

## **The Existence of the Devil**

*(From the Preface)*

There are two equal and opposite errors into which our race can fall about the devils. One is to disbelieve in their existence. The other is to believe, and to feel an excessive and unhealthy interest in them. They themselves (the devils) are equally pleased by both errors and hail a materialist or a magician with the same delight.

*(From Chapter/Letter VII)*

My dear Wormwood...

I wonder you should ask me whether it is essential to keep the patient in ignorance about your own existence. That question, at least for the present phase of the struggle, has been answered for us by the High Command. Our policy, for the moment, is to conceal ourselves. Of course, this has not always been so. We are really faced with a cruel dilemma. When human beings disbelieve in our existence we lose all the pleasing results of direct terrorism and we make no magicians. On the other hand, when they believe in us we cannot make them materialists and sceptics - at least not yet.

I have great hopes that we shall learn in due course how to emotionalise and mythologise their science to such an extent that what is, in effect, a belief in us, (though not under that name), will creep in while the human mind remains closed to belief in the Enemy. The 'Life Force', the worship of sex, and some aspects of Psychoanalysis may here prove useful. If once we can produce our perfect work - the Materialist Magician, the man, not using, but veritably worshipping what he vaguely calls 'Forces' while denying the existence of 'spirits' - then the end of the war will be in sight. In the meantime we must obey our orders.

I do not think you will have much difficulty in keeping your patient in the dark. The fact that 'devils' are predominantly *comic* figures in the modern imagination will help you. If any faint suspicion of your existence begins to arise in his mind, suggest to him a picture of something in red tights, and persuade him that since he cannot believe in that (it is an old textbook method of confusing them) he therefore cannot believe in you.

**Avoid the danger of reasoning** - *Chapter/Letter I\**

**Play on disappointment with church** - *Chapter/Letter II\**

**Aggravate the tensions of daily relationships** - *Chapter/Letter III\**

**Recommending the choosing of a 'suitable' church** - *Chapter/Letter XVI*

**Exploiting human sexuality** - *Chapter/Letter XXI*

**Winning a soul in the long term** - *Chapter/Letter XXVIII:*

My dear Wormwood...

You have time itself for your ally. The long, dull, monotonous years of middle-aged prosperity or middle-aged adversity are excellent campaigning weather. You see, it is so hard for these creatures to *persevere*. The routine of adversity, the gradual decay of youthful loves and youthful hopes, the quiet despair of ever over-coming the chronic temptations with which we have again and again defeated them, the drabness which we create in their lives and the inarticulate resentment with which we teach them to respond to it - all this provides admirable opportunities of wearing out a soul by attrition.

If, on the other hand, the middle years prove prosperous, our position is even stronger. Prosperity knits man to the World. He feels that he is 'finding his place in it' - while really it is finding its place in him. His increasing reputation, his widening circle of acquaintances, his developing sense of importance, the growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of really being at home in earth, which is just what we want. You will notice that the young are generally less unwilling to die than the middle aged and the elderly.