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## **THE TALENT**

A talent is a gift entrusted to one for his use. And when one is given the greatest talent of them all, its use gives meaning to existence.

In the 25th chapter of the Book of Matthew, a parable is told comparing this gift to the kingdom of heaven as: "A man going on a long journey called his servants and entrusted to them his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another, one. Then he went away. When he returned, the servants explained their use of the talents. The one who had received five had increased it to ten, for which he was highly commended and invited to enter into the joy of his master. The one who received two had doubled his and he, too, was highly commended and invited to enter into the joy of his master. But he who had received one, being afraid to test it, had buried his talent. He was condemned, the talent taken from him, and given to the one who had ten.

You may wonder when you read this story how the Lord of the universe could be so cruel to one who did not use his talent. But I tell you: every individual in this world has been given the greatest talent imaginable, which is the gift of God Himself as their human imagination. How is this gift being used? Some bury it by worshipping little icons on the wall and things round about them, but the worship of God is the use of His gift - the use of the human imagination.

Now, the parable tells us that those to whom the gifts were given were asked for an accounting, and those who had multiplied them were highly commended and invited into the joy of expansion. Blake, in his preface to the 4th fourth chapter of his wonderful poem, "Jerusalem," addresses the Christians saying: "I know of no other Christianity and of no other Gospel other than the liberty, both of body and mind to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination. Imagination, the real and eternal World of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow, and into which we shall go in our Eternal, or Imaginative Bodies when these Vegetable, Mortal Bodies are no more." Then he adds this thought: "The Apostles knew of no other Gospel."

Jesus Christ is your own wonderful human imagination! Crucified on humanity, Jesus is buried in you and will rise in you to the degree that you exercise your talent - your Human Imagination!

Christianity is a mystery. When speaking of Christ, Paul uses the word "mystery" no less than twenty times. The secret of imagining is the greatest of all problems, to the solution of which everyone should aspire, for supreme power, supreme wisdom, and supreme delight lie in the solution of this great mystery. When you unravel the mystery of imagining, you have conquered death.

Now let me tell you the story of a lady I knew in New York City about twenty years ago. I started lecturing on February 2, 1938, sharing my experiences based upon my use of the talent. Shortly after my opening, a lady - very prominent in our country, both politically and socially - began to

attend my meetings. She was the daughter-in-law of one who was governor of New York, [later] Vice President, and then President of our country.

One day this lady came to our apartment and told me that she and her husband owned a home in Long Island where they spent their summers, and lease an apartment in New York City where they live during the winter, and always sublet during the summer. Needing the money obtained from renting the apartment to open their home in Long Island, this lady asked for my help.

Although this lady was a pillar of the Episcopal church in New York City and Long Island, she did not go to her ministers, but to me for help. I asked her: "If you sublet your apartment today, where would you sleep tonight?" And she replied, "In Long Island." Then I told her to go home and sleep in Long Island tonight in her imagination. As she is falling asleep, I asked her to think of her New York apartment across the East River and tell herself that she is here in Long Island now because her apartment has been rented. Admitting that, although the idea did not make sense, she [said she] would try it, and promised to call me if it worked. I told her the only "if" to it is "if" she does it!

Two days later this lady called me at 9:00 A.M. from her home in Long Island saying: "Yesterday a gentleman came to see my apartment. He had all the qualifications and money necessary to rent it, but wanted immediate occupancy. I called my husband at the office and that night we physically slept in our home in Long Island." I told her how thrilled I was for her. I had expected her call, but wanted to ask one question: "Did you imagine sleeping in Long Island the night you promised you would?" And she answered: "Yes. I told my husband I was going to retire early as I had an appointment with myself. Then I went to bed assuming I was in Long Island. I thought of my apartment in New York City and felt the relief of knowing it was rented. I took my time looking at the familiar paintings on the walls, the furniture, drapes, and accessories there. Then I fell asleep. The next morning I awoke on my bed in New York City, but because of the series of events which took place that day, we have physically moved to our home in Long Island."

Now, in this lady's mind she is a Christian. She is a gracious, sweet lady, cultured, kind, considerate and generous, but she hasn't the slightest concept as to who Jesus Christ really is. She thinks of him as a man who was born 2,000 years ago, died on a wooden cross, [and] was buried in a grave in the Near East, out of which he rose in some miraculous way. That hasn't a thing to do with Jesus Christ.

Crucified on the cross of your body of flesh and blood, Jesus Christ is your own wonderful human imagination. Buried in your skull, He is dreaming your life into being. Although everything seems so alive here, this world is really His dream of death. But one day He will awaken and you will discover that you are the one spoken of by the prophets and the law of Moses and the Psalms. That there never was another and never will be another.

Start now to exercise God's gift of himself to you, for He so loved you He became you. Can you conceive of any greater gift? But the gift, like the muscles, if not exercised will atrophy and die.

You have the greatest of all talents, which is God's gift of himself to you, which is your own wonderful human Imagination!

Now, an idea which is only a thought produces nothing. In order to be awakened, motor elements must be employed, for imagination is spiritual sensation. As an example, imagine a rose. See it in your mind's eye, feel its velvet petals with your hand, smell the rose - and you have used three talents. Now, if you can detect the fragrance of a rose, see it, and touch it, isn't the rose there? If it is not, then why is its fragrance in the air?

You may question my example, but I know, if you have used your talents as I encouraged you to do, the rose will come. I am not saying it will magically appear in your vase by falling out of the atmosphere. But I am saying that in its own wonderful way the rose will be yours. Do not concern yourself as to how the rose or roses will appear; simply go to the end and dwell there.

When you know what you want, use your sense of feeling. Let the feeling of satisfaction so fill your being that the idea ceases to be a desire, but has evoked motor elements. These awaken sensory sensations within you causing the desire's fulfillment. Imagination is nothing more than sensory states. Learn to go beyond an idea by feeling its reality. Then turn to another and still another, as the being who is feeling it begins to awaken within you. Fulfill all of your desires while you are here, and then when you least expect it, the Divine Breath will breathe upon that immortal tomb where you are buried. And you will awaken to find yourself completely sealed in your Holy Sepulcher where you have been dreaming your life into being.

This world is made up of horrible dreams which the one within every individual is dreaming. That one must and will awaken, as you hear the story and put it into practice through repentance. The word "repentance" comes from the Greek word "metanoia," which means "a radical change of attitude." This change must be so radical that it gets right down to the root, the I AM! Think of your world as your mirror. Do you like what you see there? You know you can live with it or ignore it, but perhaps you would like to see it differently. If you would, repent by persuading yourself that you are seeing a world to your liking. Persist in your repentance, for to the degree that you are self-persuaded it is so, it will be so.

If you attempt to change the world before you change your attitude towards it, your struggle will be in vain. That which you dislike will change only to the degree that you change your attitude towards it. Until you do it cannot change, for the dislike is coming from within you. "Man is all Imagination, and God is Man and Exists in us and we in Him. The Eternal Body of Man is the Imagination and that is God himself."

The secret of imagining is the greatest of all secrets, and everyone should try to unravel this mystery. Do you not realize that Jesus Christ is in you as your human imagination? Test yourself and see. You do not test another. Test yourself! See if what I tell you is true. I say your own wonderful human imagination is Jesus Christ, the life-giving spirit of all things. If this is true, you can test him who is your very self, and when you prove it you will know where, what, and who you really are.

If I told a pillar of the Episcopal church as the lady whose story I shared, was that her imagination was Jesus Christ she would think me blasphemous. When the lady came to me for help I did not call him Christ in her presence, but spoke of her imagination. She could use that and still have her little icons. She could assume her apartment in New York City was rented, but she could not believe that the being who made the mental transfer was Christ. Yet we are told that all things were made by him and without him was not anything made that is made. She mentally moved, and in less than twenty-four hours the move was physically accomplished.

Now if all things are made by Christ and she knows exactly what she did, didn't she discover him? No, she didn't. She calls Christ her imagination, but separates her imagination from the Maker of worldly things.

Although she knows she brought about the rental of her apartment by her imaginal act, she still cannot bring herself to believe that her imaginal act was God in action. Raised to believe Jesus Christ was someone on the outside, she still worships a man based upon an artist's concept of him. But when you discover who Jesus Christ really is, you will know him as your very self. It does not yet appear what we should be, but we know that when he appears, we shall know him, for we shall be like him. "When scripture unfolds from within you, you will know that you and Christ are one."

God became not a man, but humanity, that humanity may become God. In giving us himself, God gave us the talent to use wisely or unwisely. I ask no more than the right and the liberty to exercise this talent. In this world a man can exercise his talent, be it that of an artist, a musician, a writer, or a poet, but he must conform to the ideology of the country and the time in which he lives. In Russia, the praises of Stalin were sung for almost thirty years. Statues were made of him; pictures were painted of him. Writers praised his name, yet he was a monster who deliberately slaughtered thirty-odd million Russians. Hitler was another monster who used the talents of others to balloon his own ego.

But I tell you, every child born of woman has the greatest talent of them all - the human imagination. A man sentenced for life could be in a dungeon imagining himself elsewhere, and if it takes an earthquake to set him free, an earthquake will appear. But if he sits in the dungeon believing the world is against him, he will remain there. But, while there in his body, he can walk the streets as a free man by using his talent. He can view the world from a free state and in a way that no one knows, he will be set free.

Whatever your desire may be, is possible and can be yours if you will imagine its possession and dwell in its fulfillment. But I warn you: Do not imagine with hate in your heart, because you are only hurting yourself. Although you may not realize it, the world is yourself pushed out. It is forever bearing witness to you who are all Imagination. Make no attempt to change the world until you first change your attitude towards it. Change your thinking and the world will reshuffle itself to reflect your new thoughts. This is the talent of which the gospels speak.

To one five talents were given. To another, two and another, one. Then came the day of accounting and all those who had expanded their talents were invited to enter into the joy of their master. And those who were afraid to test their Imagination, who wouldn't even try it, were condemned, and the knowledge of the power that they are was taken from them.

The talent is God's gift to you. It is entrusted to you for your use. Use your talent tonight by sleeping in the assumption that you are now - not tomorrow - but now, the person you would like to be. In the morning, persist in your assumption by allowing the world to see you as they would have to see you, were you now the one you would like to be. Although your reason and senses deny your assumption, if you persist your desire will harden into fact.

Let the world turn their back upon this law. That is perfectly all right, but you go your way using your talent. And when you least expect it, all that is said in scripture concerning Jesus Christ will be yours to experience in the first person, singular, present tense. Then you will know beyond all doubt who Jesus Christ really is. When you know who you are, it will not matter what the world says. Let the billion Christians and the two billion non-Christians go their way. If they want to question or ridicule you, turn your back and walk away. Having found the real Christ, you have found the great secret to the mystery of all life.

Christianity is the fulfillment of Judaism. All that was promised in the law of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms came to its fulfillment in the mystery called the gospels. Man thinks they are speaking of secular history, but I tell you, they have recorded Divine history. The story of Jesus Christ as recorded in scripture is a supernatural experience which takes place within the individual. No drug can unlock this experience and no person has the key. It is grace, grace, and more grace, for the talent - which is God's gift of himself to the individual - will awaken and the individual will know that "I am he."

Another time, this same lady came to me regarding her son, who was in the State Department in the Near East. Long before hippies came into being, her son wore a beard. She wanted him to shave it off, so I suggested that she kiss him and feel the smooth skin on his cheek and chin. This she promised to do.

One morning I opened the New York Times to the Social page where I saw a picture of her son without a beard. The next time this lady came to see me I mentioned seeing her son clean shaven and she said: "I imagined kissing him and feeling his face, but because he fell in love with a girl in the State Department who didn't like his beard, he shaved it off." She attributed the shaving of the beard to the means rather than the cause, which was what she had done in her imagination. The girl was only the instrument which brought it about. Having forgotten when she planted the seed, this lady didn't recognize her own harvest.

What are you doing in your imagination? To let something drift on and on when you dislike what is happening is stupid. As far as I am concerned, I don't care if every man grows a beard and wears his hair long. I would hope they washed it occasionally, as I do like cleanliness. But it is

entirely up to you what you do with your talent. I hope you will learn to use it consciously, for this talent is God's gift to you, and it contains the power to set you free.

The only Christ the apostles ever referred to is the human imagination. Blake knew that, for it was he who said: "I know of no other Christianity and no other Gospel than the liberty, both of body and mind, to exercise the Divine Arts of Imagination. Imagination, the real and eternal world of which this Vegetable Universe is but a faint shadow and in which we shall live in our Eternal or Imaginative Bodies when these Vegetable Mortal Bodies are no more".

These garments will all wear out because they cannot inherit the Kingdom of Heaven. But you are not these garments of flesh! You are all imagination! You are Spirit! You are a reality that cannot die, as you are forever. But while you are here, clothed in these garments of flesh, you have been given a gift. Don't bury it. Exercise it. You not only can become the person you want to be, but you will become it to the degree that you exercise your talent. That talent is God's gift of Himself to you, and God is in you as your own wonderful human imagination.

Now let us go into the silence.

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