

## THE "HYDRA" OF PRIDE

March 2015, C.S. Lewis Institute

C.S. Lewis, after a long struggle and search for truth, surrendered his life to Jesus in his early 30's. Very quickly, as he sought to grow in his faith, he became aware of the depth of his own sin. In a letter to his childhood friend in Belfast, Arthur Greeves, Lewis gives us a humorous, yet alarmingly accurate picture of how pride works in our lives. He writes:

*"What worries me much more is Pride – my besetting sin, as yours is indolence. During my afternoon 'meditations', – which I at least attempt quite regularly now – I have found out ludicrous and terrible things about my own*



*character. Sitting by, watching the rising thoughts to break their necks as they pop up, one learns to know the sort of thoughts that do come. And, will you believe it, one out of every three is a thought of self-admiration: when everything else fails, having had its neck broken, up comes the thought 'What an admirable fellow I am to have broken their necks!' I catch myself posturing before the mirror, so to speak, all day long. I pretend I am carefully thinking out what to say to the next pupil (for his good, of course) and then suddenly realise I am really thinking how frightfully clever I'm going to be and how he will admire me. I pretend I am remembering an evening of good fellowship in a really friendly and charitable spirit – and all the time I'm really remembering how good a fellow I am and how well I talked. And then when you force yourself to stop it, you admire yourself for doing that. Its like fighting the hydra (you remember, when you cut off one head another grew). There seems to be no end to it. Depth under depth of self-love and self admiration. Closely connected with this is the difficulty I find in making*

*even the faintest approach to giving up my own will: which as everyone has told us is the only thing to do."*<sup>(1)</sup>

In total transparency, Lewis describes his battle with pride, and helps us see it in ourselves. He points out that the first step in dealing with any sin is identifying it and naming it. The good news is that if we humble ourselves before the Lord, he will come to our aid and draw us closer to Himself – pointing us to our true source of satisfaction and fulfillment.

**"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."**

– James 4:10 (ESV)

The excerpt above from a letter written by C.S. Lewis describes exactly what I see in myself. It's almost like there is a little me sitting on my shoulder, the one with the horns and not the wings, watching everything I do, and then patting me on the back for my wonderfulness! The horned version of me can find all kinds of ways to make me look good in my own eyes!

I'm especially wonderful, according to this little devil on my shoulder, when I groan and realize how un-wonderful I am, and that very self-criticism is what qualifies me for praise in my own eyes. It's all very subtle, a secret between me, myself, and I, and never shared with anyone else at the time. It's only in a grand moment of confession such as this that I let others in on my secret.

It seems that the longer I try to follow God and grow in His Spirit, the worse I become. Or is it that I see more of my shortcomings and sins because I see more as God sees? Oh boy! Maybe I'm not a murderer or a terrorist or a bank robber, but I am a hypocrite lots of times, or judgmental, or overly critical, or inconsiderate of others. God hates all sin, and He hates mine as much as anyone else's.

<sup>(1)</sup>C.S. Lewis. *The Collected Letters of C.S. Lewis, Volume 1, Family Letters: 1905-1931*. Ed. by Walter Hooper. HarperCollins: San Francisco, 2004, pp. 878-879.



Aslan

Many years ago, my dad attended seminary, where one of his favorite professors told the class that the only thing left for him to do when facing the Lord at the Last Judgment would be to fall on his knees before Him and beg His forgiveness. He KNEW the struggle we have as God reveals to us how

wretched we are inside.

Falling on our knees before God is all that any of us can do, but the great thing is the Hope we have that when we do that, we have that forgiveness, and He will welcome us in. And if we don't, well. . . .

The "Hydra" of Pride reminded me of this incident from the "Chronicles of Narnia". (These are supposedly children's stories but I read them as an adult and LOVE them.)

The person talking is Eustace, a boy who is a spoiled rotten brat and thinks he is better than everyone else. His nasty attitude and greed got him into a situation that turned him into a dragon. Realizing his plight, he learned humility and appreciation for the others he was with, so after a while, Aslan the Lion, Son of the Emperor Beyond the Sea (God), challenged Eustace to become a boy again but he had to shed the dragon skin in order for that to happen. (I know you must think I'm nuts, but this IS what God expects of us when we turn our lives over to Him – we peel off the old self and become a new person.)

*Linda Grimmel*

**From C.S. Lewis' "Voyage of the Dawn Treader":**

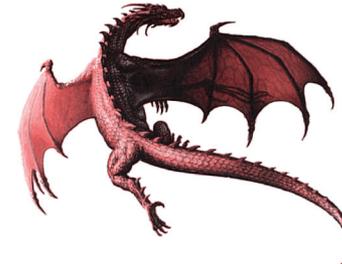
*But the lion told me I must undress first. . . .*

*I was just going to say that I couldn't undress because I hadn't any clothes on when I suddenly thought that dragons are snaky sort of things and snakes can cast their skins. Oh, of course, thought I, that's what the lion means. So I started scratching myself and my scales began coming off all over the place. And then I scratched a little deeper and, instead of just scales coming off here and there, my whole skin started peeling off beautifully, like it does after an illness, or as if I was a banana. In a*

*minute or two I just stepped out of it. I could see it lying there beside me, looking rather nasty. It was a most lovely feeling. So I started to go down into the well for my bathe.*

*But just as I was going to put my feet into the water I looked down and saw that they were all hard and rough and wrinkled and scaly just as they had been before. Oh, that's all right, said I, it only means I had another smaller suit on underneath the first one, and I'll have to get out of it too. So I scratched and tore again and this under skin peeled off beautifully and out I stepped and left it lying beside the other one and went down to the well for my bathe.*

*Well, exactly the same thing happened again. And I thought to*



*myself, oh dear, how ever many skins have I got to take off? . . . So I scratched away for the third time and got off a third skin, just like the two others, and stepped out of it. But as soon as I looked at myself in the water I knew it had been no good. . . .*

*"Then the lion said — but I don't know if it spoke — You will have to let me undress you. I was afraid of his claws, I can tell you, but I was pretty nearly desperate now. So I just lay flat down on my back to let him do it.*

***"The very first tear he made was so deep that I thought it had gone right into my heart. And when he began pulling the skin off, it hurt worse than anything I've ever felt. The only thing that made me able to bear it was just the pleasure of feeling the stuff peel off. You know — if you've ever picked the scab of a sore place. It hurts like billy-oh but it is such fun to see it coming away." . . .***

***"Well, he peeled the beastly stuff right off — just as I thought I'd done it myself the other three times, only they hadn't hurt — and there it was lying on the grass, only ever so much thicker, and darker, and more knob-bly-looking than the others had***

***been. And there was I smooth and soft as a peeled switch and smaller than I had been. Then he caught hold of me — I didn't like that much for I was very tender underneath now that I'd no skin on — and threw me into the water. It smarted like anything but only for a moment. After that it became perfectly delicious . . . And then I saw why. I'd turned into a boy again. . . ."***

## SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

### L.V. School Board Meeting

Thursday, June 8, starts at 5:30PM.  
At the Alternative Education Center,  
8560 Aliento Rd up Highway 18.

### Household Hazardous Waste & E-Waste Collection

SATURDAY, June 24, 9A to Noon. Free disposal of household hazardous waste (Antifreeze, Batteries, Motor Oil & Oil Filters, latex paint only, medical needles, fluorescents, and all electronic wastes.) Behind LV Fire Station, 33269 Old Woman Springs Road. For info call 1-800-OILY CAT.

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE --

From the Web

The loaded mini-van pulled into the campsite. Four



children leaped from the vehicle and began feverishly unloading gear and setting up the tent. The boys rushed to gather firewood, while the girls and their mother set up the camp stove and cooking utensils.

A nearby camper marveled to the youngsters' father, "That, sir, is some display of teamwork."

The father replied, "I have a system -- no one goes to the bathroom until the camp is set up."

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