

THE SCREWTAPE LETTERS

by C.S. Lewis



THE AUTHOR

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland; his father was a lawyer and his mother a mathematician. She died when Lewis was nine, and the trauma eventually drove him to atheism in his teens. He read voraciously from his youth and began writing at an early age. He served briefly in World War I and graduated from Oxford in 1923. He returned to Oxford to teach English at Magdalen College (1925-1954), then moved to Cambridge as Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature (1954-1963). He died on the same day that John F. Kennedy was assassinated - November 22, 1963.

Not surprisingly, reading and conversations with fellow scholars led to Lewis' conversion. Christian writers such as George MacDonald and G.K. Chesterton led him to question the arrogance of his atheism, and ultimately the exercise of his imagination along with his reason brought him to Christ. He went on to become one of the greatest spokesmen for the Christian faith in the twentieth century.

Lewis preferred the company of men to women, living for most of his life with his older brother Warren and spending long and delightful afternoons in discussions with fellow writers at the *Eagle and Child* pub in Oxford. The writers who gathered there styled themselves the Inklings, and included J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield and Charles Williams. He did, however, care for the mother of his college roommate, Paddy Moore. The two had vowed to care for the other's families should either one be killed in the war, and Lewis kept his promise, allowing Mrs. Moore to live with him and his brother until her death in 1951. Finally, and most unexpectedly, Lewis married - having carried on a lengthy correspondence with Joy Davidman, an American Jewish divorcee, the two fell in love when she visited him in England and married in 1953. Their marriage was a happy one, but was cut short when Joy died of cancer in 1960.

Lewis' writings display an enormous range and virtuosity in varying styles and genres. They include the children's stories for which he is perhaps most famous (*The Chronicles of Narnia*, 1950-1956), autobiographical writings (*The Pilgrim's Regress*, 1933; *Surprised by Joy*, 1955; *A Grief Observed*, 1961), his Space Trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, *That*

Hideous Strength, 1938-1945), and theological and apologetic writings (*The Problem of Pain*, 1940; *The Screwtape Letters*, 1942; *Mere Christianity*, 1943; *The Abolition of Man*, 1943; *The Great Divorce*, 1945; *Miracles*, 1947; and *God in the Dock*, published in 1970), along with literary criticism and essays on a variety of other topics.

The Screwtape Letters was conceived while Lewis was sitting in church in July 1940. He began writing and found that the letters flowed easily from his pen. The letters were first published in *The Guardian* in serial form in 1941. They became instantly popular and were published in book form the following year. Despite constant clamors from his audience to write more editions of the demonic correspondence, Lewis resisted until he received an invitation from the *Saturday Evening Post*, in answer to which he added *Screwtape Proposes a Toast* in 1959.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Screwtape - A senior devil whose letters of advice to his nephew, and apprentice tempter, make up the book.
- Wormwood - The junior tempter who is the recipient of the correspondence that makes up the book.
- Glubose - The tempter assigned to the mother of Wormwood's subject.
- Slubgob - Principal of the Tempters' Training College for young devils, and apparently a rank incompetent.
- Toadpipe - Screwtape's secretary.
- Slumtrimpet - The tempter assigned to the girlfriend of Wormwood's subject.

NOTES

Letter #1 - Screwtape advises Wormwood not to engage his patient in reasoning, but to deaden his mind with jargon and distractions. Thought about things beyond human experience is to be discouraged by any means necessary.

Letter #2 - Screwtape notes that Wormwood's patient has become a professing Christian, but tells his nephew not to give up hope. Many have been turned away, he notes, by focusing on the flaws and peculiarities of Christians rather than on Christ himself. As long as the patient somehow thinks of himself as a good person, he can easily be persuaded that those he sees in church are hypocrites because of their imperfections.

Letter #3 - In the next letter, Screwtape advises Wormwood about how to use his subject's relationship with his mother to the advantage of Our Father Below. If the man can be made to think high spiritual thoughts while ignoring the daily routines of life, he can be made to think himself very spiritual while at the same time becoming increasingly annoyed with his mother (and

she with him - Wormwood is to work with her tempter, Glucose, to bring this about). Little offenses can be made to produce significant results if handled correctly.

Letter #4 - The next letter deals with prayer, and Screwtape advises Wormwood to get his man to think that prayer only really occurs when he “feels spiritual,” thus getting him to focus on himself rather than the Enemy (i.e., God). When he does pray to God, he should be encouraged to pray to his own imagined version of what God should be, so that his prayers are in reality directed to nothing at all.

Letter #5 - Wormwood is overjoyed that war has begun in Europe (a reference to World War II, during which the book was written). Screwtape warns him, however, that suffering can turn men to God, and that considerable thought must be given to encouraging the alternatives of patriotism or pacifism.

Letter #6 - Screwtape is pleased to hear that whether or not the young man will be called into military service remains uncertain. He sees value in uncertainty because suspense and anxiety keep a person from thinking about the Enemy. In fact, Screwtape advises Wormwood to prompt his subject’s thoughts in such a way that his malice is directed toward people he knows and sees every day, while his benevolence is directed toward those who are far away and unknown. Furthermore, when his thoughts favor the Father Below, he is to concentrate on the object of his anger or lust and not on his own heart, but when his thoughts favor the Enemy, he is to be encouraged to focus on his own praiseworthy emotions rather than on the object of those emotions.

Letter #7 - Screwtape addresses the question of whether or not demons should reveal their existence to their subjects. He notes the advantages and disadvantages of both approaches, then concludes that the ideal is really to get people to the point of worshiping the forces of evil while thinking of them in scientific terms, and thus denying their existence. He also suggests that Wormwood should direct his subject toward pacifism, as this shows the greatest promise of becoming a religion in and of itself, and thus drawing attention away from the Enemy.

Letter #8 - Having heard Wormwood express delight at the apparent waning of his subject’s religious interests, Screwtape warns his nephew that the Enemy did His best work when His children were going through struggles. Obedience in the face of doubt, he asserts, is the tempter’s worst enemy.

Letter #9 - Screwtape now advises Wormwood that sexual temptation is more potent when a subject is going through a “dry” period because then he is less likely to find true pleasure and is more susceptible to perversions. Furthermore, troughs may be most readily exploited when the subject does not realize that such things are temporary, and thus may be led to accept a low level of spirituality as the norm and think that heightened spiritual interest at the time of conversion was nothing more than a phase.

Letter #10 - Screwtape is glad to hear that Wormwood’s subject has been making worldly friends, and encourages the young tempter to teach his man skepticism. Most importantly, he should be taught to look down on the Christians around him because they are less worldly-wise than he,

while looking down on his new friends because they are not as spiritual. Any real movements of the conscience in him should immediately be marked down as “Puritanical.”

Letter #11 - Wormwood’s subject is making more new friends among the worldly, and Screwtape is pleased with this development. He uses this letter to teach Wormwood the difference between genuine joy and the kinds of humor that do nothing but encourage one to take lightly all that is sacred.

Letter #12 - Screwtape here emphasizes the importance of keeping the subject ignorant of his true condition; while he thinks he is continuing to move in the orbit of the Enemy (albeit with a more balanced approach to life), he must never be allowed to see that the path he is following leads directly away from the Truth. In this regard, it is important that he continue to go to church, but that he learn not to take it too seriously. His conscience should make him uncomfortable with true religion, yet never become so disturbed that he will seek true repentance.

Letter #13 - Screwtape is deeply disappointed to find that Wormwood’s subject has repented of his sin. He warns his nephew that allowing his subject to enjoy real pleasures such as reading a good book or taking a walk in the woods would quickly reveal the emptiness of the hollow pleasures he enjoyed with his new friends. Screwtape still finds hope, however, in the fact that the subject has not yet turned his repentance into action, and urges Wormwood to see that this never happens.

Letter #14 - To Screwtape’s alarm, Wormwood’s subject has begun to show signs of genuine humility. He advises the young tempter that the proper approach here is to get the man to focus on his own humility and become proud about how humble he is becoming, or at least to foster false humility rather than real self-forgetfulness.

Letter #15 - Wormwood seeks Screwtape’s advice on how to handle a lull in the war, and Screwtape advises him to do whatever he can to get the man to concentrate his thoughts on the future, since the future is uncertain and unable to be controlled, and thus is a perpetual source of fear and disappointment. Above all, he should not allow his subject to focus on the present and glorifying the Enemy moment by moment, or on eternity and the values that implies.

Letter #16 - Here Screwtape advises Wormwood to get his subject to do some church-hopping. By seeking a “suitable” church he becomes a critic rather than a worshiper and learner. Screwtape debates between sending him to a church with a liberal rector who believes nothing the Bible says and a church led by a young radical who preaches whatever passes through his head at the moment, with no consistency or no sense of authority. By all means, he should not allow the young man to understand the importance of Paul’s teaching about unity in questionable matters.

Letter #17 - Screwtape here speaks of the virtues of using gluttony to trap souls. He notes that the most effective kind of gluttony is not the consumption of large quantities of food, but the pickiness that puts the satisfaction of one’s appetites above everything else.

Letter #18 - Screwtape again returns to the subject of sexual temptation and notes the value of the concept of “falling in love,” which tends to turn people’s minds in directions that have nothing

to do with the Enemy's idea of love, let alone His demonstration of it. According to Screwtape, people are unavoidably selfish, so that true love is not possible - it is a fiction of the Enemy.

Letter #19 - Screwtape here is a little panicky, fearing that the heresy he uttered in his last letter - that the Enemy really loves His creatures - might be repeated to the wrong sets of ears below. He also assures Wormwood that his negative comments about Slubgob, his college professor, were completely in jest. He continues to talk about love, noting that either the acceptance or the rejection of "falling in love" can be useful as long as the subject focuses on himself. Best of all would be if Wormwood could convince his subject to marry a young woman in the neighborhood who would make it really difficult for him to continue to pursue his life as a Christian.

Letter #20 - Though the Enemy has put a stop to Wormwood's direct assaults upon his subject's virtue, Screwtape advises that he pursue a course of putting into his mind false expectations concerning women. Shallow concepts of beauty can go a long way toward convincing the young man to marry the wrong sort of woman, who would then be devastating to his spiritual life.

Letter #21 - Screwtape here advises Wormwood to cultivate in his subject a sense of victimhood in the light of minor inconveniences. Above all, he must learn to think of his time as his own, which he in turn grudgingly gives up to his job or magnanimously gives up to the activities of his church. He must also be taught to think of his body as something that belongs to him; by no means should the idea that all he has and is belongs to the Enemy be allowed to enter his mind.

Letter #22 - Apparently Wormwood's subject has found a girlfriend, and Screwtape is furious, since she is a chaste and modest Christian girl from a Christian family. Furthermore, Wormwood had informed the Secret Police of Screwtape's indiscretions in an earlier letter. In this epistle, Screwtape can't make up his mind whether to rage more about the love relationship or about Wormwood's perfidy. He goes so far as to threaten Wormwood with words about the House of Correction for Incompetent Tempters, but in his fury he suddenly turns into a centipede and winds up dictating the rest of the letter to his secretary Toadpipe.

Letter #23 - The subject's new girlfriend has introduced him to many other Christians who are intelligent and firm in their faith. Screwtape advises Wormwood to attempt to corrupt that faith in two ways. The first is to convince the subject that the "historical Jesus" is not found in the Bible, but by going behind the biblical records into unsupported speculation. This approach is guaranteed to produce a Jesus who is no more than an historical curiosity, and certainly not God to be worshiped. The second is to focus his mind on the political implications of Christianity to such an extent that Christianity becomes no more than a means to an end.

Letter #24 - Screwtape finds by contacting Slumtrimpet, the tempter in charge of the girl in whom Wormwood's subject has taken an interest, that she is naively convinced that all unbelievers are clearly different from and inferior to believers. He advises Wormwood to cultivate this idea in his subject and do all he can to turn it into spiritual pride, in which he sees himself as inherently superior to those outside this wonderful society to which he now belongs, of course, by right.

Letter #25 - Screwtape now advises Wormwood to corrupt his subject's Christianity with the desire for novelty and change. Christianity must always be associated with some new fad. After all, novelty is subject to the law of diminishing returns and leads to discontent, avarice, and ultimately to the hunger for forbidden pleasures. If the devils do their job really well, novelty can be transformed into an evolutionary philosophy that corrupts the intellect as well as the will.

Letter #26 - Screwtape now advises Wormwood about ways to use the period of courtship to sow future conflict in the marriage. The most important tactic is to promote unselfishness of such a shallow sort that each one feels offended because the other did not notice or fully appreciate the sacrifices being made. If this is done effectively, grudges and bitterness can be built up that will last for years or even decades.

Letter #27 - Wormwood is trying to use his subject's love for his girlfriend to distract him from God, but the tactic is backfiring because he is now praying to avoid such distraction. Screwtape then talks about prayer, noting that Wormwood can seek to cultivate false spirituality that scorns simple petitions, while at the same time raising questions about the efficacy of prayer because, if a request is not granted then prayer doesn't work, but if it is it would have happened anyway. Screwtape then speaks of the peculiar characteristic of humans of thinking that living subject to time is the natural mode of being, failing to recognize that God is outside time and thus uses prayer as a means of determining events. He also notes that man's peculiar bondage to time often makes him impervious to profiting from the learning of past ages because he is too busy engaging in historical criticism.

Letter #28 - Wormwood has been gloating about the destructiveness of the war, and is particularly excited that bombing raids are beginning in the city where his subject lives. Screwtape excoriates his stupidity and reminds him that the death of his subject is the worst possible thing that could happen given his present spiritual condition. On the other hand, long life provides many opportunities for tempters to separate people from the Enemy, whether through the trials of monotony and disappointment or the lures of prosperity, both of which tie man to the earth and turn his thoughts away from eternity.

Letter #29 - With the bombing of the city imminent, Screwtape debates whether to induce in the subject prideful courage, shameful cowardice, or hatred of the Germans. The first is impossible because demons can't produce virtue, they can only corrupt it; the last may be fun, but is too easily recognized as sin. The best approach is to induce cowardice. Though the subject recognizes that it is wrong, it can nonetheless be produced by filling the subject's mind with precautions that he could take should danger arise. He will thus learn to trust himself rather than the Enemy, and will, in a pinch, inevitably fail.

Letter #30 - The subject has performed admirably during the first air raid without a hint of pride. It is clear that Wormwood is losing his grip on the man. Screwtape advises that moderate fatigue can be used to create false expectations about the end of the trial, and that emotions can be manipulated so that "reality" is perceived as underscoring the objectivity of ugly things while relegating to the realm of mere subjective sentimentality those things that are pleasant and admirable.

Letter #31 - Wormwood has failed. The subject was killed in a bombing raid and found himself immediately in the presence of the Enemy, lost to Screwtape and his fellows forever. All that remains is for Screwtape to savor the devouring of his incompetent nephew, which will undoubtedly occur in the near future.

Screwtape Proposes a Toast - This address purportedly given by Screwtape at the graduation ceremonies at the Tempters' Training College focuses on a critique of the educational system in Britain. For the most part, Screwtape praises the inculcation of the idea that all are equal, so that all excellence is to be condemned because it might make someone else feel bad about himself. Stalks that rise above the others are to be ruthlessly cut off, thus institutionalizing mediocrity.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail the materialist and the magician with the same delight.” (Preface, p.3)

“It sounds as if you supposed that *argument* was the way to keep him out of the Enemy's clutches. That might have been so if he had lived a few centuries earlier. At that time humans still knew pretty well when a thing was proved and when it was not; and if it was proved they really believed it. They still connected thinking with doing and were prepared to alter their way of life as the result of a chain of reasoning. But what with the weekly press and other such weapons, we have largely altered that. Your man has been accustomed, ever since he was a boy, to having a dozen incompatible philosophies dancing about together inside his head.” (Screwtape, ch.1, p.7-8)

“Provided that any of those neighbors sing out of tune, or have boots that squeak, or double chins, or odd clothes, the patient will quite easily believe that their religion must therefore be somehow ridiculous.” (Screwtape, ch.2, p.12)

“It is funny how mortals always picture us as putting things into their minds: in reality our best work is done by keeping things out.” (Screwtape, ch.4, p.20)

“A faith which is destroyed by a war or a pestilence cannot really have been worth the trouble of destroying.” (Screwtape, ch.5, p.27)

“Our cause is never more in danger than when a human, no longer desiring, but still intending, to do our Enemy's will, looks round upon a universe from which every trace of Him seems to have vanished, and asks why he has been forsaken, and still obeys.” (Screwtape, ch.8, p.39)

“Never forget that when we are dealing with any pleasure in its healthy and normal and satisfying form, we are, in a sense, on the Enemy's ground. I know we have won many a soul through pleasure. All the same, it is His invention, not ours. He made the pleasures: all our research thus far has not enabled us to produce one.” (Screwtape, ch.9, p.41)

“A moderated religion is as good for us as no religion at all - and more amusing.” (Screwtape, ch.9, p.43)

“All mortals tend to turn into the thing they are pretending to be.” (Screwtape, ch.10, p.46)

“When they have really learned to love their neighbors as themselves, they will be allowed to love themselves as their neighbors.” (Screwtape, ch.14, p.65)

“Surely you know that if a man can't be cured of churchgoing, the next best thing is to send him all over the neighbourhood looking for the church that 'suits' him until he becomes a taster or connoisseur of churches.” (Screwtape, ch.16, p.72)

“The search for a 'suitable' church makes the man a critic where the Enemy wants him to be a pupil.” (Screwtape, ch.16, p.73)

“Let him have the feeling that he starts each day as the lawful possessor of twenty-four hours. Let him feel as a grievous tax that portion of this property which he has to make over to his employers, and as a generous donation that further portion which he allows to religious duties.” (Screwtape, ch.21, p.96)

“‘Believe this, not because it is true, but for some other reason.’ That's the game.” (Screwtape, ch.23, p.109)

“The horror of the Same Old Thing is one of the most valuable passions we have produced in the human heart - an endless source of heresies in religion, folly in counsel, infidelity in marriage, and inconstancy in friendship.” (Screwtape, ch.25, p.116)

“But the greatest triumph of all is to elevate this horror of the Same Old Thing into a philosophy so that nonsense in the intellect may reinforce corruption in the will. It is here that the general Evolutionary or Historical character of modern European thought (partly our work) comes in so usefully.” (Screwtape, ch.25, p.118)

“A woman means by Unselfishness chiefly taking trouble for others; a man means not giving trouble to others.” (Screwtape, ch.26, p.121)

“Thanks be to Our Father and the Historical Point of View, great scholars are now as little nourished by the past as the most ignorant mechanic who holds that 'history is bunk.’” (Screwtape, ch.27, p.129)

“Prosperity knits a man to the World. He feels that he is 'finding his place in it,' while really it is finding its place in him.” (Screwtape, ch.28, p.132)

“He sees as well as you do that courage is not simply *one* of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point, which means, at the point of highest reality.” (Screwtape, ch.29, p.137)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. In the preface to *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis says, “There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves are equally pleased by both errors, and hail the materialist and the magician with the same delight.” In what way does Lewis’ marvelous composition avoid these twin errors? Use specific quotations to support your assessment.
2. The literary tactic used by C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters* has often been imitated but never surpassed. Discuss why the decision to describe the Christian life from the standpoint of one trying to undermine it is so effective. How would the book have been different had Lewis written a straight devotional book advocating certain characteristics of Christian maturity? Would have worked as well? Why or why not?
3. Discuss the role of reason in C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*. Pay attention both to the ways in which Screwtape uses it in dealing with Wormwood and the way he advises the junior tempter *not* to use it in dealing with his subject. What does this tell you about the value Lewis places on reason and its role in the Christian life? To what extent is his assessment of reason biblical?
4. Discuss the view of war expressed in C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*. According to Lewis, war can be a weapon of the Enemy as well as being useful to the Father Below. What aspects of war make it such a two-edged sword?
5. Discuss the role of friendship in C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*. In what ways is Wormwood’s subject influenced by his friends? Be sure to plumb greater depths than merely saying that the wrong friends turn him against God while the right friends draw him closer to God; deal with questions of *why* and *how*.
6. In C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*, the author gives a complex picture of the church rather than a simple one. In what ways does he picture the church as assisting the efforts of the Father Below? Do you agree with Lewis’ views on ways in which the church can contribute to a soul’s damnation? Why or why not?
7. In C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters*, the author gives a complex picture of the church rather than a simple one. In what ways does he picture the church as assisting the efforts of the Enemy? Do you agree with Lewis’ views on ways in which the church can contribute to a soul’s salvation? Why or why not?
8. In what ways may C.S. Lewis’ *The Screwtape Letters* be seen as a critique of the contemporary church? What aspects of the modern church does Lewis see as endangering the souls of those who attend it? Do you agree with his assessments? Why or why not?

9. Contrast the reasons why God and Satan desire the souls of men as presented in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. Why is Screwtape unable to understand the Enemy's motives? What does this indicate about the fundamental nature of sin?
10. Discuss the view of truth presented by Screwtape in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. What approach to truth does Screwtape advise Wormwood to cultivate in his subject? Why? To what extent does Lewis anticipate postmodernism in Screwtape's approach to truth, especially in regard to the interpretation of literature and history?
11. In C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape argues that man best serves his Creator when he concentrates on the present and on eternity, but that focusing on the future is always to the advantage of the Father Below. Why does he say this? Do you agree with his argument? Why or why not? If possible, incorporate an incident from your personal experience into your answer.
12. In C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape insists that all pleasures are created by the Enemy, and that demons have yet to find out how to create one. What does Screwtape mean by this? Do you agree with him? Why, then, do so many sins seem so pleasurable, and why are so many seeming pleasures on the list of things Christians are not supposed to do?
13. In C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape talks to Wormwood about the importance of cultivating a continual demand for change and novelty. Why does the demon see this as such an effective weapon in his arsenal? Why does Lewis see such a craving as inevitably leading to spiritual decay and destruction? How does this issue work out in practice in your daily life?
14. In C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, Screwtape is unable to understand the love of the Enemy for His wayward creatures, yet sees love as humans understand it as a fertile field for the machinations of the forces of Hell. Why is Screwtape unable to grasp God's love? What conclusions does this lead the reader to draw about the difference between true, godly love and the love of popular culture? Be sure to use specific quotations from the book to support your argument.
15. In what ways does C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* serve as a critique of contemporary culture? Do you consider his criticisms dated, or do they carry a universal applicability that takes them beyond the issues of the middle of the twentieth century? Support your conclusion with details from the book.
16. Discuss the picture of demons painted by C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*. Evaluate from Scripture the validity of the portrayals of Screwtape and Wormwood. Note that I am looking for an evaluation of ideas rather than literal details like "demons don't write letters to each other."

17. In the preface to C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, the author expresses the idea that the best picture of Hell is one of a vast bureaucracy. Discuss the effectiveness of this aspect of Lewis' book. What does this parallel tell us about the nature of Hell and the relationships of demons to one another? What does it indicate about Lewis' view of bureaucracy, and thus serve as social criticism?
18. Compare and contrast the view of demons found in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* with that found in Dante's *Inferno*. Which is more biblical? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with details from both books.
19. Compare and contrast the view of demons found in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* with that found in John Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Which is more biblical? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with details from both books.
20. In Book II, lines 496-505 of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the poet argues that there can be no conflict in Hell because there is nothing valuable about which demons could possibly fight. Discuss this concept. Is there such a thing as "honor among thieves"? Contrast Milton's view with that presented by C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*.
21. Compare and contrast the view of demons found in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* with that found in Goethe's *Faust*. Which is more biblical? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with details from both books.
22. Compare and contrast the view of demons found in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* with that found in Christopher Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus*. Which is more biblical? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with details from both books.
23. C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* was written during the hardest days of World War II. In what ways does the war influence the book? Consider not only the letters where Lewis specifically addresses the war, but also the overall picture of Hell and its denizens presented in the book.
24. C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* was intended by its author to edify the reader. How must one approach the book in order to find in it a source of spiritual growth? What parts of the book were most helpful to you in examining your own life and Christian profession? Why?
25. In C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, the author shows the influence of Augustine of Hippo when he pictures evil as having no independent existence, but being nothing more than the absence of good. How does this Augustinian view of evil show up in the book? Do you agree with the definition of evil Lewis uses here? Why or why not? Be sure to use Scripture in your evaluation of the author's view of evil.
26. Baptist pastor John Piper advocates in his books something he calls "Christian hedonism." Discuss this concept using C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. According to Lewis, in what sense should pleasure be the goal of a Christian's life?

27. In C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, discuss the extent to which the author pictures Hell as a place where one's survival is entirely dependent on works. In contrast, how does entrance into the abode of the Enemy in the book depend on grace rather than works?
28. Discuss the critique of modern education presented in *Screwtape Proposes a Toast*, the addendum to C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. Though the essay was written almost half a century ago, to what extent does it still accurately describe public education? Why is such an approach to education dangerous, both to society and to the life of the spirit? Use Scripture in your discussion of the essay that concludes the book.
29. C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* incorporates the belief of Anglicans (and Catholics) that a person can lose his salvation by committing a sin of sufficient seriousness. In what ways does this belief affect the teachings of the book? In your opinion, did it in any way interfere with the validity of the lessons Lewis is trying to teach? Why or why not? Be sure to use details from the book to support your argument.
30. Discuss the concept of the "law of undulation" found in C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. What is Lewis saying here about human experience? How does he see these normal ups and downs as part of God's purpose in the lives of His children? How can they become sources of temptation and even spiritual destruction? Use both Scripture and specifics from the book in answering the question.
31. Discuss the treatment of humor in chapter 11 of C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*. Why does Lewis argue that some kinds of humor are healthy while other kinds can be spiritually hazardous? Do you agree with his distinctions? Give examples from your own experience of modern culture that support Lewis' arguments.
32. In chapter 17 of C.S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters*, the author presents an unusual definition of gluttony. Evaluate his treatment of the subject, noting the breadth of application implied in his expanded definition. How could this sort of gluttony appear in the spiritual realm as well as in the physical? Why is such gluttony far more hazardous to one's soul than the mere over-consumption of food?
33. In *The Screwtape Letters*, C.S. Lewis argues that little can do more to destroy a person's life than living with an eye constantly on the future. Such an outlook, he maintained, both set one up for disappointment and kept him from appreciating and being involved in life in the present. Evaluate Lewis' assertion by using the character of Richard Carstone in Charles Dickens' *Bleak House*. In what ways does Richard demonstrate the truth of Lewis' point, and the tragic consequences that flow from a life based on unrealistic expectations?
34. In Book II, lines 496-505 of John Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the poet argues that there can be no conflict in Hell because there is nothing valuable about which demons could possibly fight. Discuss this concept. Is there such a thing as "honor among thieves"? Contrast Milton's view with that presented by C.S. Lewis in *The Screwtape Letters*.

35. Compare and contrast the treatments of sin and temptation in C.S. Lewis' *Perelandra* and *The Screwtape Letters*. What themes do the two works have in common? In what ways do the differences in genre influence the treatment of those themes?
36. To what extent does Weston in C.S. Lewis' *Perelandra* use the tactics advised by Screwtape in *The Screwtape Letters*? Choose three specific pieces of advice in the latter work and explain how Weston uses them in the novel. Are these realistic avenues of temptation in human experience? Why or why not?
37. In C.S. Lewis' *Perelandra*, Ransom muses over the question of the relationship between Satan and his minions in the following words: "There was, no doubt, a confusion of persons in damnation: what Pantheists falsely hoped of Heaven bad men really received in Hell . . . The question whether Satan, or one whom Satan has digested, is acting on any given occasion, has in the long run no clear significance." Compare this idea to the similar one expressed in *The Screwtape Letters*. Is this conception of the relationship between Satan and sinners biblical? Why or why not?
38. Compare and contrast the views of demons presented in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* and *The Screwtape Letters*. How are the machinations of Screwtape and his nephew similar to those of the Masters of Belbury? Consider both the nature of the respective temptations and the desired outcomes of those temptations.