Propuse de Cristian Comănescu.

1. Fear of Death

Orthodox theologian John Romanides describes in The Ancestral Sin (162-3) how the fear of death leads to evil practices and habits: “Through the power of death and the devil, sin that reigns in men gives rise to fear and anxiety and to the general instinct of self-preservation or survival. Thus, Satan manipulates man’s fear and his desire for self-satisfaction, raising up sin in him. . . . Because of death, man must first attend to the necessities of life in order to stay alive. In this struggle, self-interests are unavoidable. Thus, man is unable to live in accordance with his original destiny of unselfish love. This state of subjection under the reign of death is the root of man’s weakness in which he becomes entangled in sin at the urging of the demons and by his own consent. Resting in the hands of the devil, the power of the fear of death is the root from which self-aggrandizement, egotism, hatred, envy, and other similar passions spring up. In addition to the fact that man ‘subjects himself to anything in order to avoid dying [=slaves?],’ he constantly fears that his life is without meaning. Thus, he strives to demonstrate to himself and to others that it has worth [=masters?]. . . . ”

This helps us think through the counter-thought-experiment: What would our lives look like if we thoroughly and fully believed that death had been conquered, if we were completely freed from fear of death, if we live in undoubting hope of resurrection? A lot like the life of Jesus. (Peter Leithart)

2. Chiliasm

...One should be aware and keep in mind that chiliasm was condemned by the Second Ecumenical Council in the year 381; and therefore to believe in it now in the twentieth century, even in part, is quite unforgivable. Besides which, this contemporary “neo-chiliasm” is far worse than the ancient chiliastic heresy in that at its basis indubitably lies a disbelief in the life of the age to come and the passionate desire to attain blessedness here on earth, using all the improvements and achievements of the material progress of our times. This false teaching wreaks terrible harm, lulling to sleep the spiritual vigilance of the faithful and suggesting to them that the end of the world is far away (if in fact there will be an end), and therefore there is no particular need to watch and pray, to which Christ the Saviour constantly called His followers (cf Mt. 26:41), since everything in this world is gradually getting better and better, spiritual progress keeping step with materialism. Thus, everything is fine! It is not necessary to labor over oneself, and no spiritual struggle is required; the fasts may be abolished. Everything will get better all by itself, until the Kingdom of God is finally established on earth with universal earthly satisfaction and blessedness. And the terrible phenomena which we observe at the present time are all temporary; all has happened before, and all will ultimately pass away, and an extraordinary flourishing of Christianity will replace it, in which, of course, the ecumenists will occupy the principal and most honored places.

Brethren! Is it not clear where the ultimate source of this alluring false teaching is to be found? Who suggests all these thoughts to contemporary Christians with the purpose of overthrowing all of Christianity? As an infectious plague, as fire, must we fear this “neo-chiliasm” which is so profoundly contrary to the teaching of the Word of God, the teaching of the holy Fathers, and all of the centuries-old teachings of our Holy Church, by which many, many thousands of the righteous have been saved...
(Abp. Averky Taushev
, slightly rearranged)

3. But in whose hand are the souls of sinners?

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God (Wisdom 3:1). But in whose hand are the souls of sinners? The Saviour said to the apostles that satan seeks to sift them like wheat, that is, he seeks to knock them from the right path, to take them into his hands and do with them what he wants. That is why everyone turning away from the Lord is in the hands of satan, and he sifts them and casts them wherever he desires. Due to this the heads of sinners are constantly spinning, because the enemy, dragging them here and there, does not give them a chance to come to their senses. As soon as the enemy notices that someone is starting to have second thoughts, he starts to shake him even more strongly, so that his head again becomes

clouded and his thoughts become scattered. (St. Theophan the Recluse)

4. Who shall separate me from the love of Christ?

The Lord asked the apostles how they see Him? In the person of the holy Apostle Peter, they answered Thou art the Christ. This confession did not ripen suddenly, but once it ripened, it settled in the depths of the heart and became the source of his guidance. It was overshadowed by the death of the Lord, but not shaken, and being resurrected in even greater power by the resurrection, it directed the apostles for their entire lives to preach to the whole world. There is a moment for each believer, when he utters with all his strength, “Thou art the Christ, my Lord and Saviour. Thou art my salvation, my light, my strength, my comfort, my hope and eternal life.” Then is accomplished that by which this believer cries with the Apostle: “Who shall separate me from the love of Christ!” (cf. Rom. 8:35) and like him he begins to pursue all that is pleasing to Christ the Lord until he comes unto the measure of His stature (cf. Eph. 4:13). (St. Theophan the Recluse)

5. Lazarus, come out!

To whomever has work-loving Martha, who symbolizes comprehensive good works, and who has Mary sitting at Jesus’ feet, symbolizing an attentive and warm appeal to the Lord with all the heart, the Lord Himself will come and will resurrect Lazarus, who symbolizes his spirit, and will release him from all his emotional and fleshly bonds. Then a truly new life will begin in him, bodiless in the body and unearthly on the earth. It will be a true resurrection in the spirit before the future resurrection, which will be together with the body! (St. Theophan the Recluse)