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The Power and the Wisdom

Wisdom is revealed truth, which cannot be logically proven. Knowledge is science; you can prove it. You can prove the theory that you had concerning going to the moon; that can be proved. Einstein's theories – they were theories, but in time man could devise the means to test them and either prove or disprove them. So far they've been proved – not completely, but they have been proved. That's knowledge. But visions are described in Scripture as wisdom. They are revelation of divine truths. In the end, all knowledge will cease to be, but wisdom will remain – these visions that are eternal.

So Paul speaks of Christ as “the power of God and the wisdom of God.” (I Corinthians 1:24)

Now, what do we mean by power? Certainly, I would say, the best definition of it would be effectiveness in achieving one's purposes. But these are the purposes of God, yet we can use power on this level to achieve a certain objective. But I am speaking, now, of the power of Christ. It's entirely different from anything known to man, unless he has had the experience. You taste it before the end, before you awaken from this dream, you will taste of this power. And may I tell you it is startling. It's not destructive in the sense that you blow up a city with a hydrogen bomb or many bombs. It has not a thing to do with that power.

Here is a taste of it. You come into a place just like this. When I first tasted of it many years ago, I found myself moving in time – I would say, backwards in time, judged by the costumes – judged by the clothes. I would say it was a hundred and fifty years ago in this land of ours, in the east. I would say it was in the New England states, looking at the people that I saw.

I was taken in spirit into this place. It was a wonderful restaurant of that day – 150 years ago. It was a Sunday afternoon; I could tell by the atmosphere. It was afternoon. I saw a table of four, two young men in their early 20's; undoubtedly college students and then what would be their parents. Then came a lady – she was the waitress – bringing a tray of food to the table. She had already served the course of soup.

There was a huge, big bay window through which I could look, and through this window I could see the grass moving. The wind was blowing. It was Fall. I could see the leaves falling; they were dropping. I could see a bird in flight.

I saw other diners, and at that moment I knew that if I could arrest the activity that I felt in me, everything would stand still. I knew it! I no sooner knew it than I tried it, and I arrested not them; I arrested the activity in me – all in my head. Everything stood still. The bird flying flew not. The grass moving moved not. The leaves falling, fell not. The waitress walking walked not. The diners dining dined not. Everyone was as dead as things in the museum – as though they were made of clay. I examined them all; they were all dead. One moment before, they were all living, living beings, and everything was alive.

A bird in flight, if arrested, should fall, shouldn't it, if gravitation is a law that is absolute. If it is arrested in flight, that thing should fall. It didn't fall; it stood still, just as I had arrested it. Leaves I could see, but they did not fall. Everything stood still. The grass stood still. The waitress stood still. Well, that's understandable; if you stop her, she can't go through the floor.

And here are these diners, and one facing me – the young boy, about twenty-two years of age – he had the spoon almost to his mouth, and it was perfectly still. He could not move it. I looked at him; he looked like death itself!

Then I released that activity within me, and everything continued in its course. The bird continued in its flight. The leaves continue to fall. The waitress continued to bring the food to the table, and he brought the spoon that was here [indicating] to his mouth and completed the action. Then I knew that everything was within me; that "All that I beheld, though it appeared without, it was within – in my own wonderful human imagination, of which this world of mortality is but a shadow. [Blake, from "Jerusalem"] It is not taking place out there at all! That's tasting of the power.

So, he defines Christ – you read it in the 1st chapter of his 1st letter to the Corinthians, the 24th verse, "Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God."

Wisdom is now defined in Scripture as a child; it's personified. We speak of wisdom – we do not think of it as a person; but may I tell you, man is everything in this world. So everything, really, can be personified.

The 8th chapter of Proverbs personifies wisdom, and now Wisdom is made to speak, and these are his words:

“God possessed me at the beginning of His way,
The first of His acts of old.” (Proverbs 8:22)

“When he laid out the foundations of the earth, . . .
I was beside him, like a little child,
I was daily his delight,
Rejoicing before him always,
Rejoicing in his inhabited world,
Delighting in the sons of men.” (Proverbs 8: 29-31)

Now he talks to the “sons of men,” and he tells them:

“He who finds me finds life
And obtains favor from God;
He who misses me injures himself;
All who hate me love death.” (Proverbs 8: 35, 39)

When you read it you say. What is he talking about? He's a little child; this is the “wonder child” spoken of in Isaiah – the personification of Wisdom. One day you will find the child. When you find the child, then you receive favor from God, for the child is but a symbol of His Creative Power – His Creative Wisdom. You'll find that child!

“Those who miss me injure themselves;

Those who hate me...”

May I tell you, the majority of the world hates Him to the extent that they have no interest in Him – none whatsoever. They do not wish to hear about Him. To them, it's stupid. It's folly to the

Gentiles – folly to the Greeks, and certainly a stumbling block to those who look for Him in some other form.

Who is the child personified in Scripture? It's called the "infant child" that one day will be placed in your hands, and you will see him as your child. But he also is a youth, as told us in the 9th chapter of Isaiah:

"To us a child is born,

To us a son is given."

The son is given, for, "No man knows the Father except the Son, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him."

So, "No man has ever seen God. The only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known."

So, unless the Son makes Him known, you will never know the Father! I'll tell you who He is. Now, this is only a symbol, but when you meet the symbol, it's a living, living thing as you are now, and it's David!

Robert Browning in his poem called "Saul" – Now Saul was the demented king – an insane man, and in this poem called "Saul" he has David, and David is about to tell the king of the coming of Messiah, of the coming of Christ. And standing in the presence of the king, Browning has him say:

"O Saul . . .

A face like my face shall receive thee; a man like unto me,

Thou shalt love, and be loved by forever: a Hand like this hand

Shall open the gates of new life to thee! See the Christ stand!"

It takes the Christ to reveal the Father! He tells him, "Look at me, Saul, and see the Christ stand!" But Saul was demented, as we all are. He was suffering from total amnesia, and could

not recognize the Son. So the Son is screaming out morning, noon and night to the Father in all, but we are sound asleep, and do not recognize the Son.

One day he stands before you, and then there is no uncertainty as to this relationship – none whatsoever, and you'll recognize your son. Memory returns, and then you realize the gift. God the Father actually – literally – became you, that you may become God! And you look at His Son – His only begotten Son, and you know he is your son, and he knows you are his father, and then you realize the gift that was given and bestowed upon you.

He gave you His power, and He gave you His wisdom, and you will taste of these before you depart the world, after you have had these experiences. And when you take off this garment, you'll be clothed in an entirely different form, but with all the identity of person, I'll know you in Eternity. There is a radical transformation of form. Yet, I'll know you, but your form will be entirely different. I'll know that face raised to the nth degree of beauty and majesty – the same face, but oh, what a glorious face that was so distorted by the life you live while here.

And I am not speaking of any reincarnation. May I tell you, you are not reincarnated; you are individualized, and you tend forever towards ever greater and greater individualization. You are now completely individualized. I'll know that face, but the face is raised to the nth degree of beauty and majesty, and a strength of character that you could not believe that Eternity would be long enough to produce. That's the Being that you are destined one day to encounter, and it's you, and I'll know you, but I will know you as the Risen Lord. I will know you as God Himself, and yet I'll know you as my friend – my friend that I know and love. I'll know you as my friend, yet I will know you as God Himself.

So, he tells us in his wonderful chapter concerning Life; He is just talking, "You will not come to me. You search the Scriptures because you think in them you have Eternal Life. And it is they who bear witness to Me, yet you will not come to Me that you may have Life.

You think "in them" you find it, and people will all day long search the Scripture. They search and search, and one comes upon the scene. It's not what they were looking for. Well, listen to the One who comes upon the scene. He is clad in a robe "dipped in blood," and the name by which he is called is the Word of God.

Are you dipped in a robe of blood? Are you not now wearing a body of flesh and blood? Is this [indicating the physical body] not something you are now clad in that is “dipped in blood”? Cut yourself and see if it’s not blood. And who wears it? The Word of God. Well, who is the Word of God? Are we not told, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God”? It’s God Himself!

“God actually became as we are, that we may be as He is.” ([Blake, from “There Is No Natural Religion”])

That is the mystery. You are now wearing a garment “dipped in blood,” and the name by which you are called is the “Word of God.” Now there is the great mystery. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt” – now the translation is “among us,” but the preposition is within, it’s not among, as you look over here. It is in us. “God can never be so far off as even to be near,” for nearness implies separation. Well then, where is He? His name forever and forever is “I AM.”

I can put the body out there and look at it, but I can’t stick “I AM” out there and look at it. I am the observing Being. I can observe all the things round about me as objects, but I can’t observe the Observer! I can see myself in the objects round about me, revealing all the activity within me, but I, the Observer, can’t stick it out and look at it as another observer. So, God can never be so far off as even to be near, because nearness – no matter how near – implies separation. And He is not separated from you. He actually is your very Being. The true identity of man is God!

Now, this mystery unfolds within you, and you will taste the power – a power unknown to mortal mind. You will taste of a wisdom. You will be able to interpret all the phenomena of life, for everything in the world contains within itself the capacity for some symbolic significance, and you will see something that means nothing to the mind as it walks by, but you will interpret the action. You will actually be able to interpret the dream – the vision, because it’s all the language of God.

Three men walk by, and to the average person, three men walk by. They are not just three men walking by to you when it begins to unfold. So, a woman gets upon the bus, followed by a man, followed by a woman, followed by a man, and you interpret the phenomenon that is unfolding before you. That’s wisdom. Everything in the world is screaming at you and telling you what it

represents in this world. But man is completely blind to it, and confuses Wisdom, which is revealed Truth, with knowledge, which is science. Now he does not disparage science – no. But in the end it will all fade as though it were never a part of the world.

So here, the Power and the Wisdom – the gift that God gives to His Son: now he delights in the sons of men. Well, who does he call himself in Scripture? He speaks of himself more often than with any other title as the “Son of Man.” That’s the singular of “sons of men”. What does he mean by it? A “son of man” is that which comes out of man, as told us in the 7th chapter of the book of II Samuel.

“Go and tell my servant David” – And who is David? “I have found in David, the son of Jesse, a man after my own heart who will do all my will.”

Now the central figure in the Gospel speaks of Himself as the “Son of God,” but he speaks of Himself more often as the “Son of Man,” and He tells you, “I have come to do the will of Him that sent me.”

“Not my will, but Thine be done.” Well, then who is that one? We are told – David was the one that He chose, and called David “a man after my own heart, who will do all my will.”

And who was David? He was the son of Jesse, and “Jesse” means “Jehovah Exists.” That’s what the word means – any form of the verb “to be” – in other words, “I AM.” He is the son of “I AM.” So, in the 7th chapter of II Samuel, he turns to his prophet, “Go and tell my servant David that when his days are fulfilled and he lies down with his fathers, I will raise up his son after him who shall come forth from his body, and I will be his father, and he shall be my son.

Something comes out of man. It is you – your own identity – not another. But what comes out? For all the identity of the person that you are, there’s going to be a radical, radical transformation of form. It’s not the same form. It’s not the face, it’s not the things that you have here – no – an entirely different being, but still the same identity, but a form that is altogether different. It is a form that is Power. It’s infinite power, and you do not have to exercise it in the sense of doing this or doing that.

This is what I mean by it. If clothed in that body, you found yourself in hell, instantly hell would be transformed into Heaven without your raising one finger to transform it. I know this from experience. The year was 1946 when I tasted of the Wisdom of God and the Power of God.

I was on a ship coming through the Caribbean Sea from the Port of Spain, Trinidad, to Mobile, Alabama. We were seven days at sea. It was a freighter bringing boxite into the ovens in Alabama. They only carried twelve passengers. I had retired early. I had my wife and my little girl. Now the thing to do aboard a little ship like that was simply to enjoy the three meals, the sea breezes and then sleep. So, I turned in quite early, and in the wee hours of the morning I felt like a fiery being, being pulled out of my skull in the form of a serpent, like a spiral motion.

Here I am clothed, entirely different. I am fire and air! My body is simply one living, living body, something unlike anything I had ever experienced, and as far as my eye could see was a huge sea of human imperfections the blind, the lame, the halt, the withered – everything, all imperfect. I glided by in this body of light. I did not need the sun; I did not need the moon, the stars – anything to illuminate my world. I was luminous enough. As I glided, I simply illuminated the area that I wanted to see. As I came by these, I knew they were waiting to see me – waiting for me. As I glided by, everyone was transformed into the Perfection that I felt myself to be. I was “made perfect,” and as I walked by, everyone had to be perfect in my presence. Eyes that were missing came out of nowhere and filled the empty sockets; the hands that were missing filled the empty sockets. Those who could not walk, they leaped for joy.

Everything was made perfect, and this heavenly chorus accompanied me and called me by my earthly name, Neville. They said, “Neville is risen,” when they first came out. And then from then, that wonderful choral group sang my praises and only repeated the words, “Neville is risen.” I can’t describe how this heavenly chorus could take only those three words and use them in such a dramatic, wonderful way without changing the words. The music was fantastic, and these voices formed the music. I didn’t hear instruments; I only heard the voices, and just the words, “Neville is risen.” Well, they could take it and blend it into such beauty that at the very end of the journey when the very last one was made perfect, this heavenly chorus sang out, “It is finished.”

And then I felt myself actually come down into this garment, and this was like a straitjacket. This was something so cramping – so completely cramping – that no straitjacket in this world could be more confining than this body was when I came down into it.

So, I tasted of the Wisdom of God and the Power of God! I didn't have to do a thing to transform these people. My very presence transformed them. So, I know the Kingdom of Heaven is a body, and clothed in this Body, wherever you go is Heaven. As Milton said: "If I make my bed in hell, Thou art there; make it in heaven, Thou art there. If I take my wings and fly" – no matter where I fly – and he puts the words into the mouth of Satan – "it is hell, for I myself am hell."

(From "Paradise Lost") If I am hell, no matter where I go – put me into Heaven, it becomes hell. It's confusion.

Haven't you met people that, no matter where they go, they disturb the entire evening, the whole day? Bring them in – it's like a plague.

A friend of mine in New York City – his name was Milo. I loved the fun of him. Take him to Carnegie Hall and put Milo at the end of the aisle standing in the back, and have Milo walk down that aisle toward, say, the 3rd or 4th row; he bumped into everyone in this world. He could no more walk down an aisle and go without hitting someone. He struck this one, struck that one, struck the other one.

One night at home he took my hand to say good-bye, opened the wrong door and went right into the closet. Milo could no more stop that – he just simply confused everything. If he came home and dined – well, I had to watch everything at the table. He would use everything that was wrong, and yet he was a delightful person, but Milo was so completely confused – that was Milo's life.

Well now, this is Harmony beyond measure – the Body that is yours when you wake to it! And wherever you are, it's perfect. If you stood in the Petrified Forest, the whole vast forest would burst into foliage. If you went through the desert, it would blossom like the rose. Things long dead would simply become alive because you are alive, for you are the Resurrection then. You are the God of the Living, not the dead, and so all things that seemingly are dead become alive

in your presence. This is the Power and the Wisdom of which I speak, and I am not theorizing, I am not speculating. I have tasted of the Power.

By taste I mean I have experienced the Power and the Wisdom of God. And when this little garment comes off for the last time, in the not-distant future, I am clothed in that Body forever. And the day will come; you will be clothed in a similar body. He gives it a body as He has chosen.

So, let no one frighten you, [telling you] that you've got to earn the Kingdom of Heaven. You do not earn it! It is the consequence, not the condition, of His choice. "It is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom."

So, when people tell you, you've got to do this and do that and do the other in order to earn it, forget it. Then it's not a gift if you earn it. It's something that is due you, like your wages. Don't tell me at the end of the week – if I work by the week or by the month and you pay me what I've earned that you gave me something.

I recall once my publisher, at the end of six months when he gave me a very big check, his wife said, "You see how much I have given you?"

I said, "You haven't given me anything. You have only now put into my hands what you've been using without interest for the last six months. If I come in here every day and say, 'What book did you sell today?' and you paid me that day, I didn't do that. You waited six months in the confidence that you would give me the accumulated monies. So at the end of six months, you used that money – you put it in the bank; you didn't put it in the vault. You kept that money in the bank so that you did not have to borrow from the bank to run your business. It was my money, and because it accumulated, and it was a good, big check; you now feel poor that you gave me so much. Just get that idea off your mind. You didn't give me one red penny; you just simply took what was mine that you accumulated and used without interest, and then put it into my hand." Well, she never repeated that again!

So, I tell you, this is a gift! You don't earn the Kingdom. It is God's good pleasure to give it to you, and He has already given it to you, but the gift has not yet been realized. It is still to be realized in experience. So, I am sharing with you the experience. It comes suddenly, without

warning, and then you taste of it. You tell it to the friends. Those who are not yet called to receive it will laugh at you, and say it's a hallucination. All right, let them be. They will, one day, get it. Even though today they laugh at you, one day they will get it. They will all get it.

But He calls us one-by-one, as told us in the 27th chapter of the book of Isaiah: "I will call you one by one, O people of Israel." Well, who are the "people of Israel"? Let me quote you, now, the 8th verse, of the 32nd chapter of Deuteronomy: "He has put bounds to the peoples according to the number of the sons of God." Not one child can be born in this world, but what it is a garment that a Son of God wears!

But He's going to call His sons one-by-one, all in good time, each in his own order, and when He calls you, how does He call you? He sends "a famine upon the land." It's "not a famine for bread, not a hunger for bread nor a thirst for water, but for the hearing of the Word of God." (Amos 8:11)

When not a thing in this world can satisfy you but an experience of God, the hunger is on you. Yes, the fields may be bursting with wheat, and all the food in the world at your disposal and all the money to buy it, but if the hunger is for the Word of God, not a thing can satisfy you but an experience of God. That's when He calls you. He sends "a famine upon the land – not a hunger for bread or a thirst for water, but for the hearing of the Word of God."

When that comes upon you, I don't care what the world will say; they can't turn you away from that experience because not a thing can satisfy you. There is not one temptation in the world – offer you all the things in the world, it can't satisfy you. Offer you tonight the Presidency, a dictatorship of the world; it could not satisfy you. You wouldn't want it. You want to experience God. You don't want it as hearsay; you want it from something that actually takes place within you that you know from experience that God is; and you will never know Him unless His Son reveals Him. For, when His Son comes into your presence, then you know Who-God-Is. And in knowing Who-God-Is, you know Who-You-Are. Well, I'm telling you, you are God!

You are actually the only God, because in the end, there can be nothing but God. There is no room for another in the Universe. You brought this wonderful world into existence as a theater to manifest His power and His wisdom and His love for His sons, because He is going to give

Himself to His sons – not loan Himself. He actually becomes His sons, that His sons may become the Father! That's the mystery.

So, this Power – and there are in this audience tonight those who have tasted of the Power; there are those who have tasted, I hope, of the Wisdom, where you know you do nothing to make it so. It just is so because you are perfect. Therefore, you are told: "Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect." When that Perfection is yours, everything in the world is perfect.

No matter what happens to you and to those you love, you still cannot for one moment entertain the thought that God is cruel, even though you see what appears to be a horrible thing taking place in your most intimate world. Yet, you still maintain your conviction that God is Love. For, when you experience God as Infinite Love, not a thing in the world can turn you from that conviction. You know God is Love – that's all there is to it, and you stand in the presence of the Ancient of Days, and you can't think of anything but love. And the Ancient of Days embraces you, and you fuse and become one body. You are the Ancient of Days. And then you are sent, and you do the job that you are sent to do. Then, as you are sent, you are the Word. "And His name shall be called the Word of God."

And you are told," My word that goes forth from my mouth shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and prosper in the thing for which I sent it." It cannot come back void, so you will return to the Father, having accomplished the work that He gave you to do. And at that return, you are God Himself! You are the Father!

I'm not here to flatter you. I'm not here to change what you are doing now. If you feel that you have not completed the world of Caesar and you want something better in the world of Caesar – a bigger home or more homes and more money, more fame, more recognition – all right. If that's your hunger, may I tell you, you're entitled to it, and you can get it. You can get it by simply assuming the feeling of the wish fulfilled, and remaining faithful to that assumption. And if you remain faithful to that assumption, it will become a fact. He puts no limit on the power of belief – none whatsoever.

"Whatsoever you desire, believe that you have received it, and you will." That is the promise made in the 11th chapter of the book of Mark.

It doesn't say if it's good for you or it is wrong, if you desire it. There is no restriction upon the limit – upon the limit of belief – none. So, if you know what you want, and you dare assume that you have it, and live as though you have it, and live in the end – viewing the world from the end instead of thinking of the end, because God in becoming man does not think of man; He thinks from man. That's the secret.

So, "Be ye imitators of God as dear children." So, God in becoming me isn't thinking of Neville; He is Neville, and He's thinking from Neville. So, if I would imitate Him, I cannot think of what I want. I must think from it.

If I want to be this, that or the other, I assume the feeling of my wish fulfilled, and then think from it. That's the secret. And you'll become it. But I'm telling you, I cannot persuade you to want an experience of God. It comes from your own Father in the depths of your own Being. And when you really are ripe for that experience, He will send the hunger. And not a thing in this world can divert you but an experience of God. You've got to have it! And you may go through a thousand and one blind alleys, but you're going to have it. And you'll come to the end, and you will realize that the Jewish-Christian faith is the one solid rock in this world.

There is no Christianity without Judaism, and Judaism without Christianity would be a tree without flowers, without fruit. Judaism is the tree, Christianity is its fulfillment, and a tree must fulfill its purpose – if it's an apple tree, bear apples. And so, Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism, and you can't divorce them. That is the solid foundation.

All these others come with their little strange concepts of life, taking you to some holy place in the country and changing your physical diets and all these things to earn the Kingdom. You don't earn it that way. You hear the story, and then you react. You either believe it, or you don't believe it.

So, Paul said he spent the last years of his life teaching Christ "from the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms, and some believed what they heard, while others disbelieved." There was no New Testament; he was only telling his own experiences based upon the Law and the Prophets and the Psalms. So he reinterpreted the old in the light of his own experience, and some believed it and others disbelieved it.

So, one day the tree will bloom, and you will know how true the Christian faith is. But it could not be unless there was first the great story of Judaism, for Judaism is the foundation stone; Christianity is the fruit – its fulfillment. So, when you hear one little snide remark about the Jew or the Christian, don't react. They don't know what they are doing. Leave them alone. There could not be one without the other.

As the late Bishop Pike said when asked if he was a Jew – some person undoubtedly disliked what he said from the pulpit with the cross behind him, and he said, "Yes, I am a Jew. I am a Jew because I am a Christian. I could be a Jew and not be a Christian, but I cannot be a Christian and not be a Jew." He said, "I can be an apple tree and not bear an apple, but I can't have an apple and deny the apple tree."

Now let us go into the silence.

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