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Faith vs. Science: The Demons Like It!

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More than two generations ago C. S. Lewis published *The Screwtape Letters*; letters from a senior devil, Screwtape, to his junior devil nephew, Wormwood. Lewis claimed that he had methods for intercepting this correspondence, but that they were not for the faint-hearted. Herbert O'Driscoll, a Canadian Anglican preacher and author, also has published faxes between these devils. He claims he does nothing to receive them, they just appear, smelling faintly of sulphur. He conjectures that nether regions apparently use available technology, but, as with us, sometimes technology fails them. That's one explanation for my strange experience.

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I was looking for ideas on how to begin this talk on faith and science, wanting to begin with some current thought about the apparent conflict between science and faith. I started my Internet browser, went to one of the many search engines and looked for sites dealing with science or technology and faith or religion. I began cruising through a series of home pages, clicking on interesting looking links, and soon found a Web site that was very odd indeed. Where, and what, was *beelzebub.sheol.com*? I followed a link to "Department of Damnation—Faith and Science Section". Another link caught my attention: "Screwtape: Letters—Latest". With horrid fascination, I clicked! My screen flashed, there were noises from my hard drive, I could smell something quite unpleasant, and there it was!

* * * * *

My dearest nephew Wormwood; I am taking the unusual step of publishing my letters on the Net, because all our infernal Master's devils, demons and imps can benefit from the

almost schizophrenic split between faith and reason that humans have created and deepened for nearly 500 of their years. Why our Enemy has created them able to go contrary to his purpose, and has given them free will to accept or reject his love (what a sickening word that is!) is forever beyond me! But it is to our great advantage; we lead them away from our Enemy, and make them our food! Reason, properly misdirected, is our great tool; if we get them to reason that our Enemy does not exist, or that the Enemy is unnecessary in their theories of their world, they are ours by default!

I wish the legions of our fiendish Master could take credit, but the humans did it to themselves. I take devilish joy in knowing it was the Enemy's chief agent, the Church, that began the great divorce of reason and faith. Knowledge amidst ignorance is power, and as a human institution, the Church liked power. When knowledge threatened them, they suppressed it. So they tried Galileo for teaching a moving Earth contrary to Scripture, and change in the supposedly unchangeable heavens, and condemned him for declaring what any reasonably bright human could easily see. With that verdict the die was cast, the Church insisting that the evidence of the senses and mathematical proof must yield to scriptural interpretation. Galileo's works were banned, and with this notoriety ensured their circulation to scholars throughout Europe.

Within a century the separation was complete. Johannes Kepler developed laws of planetary motion, showing that the Earth indeed moved around the Sun. Isaac Newton, with universal gravitation, discovered the force necessary for moving planets, showing that once in motion, they would continue forever. Suddenly the heavens and the earth, and a God to keep them working, were replaced with clockwork that could run on its own. In the minds of scientific humans, the Enemy of our hellish Master, who is the creator and sustainer of all, was becoming unnecessary!

William Harvey, studying blood circulation, started the understanding of the human body as just another machine. René Descartes and Blaise Pascal developed the mathematical, logical, and philosophical foundations of a new world view. Roger Bacon articulated the scientific method. By the end of the 17th century of human time, Science triumphed over Religion.

Henceforth empiricism, observation and discovery replaced revelation as the way of understanding the world, the universe, and the deepest yearnings of the human heart. A new way of thinking came into being, and with it a great harvest of souls for our hellish Master.

Dear Wormwood, it was not our doing, but we gladly reap the fruits. Simply, in this worldview there is no room for our Enemy. God is either unnecessary or non-existent. Because the Enemy wants a relationship of love (I hate, I don't understand, that word!) with these humans, and they can't relate to the unnecessary or non-existent, therefore we gather the harvest of souls by default.

Dear Wormwood, we have gone from strength to strength. It has not taken much for hell's legions to persuade certain humans that if only the observable and measurable is valid, then observation and measurement must be applied to human behaviour. We cannot take credit for psychology, but we can delight in the conventional psychological wisdom that belief in a supreme being is neurotic. After all, such a supreme being cannot (by definition) be observed or measured. Meanwhile, belief in the ego, id, or super-ego, or even a collective unconscious, which can no more be measured or observed than a supreme being, is said to be the height of sanity! Oddly, these observers and measurers totally ignore common behaviour present in millions, even billions, of people who have religious faith—an understanding of oneself as more than a body, a relationship with some Other, greater than oneself, that Enemy of our hellish Lord. O how I wish that we had caused this, but they have done it entirely themselves. Why the Enemy created them blind to all but their own prejudices is a mystery; it must be this “free will” we do not comprehend.

Mind you, my dear Wormwood, some on the Enemy's side, some of the faithful, have helped. The more science insists on only its worldview, the more stridently they insist on only their interpretation of their scriptures. Since those often fly in the face of the plainly observable, and deny every-day experience, many humans simply ignore what religion insists is absolute truth, and believe every claim of science, no matter how abstract or improbable. Others simply divide their lives in two: weekly they attend worship services and assent to the creeds of their faith, and the rest of the time they act as if none of

it mattered. Others retreat into ignoring common sense and experience, and insist against all evidence that their religious understanding of the world has to be true. Needless to say, none of that creates the relationship the Enemy wants, and we benefit.

Some devils have promoted specialization. With few exceptions, young humans destined to work in science are discouraged from learning about humanities, or about our Enemy. Education is a great help; there are so many demands on time to learn all the minutiae of science, it is impossible to read even casually in another field. Better yet, some of these young scientists take "survey courses" in humanities so trivialized that bright young humans cannot take them seriously. At the same time, those destined for the humanities (and study of the Enemy, theology) are weaned early from science and mathematics, and even simple theories are beyond them. Their teachers and mentors even encourage them to be proud of this ignorance. Many of our imps and demons working in educational bureaucracies have done excellent work to ensure that this state of affairs continues, and gets worse, to our great benefit.

Specialization in humanities and sciences, and wide-spread general ignorance, ensure that few ideas become known outside their narrow field. Seldom is there a synthesis of knowledge. If that ever happened, it might point to the Creator, our enemy. There are theologians who sound like cosmologists, and cosmologists who sound like theologians, but they don't understand each other, and they are not understood by other specialists or by the rest of the humans. Of great amusement are evolutionists, who have theories of the complexity of life on earth developing randomly, quite unaware of probability theory demonstrating that the time available has simply been too short by many orders of magnitude, unless there was guidance. Or thermodynamicists proving that all systems, if left alone, will always go from complexity to randomness, contrary to evolution, unless there is an input from "outside". If these groups got together, they might be forced to realize that their work, collectively, leads to strong evidence for the existence of our Enemy, which would be a disaster for our devilish Master.

Dear Wormwood, you worry about the new interest in spirituality, particularly prayer and healing. You express concern that recently *Time* magazine devoted a cover and several pages

to the subject. You worry that the popular press seems to be fascinated with things spiritual. But there is little actual threat, if you read carefully. Scientists are firmly in control; studying, probing, measuring, looking for scientific reasons why prayer and meditation heal. Since the Enemy cannot be measured, what results is a utilitarian understanding of religion. Faith and prayer work; they are cheaper than pills or surgery, and there are fewer malpractice suits from patients who pray, so why not use faith? But that is far from what faith and prayer are intended to be by our Enemy. Very few of these utilizers of prayer will have the experience that millions of genuinely spiritual humans have daily; a deep sense of the presence of our Enemy in their lives. Let them use spirituality for their own purposes, and they are ours!

Dear nephew, the division between faith and science is our great asset. There are a few humans making an effort to heal that great rift, but they are easily dealt with. Here is how we do that...

* * * * *

My screen went black. A message appeared; "Connection to Remote Server Lost"; and despite trying for hours to reconnect, I kept getting "Remote Server Does Not Exist". There was no trace of the letter from Screwtape on my computer. Why had I been allowed to see it at all? Was the situation indeed as Screwtape presented it? Was I to feel hopeless about the effort to re-integrate faith and science? I remembered then that the devil is also called the "Father of Lies". I finally gave up, and thought that there might be a sermon in all that!