric, and his Christ is not merely a good man,"¹ so we see in his books for children this same emphasis on Christology. It is clearly the

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1; Walsh, op cit., p. 78.

purpose of Lewis to help bring his readers to know Christ.

He says in the Chronicles, in a form that children can begin to understand, what he has said in various ways throughout his works for adults:

Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death, death of your ambitions and favorite wishes every day and death of your whole body in the end; submit with every fibre of your being and you will find eternal life. Keep back nothing. Nothing that you have not given away will ever really be yours. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead. Look for yourself and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him, everything else thrown in. 1

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