

* Some words for this: "desacralizing," "demythologizing," "dechristianizing," "deconstantinianizing."

8. OK-ism: either I or you as left/right wrong--e.g., judging "gospel" by criteria of "world."....Also, materialism [technocracy, speed, consumerism], utilitarianism, objectivism, anticonventionalism [in sex, etc.], sports cults, nihilism, classism, racism, sexism, reverse sexism, panaceisms, academisms.

Our Lord's parable of the swept house [Mt.12.43-45 (L.11.24-26)] speaks of a way the fallen principalities and powers gain greater grip, viz. by negative exorcism *-- literally a "sweeping" condemnation of what was and is, without positive replacement with something better (Bushnell's "the expulsive power of a new affection" more worthy than the old). Our prophetic religion condemns only in the interest of replacing with what is more worthy, viz. devotion-obedience to God our Source and Destiny, the God of Abraham, Moses, and Jesus. This thinksheet lifts up some culture-"demons" now being used by the fallen p. and p.--let's say eight of them, since it's the number latterly inhabiting the parable's swept house. (I'm moved to do this thinksheet partly because of the inspiration from two excellent recent books: Hans Kung's ON BEING A CHRISTIAN [Doubleday/76] and Jacques Ellul's THE NEW DEMONS [Seabury/76]--though this demon list is my own.)

1. Ne-ism, addiction to "something new" [Ac.17.21, which we might call "Athenianism"]. The older I get, the deeper pathos I feel for such humans as one in yesterday's (30 Dec76) NYT, a citizen of Konya who said "The past began with Ataturk." Now, Konya is the neolithic city where Paul founded a church ["Ikonium" or "Iconium"]; yet now an atheist says the town had no history before 1912, when "modern" secular Turkey began! This arrogance is not limited to atheists: many so-called Christian theologians have been guilty of it--e.g., Tillich, Bultmann, Bonhoeffer, Cox, some of the death-of-God-ers, some liberationists.

2. Me-ism, individual-and-group narcissism of fight/flight, fear/faith. Post-WWII tempts religion to take its shape from this mentality--both old religion [B. Graham and other forms of evangelical mission] and new [the movement for "humanistic psychology," which is the head-term for the human potential movement]. A holy word for this demon is "relationship," meaning a connection that is good for "me." If marriage such as I'm experiencing is not seen by "me" as good, it is not "an authentic relationship" and my dignity demands that I be quit of it--so much of this pious shit in the women's movement, and currently among my female counselees. Ditto for group "relationships," such as church and politics.

3. World-ism, a love affair with "the secular" as world-"matured"--beyond-"God." In his last days, Bonhoeffer babbled a lot of romantic nonsense about "the world come of age"--paradoxically, within the Nazi society, a case of recidivism to Nordic childhood! Secularism occurs not as a culmination on the human-development model, but only as a postpre-sacral lull between religious periods--a lull "nonreligious" only in the sense that society's religious energies are unstructured or [as now] pluralistically structured [as also the Hellenistic world, into which Christianity came]. I, too, might have gone bananas if Hitler had come close to killing me: I don't want to be unfair to Bonhoeffer; I feel harder toward people like Cox and the death-of-God-ers, who made a good thing of D.B.'s agony--as theologians, said S.K., only talk about the agony of Jesus.

4. Now-ism, coeval with ne-ism. Fritz Perls, with whom I studied at Esalen, is the founding saint of this religion, whose creed has two parts: the Gestalt "prayer," and the question "How are you feeling right here-and-now?" Good as an ascetic technique in a wider therapy context; reductionistic as a religion allied with me-ism. See my "tyranny of the touchy" complaint against those possessed by this demon, and those who cozen to this corruption in education.

5. Etatism of right and left, the belief that humanity's fundamental ills can be politically remedied. Here I'm saddened to have to lump together the John Birchers and most of the liberation theologians. [Ellul's THE POL. ILLUSION (Knopf/67.)]

6. Scientism, rationalism's latest construct in the struggle for respectability. A form of willful ignorance condemning all else--religion, art, etc.--as ignorant. The condemned--psychologists, sociologists, even theologians--tend to become prostitutes in its temple.

7. Caus-ism, passionate egoic formation only around some "cause," usu. the latest.