

# Notes on Screwtape Letters by C.S. Lewis

Oct 7, 2021

Lei Yu



# Letter 1

- picking up on a conversation b/w Wormwood and Screwtape
  - Wormwood's been working on a 'patient' by guiding 'him in his readings' and 'taking care that he sees a good deal of his materialistic friend'
  - what is the patient reading?
  - materialistic friends? → consumerism? materialism?

- Screwtape says that Wormwood's being naive

↳ argument is not the way to keep 'the patient' out of 'the Enemy's clutches'

↳ this would have worked if it was a long time ago ...

↳ people would believe and prepared to alter their living

↳ now, people grew up w/ many incompatible philosophies (Christian, materialism, pantheism...)

↳ doesn't think of doctrines primarily as 'true' or 'false'

but as 'academic' or 'practical', 'outworn' or 'contemporary', 'conventional' or 'ruthless'.

- Screwtape suggest 'jargon': word or expressions used by a particular group or profession and are difficult for others to understand. (Gren Z speak) → Not argument

- don't make them think materialism is true or not. Instead make them think it strong, stark or courageous.

- don't use logic and reason

Abstract Truth  
vs

Senses / Experience taste sight

- Some think that only weak people believe in religion, and think they are strong or courageous by facing the 'truth' of materialism

- God can use logic and reason too

- the Devil's better at the strategy which Screwtape's suggesting

- to call it 'real life' but don't let him ask what he meant by 'real'

Human  
Spiritt  
+  
Animal

- The Devil have never been a human. (But God has through the incarnate Christ)

- Human are enslaved to 'the pressure of the ordinary'

- Devil's control over our appetite

- By showing the man the ordinary or 'real life', he kept him from considering God?

- what is 'all that sort of thing'

- 'that inarticulate sense for which is our ultimate safeguard against the aberrations of mere logic.'

- what was the process they used so that 'they (human) find it all but impossible to believe in the unfamiliar while the familiar is before them?'

All these displays, all these reinvented artifacts  
is this all we have to show for our lives?

- Mortality → Eternity

- 'the ordinariness of things'

- what does Wormwood mean by 'real' science?

↳ not economic and sociology

- 'give him a grand general idea that he knows it all and that everything he picked up in casual talk and reading is 'the result of modern investigation'.

- to fuddle: to confuse or stupefy, especially with alcohol, (to make drunk)

To keep the man away from God, ...

↳ jargon, to confuse, not let 'em use reason or logic

What advice did Wormwood give to Screwtape?

What strategy does the Devil use to lead people away from God?

What strategy actually works against their (the Devil's) favor?

What did Screwtape try to do at first?

What is 'real life', 'the ordinaries', 'real science'?

<https://youtu.be/D3MWVMKKY3A>

The Devil uses the ordinary to distract us from think about what's important.  
subtly

- Human find it impossible to believe in the unfamiliar when the familiar is in their face

Patient: the human the devil are trying to damn

'The Enemy': God

"Our Father Below": Satan

↳ not a literal father, '

↳ father of country, father of community

↳ respect & fear.

The devil has a hierarchy; Angel have a hierarchy.

↳ ability

<https://youtu.be/YTeRM2x72-0>

## The Work of the Devil

- Devil work in subtle way

- many people think the devil tempts us in spectacular ways

1 Peter 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour

- argument is not a good idea because it excites his reason

- 'How about lunch?'

↳ all the thought about God disappeared when he cut on the street, more 'real' than God.

- the devil simply have to move us, from a higher good to a lower good, not things that are particularly evil?

## Mere Christianity

- there's a moral law

- guilty, ...

- there's an intelligence direction that we're under when we look at our conscience

The Devil prefer to work in emotion, propaganda than reason.

- contrary to what people think that religion is emotional and non-religion is logical

- C.S. Lewis → very smart guy that uses reason to support God and Church...

- Thomas Nagel → shows non-belief can carry emotions

- belief will take a leap of faith, beyond reason. But reason will be a foundation of  
into taking the action of faith

the pressure of the 'ordinary'

1. People now days don't connect thinking with doing. People would change how they live based on what they know. Now days people don't do that anymore. Because of the weekly press and other weapons. Doctrines not longer primary as 'true' or 'false', or 'right' or 'wrong', but 'academic', 'contemporary', 'conventional' or 'ruthless'.
2. ↗, also God can argue too. Faith/Christianity is not ~~logical~~ irrational. There's many scholars using logic to prove the truth claim of Christianity. C.S. Lewis is one example. Apologetic as a field is using logic and reasoning to defend one's faith.
  - God gave us intelligence to be able to find truth, which can then lead to Him.
3. - people were prepared to alter their lives based on their thinking.
  - Believing the right thing doesn't always lead to doing the right things.
  - Playing video game while I <sup>have</sup> other important to do isn't good. But I still do it anyway. In a way your mind condemns yourself.
  - Maybe I shouldn't eat that ice cream
  - Asking ourselves what does it mean to our lives? How should I live differently knowing this?
4. Wormwood credits the weekly press for the numerous philosophies dancing in our heads. Other weapon of today... social media. (Facebook, 'news', ... twitter, youtube)
  - TV, music, movies, magazine, talk show, internet. etc..
  - Consumerism
  - Dissatisfaction and unhappiness
  - over exposure to these can make us lazy in thinking, → become susceptible to temptation
5. People are more concerned with what is in it for me? ↗ how reason and faith go hand in hand
  - is it practical? outworn? contemporary ↗ how people can be emotionally on believing.
7. - sleep
  - youtube videos
  - what ever is in front of me.
  - Satan works in subtle ways.
  - Satan didn't try to stop the atheist from thinking about God. He just provided another option.
  - the Devil simply have to move us from a higher good to a lower good. All thoughts about God disappeared
8. What you see is what you get. - This is real... and is all there is.
  - forgetting eternity,
  - there's a reason you are here
  - God is the most real thing there is b/c all other things exist b/c of Him

## Chapter 2

- patient has become Christian
- 'the habits' of the patient, both mental and bodily
  - ↳ still in the demon's favor
- the Church invisible v.s. the Church visible
- the people at church
  - your patient is a fool, doesn't matter who's on the other side of the pew
    - ↳ will judge the faith base on superficial things
  - a false idea of 'Christians'
  - 'keep it hazy in his mind now', what should a Christian look like?
- Dreaming aspiration to laborious doing
  - a stage of discipline and change for the patient.
    - God's willing to risk this stage b/c he loves us.
      - to 'do it on our own'
    - after this stage the Christian becomes stronger in their faith, less dependent on emotion & harder to tempt.
- If me being me w/ the sins that I have can be considered a Christian why would the sin of others prove their faith to be mere hypocrisy or convention?
  - fake humility
  - Parrot talk (imitating the outward but not the inward of more mature Christians)
    - ↳ Discipleship to prevent outward appearance matureness

ft

Distraction, like a squirrel we get distracted easily

"There's no need to despair, ... reclaimed... and now with us."

- the soil and the seed
  - those who endure are the true Christian
  - those who fall away are not true Christian.
- Christian life is hard

"All the habits of the patient, both mental and bodily, are still in our favor."

- Sinful nature
- desire of the flesh (Rom. 7:21-25)
- people are made of habits (can be good or a bad thing)

In what way can the church be one of the demons greatest allies?

- Division w/in church as a bad witness
- church made of sinful people
- Pride w/in church, v.s. humility → a hinderance

- big church pastors renounced / scandal → bad witness (R.Z.I.M.)
- false churches deceiving others.
- Church invisible v.s. Church visible (What is spiritual power? What should we look for?)

What is the difference b/w the church that is seen v.s. the church that is unseen?

- the people v.s. the physical building
- the church is a place for all people, lead to people of differing opinions but united in one thing.
- Christians have been viewed to be stuck up and mean.
- People come into church not to worship God so they missed the point and are disappointed

What does a Christian look like?

- Silly to judge by appearance
- Some times we expect a 'Christian' to look like ourself

### The laborious doing

- intentional w/ your relation w/ God
- bible reading
- prayer
- watch your action & talk.
- easy to talk the talk not what you know  
↳ but walk the walk ↳ but what you do

Saul becoming a Christian...

- pull out the log that's in side your eyes before you pick out the pricks in your brother's eyes

Screw tape informs Wormwood to keep his patient in a

- self righteous state
- proud state.
- prayer of the pharisee v.s. tax getter.

Ben

TD Christian School

high school for Luke

Phares leads & praise

BSF (Bible study fellowship)

Llang

- what's from God

- bump on jaw (not a tumor)

- busy week & Christmas season w/ work

- spending time w/ co worker

## Chapter 3

### First Method

- over spiritualizing & not realizing his own faults

↳ Matthew 23:1-7, 27-28

- outward appearance v.s. inside
- fixating on advancing his 'spiritual knowledge and duties.'

What are these elementary duties, v.s. the 'advance' ones?

elementary - Gal. 5:22-23, fruit of the Spirit and Mat. 22:34-40 the Great Commandments

→ advanced, → all the other things

- faith w/o work → hypocritical faith
- bad witness and no spiritual growth.

- Remember and do the basic

### 2nd Basic

- prayer 'spiritual' but not practical
  1. focusing on some one else's sin, selfish and not caring
  2. praying for an imaginary person.
    - ↳ distorted image of a person.

Luke 18:9-14

- instead of 'prideful' prayer
- pray w/ humility

### Method 3

- irritations w/ each other

Col. 3:12-13:

- forgive for God has forgiven you.
- put on God's likeness
- forbearance, loving tolerance

Psalm 86:15

- looking to God
- God's forbearance with us.

Matthew 6:14-15

- forgive as your Father forgives you

### Method 4

- elder brother  
↳ is she resentful of her son becoming Christian?

- double standard

- speck and the Log      Matthew 20:1-16

- Philippians 2:3-4