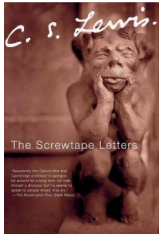


The Screwtape letters ; with, Screwtape proposes a toast

"The Screwtape Letters" reviewed by Sarah on June 15, 2010



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Grade:

11

Title:

The Screwtape Letters

Author:

C.S. Lewis

Genre:

historical

Write a review of the book, including plot points, if you wish:

In the novel, *The Screwtape Letters*, by C. S. Lewis, God's nature and desire is revealed by a devil's letters. Through Screwtape, Lewis reveals that God is love in His very being, something Screwtape cannot understand or believe. Secondly, Screwtape knows that God created mankind in His own image because He loves them for their sake, not His, and wants them to be with Him in Heaven for all eternity. Lastly, Screwtape reveals that God challenges people to love their fellow man and even become generous in their love as a response to His love. Thus, through Screwtape's distorted views on God's love, Lewis implies that God is Love in His very being, that He loves people for their sake, not His, and that His love challenges people to become generous in their love. Through Screwtape, Lewis reveals that God is love in His very being, something Screwtape cannot understand or believe. For instance, Screwtape proves that God is love in His very being when he states, "This impossibility He calls love, and this same monotonous panacea can be detected under all He does and even all He is or claims to be. Thus He is not content, even Himself, to be a sheer arithmetical unity; He claims to be three as well as one, in order that his nonsense about Love may find a foothold in His own nature." (Pg. 94) Senior Devil Screwtape reveals that God is Love itself and wants His creation to share in His love with their fellow man in order to achieve Heaven. Screwtape demonstrates God's love by reminding the Junior Devil Wormwood that mankind is extremely special to God, telling Wormwood, "Remember always, that He really likes the little vermin, and sets an absurd value on the distinctness of every one of them." (Pg. 65) This value Screwtape reveals is really God's love shining forth on mankind. Screwtape cannot understand this because he is a devil, but knows that the readers of the letters do have an idea of God's love, which causes Screwtape to feel uneasy and worry. As a result of this feeling, Screwtape writes, "The Enemy's idea of Love is a contradiction in terms, what becomes of my reiterated warning that He really loves the human vermin and really desires their

freedom and continued existence? I hope, my dear boy, you have not shown my letters to anyone. (Pg. 99) This worry Screwtape experiences proves, without a doubt, God's love for man and that He is truly Love in His very being. As a result, Screwtape concludes that God's love must be a disguise for something other than pure love for His creatures and that He must have created them for something else. He states, "All His talk about Love must be a disguise for something else. He must have some real motive for creating them and taking so much trouble about them." (Pg.100) Screwtape's disbelief in what He knows to be true, that God is Love, reveals strongly God's true nature: that He created mankind, loves mankind for their sake, not His, and solely desires their being with Him in Heaven for all eternity. Secondly, Screwtape knows that God created mankind in His own image because He loves them for their sake, not His, and wants them to be with Him in Heaven for all eternity. He tells Wormwood that God's love for men is not propaganda, but truth, and that God really wants mankind to be with Him forever. Screwtape emphasizes, "all the talk about His love for men, and His service being perfect freedom, is not mere propaganda, but an appalling truth. He really does want to fill the universe with a lot of loathsome little replicas of Himself" (Pg. 38-39) This truth about God emphasized by a Senior Devil strongly proves the point that God truly and without a doubt, unceasingly loves mankind. Screwtape goes on to say that God has destined man to live with Him in Heaven and he will not feel at home anywhere else. He reports, "The truth is that the Enemy, having oddly destined these mere animals to life in His own eternal world, has guarded them pretty effectively from the danger of feeling at home anywhere else." (Pg. 155-156) Thus, God has placed the desire to be with Him in Heaven, in the hearts of every human being. In addition, Screwtape reports that God's nature is love for mankind and that this love is what the devils absolutely hate and find repellent. He says, "we must never forget what is the most repellent and inexplicable trait in our Enemy; He really loves the hairless bipeds He has created..." (Pg. 72) This love God has for man must be true, especially since Screwtape emphasizes the word really in his statement, "He really loves the hairless bipeds He has created." Thus, Screwtape continuously reveals through his council to Wormwood that God loves people for their sake and truly desires mankind to be with Him in Heaven for eternity. Lastly, Screwtape reveals that God challenges people to love their fellow man and even become generous in their love as a response to His love. By God's giving man free will to choose what they desire He does not force anyone to do what He wills, but can only counsel and look out for us. Screwtape says, "The Enemy has a curious fantasy of making all these disgusting little human vermin into what He calls His free lovers and servants...sons is the word He uses, with His inveterate love of degrading the whole spiritual world by unnatural liaisons with the two-legged animals. Desiring their freedom He leaves them to do it on their own." (Pg. 7) By leaving man to do it on their own, God shows mankind His love and if men choose to be with God in Heaven, they must choose to love their fellow man because all mankind is His sons, and what father would not want his sons to love one another. Screwtape also says that God wants man to be aware of what they are choosing so that they may be with Him forever. He reports, "He wants men to be concerned with what they do" (Pg. 25) This concern is responsibility for one's actions, and God wants man to become generous in their love toward one another. Screwtape then tells Wormwood that God's love prompts mankind to do good works and make choices that will lead him to his salvation. Screwtape says, "forced to attend to his neighbours more than he has ever done before and liking it more than he expected, taken out of himself as the humans say, and daily increasing in conscious dependence on the Enemy, he will almost certainly be lost to us..." (Pg. 154) This love man shows for one another, encouraged by God, enables mankind to gain eternal life, happiness and peace with God in Heaven forever. Thus, Screwtape reveals that God's love encourages man to become generous in his love by helping those around him. In conclusion, through Screwtape's distorted views on God's love, Lewis implies that God is Love in His

very being, that He loves people for their sake, not His, and that His love challenges people to become generous in their love. Through Screwtape, Lewis reveals that God is love in His very being, and concludes, because Screwtape is a devil, that God's love must be a disguise for something else, while He actually reveals that God is love in His very being. Secondly, Screwtape knows that God created mankind in His own image because He loves them for their sake, not His, and wants them to be with Him in Heaven for all eternity, thus proving to the reader God's infinite love of mankind and His true nature. Lastly, Screwtape reveals that God challenges people to love their fellow man and even become generous in their love as a response to His love for them, thus revealing to the reader what must be done to attain eternal life, happiness and peace. Therefore, by God's being love and loving man for just being man, God challenges mankind to love one another as He loves them so they may be with Him in Heaven.

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