

*More Letters
From
Hell*

Compiled by Kent Higgins

Introduction to More Letters from Hell

When C. S. Lewis penned the introduction to The Screwtape Letters in 1941, he said: “I have no intention of explaining how the correspondence which I now offer to the public fell into my hands.”¹ He continued: “The sort of script which is used in this book can be very easily obtained by anyone who has once learned the knack...,” and this has proven to be the case. Nonetheless, I shall follow Lewis’ example and pledge not to disclose the means by which this material was obtained.

Of course there are a great many more devils at work in the world than Wormwood and his uncle Screwtape, so it should come as no surprise to anyone that additional correspondence, similar to that found by Lewis and even referencing that material, would come to light.

The additional correspondence here presented is from a different time than that Lewis obtained. It appears that, in the interval, standards of writing (like so many other standards!) have declined; this will be apparent to any reader who compares the “original” letters with these. The reader is requested not to think less of Lewis’ scholarship in presenting the original letters by virtue of the defects herein found.

Sources of documents aside, the present compiler of this additional correspondence is led to believe that Lewis would have approved of this materials’ being made available to a limited audience. After all, it was he who provided the world with Mere Christianity, his term for sticking to the fundamentals that unite all Christians instead of focusing on the points that divide us. It is indeed true that “the devil is in the details” (those dividing points), something that Lewis clearly understood. We would do well to remember it today.

Kent Higgins
Charleston, West Virginia
St. Valentine’s Day, 2004

¹ Lewis, C. S., The Screwtape Letters, San Francisco, HarperCollins, 2001, p. IX.

I

My dear Suggles,

Imagine my delight to have heard from you again after all this time! I have, as you requested, asked permission from my superiors below to advise you in your current efforts among humankind, and I am pleased to say that The One Beneath has approved.

He has even been so kind as to provide access to earlier correspondence between one "Screwtape" and his nephew "Wormwood," and has suggested that each of us review that material for lessons which could be applied to your situation. Unfortunately, it seems that somehow the earlier correspondence fell into human hands and received fairly wide distribution. We must be careful to avoid that mistake, since the more they know of our strategies the more likely they are to counter them.

Of course, there is no way to keep our communication out of the hands of the Enemy. His keeping up with all that prayer has always been something of a marvel, and apparently He is also able to monitor the Internet in real-time. There are those who say He actually knows what is going to be posted before it occurs, but I discount that as improbable. In any event, there is nothing we can do about it.

I will appreciate your summarizing for me your recent activities as well as the areas (if any) upon which you wish me to focus.

With best regards, your affectionate uncle,

Crimeon

II

My dear Suggles,

My, you have been a busy fellow, haven't you? While you have made admirable progress, it is fortunate that I am now able to advise you, since you are, it seems to me, in some danger of being exposed for what you are.

Now in the normal course of events, for one of us to be identified as agents of The One Beneath is of no great consequence. Although some modern humans are willing to acknowledge that there is such a thing as a devil, they are at the same time so self-centered and self-indulgent that they feel safe in ignoring us.

You've heard that advertising slogan, I suspect, "Have it your way," which is all well and good with respect to a hamburger but a far different thing with respect to the important things of life. The focus on self that pervades Western culture, especial that of the Americans, coupled with their belief in whatever the media tell them has allowed many of our fellows to incorporate these slogan-based beliefs into matters of the spiritual.

There's nothing new about this. The records are incomplete as to which of us should have credit for the wonderfully-effective "God helps those who help themselves." Anyone who knows anything of the Enemy and who is thinking clearly (and it is that second point that really matters!) would reply instantaneously "That's not true. God helps those who *ask* for help." But because they're *not* thinking clearly (and each of us gets some credit for that), they don't make that response. I know of humans who think that the quotation comes from the Bible. I wonder if they think it is Old or New Testament?

To return to the point of your being identified. The danger lies in your choice of arena, for while ordinary mortals are willing to ignore or even deny the presence of devils, you have chosen to work within the Church, and some of them may actually recognize you. That's not too bad if only one or two point it out, but if the notion spreads, there will be that hue and cry we have heard so many times below. If the humans actually *ask* the Enemy for help instead of relying on themselves, then all is lost for us.

We must at all cost keep that from happening! I shall write further on this matter after "refreshing my recollection" (as one human so quaintly put it!)

With best regards, your affectionate uncle,

Crimeon

III

My dear Suggles,

After a period of reflection, I am pleased to say that I think your plan, with some modifications that I will suggest, has every chance of success.

You understand, of course, that the Enemy has fortified His Church in special ways against our interference. You will remember the early days following that regrettable interjection of the Second Person into humanity when the likes of us couldn't grab a soul no matter what we did.

The clear memory of the Second Person, combined with the interference of the Third Person, made life a living Hell (if you'll pardon the expression) for you and me. The only redeeming factor was that there were so few people who had actually seen the Son themselves that the news didn't spread very widely or rapidly. The Enemy was, as usual, His own biggest problem, since He refused to simply force humans to see Him as He really is. This insistence upon free will has allowed us to work on people in many a way without His interfering.

Can you imagine if the Son were to come again? The media circus that would ensue, coupled with humanity's present willingness to believe anything they see on television, would undo in a day the work of centuries. None of the tricks we used so effectively before would work, since everyone would know "they saw it on TV." You'll remember the trouble Paul (whom you may recall as Saul) had with just a few believers. That was the result of our good work, and our continuing good fortune in keeping people centered on themselves instead of accepting the message of the Enemy.

We were further aided by that so-called "miracle" which led the Emperor of Rome to declare himself a believer! That made it socially acceptable, even obligatory, for people at all levels of society to do so as well. We were faced with calamity, when The One Beneath reminded us that the Second Person had once been quoted as saying "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and unto God what is God's," or something like that. It was but the work of a moment to combine Caesar and God into one (human) person, and the rush to the side of the Enemy was halted even as the rush into church continued.

There's nothing like organized religion to keep the Enemy at bay, especially if you hand out (as we did) the earthly trappings of success. The Church grew rich but not powerful, at least not in terms the Enemy had in mind. Men vied with one another for positions of power in the Church, and pretty soon there were all sorts of churches. "Divide and conquer" was always good advice.

It was also fortunate that technology was not so advanced in those days as it is now, and we were able to influence the recording of history in subtle ways that, over time, combined to produce conflicting records of what happened. Since none of it was captured on video, none of it was necessarily true. We were saved!

There are now more branches of the Church than one can count, each one believing that it (and it alone) holds the key to salvation. Your chosen field of endeavor, the Anglican Communion in general and the Episcopal Church in particular, is somewhat less dogmatic on this point than other branches of the faith, yet opportunity awaits us.

I shall have more to say on this point shortly, but for the moment I must turn to my paperwork for The One Beneath. There are days when I wish our master would adopt e-mail and other modern communications tools, but no, he wants everything written down and printed out.

Ah well, there's no rest for the wicked, is there?

With best regards, your affectionate uncle,

Crimeon

IV

My dear Suggles.

In order for you to understand how to attack the Episcopal Church, you need to review its history. Our brethren have been able to obfuscate how this branch of the Enemy's kingdom on earth originated, and since no one studies history anymore, it remains a matter of confusion.

Modern mortals think Henry VIII founded the Church of England in order to get a divorce. Nothing could be further from the truth, although it is correct that Henry was in need of a divorce. But he needed a divorce because he needed to try to obtain a male heir by use of another wife (and another and another. Makes you wonder why he didn't realize *he* had something to do with the sex of the child, doesn't it?)

And he needed a male heir for the perfectly sound and understandable reason that first, temporal rule descended through the male line in preference to the female and second, men tended to fight wars more effectively than did women. I assure you that Henry had no intention of abandoning the more-or-less catholic church of his day, although the Pope didn't see it that way! (The Pope still clung to those ideas I referenced in my last letter combining God and Caesar. When the Roman emperors at last frittered away their power, the princes of the church stepped up to the plate and assumed the purple, as it were.)

No, the Anglicans got their real start with Henry's daughter Elizabeth I in a remarkable bit of statecraft known as the "Elizabethan Settlement of 1559." You have to give "the virgin queen" her due on that one, since she wedded Catholic and Protestant beliefs without *appearing* to compromise either. In fact, of course, she compromised *both*, but as she expected, each side saw in it only what it wished to see. Her interest was more in maintaining the peace and security of the realm, and she did it!

I continue to be amazed that the Episcopalians simply don't see what is right before their eyes in their *Book of Common Prayer* (which really contains everything they say they believe). Elizabeth would be very familiar with their words of administration:

"The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving."²

The beginning sentence is Catholic; the ending is Protestant. Yet there they are, right together, and no one seems to mind. But the present crowd has forgotten how enduring was Elizabeth's settlement which has relied on the good will of human kind toward one another.

² Book of Common Prayer (1979), Holy Eucharist I, p 338.

I applaud your efforts to get them focused once again on their distinctions instead of on their common beliefs, and I have some further suggestions on that process which I shall in due course impart. At the moment, as I'm sure you can understand, just having to write down that odious phrase has left me with a nasty headache, and I need to have a bit of a lie down.

But before I end this letter, may I refer you to another part of that book of theirs (do you think they see the irony in being "people of the book"? I doubt it.) You should examine articles XXVI and XXXII of their *Articles of Religion*. We need to keep them from reading these and really understanding what their faith is. I am confident that you will be able to sustain this fuss for at least several more years and that, in the process, we shall acquire a number of converts to the service of The One Below.

With best regards, your affectionate uncle,

Crimeon

V

My dear Suggles,

Let's review the play to date, shall we?

You've managed to convince some people, and confuse a great many more, over this "issue" of the consecration of that Robinson fellow as a bishop. I especially applaud the way in which you have managed to drag into the controversy people who have nothing to do with it (I'm speaking first of the bishops of the other parts of the Anglican communion and second of all those American politicians who are rushing to defend the sanctity of marriage). Good show!

Getting the other bishops to chime in wasn't all that difficult, but it was a nice touch. It's always good to provide competing authorities whenever morality is under discussion. After all, if one could say absolutely (as only the Enemy can), what is or is not morally correct, well then, the matter would be settled. So long as it appears to be open to question, then we have room to work.

You have managed to convince a great number of them that their *opinion* actually counts for something, when in fact nothing could be further from the truth. I refer you to your homework from my last letter, namely Article XXVI from their *Articles of Religion* (conveniently found on page 873 of their prayer book. I wonder that they never ignore the sermon and read what is right before them. I applaud you for putting in their minds that it would be *impolite* to do so!)

The title of the article says it all: "Of the Unworthiness of the Ministers, which hinders not the effect of the Sacraments." Well, of course it doesn't! We know surely that the Enemy is responsible for the Sacraments, and that nothing He puts His mind to can be messed with, either by the likes of us or by the humans. I hope you will be able to keep them away from this kind of thinking. If it does come up, I'd suggest you say something like "that's old fashioned" or "we don't really have to follow those rules, do we?" Even better, you can appeal to Scripture, and as you know, we can prove just about *anything* from there!

But if they do happen to stumble across this, see if you can't reduce its plain meaning to something humorous. Or move them into a question somewhat like "Just what is the supposed effect of the Sacraments?" That will (with any luck at all) get them discussing theology, and most of them will be lost in an instant. And the ones who understand it will be convinced that it is really, in some fundamental way, important. I'm not sure the Enemy would see it that way. Oh, I suppose He doesn't object to people studying Him, but He'd much rather they *loved* Him, and with all those complicated words no one has much time for that.

The other article that I asked you to look at was XXXII: "Of the Marriage of Priests." The English Church concluded that it was all right for priests to marry *because there*

wasn't anything in Scripture to prevent it. This is a point they take over and over again. Their phrase is "Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation," and that's a marvelously tricky statement. It doesn't mean "All things contained in Holy Scripture are necessary to salvation," but it's such a fine point that you can easily convince many people that our reading is true. I'm fond of "The Bible says what it means and means what it says." That's a bit like the hamburger slogan. As long as we keep them thinking it's really that simple, then we have them. You can point out passages that have a "clear meaning" and convince them that's all there is to it.

St. Paul is, for once, helpful there. Ignore that he was writing to specific people to deal with specific problems. Generalize! Extrapolate! Convince your charges that the Bible speaks to them now exactly as it spoke to people 2,000 years ago. Never mind that nothing much else is the same. Never mind all the discoveries of science. Just remind them that "If the King James version was good enough for Jesus, it's good enough for me!" Keep them out of anything that smacks of real scholarship or understanding.

Pray do not let them return to the idea that they have some responsibility to join reading of Scripture with prayer, for that conversation with the Enemy is fatal to us.

More on this next time.

With best regards, your affectionate uncle,

Crimeon

VI

My dear Snuggles,

About this thing of “practicing homosexuals.” I think that’s the phrase that has gotten a lot of people worked up, which is good for us.

Most people are unsure about their own really deeply held beliefs and feelings, and we mean to keep it that way. Fortunately for us, it usually takes some real test or challenge in order for people to reach far enough into themselves to find the strength to do what they have to do to protect a loved one, and modern life produces few of those.

Nothing like a rampaging wild boar in the old days to get people defending home and hearth, but those days are long gone. Between the lack of challenges and the incredible tedium of the lives most people lead, there are few opportunities for heroes. They used to be commonplace, but no more.

And since people don’t know, in any fundamental sense, what they really believe, they care even less about what other people may believe. In fact, they assume that, in a self-centered world, everybody else is *just like them!* So when you show them someone who clearly *isn’t just like them*, they get uneasy. They don’t know why, but they feel it’s not “normal.” If only they knew what the Enemy meant to be “normal” for them! But they don’t, and with some help from us, they won’t.

I warned you earlier that you needed to be careful in attacking the Church, since the Enemy has peopled it with some who would recognize and expose us. We are aided in this case by the rush of politicians to defend the “sanctity of marriage.” The plan is to prevent some people who profess their love for one another from solemnizing that love, while allowing other people to do so.

Now you must tread very carefully here. The idea is to keep those who *are* allowed to marry focused on the right and privilege they have, and convince them that allowing people “different from them” to marry somehow diminishes their own marriages. Don’t let them get into the area of divorce, because that will make them less self righteous. Any honest appraisal of marriage in America today will show in a moment that it is not what the Enemy may have intended it to be.

The politicians are enormously helpful here. This is exactly their kind of issue. It costs them nothing and gains them votes. They are allowed to make really strong statements, get red in the face, all those things that convince the voters that they are *sincere*. Maybe they are; maybe not; it really doesn’t matter. They will fill up the newscasts and talk shows and keep them away from the danger that lurks within this conversation.

The danger in this area is that someone will start to talk about “love.” You know, “when two people are in love,” “when two hearts beat as one,” all that sort of thing. There are two directions these thoughts can take, both bad for our side. One direction is that all

these gooey words will soften their hearts so that they actually have tender feelings for others. You know: “Well, they are clearly so happy together.” Start down that path and the whole matter of difference can become of no consequence. (There’s a variant on this when some member of a human’s family “comes out” because then they have to deal with it as a real and personal, not a theoretical, issue. We’ve not been doing well recently keeping people ashamed of their sexual orientation, and so more and more of them are admitting who they really are and how they really feel. Try to keep this whole thing on the theoretical plane.)

When it happens that the issue of others comes close to home, we do best to help our charges fall back into feelings of squeamishness. If we can just keep them uneasy, we may get by with their giving lip service to “that kind of thing” being all right, but not really believing it. In my experience, this works almost all the time (the notable exception being when a parent and child are truly close to one another and one “comes out” to the other. We almost always lose in those cases because the love is too strong.)

The other direction that all this talk of love can take us is for a person to let his mind wander until he remembers what the Second Person had to say about love. (Well, since He had so much to say about it, it’s unlikely they’ll remember it all, but one particular saying is all it will take.) The point we want to avoid at all cost is “the first and great commandment” as well as the second, “love your neighbor as yourself.” Once they start to think what *that* means, there is a very real chance that they will start to wonder just what the Enemy had in mind.

Once again, if they simply ask Him, they’ll be faced with the need to admit that He is a lot more generous than they have been. That could shame them into some charity toward one another, and I tell you that is a loathsome sight to behold. Keep them self-centered and self-righteous, and throw in some unrest in the world at large (a small war somewhere is always nice, if you can arrange it). But if they ever truly embrace and live those commandments, there is no hope for us!

On that depressing note, I remain,

With best regards, your affectionate uncle,

Crimeon

VII

My dear Suggles,

What a splendid idea to “go for the money”! I had meant to suggest it, and am thrilled that you came up with it on your own.

Most humans have never understood Grace, and they are especially confused about the notion that He gives His grace freely and without condition. That is so unlike the beings they have become that, for the most part, they simply can't understand that something freely given is infinitely valuable. Nor do they understand giving something away without anticipation of reward.

Part of the way the humans can be more like the Enemy is to give of themselves to others, freely and without reservation. Some of them have learned that the more of themselves they give away, the more they are given by Him. Fortunately for us, the idea is so counter-intuitive that few will really try it, at least not for long. When some do, we can usually categorize them as “holier than thou” sorts, and their companions will shrug it all off with a good laugh.

So the proposal, and I am not clear that this is really your direct work or just some good fortune come your way, the proposal that parishes in the Episcopal Church ought to be able to withhold their money from the national Church works for us because it just doesn't seem all that bad. “We don't want to punish the Church,” most will say, “but we're uncomfortable, and we just want to be comfortable with where our money is going. Surely you can allow us that small privilege?”

What wonderful language. I know you didn't write it, but whoever did should come over to our side. First of all, where is it written that they are supposed to be comfortable? We've convinced them they have that right, that they're *entitled* to feel good about themselves, when what that really means is that they care only for their own feelings and their own needs. Since that is completely contrary to what the Enemy has in mind for them, it puts them squarely in our camp. The beauty of it is they feel good about it!

But secondly, and far more important, is the statement that the money is theirs. Money is a relatively recent invention, and modern humans have forgotten that it is merely a substitute for something real, some goods or services that they have to provide or want to obtain. Since few of them understand money (what is an “electronic funds transfer,” anyway?), they can be led to think that the money is really theirs. The phrase is “I earned it.” Once you get them to that point, it becomes not only their right but their duty to spend it wisely.

Be on guard that they not realize, or even begin to think, that He gave them everything, beginning with life and continuing to anything they can be said to possess. Once they appreciate this truth, and it is so glaringly obvious once it is seen that it cannot be denied,

once they accept the truth of their utter and absolute dependence on the Enemy, they will be drawn into His camp and there is nothing you and I can do about it.

In summary, I suggest that you keep them focused squarely on themselves. Make them believe that anyone who appears to be different from them is, therefore, bad, or at least not so good as they. If each of them is the center of his own little universe, then each will fail to see the universe as it really is.

I suspect the politicians will continue to be helpful to our side without much prompting from you. This is a free kick for them, something that costs nothing and gains much, at least in the short term, which is all they care about.

Some of the Episcopalians will grow weary of the conflict and simply give up. They will simply stop coming to church. We must convince them that they are right to do so. "Live to fight another day" may come in handy. Try to convince them that all this bickering is just not something that their sort does, that it is impolite to insist that someone else have a certain belief or any beliefs at all, so long as they *behave* appropriately.

It is especially important that people not be allowed to pray to the Enemy for guidance. They did some of that in Minneapolis, and you know what the atmosphere was like there! You and I know that prayer is answered, period. Keep them thinking that it is a rarity.

Above all else, keep them away from receiving the Eucharist together. If they must, do not let their eyes make contact as they return from the altar, for if they do look into one another's souls, which is what happens when they are so close to the presence of the Enemy, then all of our tricks and suggestions will be swept away.

I wish I could give you some newer advice, but I think that our best program is to continue what we have been doing for centuries. We're still in business after all these years, and many a soul has been taken for the amusement of The One Below, and many more will come our way.

Basically, to paraphrase one of their recent politicians, "It's about the love, stupid." Keep them away from that realization, and all will be well for us.

With best regards, your affectionate uncle,

Crimeon