

A black fountain pen nib with gold-colored accents is positioned at the top right, pointing downwards towards the letter 'i' in 'Screwtape'. The nib is surrounded by a yellow, textured background that resembles a torn piece of paper. There are some black ink splatters on the yellow background.

The
Screwtape
Letters

C·S· LEWIS



**VISIT THIS PLACE, O LORD,
AND DRIVE FAR FROM IT
ALL SNARES OF THE
ENEMY; LET YOUR HOLY
ANGELS DWELL WITH US
TO PRESERVE US IN
PEACE; AND LET YOUR
BLESSING BE UPON US
ALWAYS; THROUGH JESUS
CHRIST OUR LORD. AMEN.**

1

Men are not angered by mere misfortune but by misfortune conceived as injury. And the sense of injury depends on the feeling that a legitimate claim has been denied. The more claims on life, therefore, that your patient can be induced to make, the more he will feel injured and, as a result, ill-tempered. Now you will have to find a tract of time which he reckoned on having at his own disposal unexpectedly taken from him. It is the unexpected visitor (when he looked forward to a quiet evening), or the friend's talkative wife (turning up when he looked forward to a tête-à-tête with the friend), that throw him out of gear.... They anger him because he regards his time as his own and feels that it is being stolen. You must therefore zealously guard in his mind the curious assumption "My time is my own". Let him start each day as the lawful possessor of twenty-four hours. ...You have here a delicate task. The assumption which you want him to go on making is so absurd that, if once it is questioned, even we cannot find as shred of argument in its defense. The man can neither make, nor retain, one moment of time; it all comes to him by pure gift; he might as well regard the sun and moon as his chattels. ... Wrap a darkness about it, and in the center of that darkness let his sense of ownership-in-Time lie silent, uninspected, and operative. (p. 111-113)



My times are
in Your hands

Psalm 31:15

(Matthew Henry)

If God have our times in his hand, he can help us; and, if he be our God, he will help us; and then what can discourage us? It is a great support to those who have God for their God that their times are in his hand and he will be sure to order and dispose of them for the best, to all those who commit their spirits also into his hand, to suit them to their times, as David here. The time of life is in God's hands, to lengthen or shorten, embitter or sweeten, as he pleases, according to the counsel of his will. Our times (all events that concern us, and the timing of them) are at God's disposal; they are not in our own hands, for the way of man is not in himself, not in our friends' hands, nor in our enemies' hands, but in God's;...

2

He (God) is a hedonist at heart. All those fasts and vigils and stakes and crosses are only a façade. Or only like a foam on the seashore. Out at sea, out in His sea, there is pleasure, and more pleasure. He makes no secret of it; at His right hand are “pleasures for evermore”. Ugh! I don’t think He has the least inkling of that high and austere mystery to which we rise in the Miserific Vision. He’s vulgar, Wormwood. He has a bourgeois mind. He has filled His world full of pleasures. There are things for humans to do all day long without His minding in the least----sleeping, washing, eating, drinking, making love, playing, praying, working. Everything has to be twisted before it’s any use to us. (p. 118)

Sleeping –Self-deprivation of sleep under the pressure of meeting deadlines; self-indulgence in sleeping too much to the detriment of responsibilities

Washing- Carelessness in hygiene to the point of being offensive; over care to the point of being obsessive.

Eating – Eating disorders; gluttony

Drinking- Self-righteous abstinence; drunkenness that disrupts relationships; alcoholism

Making love – Abandonment of biblical parameters of sex (one man and one woman married to each other); transformation of virginity from a badge of honor to one of ridicule and scorn; within a marriage, withholding sex as a weapon; porn addiction; rape

Playing – Self-deprivation of play and recreation due to a twisted view of duty; Playing too much to the detriment of responsibilities

Praying – Caving to distractions from praying; Deception that prayer is boring or futile; a spirit of pride and self-righteousness toward one's own praying.

Working – Sloth, laziness, and resentment toward work; deception that a person's worth hinges on success at work; overworking to the detriment of relationships and health; workaholism

3 [The house] bears a sickening resemblance to the description one human writer made of Heaven: “the regions where there is only life and therefore all that is not music is silence.”

Music and silence----how I detest them both! How thankful we should be that ever since Our Father entered Hell----though longer ago than humans, reckoning in light years, could express---no square inch of infernal space and no moment of infernal time has been surrendered to either of those abominable forces, but all has been occupied by Noise---Noise, the grand dynamism, the audible expression of all that is exultant, ruthless, and virile---Noise which alone defends us from silly qualms, despairing scruples and impossible desires. We will make the whole universe a noise in the end. We have already made great strides in this direction as regards the Earth. The melodies and silences of Heaven will be shouted down in the end. (pp. 119-120)

¹¹ And he said, “Go out and stand on the mount before the LORD.” And behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind tore the mountains and broke in pieces the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. And after the wind an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

¹² And after the earthquake a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire a still small voice.

¹³ And when Elijah heard it, he wrapped his face in his cloak and went out and stood at the entrance of the cave. And behold, there came a voice to him and said, “What are you doing here, Elijah?” (1 Kings 19: 11-13)

*Be still, and know that I am God;
Psalm 46:10*



4

The grand problem is that of “Unselfishness”. Note, once again, the admirable work of our Philological Arm in substituting the negative unselfishness for the Enemy’s positive Charity. Thanks to this you can, from the very outset, teach a man to surrender benefits not that others may be happy in having them but that he may be unselfish in foregoing them. This is a great point gained. (p. 141)

C.S. Lewis – “The Weight of Glory”

If you asked twenty good men to-day what they thought the highest of the virtues, nineteen of them would reply, Unselfishness. But if you asked almost any of the great Christians of old he would have replied, Love. You see what has happened? A negative term has been substituted for a positive, and this is of more than philological importance. The negative ideal of Unselfishness carries with it the suggestion not primarily of securing good things for others, but of going without them ourselves, as if our abstinence and not their happiness was the important point. I do not think this is the Christian virtue of Love.

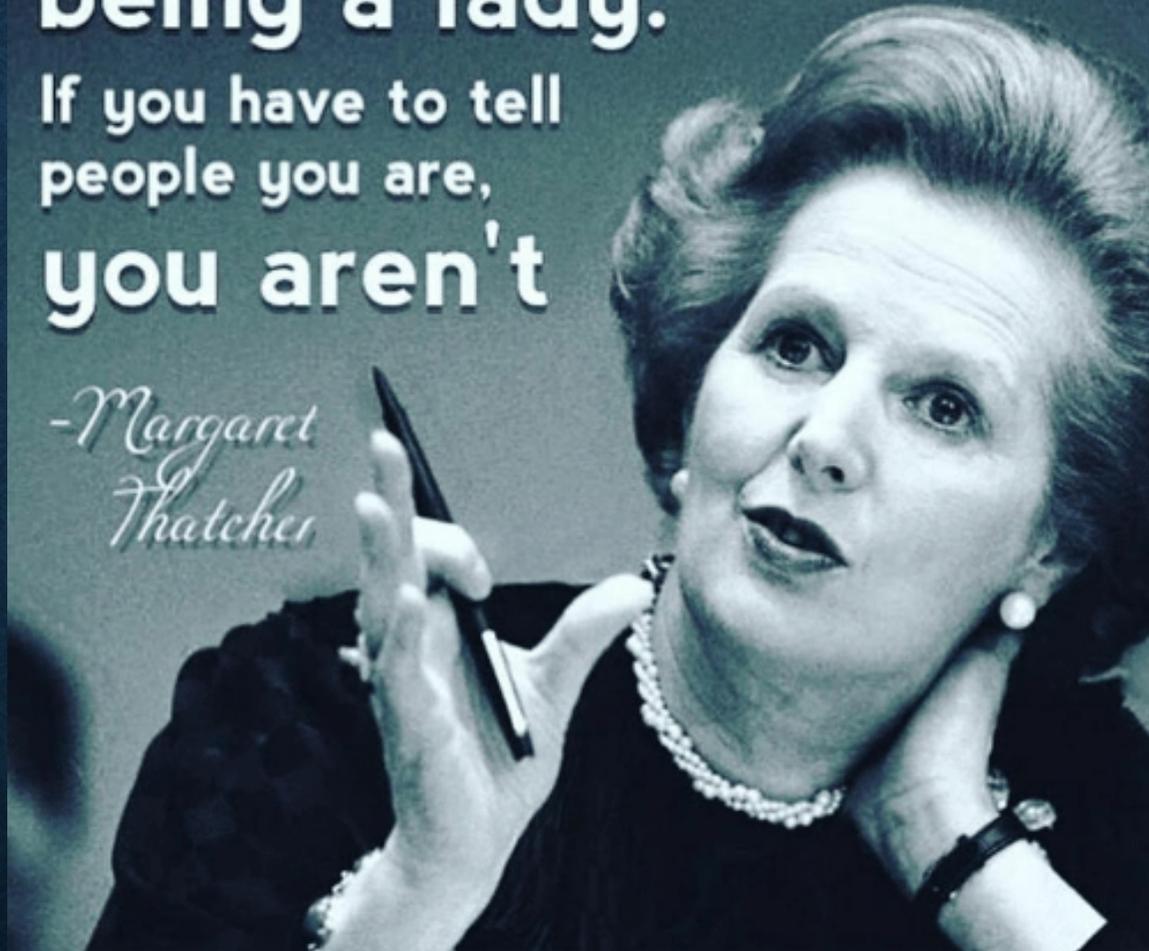
4A

Later on you can venture on what may be called the Generous Conflict Illusion. This game is best played with more than two players, in a family of grown-up children, for example. Something quite trivial, like having tea in the garden, is proposed. One member takes care to make it quite clear (though not in so many words) that he would rather not but is, of course, prepared to do so out of “Unselfishness”. The others instantly withdraw their proposal, ostensibly through their own “Unselfishness”, but really because they don’t want to be used as a sort of lay figure on which the first speaker practices petty altruisms. But he is not going to be done out of his debauch of Unselfishness either. He insists on doing “what the others want”. They insist on doing what he wants. Passions are roused. Soon someone is saying, “Very well then, I won’t have any tea at all!”, and a real quarrel ensues with bitter resentment on both sides. You see how it is done? If each side had been frankly contending for its own real wish, they would all have kept with the bounds of reason and courtesy;.... (pp. 143-144)

Being powerful is like
being a lady.

If you have to tell
people you are,
you aren't

*-Margaret
Thatcher*



Unselfishness always begins with me.
Selflessness (love, charity) always
begins with you.

True love is always wanting what's best
for someone, even if it doesn't include
you.

5

The general rule which we have now pretty well established among them is that in all experiences which can make them happier or better, only the physical facts are “real” while the spiritual elements are “subjective”; in all experiences which can discourage or corrupt them the spiritual elements are the main reality and to ignore them is to be an escapist. Thus, in birth the blood and pain are “real”, the rejoicing a mere subjective point of view; in death, the terror and ugliness reveal what death “really means”. The hatefulness of a hated person is “real”---in hatred you see men as they are, you are disillusioned; but the loveliness of a loved person is merely a subjective haze concealing a “real” core of sexual appetite or economic associations. Wars and poverty are “really” horrible; peace and plenty are mere physical facts about which men happen to have certain sentiments. The creatures are always accusing one another of wanting “to eat the cake and have it”; but thanks to our labors, they are more often in the predicament of paying for the cake and not eating it.” (pp. 168-169)

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others who have no hope.

(1 Thessalonians 4:13)

The liturgy for the dead is an Easter liturgy. It finds all meaning in the resurrection. Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we too, shall be raised.

The liturgy, therefore, is characterized by joy, in the certainty that “neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

This joy, however, does not make human grief unchristian. The very love we have for each other in Christ brings deep sorrow when we are parted by death. Jesus himself wept at the grave of his friend. So, while we rejoice that one we love has entered into the nearer presence of our Lord, we sorrow in sympathy with those who mourn. (BCP p. 507)

The place where they serve is a copy and shadow of what is in heaven. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: “See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.”(Hebrews 8:5)

6

This animal, this thing begotten in a bed, could look on Him. What is blinding, suffocating fire to you, is cool light to him, is clarity itself, and wears the form of a Man.... All the delights of sense, or heart, or intellect, with which you could have once tempted him, even the delights of virtue itself, now seem to him in comparison but as the half-nauseous attractions of a raddled harlot would seem to a man who hears that his true beloved whom he has loved all his life and whom he has believed to be dead is alive and even now at his door.

(pp. 174, 175)

“He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
Revelation 21:4

