

The Screwtape Letters : Letters from a Senior to a Junior Devil

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On its first appearance, *The Screwtape Letters* was immediately recognized as a milestone in the history of popular theology and has since sold more than a quarter of a million editions. Now stunningly repackaged and rebranded as part of the Signature Classics range. A masterpiece of satire, this classic has entertained and enlightened readers the world over with its sly and ironic portrayal of human life and foibles from the vantage point of Screwtape, a highly placed assistant to 'Our Father Below'. At once wildly comic, deadly serious and strikingly original, C.S. Lewis gives us the correspondence of the worldly wise old devil to his nephew Wormwood, a novice demon in charge of securing the damnation of an ordinary young man. Dedicated to Lewis's friend and colleague J.R.R. Tolkien, *The Screwtape Letters* is the most engaging account of temptation -- and triumph over it -- ever written.

This adaptation of C.S. Lewis's biting satire received a 1999 Grammy nomination for best spoken-word performance, and it's easy to see why--the story fits the format perfectly. It's relatively brief (the unabridged reading takes a mere four hours), and contains only one character--the demon Screwtape, who writes letters to his novice nephew Wormwood, instructing him on how to best tempt his "patient" (a wayward soul on earth) into the bosom of "our Lord below."

Obviously, the book wasn't written with former Monty Python John Cleese in mind, but it's hard to imagine a better Screwtape. Cleese's voice provides the perfect vehicle for Lewis's dry, razor-edged wit. His uncanny comic timing and ability to milk each phrase for maximum effect betray an infectious enthusiasm for the story. It's clear that he's having a great time reading, and it's impossible not to laugh along with him. This inspired pairing of two of the 20th century's greatest wits makes for a meditation on the dark side of spiritual guidance that's as relevant and funny today as it was in Lewis's war-torn England. (Running time: 4 hours, 3 cassettes) --Andrew Neiland

His letters are signed, save one, "Your affectionate uncle", yet Uncle Screwtape's purposes in writing to his young nephew are hardly innocent. Penned in a brisk, businesslike style, old Screwtape offers the gullible Tempter Wormwood fiendishly clever advice on his most pressing concern: the winning of young lives to the devil.

First published in 1941, *The Screwtape Letters*, a perennial best seller, has earned a place in the library of classics. The truths contained in C. S. Lewis's treatise on human nature are as old as the world, but his witty observations continue to confront and challenge believers and nonbelievers alike.

The outcome of Screwtape's correspondence is not known. But judging from his final signoff -- "Your increasingly and ravenously affectionate uncle" -- his appetite for evil has not lessened.

Other Books

The Human Icon, Despite the history that divides them, Hinduism and Orthodox Christianity have much in common. In *The Human Icon*, Christine Mangala Frost explores how both religions seek to realise the divine potential of every human being, and the differences in their approach. Frost, who has experienced both the extraordinary riches and the all-too-human failings of Hinduism and Orthodox Christianity from the inside, is perfectly placed to examine the convergences and divergences between the two faiths. Inspired by a desire to clear up the misunderstandings that exist between the two, *The Human Icon* is a study in

how two faiths, superficially dissimilar, can nevertheless find meeting points everywhere. The powerful intellectual and spiritual patristic traditions of Orthodox Christianity offer a rare tool for revitalising too-often stalled dialogue with Hinduism and present the chance for a broader and more diverse understanding of the oldest religion in the world. Tracing the long history of Orthodox Christianity in India, from the Thomas Christians of ancient times to the distinctive theology of Paulos Mar Gregorios and the Kottayam School, Frost explores the impact of Hindu thought on Indian Christianity and considers the potential for confluence. With a breadth of interest that spans Hindu bhakti, Orthodox devotional theology, Vedanta and theosis, as well as meditational Yoga and hesychastic prayer, Frost offers a fresh perspective on how the devotees of both faiths approach the ideal of divinisation, and presents a thoughtful, modern methodology for a dialogue of life.

❓ ❓ ❓ ❓ ❓ . Elder Thaddeus , Our Thoughts Determine Our Lives : The Life and Teachings of Elder Thaddeus of Vitovnica (compiled by the St Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, translated by Ana Smiljanic (California: Saint Herman Brotherhood, 2009; 2012), p."