



THE NOBLE HEART™

Wearing Out Our Soul by Attrition

May 20, 2010 eLetter

My friends,

I open my personal journal to you, my expeditions and explanations with God, this morning.

I was reading an excerpt from C. S. Lewis', *The Screwtape Letters*. In this selection, senior devil Screwtape is instructing junior devil Wormwood how to defeat followers of God.

“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 (hardly felt as pain) of ever overcoming 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 provided 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 a 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 sense of importance, the growing pressure of absorbing and agreeable work, build up in him a sense of being really at home on Earth, which is just what we want.”

As I read this I was stunned by the accuracy and pervasiveness of these assaults on a man or woman. I know this to be true by my own experience as well as conversations with others.

“It is so hard for these creatures to persevere.” This is so true. Perseverance is more essential to the Christian life and our calling than we’d like to believe. You and I can do or be just about anything for a moment, but over time who we truly are and our level of fitness will be revealed. We don’t persevere for an instant or a moment, we persevere a season. Only time can give birth to perseverance. Those who possess a “noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it” and who persevere “produce a crop”. (Luke 8:15) There is no fruitfull life with perseverance...in the right things.

The routine of adversity

The gradual decay of youthful loves and youthful hopes

The quiet despair of ever overcoming chronic temptations

The drabness which we create in their lives

The inarticulate resentment with which we teach them to respond to it

Being knit to the World through a sense of being really at home on Earth

Check, check, check, check and check...I am familiar with these assaults and know how effective they are. We must recognize that this is not “the way life is”, accepting it and thereby letting the enemy wear out our soul by attrition. We must not fall under his evil spell. I believe that the way we overcome this assault is to fervently guard our heart, stay close to God and live like an artist in the fellowship of artists. Paul wrote, “I pray that the fellowship of your faith may become effective through the knowledge of every good thing which is in you for Christ’s sake”. (Philemon 1:6)

Winston Churchill said, “Virtuous motives, trampled by inertia and timidity, are no match for armed and resolute wickedness.”

Fighting inertia and timidity with compelling and courage (I guess that’s what a movement is),

Gary