

Screwtape in a Postmodern Age

in the spirit of C.S. Lewis

By [Todd Baucum](#)

Todd was not born into a Christian home, but heard the Gospel explained to him by a visiting pastor at the age of eleven in South Texas and came to saving faith in Christ. He attended Liberty University and graduated with a major in Cross-cultural Studies in 1983. Believing God was calling him to be a Presbyterian, he transferred from a Baptist seminary into one more Reformed. His theological education being diverse, but made him think through his beliefs and as he matured he became more confessional, orthodox and biblical in his theological thinking. Eventually the Lord led him to the Presbyterian Church in America. He is blessed by a wonderfully supportive wife named Mary and four daughters. He enjoys Christian and Classical music, reading good books, spending time serving the Lord and doing short-term missions.

1 Peter 5:8 (ESV) Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

Presented by the Committee of Devilries Achievement

The Devil is growing fat and lazy thanks to Evangelical Christianity. The word out on the celestial grapevine is that Devil is spending more leisure time than ever before. His work has been significantly curtailed in recent times.

The reason for this change in diabolical behavior is due in large part to the groundswell of cooperation the Father below has been receiving with one of his former more ardent enemy – evangelical Protestantism. Once upon a time, this branch of the Church was taking on the very gates of hell with its clear dogma and culture changing manner of life. Demons of all stripes and power trembled at these valiant crusaders who seemed to be taking the world for their side. While we were celebrating the demise of liberal Christianity, which took a lethal blow from our very clever strategy of slipping in the Trojan horse of Modernity,¹

¹ Modernity stands for the period of time where science and technology became more and more the way the world of ideas and meaning became defined. The great icons of Modernism; Freud, Marx and Darwin were fiercely anti-religion. What is now called Postmodernism is a strange mix of modern ideas thrown in with religion or spirituality.

something quite shocking happened in our favor. It took many decades for us to mount the full-scale offense against what is called Mainline Christianity by appointing spies in major theological schools and a few handpicked bishops. What began as an academic mood among progressive minded intellectuals in schools across Europe, once the bastion of our nemesis, the so-called Reformers, eventually filtered into the pulpits of some of the great churches of American Protestantism. All the money in bank of the Rockefellers could not have done better than our plan of developing an acceptable alternative among the respectable churchgoer to the anti-intellectual fundamentalists. Yes, the “Bible-thumpers” as they were called, were a force to contend with because their beliefs were so simple. We just kept them supplied with reasons to fight themselves. It was the evangelical types who stood in the intellectual tradition of the older Reformers who were the unconquerable foes. They had the great weapon that we cannot even mention. They had “T”. Oh, how we shudder.

One of the enemy’s great writers said, “If you marry the spirit of the age, then you will be a widow in the next.” This is precisely what happened with the mainline believers who took the bait we dangled in front of them. They saw modernity as an irresistible maiden teasing them with her sweet and delicate charms. Soon the wedding bells were ringing as the progressive believer announced his devotion and life-long love to our mistress. Unwittingly, the bell that rang out was the death toll of the mainline denominations. With the untimely death of Modernity we wondered if our great strategy achieved its goal. It appears that it has. All indicators and polls show that they are losing great numbers.

We held off on our festive victory dinner, knowing the greatest challenge was yet to be faced in the growing influence of conservative believers. Yet, what took decades for us to accomplish with the progressives, was like an overnight turn toward our favor among the great evangelical army. As it were, the end of Modernity and the rule of Science and Reason over Faith was the beginning of a new era of something called Post-Modernity.

It did not mean that Science came to an end. We must remember that “real science” is a friend of “T”² and so is our enemy. But the pseudo-science of our kind that is divorced from a pure philosophy helped our cause for centuries. We now see Scientism courting a Mysticism that may in fact turn into a rather pleasing marriage for us. People suppose, stupidly of course, that as long as they can be “religious” and keep their view of this new science it is holistic and they have arrived at some healthy integrated system. This kind of belief, if one can call it that – it may be more of a feeling, a bit like gas, is a good stroke for our side. This is better than the bare Atheistic Naturalism we once thought was so grand and effective in our arsenal. Atheism on its own value is a system too easily refuted by even the lower ranks of the enemy with a bit of consistent

² “T” – Stands for Truth – “I am the Way, the Truth and the Life” said Jesus – John 14:6.

reasoning. Nature is in the final analysis an instrument of our destruction. We are fiercely anti-nature; but relish the disguise of being its friend. Take note my putrid fiends, that Nature by itself can be a great danger. Men are more drawn to paganism than atheism. Of all the billions of humans and the thousands of their tribes, not one anthropologist has ever discovered a culture that was “naturally” atheistic. We were helped by connecting atheism with the idea of progress and not a simple and therefore savage piece of folklore. Humans like the idea of progressing to something better and more complex. At this point Ockham’s razor³ is best kept hidden. Let the whiskers of complexity and advancement grow! If men follow logic we are doomed. There was a reason why their missionaries were so effective among the pagans. In this way, Nature gave them a push toward the other side.

We have become accustomed to the notion that we can be quite happy with humans pursuing what they call spirituality as long as we keep them from sound thinking. In this regard, the new mood of this age has been our greatest ally since the old paganism. What we want is a more functional or practical atheism that effectively renders the notion of an absolute, moral, and sovereign Being unnecessary. Once these bipeds get hold of the idea that a supernatural view of life is an organic or emergent process that connects to their “natural” aspirations, we are more likely to keep them from the fatal view that a transcendent Being must come from above and make himself known in a comprehensible revealed language. At all cost we must keep them from making this error.

Evangelicalism it turned out was its own worst enemy. It saw its great purpose was to fill the need of people as they saw their need. It was the door which our great mentor and deceiver used with the first temptation. Humans are easily beguiled when thinking about themselves. Once they do, we’ve nearly got them. Today evangelical churches proudly announce to their consumers that they are a congregation that meets their needs. The old Scot understood us when he wrote, “that need which is no need, is a demon sucking at the spring of your life.” (G.McDonald)

When back doors are left wide open, we need not knock and ask for admittance. The cultural sentiment of making religion to fit the desires of contemporary humans was a true gift for us. We need not look a gift horse in the mouth. But we feel like some of the celebration has been hampered by this victory. We see that evangelicals are doing our own work. Even the Devil himself has been on a bit of a prolonged vacation. We hope that he is getting rested and renewed in this latest feast. We are getting some very bad news in Africa and Asia these days. It appears the front lines have changed. So while we feast tonight and offer this award to our dear and hated Screwtape, we must postpone our

³ William of Ockham was an English medieval philosopher who promoted the principle of parsimony – latter known as Ockham’s razor. It is the idea that you cannot make something true simply by making it more complex.

celebrations. The laughter of hell always turns to noise. We always despise the sound of singing that comes from the enemy camp. The fruit of the old missionaries has ripened into a great army that is marching and singing with “T” and a fervor we have not seen in ages. Get out you devouring devils with rounded bellies; we are behind the fight and loosing every minute.

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