



PREFACE

C. S. Lewis' *The Screwtape Letters* is a wonderfully creative little book that teaches Christian living by imagining how demons might wage war against it. It consists of a series of letters in which Screwtape, a senior demon, mentors and coaches Wormwood, a junior demon, as to how best to trip up his "patient," a new Christian. Ultimately, the effort fails, as the patient is killed during wartime and is taken to glory.

It is interesting to me that in his final letter, when he reproaches Wormwood for his failure, Screwtape recounts the patient's "escape" with special emphasis on what the unnamed Christian saw in the moments after his death. Lewis writes:

How well I know what happened at the instant when they snatched him from you! There was a sudden clearing of his eyes (was there not?) as he saw you for the first time, and recognized the part you had had in him and knew that you had it no longer...





As he saw you, he also saw Them.... The [angels] are strange to mortal eyes, and yet they are not strange. He had no faintest conception till that very hour of how they would look, and even doubted their existence. But when he saw them he knew that he had always known them and realized what part each one of them had played at many an hour in his life when he had supposed himself alone, so that now he could say to them, one by one, not “Who *are* you?” but “So it was *you* all the time.” ... He saw not only Them; he saw Him. This animal, this thing begotten in a bed, could look on Him. What is blinding, suffocating fire to you is now cool light to him, is clarity itself, and wears the form of a Man.

I believe Lewis’ insistence that death will bring a sudden clearing of one’s eyes is wholly biblical. Did not the apostle Paul tell us: “For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known” (1 Cor. 13:12)? I’m less sure, as Lewis postulates, that we will instantly see that we have been troubled by personal demons and guarded by specific angels, but I am convinced that we will know with certainty that these beings exist and that heaven and hell are real places, just as our faith in God’s existence will be confirmed by the blessing of gazing upon Him face to face.

Most of us accept the biblical testimony that there is a God who rules in heaven and earth (though we don’t always accept everything Scripture says about Him). However, we are much less certain about other spiritual truths, such as heaven and hell, angels and demons, and their prince, Satan. We are like Wormwood’s patient, who, in Screwtape’s words, “even



doubted their existence” until death brought clear sight. Why do we struggle to accept these things? God is no less invisible to us, yet we believe in and worship Him. Moreover, we fully accept that such things as microbes and germs exist, even though we cannot see them with the naked eye. Our selectivity when it comes to what we believe troubles me, for heaven and hell, angels and demons are taught as realities in Scripture as much as is God Himself.

I believe that if we are to be consistent Christians, believing all of the Bible rather than portions of it, we must recognize that the supernatural places and beings described on its pages are real. There is an uncompromised supernaturalism at the heart of the Christian worldview, and we must not let the world’s skepticism with regard to these things affect our belief systems. We must trust and affirm that there is much more to reality than meets the eye. We must declare with Hamlet, “There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamed of in your philosophy, Horatio.”

I hope this brief tour through the Bible’s teachings in regard to heaven and hell, angels and demons, will bolster your faith in Scripture’s teachings regarding the supernatural. May we stand fast on the firm foundation of the inspired writings of the prophets and the apostles, waiting with anticipation that day when our vision will clear. And as Horatio G. Spafford taught us in his great hymn “It Is Well with My Soul,” may we sing, “O Lord, haste the day when the faith shall be sight.”

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