

12:2 True Worship Transfigures Your Mind

PAUL'S TWOFOLD PURPOSE IN THIS VERSE.

CYRIACUS SPANGENBERG: With his command he does two things. First, he warns us about what we should avoid. Second, he admonishes us about what we should diligently attend to. The warning sounds like this: do not be like those of this world. That can well be taken to heart by a preacher, who should not only admonish for the good, but also warn about the bad.... Since therefore, beside the devil and our corrupted flesh, most of all the world by its example turns people away from God, so very faithfully Paul warns us, saying: "Do not be conformed to this world." He speaks explicitly about this world, in which we now live, and indeed, equally lets us understand that there is still another and better world, where things will clearly be different and toward it we should also orient our thoughts. So watch out that we do not conform to this world. And for the Christians in Rome this warning was very necessary for the time, because they lived in such a place where the most powerful and mighty people on earth lived, who daily lived their lives in arrogance and sensual pleasure, where one also never saw and heard anything else but pleasure, lust and corruption with all kinds of luxury and ostentatious display. And it is certainly a good warning for our time, and necessary

as well, where everything is coming undone and everyone does what they want. LAST EIGHT CHAPTERS OF ROMANS.²⁰

THE NATURAL LIMITS OF NONCONFORMITY.

SEBASTIAN FRANCK: Some get to the place where they will have nothing to do with the heathen, not only in fasting, celebrating, living, eating, drinking, etc. They also establish rules about how simple clothes have to be, how each is to be made and how many folds the skirt should have. Like the monks, they have rules governing eating, drinking, silence, speaking and clothes. And when one of their wives gives birth to a child, she is not to be modest, or to draw a curtain as the heathens do. They quote the Scripture "and be not conformed to this world," as though faith changed the nature, customs and laws of the outward person. Or as though Paul meant that we should walk on our head, eat with our feet, speak with our hands and do all the work of nature differently from the world when he says you are not to be like them, etc. Paul means the vain and wicked ways and practices of the world that we are not to be like, for what is considered great in the world is an abomination before God. Not all practice these fantasies but only a few, the others allowing nature its right at these points. ON THE ANABAPTISTS.²¹

²⁰ C. Spangenberg, *Außlegung der Letsten Acht Capitel der Episteln an die Römer*, 176v.

²¹ CRR 10:235*.

DAILY WE GROW IN THE THEOLOGY OF THE CROSS. JOHANN SPANGENBERG: The world can neither see nor hear this sacrifice; it looks askance at it from both sides; it does not have our mind and spirit in itself at all. But we still have a strong mind and intention of the world in ourselves. Therefore it is necessary for us to pay attention that we follow neither the ways of the world nor our reason and good intentions. Instead we must always subdue our mind and will, acting differently from what our reason and will prescribes, so that we are found to be unconformed to the world. And thus we are daily transformed and renewed in our minds.

What does “transformed and renewed in mind” mean? That daily we cherish more and more what the world and reason hate, because daily we prefer more and more to become poor, sick, rejected, fools and sinners. And finally we consider death better than life, foolishness more precious than wisdom, shame more noble than honor and poverty more blessed than wealth. This mind the world does not have. Instead it thinks about everything much differently, and it remains in this old mind, unchanged and unrenewed, old and hardened like a stone....

There is a big difference between God’s will and our will. The world cannot be satisfied with this life, but a Christian says with Saint Paul, “Here we do not have an enduring city.” The world fears the cross; a Christian desires it and sighs

with that hermit that God had forgotten him, because he had not been sick for a whole year. For the world all suffering lasts too long, but a Christian says with Saint Paul, “I consider the suffering of this time not worth comparing to the glory, which will be revealed to us.” The world cries: “O Lord, let me live a long life. Give me luck, well-being and health. Let everything go well,” etc. But a Christian says with Saint Paul, “I desire to depart and be with Christ.” EPISTLE FOR THE FIRST SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY.²²

HEAVENLY DOCTRINE MATURES THE NEWLY BORN IN CHRIST. DAVID PAREUS: To be sure, this will of God is contained and described in the law. For he understands and sets forth the revealed will as a rule. But a mind that has not been reborn does not understand it all, but the wisdom of the flesh does not in any way want to be subjected to it, for it is enmity to it ([Rom 8](#)). But the will of God is not entirely in the law, but to the contrary the better part is contained in the gospel and furthermore is unknown to people’s minds. Therefore the new birth is especially necessary. But this does not take place except by the assiduous and diligent examination of the divine will, that is, meditation on, investigation of and obedience to heavenly doctrine. But assiduous calling

²² J. Spangenberg, *Postilla Teütsch*, 4:69r–70v; citing [Heb 13:14](#); [Rom 8:18](#); [Phil 1:23](#).

on God is also required for this. This will of God from the law and the gospel is recognized as a rule for us. If we follow this North Star²³ of our faith and actions, we will not go astray. Therefore the study of heavenly doctrine is demanded of us here. COMMENTARY ON ROMANS 12:2.²⁴

FOLLOW TRUTH, THAT IS, CHRIST, CAREFULLY. DESIDERIUS ERASMUS: If you examine all the cares, joys, hopes, fears, ambitions and opinions of humankind, you will find them all full of error. They call good evil and evil good; they make the sweet bitter and the bitter sweet; they make light darkness and darkness light. And it is by far the greatest part of humankind that is involved. But you must both despise them if you do not wish to be like them, and pity them if you desire them to be like you, and to echo the words of Augustine, at times one must weep for those who should be mocked, and at times one must mock those who deserve our tears.²⁵

... You are very close to danger and on the verge of slipping if you begin to look around you at what most people are doing or if you try to discover what they are thinking. Since you are one of the sons and daughters of life and light, let the dead bury the dead, let the blind, the

leaders of the blind, fall with them into the ditch. Be careful not to turn the eyes of your heart from your model Christ in any other direction. You will not go astray if you follow the lead of Truth. ENCHIRIDION.²⁶

²³ *Cynosura*, “dog’s tail,” another name for Ursa Minor or the Little Dipper.

²⁴ Pareus, *In Epistolam ad Romanos*, 1232.

²⁵ PL 38 945.

²⁶ CWE 66:93*; citing Is 5:20; Rom 12:2; Jn 12:36; Eph 5:8; Mt 8:22; Lk 9:60; Mt 15:14.