

EDITOR: Jim Wood, 15 Fenay Crescent, Almondbury, Huddersfield, HD5 8XY.  
Tel. 01484 537981; e-mail: [jawood@talk21.com](mailto:jawood@talk21.com)

## Exhortation

# "Let this mind be in you . . ."

## 1. ". . . which was also in Christ Jesus"

Jim Wood

**T**HE BRAIN is that marvellous organ where processes associated with the storing and recalling of information, the analysis of data and decision-making, the interaction with and attitude towards other people and things, and the application of our senses and abilities are controlled. The mind is the faculty we have to control those processes.

There are some aspects of these things that appear to be fixed in the early stages of the formation of the brain. We describe as 'gifted' those who have enhanced musical, artistic and mathematical abilities, for example. No matter how hard the non-gifted try, they can never develop those abilities to the same genius level. There are other areas where we start with nothing, or little, and we each develop in a manner affected by circumstance, influence, experience and desire. In these we are able to exercise much more control, and our knowledge, understanding, morality, disposition and attitude reflect the nature, direction and strength of that control.

In matters relating to salvation there are two types of influence: one good, one bad; one positive, one negative; one beneficial, the other detrimental. The good, positive and beneficial are so defined by God. The bad, negative and detrimental are not Divinely approved. The latter are described as "earthly" (Phil. 3:19), "of the world" (1 Jno. 2:16), "carnal" (Rom. 8:7) and "fleshly" (Col. 2:18), and are abhorrent to God. The former are expressed as "heavenly" (Jno. 3:12), "of the Father" (1 Jno. 2:16), "spiritual" (1 Cor. 9:11). The effects of these He desires to see in us, and we have the choice. We can choose to be influenced by the Word, the purpose and the virtues of God, or by effects which have their origin elsewhere. We can choose to let the godly influence be complete and all-embracing or superficial and selective.

Paul's advice to the "saints in Christ Jesus . . . at Philippi" was: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (2:5). "Let this" carries with it, surely, not the idea of passively exposing

oneself to influences that will bring this about. Rather, it speaks of actively, purposefully, deliberately and willingly taking steps to ensure that only what gave rise to Christ's attitude to his heavenly Father, his own life and his fellow-beings will be allowed to mould our attitude. Peter expresses the positive and intentional aspect of this in these words: "*arm yourselves likewise with the same mind*" (1 Pet. 4:1); and he goes on to draw the distinction again as to which we have to choose: "the lusts of men . . . the will of God" (v. 2).

In the early days of our probation most of us have to work very hard in the transforming and renewing of our minds (Rom. 12:2). It is the putting off of the old attitudes and disposition we have become so familiar with (and perhaps comfortable with) during the years of our unenlightenment. It is the putting on of the new, an embracing of and being directed by the Word of God and the example of His Son. It is a process that has no completion date that is within our control, but with each success in profitable change it becomes easier, as our minds, through teaching (Col 1:28), training (Prov. 22:6) and exercise (1 Tim. 4:7), learn to apply controls spontaneously according to a new set of principles—His.

Spontaneously and systematically—systematically and exhaustively. We ought not to be double-minded, with the spiritual mind operating just for the compartment in our lives labelled 'religious' and not for that labelled 'secular'. There ought to be no need for the double-mind, as there ought not to be two compartments. The same principles apply to the whole of our life: ecclesial, family, business and social, with "all thy heart . . . soul . . . mind . . . strength" directed to the same end (Mk. 12:30).

This was part of the first commandment. This was the mind in Christ Jesus. This was his attitude to life, to his privileged role and to the responsibilities it brought. Let us arm ourselves with this mind too, whatever the stage of our development.