

STRAIGHTWAY

"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" [Mark 1:18].

CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP

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ANCIENT WISDOM

by Dr. O. Talmadge Spence, Founder & President
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I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; Until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom (Daniel 7:21,22).

Wisdom in any age or generation is most rare. But the wisdom of the ancient days carried great weight. In the time after the early fall of Adam, great discernment and insight were voiced by sage and saint. In the matter of wisdom its oldness says much for its value and force in the world. The Bible acknowledges the "Ancient of Days,"

a prophetic phrase for the coming of Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, as well as the great men "of old." Even the New Testament acknowledges this, regularly. A variety may be cited:

Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: (Matthew 5:21).

And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall

see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams (Acts 2:17).

But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which veil is done away in Christ (II Corinthians 3:14).

And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years (Rev. 20:2).

The Men of Old

The Old Testament had earlier old men such as those mentioned in Genesis, Chapter 5—ten men in all: Adam, Seth, Enos, Cainan, Mahalaleel, Jared, Enoch, Methuselah, Lamech, and Noah. Adam is the oldest of all men; Noah saw both the end of the old world and the beginning of another world now old to us.

The wisdom of Adam's old

world went into a watery grave, but a 600-year-old man, Noah, and his three sons brought much of the old world to the generations from Noah to Abraham and Moses.

The Old Polynesians

I love to tell the story of "the incredible Polynesian navigators."

The Europeans first probed the Pacific Ocean in the 1500s. An astonishing discovery was made by them: without navigational instruments of any kind, the very earliest of historical man in that region had already found his way to scores of the islands scattered over this immense body of water.

Tradition survives from those old days of purposeful voyages of sea-going canoes across hundreds—even thousands—of miles.

Because of this old wisdom and knowledge, three groups of islands seem to have been deliberately populated.

Archaeologists have firm evidence that black people settled one group of islands and the Europeans named it Melanesia, from the Greek words for "black islands." This name followed the islands from New Guinea to Fiji. The people with light-brown skins colonized Micronesia—"little islands"—north of Melanesia. The tall people with pale skins settled Polynesia—"many islands"—which was something of a vast triangle in the east, taking Hawaii, New Zealand, and

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Easter Island, somewhere around 1000 AD.

Because of the old knowledge and wisdom of these earlier people and their otherwise primitive ways, many Europeans refused to believe that they could have formed such distant islands unaided by any modern instruments to help plot position and even keep course.

The New Navigators

In 1595 the Portuguese navigator, Pedro Fernades de Queirós, declared that even experienced Europeans could "neither know nor determine their situation" once they had lost sight of land for more than a couple of days.

All skepticism died when the exploits of David Lewis, New Zealand-born yachtsman, discovered that islanders in traditional catamarans and other craft were still making long-distance fishing and trading trips without modern instruments.

Of course, the old navigational skills were fast vanishing as Western tools and techniques supplanted native lore. Lewis decided to learn all he could about their old wisdom and knowledge before it was forgotten. He spent nine months in 1968-69 in a criss-cross journey over the West Pacific with native navigators in ocean-going canoes and other kinds of ocean crafts. These boats were stripped of compass and other instruments.

The Secrets of the Old Ones

The natives, in earlier days, believed these navigational skills were heredity secrets. In reality, their navigators simply followed "star paths" of as many as nine stars arising from the horizon. For example, they used stars as nocturnal guides to tiny islands far beyond the horizon, simply steering towards a star known to stand above a given destination. Each guiding star became a useful pointer when low in the sky. Not only "star paths" but also a "star compass" as a direction finder based on the position of as many as thirty-two stars was implemented in the total method of navigation. This navigation also included the use of an *etak* or reference island in connection with the stars.

Other information was coordinated, but the end-result brought them thousands of miles to their desired destination. It takes into account a trained eye to catch the color tinge, massing, and movement of clouds which index what is beneath them as an additional and valuable navigational guide, too.

This extended detail is only given to assure the present reader that great thought, knowledge, and wisdom of old, of past navigators, were valid and true.

The New Ones

Our modern age becomes impatient and skeptical of old wisdom and old truth. Modern man

tends to believe only in modern things. There remains so very much man does not know, and in reality has forgotten or lost.

Isaiah, the prophet, reveals the greater and more Ancient One, God! He reminds us in the Old Testament of our loss in history and loss in memory, and we need very much to know this again in our time.

Hast thou not heard long ago, how I have done it; and of ancient times, that I have formed it? now have I brought it to pass, that thou shouldest be to lay waste defenced cities into ruinous heaps (Isaiah 37:26).

And this shall be a sign unto thee, Ye shall eat this year such as groweth of itself; and the second year that which springeth of the same: and in the third year sow ye, and reap, and plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof. And the remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall again take root downward, and bear fruit upward (Isaiah 37:30-31).

May God sustain and/or raise up a "remnant" in our time to recall and obey God's Wisdom of the "ancient days."

Thou shalt not remove thy neighbour's landmark, which they of old time have set in thine inheritance,

which thou shalt inherit in the land that the LORD thy God giveth thee to possess it (Deuteronomy 19:14)

Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark. And all the people shall say, Amen (Deuteronomy 27:17).

Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set. (Proverbs 22:28).

The princes of Judah were like them that remove the bound [or landmark]: therefore I will pour out my wrath upon them like water (Hosea 5:10).

Our Neo-World

Almost every idea or pre-supposition in modern sight is prefixed with the "neo," from one of two basic Greek words for "new." This "neo," in Greek means something new in time. Modern thought simply declares, without embarrassment or shame: "If it is not new, it is not true," or "if it is not new, it is not worthy." Of course, that is a false concept. The fact of the matter is: "The old is true"; "the true is never new." Whether we know it or not; whether we will ever know it or not; the matter of all truth is ancient.

Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is

new? It hath been already of old time, which was before us (Ecclesiastes 1:10).

We have lost many formulas in physics; and even if we discover such an evidence, we cannot reproduce it. The Egyptians could temper copper as hard as steel. We have found the copper of their secret, but we have not found out their secret of their copper.

All of the great modes of philosophy and religion have now passed through the "neo" concepts: neo-platonism, neo-classicism, neo-evangelicalism, neo-pentecostalism, etc. This process of thinking simply removes the old presupposition to a set of facts or thoughts and in its place inserts a "new" presupposition. Platonism becomes neo-platonism from logical philosophy and physical science to metaphysics and mysticism.

No one is capable of inventing truth; we may only learn it, or discover it, or have God reveal it to us, and implement it into a reasonable conclusion or faith.

The Search for Wisdom

In the universe man has been able to see the distinction between "man-questions" and "God-questions." The statute of limitation of all of man's thoughts are contained and reasoned in the state of immanence. Man knows nothing of the questions and answers in the realm of transcendence and eternity. Man

knows to the point of physical death but cannot see beyond the grave; he knows about the identity of chemical elements in all physical seed but cannot locate or produce *zoei*, the actual life-element which only gives the chemical elements actual propensity to reproduce itself. The distance between inorganic chemistry and organic chemistry is bridged by chemistry through known photosynthesis. But the bridge between organic chemistry within seed and between seed simply cannot be bridged by man. Man cannot even sustain tissue-culture indefinitely.

The problem remains: man's quest lies mainly in physics and its adjacent areas; he is most limited in metaphysics and spiritual reality.

In fact, we need more than reason and knowledge and experimental science. The God-questions can only be contemplated through wisdom, and the heart of man must know of the fear of the Lord to gain an understanding of wisdom.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; but fools despise wisdom and instruction (Proverbs 1:7).

Undoubtedly, the "ancient ones" knew wisdom as well as reason and knowledge. Without wisdom all knowledge has blind spots, puzzles, enigmas, and "dark sayings," as the Sage of Jerusalem would reveal it.

Sinners in Their Ways

The Psalmist made it clear that God saves sinners in their ways.

Good and upright is the LORD: therefore will he teach sinners in the way (Psalm 25:8).

The sinner is saved in his sins and ways, and then God speaks to him about getting out of sin and entering the way of wisdom. Man must be converted from his sins and ways and brought into spiritual knowledge and wisdom—the way of life and truth.

A wise man will hear, and will increase learning; and a man of understanding shall attain unto wise counsels. To understand a proverb, and the interpretation; the words of the wise, and their dark sayings (Proverbs 1:5-6).

It is unfortunate that more Christians, in our time, do not seek wisdom from God. According to the Word of God, wisdom is the result of several important actions on the part of man:

1. “incline thine ear unto wisdom” (Proverbs 2:2a)
2. “apply thine heart to understanding” (2:2b)
3. “layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous” (2:7a)
4. “wisdom entereth into thine heart” (2:10a)

Jesus warned us that in the last days we must be “wise as serpents” and “harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16). We will only win this last war in our generation through wisdom, the wisdom of old, not the mere methodology of modern knowledge.

There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death (Proverbs 14:12).

Foundations Calendar (1998-1999)

1998

- 8/24-25 - Fall Semester Begins
- 9/6 - Christian Remembrance Sunday
- 9/25 - Founder's Day
- 10/21-23 - Second Congress of Fundamentalists
- 11/25 - Thanksgiving Day
- 12/19 - Recess: Foundations Schools

1999

- 1/4-6 - Spring Semester Days Begins
8:00 AM; Begins Wednesday
- 2/19 - Annual Prayer Day
- 3/28-4/4 - Annual Bible Conference:
Palm Sunday through Easter
- 4/2 - 25th Anniversary
- 5/16 - Sunday: Baccalaureate & Graduation Day
- 5/24 - Summer Semester Begins
- 6/6 - Foundations Day:
Church Anniversary Sunday
- 6/17-19 - Annual Men's Prayer Conference: Thur., 5:00 PM through Sat., 9:00 AM
- 8/23-25 - Fall Semester
- 9/5 - Christian Remembrance Sun.
- 10/1 - Founder's Day
- 10/20-22 - Third Congress of Fundamentalists
- 11/25 - Thanksgiving Day
- 12/18 - Christmas Break for Schools

THE HOLY SPIRIT IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

Teaching on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit is desperately needed as we enter the twenty-first century. The Charismatics have brought a proliferation of erroneous subjective materials to the Christian world, beginning in the 1950's. Their "prophets" have endorsed Romanism, the Ecumenical Movement, and other Neo-Concepts, including Rock Music. Some have embraced the New Age Movement.

The Holy Spirit in Heaven and Earth is indeed another view, a Biblical view. The contemporary subjective existentialism is condemned, bringing a refreshing blessing from our Sovereign God and Lord in His work of the Holy Spirit in these last days. It is His work that is more important than ours.

This 200-page book of twelve chapters sets forth the following:

- Trinitarian Monotheism
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- The Holy Spirit Phenomena
- The Holy Spirit and Suffering
- The Decree of Love in Heaven
- The Holy Spirit in Worship
- The Holy Spirit Above the Altar
- The Holy Spirit in Heaven

This book was written in the Crucible of Suffering of its author.

O. Talmadge Spence

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Second Congress of Fundamentalists

*"The wisdom that is from above is first pure,
then peaceable..."
(James 3:17a)*

October 21-23, 1998

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

7:00 PM

8:00 PM

Dr. Ian R.K. Paisley

Dr. Thurman Wisdom

Dr. Peter Foxx

&

The President and Vice President
of Foundations Bible College

**25th Anniversary
of the
Foundations Ministries**

"The pastor and president of the Foundations Ministries sends out an individual and personal invitation for all of the Foundations Friends around the world to return to the beautiful campus of the Foundations Church and College for a very special homecoming. We desire to commemorate the 25th year of our existence in the rich blessings of God upon us."

*Good Friday,
April 2, 1999*

"veritas supra omnis"

Scripture Commentary Society

THE LIVES OF THE PRINCIPAL REFORMERS, BOTH ENGLISHMEN AND FOREIGNERS -- By Richard Rolt (Hardback; 1997; Scripture Commentary Society) A reproduction reprint of a book almost 250 years old in an excellent volume with 21 etchings of all the Reformers from 1360-1600. This is a special, limited edition, including a remarkable biography, with all source-references accurately identified (202 pages). **\$39.95ppd.**

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