



LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION...

A LENTEN STUDY OF CS LEWIS' THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS [#3]

Letter #12 through Letter #18

INTRODUCTIONS

I. The Screwtape Letters (1942)

***The “genesis” of the book came July 20-21, 1940. Published essays in **THE GUARDIAN** Newspaper in Great Britain from May 2, 1941-November 28, 1941.

***One of Lewis’ most popular and best selling books. (31 Letters compiled)

***WORMWOOD is a novice devil who has been assigned as a tempter on the earth from his UNCLE SCREWTAPE who is the Undersecretary for the Infernal Lowerarchy and WORMWOOD’S supervisor. THE PATIENT is an ordinary young man who lives in England during WW2. OTHER CHARACTERS include THE PATIENT’S FIANCE, THE PATIENT’S MOTHER, THE ENEMY (GOD), OUR FATHER BELOW (THE DEVIL), SLUBGOB (The Head of the Training College for Younger Tempters/Demons), GLUBOSE (The Tempter/Demon in charge of the patient’s mother), SLUMTRIMPET (The Tempter/Demon in charge of the patient’s fiancé)

***Its Purpose: “to give all the psychology of temptation from the other point of View.” (Letter to his brother Warnie Lewis). Dedicated to JRR Tolkien with two quotes (from Martin Luther and Thomas More)

A. Some Thoughts from the Original Preface of 1941/42

*No intention of explaining how this correspondence fell into my hands.

*There are two equal and opposite errors into which our (human) race can fall about the devils...One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe and feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them...(continue reading)...

*Remember the devil is a liar so not everything the devil says should be taken to be true...There is even wishful thinking in Hell as on earth.

B. Some Thoughts from the Revised Preface of 1960

*The Most Common Question Lewis Received: Did I really believe in the Devil? Lewis’ Answer (pvii)

*The Impact of Milton, Dante, Goethe (Faust), Chesterton (read p.ix)

*The Idea of Hell: Hell is a state where everyone is perpetually concerned about his own dignity and advancement, where everyone has a grievance, and where everyone lived the deadly serious passions of

envy, self-importance and resentment. (p.ix) and then symbolized Hell as a bureaucracy of the Managerial Age where Administration is of the highest virtue (read p.x)

*The Absurd Fancy that devils are engaged in the disinterested pursuit of something called Evil...They are practical beings with two motives
1.) The Fear of Punishment ("Hell contains Deeper Hells.").
2.) A Kind of Hunger (passion to dominate and devour (an)other).

*The Desire to have written a similar work with advice from an archangel to a person's guardian angel (Heaven).

*****Letter #12 Summary:** Don't underestimate the power of "very small sins" because the fastest road to Hell is the gradual one."

*Select Readings from Letter #12

*Key Quote: "Indeed the safest road to Hell is the gradual one---the gentle slope, soft underfoot, without sudden turnings, without milestones, without signposts."

* A Biblical Reflection on the safest road to hell from Matthew 7:13-14

*****Letter #13 Summary:** Don't allow The Patient to experience real pleasures because they are a touchstone of/witness to reality.

*Select Reading from Letter #13

*Key Quote: "The more often The Patient feels without acting, the less he will be able ever to act, and in the long run, the less he will be able to feel."

*****Letter #14 Summary:** Make The Patient proud of his humility, use both vainglory and false modesty to keep him from humility's true end (which is God).

*Select Reading from Letter #14

*Key Quotes: "The Enemy (GOD) wants to bring the man to a state of mind in which he could design the best cathedral in the world, and know it to be the best, and rejoice in the fact, without being any more or less or otherwise glad at having done it than he would be if it had been done by another."

"All virtues are less formidable to us once the man is aware that he has them."

*A Biblical Reflection on humility from Mark 12:30-31 and Ephesians 4:2

*****Letter #15 Summary:** Make The Patient live for the future rather than in the present.

*Select Reading from Letter #15

*Key Quote: “We want a man hag-ridden by the Future---haunted by visions of an imminent heaven or hell upon earth---ready to break The Enemy’s (God’s) commands in the present if by doing so we make him think he can attain the one or avert the other----dependent for his faith on the success or failure of schemes whose end he will not live to see.”

*A Biblical Reflection on living in the past, present, future and eternity from Matthew 6:25-34 and Luke 12:16-21

*****Letter #16 Summary:** Encourage The Patient’s Church hopping and shopping, looking for the perfect church.

*Select Reading from Letter #16

*Key Quote: “Surely you know that if a man can’t be cured of churchgoing, the next best thing is to send him all over the neighborhood looking for the church that best “suits” him until he becomes a taster or connoisseur of churches.”

*A Biblical Reflection on Romans 14:19-21 and factionalism

*****Letter #17 Summary:** Encourage gluttony through delicacy rather than excess.

*Select Reading from Letter #17

*Key Quote: “She (The Patient’s Mother seduced by her jr devil Glubose) is in what may be called the “All I want” state of mind. [she is never satisfied]...Mere excess in food is much less valuable than delicacy.”

*****Letter #18 Summary:** Convince The Patient that the only respectable ground for marriage is “being in love”

*Select Reading from Letter #18

*Key Quote: “The Enemy’s (God) demand is a dilemma; either complete abstinence or unmitigated monogamy.

*A Biblical Reflection on Matthew 19:1-12 and Ephesians 5:22-33

Conclusions

Closing Prayer ending with The Lord’s Prayer (focus on lead us not into temptation)

Future Weeks

