

A Lord's Day Snippet!
Biblical And Southern Studies
H. Rondel Rumburg, ThM, DMin
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1 Lord, my weak thought in vain would climb
to search the starry vault profound;
in vain would wing her flight sublime
to find creation's utmost bound.

2 But weaker yet that thought must prove
to search Thy great eternal plan,
Thy sov'reign counsels, born of love
long ages ere the world began.

3 When my dim reason would demand
why that, or this, thou dost ordain,
by some vast deep I seem to stand,
whose secrets I must ask in vain.

4 When doubts disturb my troubled breast,
and all is dark as night to me,
here, as on solid rock, I rest
that so it seemeth good to Thee.

5 Be this my joy, that evermore
Thou rulest all things at Thy will;
Thy sov'reign wisdom I adore,
and calmly, sweetly, trust Thee still.

Ray Palmer (1808-1887)

The Majesty of God's Wisdom and Knowledge

“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out.”

Romans 11:33

Here Paul pours forth his *doxology* over the glorious salvific *theology* he has just finished presenting. Paul seems too often write by the guidance of the Holy Spirit from a heart bursting with praise to his God. In this passage Paul points to God's wisdom that is buried deep with His other riches along with His knowledge. Oh, the depth of “the riches.” The riches of the person of God are so deep, metaphorically like the seeming bottomless sea, that they are unfathomable, but they are mirrored in the divine attributes of God. In our text, richness is seen in His wisdom and knowledge.

God's wisdom and knowledge is so deeply buried that man is incapable of sounding its depth. The vastness of these attributes is such that they are incomprehensibly vast to human perception as the ocean—"Thy way is in the sea, and thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known" (Ps. 77:19). "The Lord knows the hearts of His creatures; but the combined intellect of men and angels would be alike insufficient to penetrate the secrets of Deity.... The angels we are told 'desire to look into' the works of their Creator, in order to make new acquisitions of knowledge. But the majesty of God stands alone in the universe" [R. Haldane]. God's infinite wisdom and knowledge put finite man at a great disadvantage because God's wisdom issues into His profound judgments that cannot be searched out or found out. Only the Spirit of God can search out the deep things of God (1 Cor. 2:10).

God's wisdom is beyond human and angelic comprehension or searching. We know that the angels are very curious, desiring to look into these things. Thus, God in wisdom makes all things in time and eternity work together through the various elements of His knowledge so that the end result is "the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory" (1 Cor. 2:7). God's wisdom is not enhanced from any other source but Himself for He is infinite. "When Christian theology declares that God is wise, it means vastly more than it says or can say, for it tries to make a comparatively weak word bear an incomprehensible plenitude of meaning that threatens to tear it apart and crush it under the sheer weight of the idea.... It is nothing less than infinitude that theology is here laboring to express" and then note that "Since the word *infinite* describes what is unique, it can have no modifiers.... Before infinitude we stand silent" [Tozer]. If there is any other wisdom it came from the One who is Divine Wisdom. Man may by God's grace reflect that wisdom in a finite way.

The knowledge of God is also infinite as He is. He comprehends all things that will be, can be, and are for His knowledge is comprehensive, "it probably means the divine intuition which foreknows the outcome of all the factors in history before they come to pass" [C. Vaughan]. His wisdom is the perfect use of that knowledge. "He thus at once declares the spring of all our knowledge, and consequently our inability to pursue our inquiries beyond the bounds of revelation; while, at the same time, he again reminds, how utterly impossible it is for a creature to bring his Creator under obligations" [Haldane].

God is "unsearchable" in "His judgments and His ways past finding out." The depth of God's wisdom and knowledge render His judgments unsearchable and His ways past finding out. His wisdom like His knowledge "is too wonderful for me; it is high, I cannot attain unto it" (Ps. 139:6). God's "judgments" or "decrees" cannot be searched out by finite man because the God whose judgments they are is infinite. The mind of unbelief rejects the decrees, but the heart of belief believes them. God's infinite wisdom and knowledge is such that He is able to fulfill His purposed plan flawlessly. The question arises, "Who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been his counsellor?" (v. 34). The answer required by the context is that no one has known His mind and no one has been His counsellor for He is infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth. The wisdom of God planned our creation and redemption, the goodness of God led us to repentance, and the power of God wrought our salvation and keeps us unto the day of redemption. Praise be unto our God!

Johannes Theodorus Van der Kemp, (1747-1811) who became a missionary to South Africa had been an infidel. His conversion was preceded by a remarkable act of Divine providence in loss and the preservation of his life. He was sailing on the river near Dort in Holland, with his wife and daughter, when a violent storm arose, and a waterspout broke on the boat, by which it was instantly capsized. His wife and daughter immediately drowned; and he was clinging to the boat, which was carried down the stream nearly a mile; no one daring, in so dreadful a storm, to venture from the shore to his assistance. A vessel lying in the port of Dort, was, by the violence of the storm driven from her moorings, and floated towards the part of the river in which he was, he was ready to perish; and the sailors took him from the wreck. His life was preserved, which was afterwards employed in the propagation of that faith which he had sought to destroy. The loss of his earthly comforts, and his long struggle against painful deaths softened his hard heart, shook the infidel principles he had cherished, and ended in the consecration of his life to the cause of God and truth when he came to Christ.