

CHRISTIAN RADICALISM
Follow Christ (baptism sermon)
Banska Bystrica, 8th December 2019

Mt 28:19 πορευθέντες οὖν μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς εἰς τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ τοῦ υἱοῦ καὶ τοῦ ἁγίου πνεύματος, ²⁰ διδάσκοντες αὐτοὺς τηρεῖν πάντα ὅσα ἐνετειλάμην ὑμῖν· καὶ ἰδοὺ ἐγὼ μεθ' ὑμῶν εἰμι πάσας τὰς ἡμέρας ἕως τῆς συντελείας τοῦ αἰῶνος

Mt 28:19-20 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Rom 6:3-8 ἢ ἀγνοεῖτε ὅτι, ὅσοι ἐβαπτίσθημεν εἰς Χριστὸν Ἰησοῦν, εἰς τὸν θάνατον αὐτοῦ ἐβαπτίσθημεν; ⁴ συνετάφημεν οὖν αὐτῷ διὰ τοῦ βαπτίσματος εἰς τὸν θάνατον, ἵνα ὡσπερ ἠγέρθη Χριστὸς ἐκ νεκρῶν διὰ τῆς δόξης τοῦ πατρὸς, οὕτως καὶ ἡμεῖς ἐν καινότητι ζωῆς περιπατήσωμεν. ⁵ εἰ γὰρ σύμφυτοι γεγόναμεν τῷ ὁμοιώματι τοῦ θανάτου αὐτοῦ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τῆς ἀναστάσεως ἐσόμεθα. ⁶ τοῦτο γινώσκοντες ὅτι ὁ παλαιὸς ἡμῶν ἄνθρωπος συνεσταυρώθη, ἵνα καταργηθῇ τὸ σῶμα τῆς ἁμαρτίας, τοῦ μηκέτι δουλεύειν ἡμᾶς τῇ ἁμαρτίᾳ. ⁷ ὁ γὰρ ἀποθανὼν δεδικαίωται ἀπὸ τῆς ἁμαρτίας. ⁸ εἰ δὲ ἀπεθάνομεν σὺν Χριστῷ, πιστεύομεν ὅτι καὶ συζήσομεν αὐτῷ,

Rom 6:3-8 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? ⁴ We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵ For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For one who has died has been set free from sin. ⁸ Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him.

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0. INTRODUCTION

- “baptism” & “radicalism” → “death” & “truth”
- **Lk 12:50** I have a baptism to be baptized with (βάπτισμα δὲ ἔχω βαπτισθῆναι), and how great is my distress (πῶς συνέχομαι) until it is accomplished!
- **1Tim 6:10** ...radix enim omnium malorum est cupiditas/avaritia...

0.1. DICTIONARY

0.1.1. "BAPTISM"

- the Slovak word "krst" → the danger of "religious" words: (1) they separate us from the "normal" reality, (2) they smuggle in ideas not present in the Bible
- "krst" → (1) giving name (2) religious initiation (3) a ritual of confession of faith or of joining a church...
- baptism in the New Testament: → we are united to Christ's death; It is a death with Christ.

- PRELLWITZ:

βάπτω tauche ein (Hom.), βαφή Färbung (Aesch.), βαφεύς Färber, βύπτειν· βαπτίζειν (Hes.), δύπτω (Ap. Rh.), δέπτως (Kallimach.) Taucher; βιπτάζω (Sophron, Epich.): ai.

- WHARTON:

βάπτω dip : O Nor. *kaf* diving, Sk. *gambhan* depth, cf. *βάθος*.

- PASSOW:

Βαπτίζω, f. -ίζω, (*βάπτω*) to dip repeatedly; of ships, to sink them, Polyb. 2, 51, 6, etc. — Pass., To bathe, Eubul. Naus. 1 : οἱ βεβαπτισμένοι, soaked in wine, Lat. *vino madidi*, Plat.

0.1.2. "RADICAL"

- **radix** (lat.) → root of a plant, tree; → source, origin, root (of anything)
- **Radical** → adj. pertaining to the root, or origin : original : reaching to the principles : implanted by nature : not derived : serving to originate : one who advocates radical reform, a democrat
- (1) The political views or principles characteristic of radicals (2) Thoroughness of method (3) Views or principles favouring radical social or political change and reform ("There is a true radicalism in scholarship, which despises all measures which do not go to the roots of things." (Max Müller, 1885)

0.2. FORMS OF RADICALISM

0.2.1. SECULAR

- radicalism: political, ideological, ethical, fundamentalist (Islam), cultural, ... → "collective(?) righteousness, social equality(?), the unfettered opportunity to rise higher(?) ... Working for a better world here and now was far more satisfying than the idea of a distant and problematical Heaven. ... True religion puts its faith in the people, believing in power with them, not over them."¹
- radical measures: more drastic approach... youth extravaganza...² → fanaticism...
- radical theory: [FOUCAULT] "...we cannot look deeply into ourselves and know our true interests beyond the reach of ideology..."³

0.2.2. BIBLICAL & CHRISTIAN

- **Amos 4:1** Hear this word, you cows of Bashan, who are on the mountain of Samaria, who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to your husbands, 'Bring, that we may drink!'
- TIME/HISTORY: → between (1) creation and (2) consummation
- Divine "accomodation": between the (1) Judgment and (2) Grace

¹ DILLARD, A. *Faith in the City*, p. xvii-xviii, 8, 63.

² GOLL, J. W. & ENGLE, L. *Elijah's Revolution*, p. 23.

³ KAUFMAN, C. *Ideas for Action*, 2003, p. 23.

- baptism: (1) death with Christ → holiness through loving [the real] God (2) truth about self (3) eschatological judgment & eschatological hope

1. THE ROOT → MY SINS

- K.R.S.T. → **K**restfánský **R**adikalizmus je **S**mrť **T**ela (hriechov)
- baptism → confessing one's own sins
- the truth about *myself* → **John 4:23** the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth

April 29, 2012 [Society of Gilbert Keith Chesterton]

QUESTION: Is it true that The Times once sent out an inquiry to famous authors, asking the question, "What's wrong with the world today?" and Chesterton responded simply,

"Dear Sir,

I am.

Yours, G.K. Chesterton."

ANSWER: This story has been repeated so often about Chesterton that we suspect it is true. Also, it seems it is never told about any one other than Chesterton. What we have not found, however, is any documentary evidence for it. It may indeed be from The Times, as the story is usually told, but no one has taken the trouble to go through the back issues and find a copy of the actual letter. It has also been attributed to other papers, but again, no proof.

1.1. CONVICTION

- **Jer 17:9-10** The heart is deceitful above all things (עֵקֵב הַלֵּב מִכָּל), and desperately sick (שָׁנֵא); who can understand it (מִי יִדְעֶנּוּ)? ¹⁰ "I the LORD search the heart and test the mind (הִקְרָ לֵב בְּדָן כְּלִיֹּת), to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

- **Gal 5:19-21** Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, ²¹ envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

Daniel DYKE *The Mystery of Self-Deceiving*, (1633) "Flatter not yourselves a vain conceit, that you withdraw not your heart from God, and so God will not withdraw his from you: Nothing more easie that for a mant to deceive himselfe; for the heart by reason of the great wickedness thereof, is a bottomlexx and unsearchable gulf of guile; insomuch as non can know, no onely anothers, but no his owne heart..."

- **2Tim 3:1-5** But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. ² For people will be lovers of self (φίλαυτοι), lovers of money (φιλάργυροι), proud (ἀλαζόνηες), arrogant (ὑπερήφανοι), abusive (βλάσφημοι), disobedient to their parents (γονεῦσιν ἀπειθεῖς), ungrateful (ἀχάριστοι), unholy (ἀνόσιοι), ³ heartless (ἄστοργοι), unappeasable (ἄσπονδοι), slanderous (διάβολοι), without self-control (ἀκρατεῖς), brutal (ἀνήμεροι), not loving good (ἀφιλάγαθοι), ⁴treacherous (προδόται), reckless [sudden, headlong, hasty, violent](προπετεῖς), swollen with conceit [to be wrapt in clouds of conceit and folly, to be silly, stupid, absurd,] (τετυφωμένοι), lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God (φιλήδονοι μάλλον ἢ φιλόθεοι), ⁵ having the appearance of godliness (μόρφωσιν εὐσεβείας), but denying its power (τὴν δὲ δύναμιν αὐτῆς ἡρνημένοι). Avoid such people.

1.2. CONFESSION

- **Prov 28:13** Whoever conceals his transgressions (מִכְסֵּה פְשָׁעָיו) will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy (וּמִדָּוָה יָעֹב יִרְחַם)
- **Mt 3:5-6** Then Jerusalem and all Judea and all the region about the Jordan were going out to him, ⁶ and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins
- **Acts 2:37-39** Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" ³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ (ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι

Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. ³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself.

2. THE ROOT → BAD CONSCIENCE

- K.R.S.T. → **K**resťanský **R**adikalizmus je **S**mrť **T**ela (náboženského formalizmu)
- Is cultured/religious/ethical behaviour good enough for God? → thoughts, desires, feelings...!
- baptism → desiring **inward purity**

2.1. RELIGION

- **Mt 23:25-26** "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the **outside of the cup** and the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ You blind Pharisee! **First clean the inside of the cup** and the plate, that the outside also may be clean

2.2. CONSCIENCE

- **1Pt 3:21** Baptism, which corresponds to this [the ark of Noah], now saves you, not as a removal of dirt from the body but as an appeal to God for a good conscience (συνειδήσεως ἀγαθῆς ἐπερώτημα εἰς θεόν,), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

3. THE ROOT → THE WEAKNESS OF THE FLESH

- K.R.S.T. → Kresťanský Radikalizmus je Smrť Tela (telesnej energie v službe Božieho Kráľovstva)
- **2Cor 12:10** For when I am weak, then I am strong (ὅταν γὰρ ἀσθενῶ, τότε δυνατός εἰμι)
- Even a perfectly holy human *body* (flesh) is not strong/good enough for the spiritual battle

3.1. THE FLESH AND THE SPIRIT

- baptism → laying aside the powers of the flesh and opening up to **the Holy Spirit**
- **Mt 26:41** The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.
- **Rom 8:3** For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh

[CHAMBERS] It might be illustrated in the spiritual life by Tennyson's phrase, "a white funeral." ("white funeral of the single life," phrase from Tennyson's poem "*To H.R.H. Princess Beatrice*"; a passage from one stage of life to another; leaving the past behind and moving into the future; spiritually, death to self) When we go through **the moral death to self-will** we find we have committed ourselves, there are many things that must go to the "white funeral." At the first we have the idea that everything apart from Christ is bad; but there is much in our former life that is fascinating, any amount of paganism that is clear and vigorous, virtues that are good morally. But we have to discover they are not stamped with the right lineage and superscription, and if we are going to live the life of a saint we must go to the moral death of those things, make a termination of them, turn these good natural things into the spiritual. (*The Place of Help*)

3.2. THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

- **Mt 3:13-16** Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him (διεκώλυεν αὐτόν), saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, "Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness (οὕτως γὰρ πρόπον ἐστὶν ἡμῖν πληρῶσαι πᾶσαν δικαιοσύνην)." Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he

went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him;

- **Ps 104:4** he makes his messengers (מַלְאָכָיו) winds (רוּחוֹת), his ministers (מְשָׁרְתָיו) a flaming fire (אֵשׁ לֹהֵט)

4. TO REMEMBER

- Baptism is a “white funeral” to the world (that is under judgment) for the future (that will come with the Kingdom)
- The Christian radicalism begins with knowing and confessing one’s own sin, → suspecting one’s own heart.
- Christian radicalism is radical love that identifies with Jesus not only in getting benefits from him but also making sacrifices for his sake. → **Phil 3:10** ...share his sufferings...