

## ***The Screwtape Letters. Lesson 3.***

### **Letter 5: On the Opportunities and Challenges of War**

In this letter, Screwtape reprimands Wormwood for his naïve enthusiasm concerning the prospects for war in drawing many away from the “Enemy.” Though Wormwood is “delirious with joy because the European humans have started another of their wars,” Screwtape warns his ward “not to hope too much from a war.”

#### **Read the marked portions of the first, second, and third paragraphs.**

What is the real business that Wormwood is to be about? Why is this important? “Let us therefore think rather how to use, than how to enjoy, this European war.”

How does war sometimes render useless “one of [the devil’s] best weapons, contented worldliness”? What spiritual insight might we gain from this?

But what of the supposedly faith-destroying effects of suffering and privation? How does Screwtape see his colleague’s optimism in this regard overstated? Do you think this is true?

### **Letter 6: On Magnifying the Fear of Fear Itself, and Engendering Real, not Fanciful, Hatred**

In this letter, Screwtape affirms Wormwood’s cultivation of anxiety in the patient – the process of diverting his attention “from the thing feared to the fear itself.”

#### **Read the first paragraph.**

“There is nothing like suspense and anxiety for barricading a human’s mind against the Enemy,” Screwtape writes. Why? Do you agree?

#### **Read the second paragraph.**

In an effort to mislead the patient and exhaust his patience, Screwtape writes, “It is your business to see that the patient never thinks of the present fear as his appointed cross, but only of the things he is afraid of.” What does this mean? What insight can we gain from this about the nature of anxiety and the way it misleads us?

#### **Read the third paragraph.**

“One can therefore formulate the general rule,” Screwtape writes. What is this general rule? How does it work and how does it resemble the devil’s strategy with our prayer life?

Screwtape goes on to speak of the “fanciful hatred” which war engenders. But he is not impressed by this sort of thing.

#### **Read the final paragraph.**

What is the strategy by which “the malice thus becomes wholly real and the benevolence largely imaginary”? What is Screwtape getting at when he insists that Wormwood “must keep on shoving all the virtues outward till they are finally located in the circle of fantasy, and all the desirable qualities inward toward the will”?