

## HOW TO BE TRANSFORMED THROUGH THE MIND

Faith and Action

Banska Bystrica, 24th May 2015

**Rom 12:2** καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.

**Eph 4:20-24** ὑμεῖς δὲ οὐχ οὕτως ἐμάθετε τὸν Χριστόν, <sup>21</sup> εἰ γὰρ αὐτὸν ἠκούσατε καὶ ἐν αὐτῷ ἐδιδάχθητε, καθὼς ἐστὶν ἀλήθεια ἐν τῷ Ἰησοῦ, <sup>22</sup> ἀποθέσθαι ὑμᾶς κατὰ τὴν προτέραν ἀναστροφὴν τὸν παλαιὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν φθειρόμενον κατὰ τὰς ἐπιθυμίας τῆς ἀπάτης, <sup>23</sup> ἀνανεοῦσθαι δὲ τῷ πνεύματι τοῦ νοῦς ὑμῶν <sup>24</sup> καὶ ἐνδύσασθαι τὸν καινὸν ἄνθρωπον τὸν κατὰ θεὸν κτισθέντα ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ καὶ ὁσιότητι τῆς ἀληθείας.

**Rom 12:2** Do not be conformed to this world, but *be [being] transformed by the renewal of your mind*, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

**Eph 4:20-24** But that is not the way you learned Christ!- <sup>21</sup> assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, <sup>22</sup> to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, <sup>23</sup> *and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds*, <sup>24</sup> and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

### OUTLINE

#### 0. INTRO: THE CHRISTIAN MIND

- 0.1. THE WAR FOR THE MINDS
- 0.2. DICTIONARIES AND USAGE
- 0.3. EXEGETICAL

#### 1. THE MOTIVATED MIND

- 1.1. THE WILL OF GOD
- 1.2. ENJOYING LIFE WITH GOD

#### 2. THE MIND CONQUERED

- 2.1. THE MIND – THE SOURCE OF SIN
- 2.2. THE NEW MIND

#### 3. THE MIND IMMERSSED

- 3.1. GREAT INTERESTS (GUTHRIE)
- 3.2. GREAT REALITIES
- 3.3. GREAT HOPES

#### 4. THE MIND APPLIED

- 4.1. TO WORDS
- 4.2. TO ACTION

#### 5. TO REMEMBER

#### 0. INTRO: THE CHRISTIAN MIND

- the Pentecost Sunday → the role of the Holy Spirit in *Heilsgeschichte* (Joel, Ezechiel)
- The Holy Spirit gives regeneration by repentance (μετάνοια) and faith (πίστις)

[LLOYD-JONES] Why do we therefore fail so much in practice? The answer, it seems to me, is that **our belief is defective**; if only we really did **see ourselves** as we are depicted in the New Testament, **the problem of conduct would immediately be solved**. So the **real trouble** with most Christian people is not so much in the realm of their conduct and practice as in the realm of their belief...<sup>1</sup>

### 0.1. THE WAR FOR THE MINDS

- *ideological battle* → battle for the minds
- MILLS – *power elites*

[BAUDRILLARD] If I were asked to characterize the present state of affairs, I would describe it as 'after the orgy'. The orgy in question was the moment when modernity exploded upon us, the moment of liberation in every sphere. Political liberation, sexual liberation, liberation of the forces of production, liberation of the forces of destruction, women's liberation, children's liberation, liberation of unconscious drives, liberation of art. The assumption of all models of representation, as of all models of anti-representation. **This was a total orgy an orgy of the real, the rational, the sexual, of criticism as of anti-criticism, of development as of the crisis of development**. We have pursued every avenue in the production and effective overproduction of objects, signs, messages, ideologies and satisfactions. Now everything has been liberated, the chips are down, and we find ourselves faced collectively with the big question: WHAT DO WE DO NOW THE ORGY IS OVER?<sup>2</sup>

### 0.2. DICTIONARIES AND USAGE

- [WEBSTER] "νοῦς embraces the Understanding, the Reason, the Will, and the Affections."
- [Begriffs Lexikon] "The Gk. term *nous* is capable of **embracing all the instruments of sensual and conceptual perception**, and depending on the context it can mean sense, understanding, thoughts, or reason."
- [HODGE] "...it does not differ from the word heart, i. e., in its wide sense for the whole soul."
- Your former mind:
  - **Rom 1:28** παρέδωκεν αὐτοὺς ὁ θεὸς εἰς ἀδόκιμον νοῦν, ποιεῖν τὰ μὴ καθήκοντα
  - **Eph 4:17** ... μηκέτι ὑμᾶς περιπατεῖν, καθὼς καὶ τὰ ἔθνη περιπατεῖ ἐν ματαιότητι τοῦ νοῦς αὐτῶν,...
  - **Col 2:18** ... εἰκὴ φυσιοῦμενος ὑπὸ τοῦ νοῦς τῆς σαρκὸς αὐτοῦ
- Your renewed mind: given *or* to be realized again and again??
  - **1Cor 2:16** ... ἡμεῖς δὲ νοῦν Χριστοῦ ἔχομεν
  - **1John 5:20** οἶδαμεν δὲ ὅτι ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ ἦκει καὶ δέδωκεν ἡμῖν διάνοιαν ἵνα γινώσκωμεν τὸν ἀληθινόν...

### 0.3. EXEGETICAL

- "Be being transformed" → *present* tense (aspect)
- "Be being transformed" → instrumental (through your mind)!
- from (1) mind to → (2) transformation to → (3) ability to examine/to approve the will of God
- the contrast of σχῆμα and μορφή → outward and inward [SHEDD] – not to be pressed to far...

- The resulting behaviour of the transformation: Rom 12:3-21 (1) humility, (2) servanthood, (3) relationships of love

## 1. THE MOTIVATED MIND

### 1.1. THE WILL OF GOD

- few questions are asked more often than "How can I know the will of God?"
  - **John 7:17** If anyone's will is to do God's will, he will know...

<sup>1</sup> LLOYD-JONES, D. M. *Life in Christ*, Wheaton : Crossway Books, 2002, p. 297.

<sup>2</sup> BAUDRILLARD, J. *The Transparency of Evil*, London : Verso, 1993, p. 3.

## 1.2. ENJOYING LIFE WITH GOD

- **Rom 12:2** ... τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.
  - (1) eternally valuable
  - (2) spiritually pleasant
  - (3) divinely relevant
- [TOZER] “God is easy to live with.”; “God is easy to please, hard to satisfy.”

## 2. THE MIND CONQUERED

- the inevitability of thinking (subconscious)
- the *heart* of thinking (likings)

[Free Thought] The indestructibility of matter is the corner-stone of modern philosophy, and the indestructibility of matter implies its eternal existence, that is, it never was created and it never will cease to exist. Theologians have taught for centuries that God created matter out of nothing. Enlightened people have to smile when they hear these stories repeated.<sup>3</sup>

- “...the Almighty doth suffer himself to be withstood, and beareth repulses from us; nor commonly doth he master our will otherwise, than by its own spontaneous conversion and submission to him:<sup>4</sup> if ever we be conquered, as we shall share in the benefit, and wear a crown; so we must join in the combat, and partake of the victory, by subduing ourselves: we must take the yoke upon us; for God is only served by volunteers; he summoneth us by his word, he attracteth us by his grace, but we must *freely come unto him*.”<sup>5</sup>

### 2.1. THE MIND – THE SOURCE OF SIN

- Jesus: from the heart ...
- Eph 2:3 the desires of the body and the mind (τὰ θελήματα τῆς σαρκὸς καὶ τῶν διανοιῶν)...
- **Eph 4:18** darkened in their understanding (ἐσκοτωμένοι τῇ διανοίᾳ), alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance (διὰ τὴν ἄγνοιαν) that is in them, due to their hardness of heart (διὰ τὴν πῶρῳσιν τῆς καρδίας αὐτῶν)

### 2.2. THE NEW MIND

- Pr 23:26 [תְּצַרְנָהּ] (תְּרַצְנָהּ) לִי וְעֵינַי לְבָבָהּ לִי וְעֵינַי לְבָבָהּ לִי
- Ps 51:12 לֵב טָהוֹר בְּרָא־לִי אֱלֹהִים וְרוּחַ נָכוֹן תְּהַדְּשׁ בְּקִרְבִּי
- **2Cor 10:4-5** τὰ γὰρ ὄπλα τῆς στρατείας ἡμῶν οὐ σαρκικὰ ἀλλὰ δυνατὰ τῷ θεῷ πρὸς καθαίρεσιν ὀχυρωμάτων, λογισμοὺς καθαιροῦντες <sup>5</sup> καὶ πᾶν ὑψῶμα ἐπαιρόμενον κατὰ τῆς γνώσεως τοῦ θεοῦ, καὶ αἰχμαλωτίζοντες πᾶν νόημα εἰς τὴν ὑπακοήν τοῦ Χριστοῦ,
- what do I like? what do I constantly return to? what do I find myself dreaming about unawares?

## 3. THE MIND IMMERSSED

- Guinness: no reason, why not → knowledge “Although a Christian should *believe simply*, he should not just *simply believe*.”<sup>6</sup>
- Ps 16:8 שְׁוִיתִי יְהוָה לְנַגְדִּי תָמִיד כִּי מִיְמִינִי בַל-אֲמוּט

<sup>3</sup> BELL, W. S. *Handbook of Freethought*, New York : The Truth Seeker Company, 1890, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> “But some man will say, "He ought to ring men in, even against their will." Away with this. He doth not use violence, nor compel; for who that bids to honors, and crowns, and banquets, and festivals, drags people, unwilling and bound? No one. For this is the part of one inflicting an insult. Unto hell He sends men against their will, but unto the kingdom He calls willing minds. To the fire He brings men bound and bewailing themselves: to the endless state of blessings not so. Else it is a reproach to the very blessings themselves, if their nature be not such as that men should run to them of their own accord and with many thanks.” (CHRYSOSTOMOS *Homilies on First Corinthians II*)

<sup>5</sup> BARROW, I. *Sermons Vol. II*, London : Baynes & Son, 1823, p. 308.

<sup>6</sup> GUINNESS, O. *Doubt*, Herts : Lion Publishing, 1976, p. 82.

### 3.1. GREAT INTERESTS (GUTHRIE)

- how *important* is God, salvation, eternity... in daily business?

[TOZER] "...one factor always present in receptivity is interest. It is virtually impossible to receive into our minds anything in which we have no interest. A man of ordinary mind may go on to do marvels in a given field if he has keen enough interest in it, and leave behind many men of finer minds who lack the necessary interest."<sup>7</sup>

### 3.2. GREAT REALITIES

- [GUINNESS] – do not mistake *rationality* with the *mystery* of faith "...rationality is opposed to *absurdity*, not to *mystery*."<sup>8</sup>
- **Col 3:2** τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, μὴ τὰ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς.
- 2Cor 3:18: 'But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed [μεταμορφούμεθα] into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.'

### 3.3. GREAT HOPES

- live for the eternal future!
- **1John 3:2-3** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we will be like him, because we shall see him as he is.<sup>3</sup> And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure.

## 4. THE MIND APPLIED

- It is not enough: "*C'est le bonheur des hommes, quand ils pensent juste.*" [FREDERICK THE GREAT] = "The people become happy when they think right/justly."
- When you read the Bible, listen to sermons, read good books → and observe where "something does not add up", something is disturbing, provoking, making you cross, rebellious... → work on it
- **Phil 2:7** ... ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφῆν δούλου λαβών...

### 4.1. TO WORDS

- **Mt 12:34** ...out of the abundance of the heart the **mouth speaks**
- **Pr 10:11** The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life...

### 4.2. TO ACTION

- [TOZER] "Truth that is not experienced is no better than error..." (*The Root of the Righteous*)
- [TOZER] "You become what you really desire"
- [KIERKEGAARD] *If a person does not become what he understands*, then he does not understand it either.

[LLOYD-JONES] Does it strike you as odd that this is something which we are commanded to do? And yet this is the position. As Christians we are already changed. That is the regeneration; that is the rebirth. And yet the apostle tells us: 'Be not conformed . . . but be ye transformed . . .' This is something over which people have often stumbled, but it is the characteristic New Testament way of teaching holiness or sanctification. I always like to put it like this. The apostle is really saying: 'Be what you are.' You have been transformed, so, because of that, transform yourself. In a sense, he is saying, 'If you, as a Christian, are living according to the mind and outlook of this world, you are being unnatural. So do not do that. Be natural. Let it be evident that you are a Christian. Throw the mask away, it doesn't belong to you any longer.'<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> TOZER, A. W. *That Incredible Christian*, Harrisburg : Christian Publications, 1964, p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> GUINNESS, O. *Doubt*, p. 83.

<sup>9</sup> LLOYD-JONES, D. M. *Romans*, Edinburgh : Banner of Truth, 2000, p. 102.

#### 4.2.1. DECISION

- Exercise your *volition* → name the problem and define the action you will take...
- **Jos 24:15** ...choose this day whom you will serve...

#### 4.2.2. PLAN, TIME

- Be definite about the time or occasion when you are going to realize your decision.
- **Pr 20:18** Plans () are established by counsel; by wise guidance wage war.

#### 4.2.3. CHECK UP

- Write down your decisions and look at your list later...
- **2Cor 13:5** Examine yourselves (Ἐαυτοὺς πειράζετε), to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves (ἑαυτοὺς δοκιμάζετε).

### 5. TO REMEMBER

- The most important change in regeneration is the change of your *mind* ()
- The potential and ability you have been given is to be realized in the transformation of all of your life.
- The Holy Spirit gives you vision, power and guidance – but it is up to *you* to do the “job of the transformation”.
- Do not forget regularly to examine your “performance” against how you perceive *the will of God* (good? – pleasant? – perfect?)