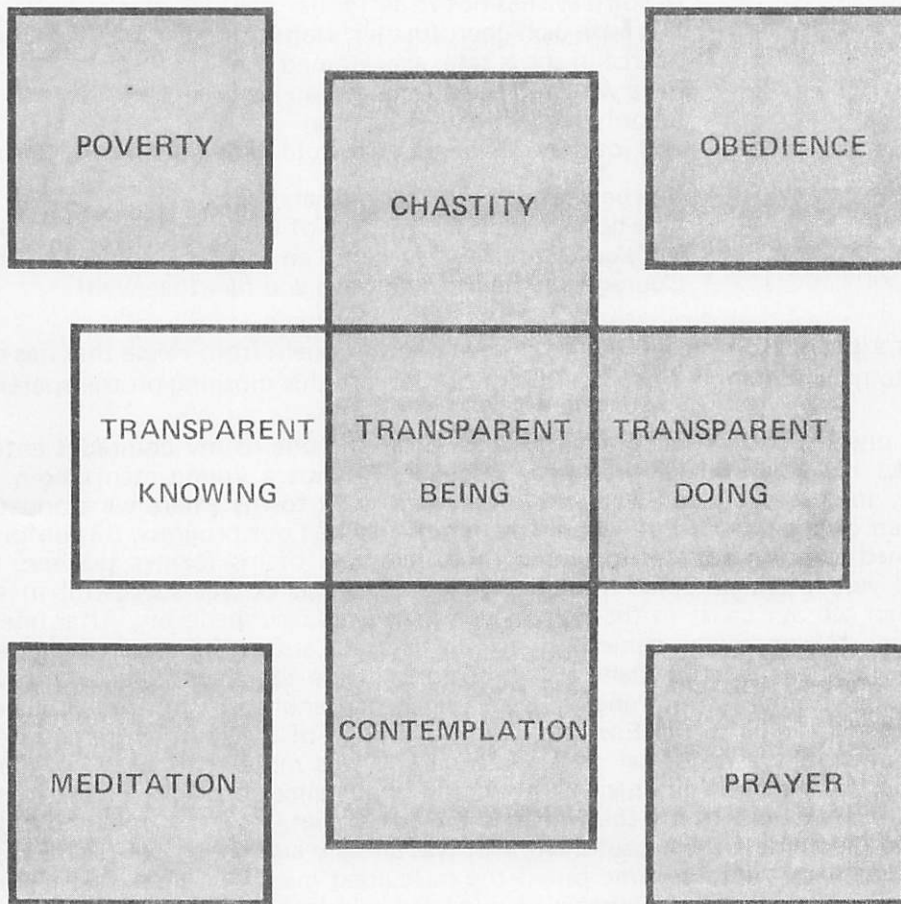




it happened some time later, when none of us thought about him any more, that we heard the inhabitants of several villages and towns through which we passed, talk about this same youth. A young man had been there (and they described him accurately and mentioned his name) who had been looking for us everywhere. First he had said that he belonged to us, had stayed behind on the journey and had lost his way. Then he began to weep and stated that he had been unfaithful to us and had run away, but now he realized that he could no longer live outside the League; he wished to, and indeed must, find us in order to go down on his knees before the leaders and beg to be forgiven. We heard this tale told again here, there, and everywhere; wherever we went, the wretched man had just been there. We asked the Speaker what he thought about it and what would be the outcome. "I do not think that he will find us," said the Speaker briefly. And he did not find us. We did not see him again.

Once, when one of the leaders had drawn me into a confidential conversation, I gathered courage and asked him how things stood with this renegade brother. After all, he was penitent and was looking for us, I said; we ought to help him redeem his error. No doubt, he would in the future be the most loyal member of the League. The leader said: "We should be happy if he did find his way back to us, but we cannot aid him. He has made it very difficult for himself to have faith again. I fear that he would not see and recognize us even if we passed close by him; he has become blind. Repentance alone doesn't help. Grace cannot be bought with repentance; it cannot be bought at all. A similar thing has already happened to many other people; great and famous men have shared the same fate as this young man. Once in their youth the light shone for them. They saw the light and followed the star. But then came reason and the mockery of the world; then came faint-heartedness and apparent failure; then came weariness and disillusionment, and so they lost their way again, they became blind again. Some of them have spent the rest of their lives looking for us again, but could not find us. They have then told the world that our League is only a pretty legend and people should not be misled by it. Others have become our deadly enemies and have abused and harmed the League in every possible way."

I think this whole lecture should just be poetry, really. You can't talk about transparent knowing anyway. It's transparent. Here's another poem, also about transparent knowing.

So Jesus said to the Jews who believed in him: "If you are faithful to what I have said, you are truly my disciples. And you will know the truth and the truth will set you free!"

"But we are descendants of Abraham," they replied, "and we have never in our lives been any man's slave. How can you say to us, 'You will be set free'?"

Jesus returned: "Believe me when I tell you that every man who commits sin is a slave. For a slave is no permanent part of a household, but a son is. If the Son, then, sets you free, you are really free! I know that you are descended from Abraham, but some of you are looking for a way to kill me because you can't bear my words. I am telling you what I have seen in the presence of my Father, and you are doing what you have seen in the presence of your father."

"Our father is Abraham!" they retorted.

"If you were the children of Abraham, you would do the sort of things Abraham did. But in fact, at this moment, you are looking for a way to kill me, simply because I am a man who has told you the truth that I have heard from God. Abraham would never have done that. No, you are doing your father's work."

"We are not illegitimate!" they retorted. "We have one Father—God."

"If God were really your Father," replied Jesus, "you would have loved me. For I came from God; and I am here. I did not come of my own accord—he sent me, and I am here. Why do you not understand my words? It is because you cannot hear what I am saying. Your father is the devil, and what you are wanting to do is what your father longs to do. He always was a murderer, and has never dealt with the truth, since the truth will have nothing to do with him. Whenever he tells a lie, he speaks in character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. And it is because I speak the truth that you will not believe me. Which of you can prove me guilty of sin? If I am speaking the truth, why is it that you do not believe me? The man who is born of God can hear the words of God, and the reason why you cannot hear the words of God is simply this, that you are not the sons of God."

"How right we are," retorted the Jews, "in calling you a Samaritan, and mad at that!"

"No," replied Jesus, "I am not mad. I am honoring my Father, and you are trying to dishonor me. But I am not concerned with my own glory; there is one whose concern it is, and he is the true Judge. Believe me when I tell you that if anybody accepts my words, he will never see

because the mood we're in is different. It's an eternal struggle. You're never apart from the struggle for the truth. In the old days when the real issue was getting yourself out from under being buried by the error of your times, the struggle for the truth was sloppy hatchet work. You had to swing hard to chop down trees a hundred feet thick. To give witness to the truth required something totally irrational, in order to get it through the thick skulls and armor plating of a rationalized society that something radically new was emerging in our time. Now that the whole mood of the moment has shifted to the doing pole, shifted to where it is and how it is we are going to rebuild the whole construct of global society—now that our struggle probably is more there, the *knowing* struggle comes new to us. One senses the necessity to give well ordered pictures that cut off all the possible escape routes, and that what you need is enough order to sustain you in the program that is going out here, knowing that your order is in constant revolution.

Transparent knowing experiences its job to be to remember all that it knows and not forget, and give such wonderful order to all that it knows that any possibility of getting off the hook of doing what has to be done is blocked off. I don't know if that makes really good sense or not, but a certain kind of refined quality to our struggle in knowing probably has to emerge as we move out into the building of new social vehicles.

The four categories we are going to use for this lecture—and these are rough—are: **ecstatic reason**, **universal secret**, **active certitude**, and **eternal illumination**. If you put it negatively, you might want to say rational mortification. That's more poetic, anyway, so put that down if you really like a good one—rational mortification. But I feel maybe **eternal illumination** is more positive.

A joke or two has to be given about some of the categories in these lectures. I started to put all the categories of all the lectures up on the board and compare them this morning—but the time ran short, and just having to say a word about every one of those categories was so frightening that I dismissed it. But we ought to get them all together—nine charts and four poetic phrases for each one of them—and put them all up on one piece of paper and look clear across until we really begin to see things we haven't seen before.

I

Under **ecstatic reason** the first thing I want to say is that the twentieth century has had a great revolution in its understanding of the knowing dimension of humanness. We have a clarity on what it means to be knowing creatures that is utterly unbelievable when compared with any previous age in Western or any other civilization. I wish I could spend more time on it but I won't.

But I want to mention just a few things. Hegel was the last human being in Western civilization that tried desperately to hold together what you might call universals. These had to be real universals—real in the sense that they really were universal. They really were the things that did not pass away, come and go. They were the stable grasp after reality, and the great invention of Plato and Greeks before that. I suppose that before the concept of rational universal became a real thing in human society, everybody clung to his own tribal privatism. And everybody having his own tribal privatism is not as good as comprehensive universals—no, they didn't use "comprehensive"—*divine* universals that held together the whole of history.

On the other side of the Kierkegaardian and analytical philosophical revolt, what we have on our hands is relative universals. I'll use that phrase "relative universals" just to shock us with the fact that we still deal with universals in our society, but they are relative. They are relative in the sense that we know that no rational construct of universals of humanness are now or ever were permanent; they are creations of man. But the creations of man that hold together the furthest reaches of the human community's experience are in a sense universals.

I got into an interesting conversation with someone one time about living in Einstein's universe.

what that meant. Back behind the decision to die, the decision to do, the decision to do with our very death—are a lot of different understandings as to why you would do that. Somebody can lay down his life out of an utterly foolish context. A decision to lay down your life could be just one more way to justify yourself or prove to yourself that you are really courageous, that you are really grand, that you are really great, or something along that line. Transparent knowing gives you the bottomless context in which your dying goes on. It gives you the crucifixion in the context in which the crucifixion first came—that is, to give witness to life the way life is, to be crucified or killed for bearing witness to the way life really is. That's what the crucifixion is—when you're crucified for being God's man. If you're crucified for something else, it isn't a crucifixion. If your life is given in some other context in that sense, you are not laying down your life on behalf of all men in the understanding of the depths of life that transparent knowing is pushing to.

Another way to begin to get a window on it is to realize that faith is not some kind of answer to life. Faith is *the* answer to life. Faith doesn't end all the problems you have with doubt. You always have things that you're in doubt about, including doctrines of faith, including teachings of the Church, including your economic theory, including your political theory, including your organizational concepts, including the way you're going to give a lecture the next time you give it, etc. All these are always filled with doubt.

But faith is a relationship to all of that doubt. It is utterly certain. It is a stance toward your doubt that all of your relative certainty and all of your doubts about life, are your life. And what it means to live is not to have life wrapped up, but to live in the midst of constantly having life unwrapped and having to take responsibility for wrapping it up afresh. That is certain. That is for sure—that you are always going to be given fresh chaos—that you are always going to be given fresh new possibilities of moving into the situation and living.

Here is where reason becomes ecstatic, where one begins to see that all reasonable things are finite, that all reasonable things pass away. Yet the only way you can get hold of life and all its absurdity and wonder, glory and awe, is to use reason to give it expression. And whenever reason is giving expression to life, reason is ecstatic, reason is jumping up and down, reason is glory, so to speak, with white hot energy. Then you stand around and look at your reasoning and you say again, "How fragile, how ridiculous, how stupid that all was. But I know the wind of reason blew through it when I did that. I know that it was ecstatic."

To begin to experience ourselves again as passionate thinkers is maybe the first step of grasping what transparent knowing has to do with—to touch the raw, deep interior base of life and to assume responsibility, then, for giving expression to it.

II

The second point here has to do with the universal secret. I think the first thing you really begin to know, when you begin to know life the way I was talking about knowing, is your sin. That seems to be where knowledge really finally begins. You begin to know how broken your life is. You begin to know how badly you fear death, or how upset you really are about the fact that you cannot rationally wrap life up, how frustrated you really get with life as it comes to you, and how little you want the frustrations that you've got. When knowledge begins to push into the depths, you learn more and more and more just how rebellious you are against life the way life has been given to you, how broken and twisted, not only your own life is, but the life of every other person that you run into. I don't have to give that lecture; that's somewhere in the RS-1 course. But it's very important to say that knowing begins there. Knowing begins with lucidity about the way life is, and one's rebellion from life.

At the same time, knowledge about life's brokenness and about life's estrangements and hostilities is also knowledge about life's glory. You cannot know the glory of humanness, unless you also know its misery. For it is in coming to know its glory that its misery is thrown into relief. As long

in all of its lucidity and all of its stupidity. If any of your stupidity becomes lucidity you can still live life. If ever some of your lucidity becomes revealed as stupidity you can still live life. That is to say, you have arrived—to know that the life that has been given is the life to be lived is the glorious life. It is this momentary struggle with life—to see through it and to deal with it, while seeing through it—that you now have on your hands. To have decided to do that is to have lucidity about all your lucidity, and all the lucidity that you will ever have until the end of time.

To get that said to myself has been very helpful—that I'm always on a journey of spirit. At the same time, when I have been enabled to be obedient to live the life that has been given to me, I am utterly alive; I have come to the truth about all of life. And to live in this truth, that all of life as it is given to you is good, is to have arrived. Human history as it goes on for twenty billion years will not arrive at any greater place than that. We have already arrived at the eschaton and have decided to live our lives exactly as they are now given to us. And then life goes on.

This, then, is the universal secret, that this truth that you have in the revelation of Jesus Christ is the only issue for man—the issue of accepting the fact that he has not lived his life as it was given to him, and accepting the possibility of that situation—laying hold of himself, laying hold of the future, and laying hold of life with all of its wonders and glories. That is the universal secret of life that prophets of ancient, and twenty-ninth century man will seek to know about life.

III

The third category is the **active certitude**, that knowledge is action. You decide to be a person of faith, but all kinds of knowledge is action. At the roots of any kind of knowledge is an act to risk yourself out into the unknown—to build over the unsteady abyss, as Nikos Kazantzakis put it. I picture that something like being out over a mountain ledge. There's a five thousand foot drop right off the edge of the mountain and another mountain ledge about three hundred feet out, and you're going to build a bridge right out over that three hundred foot gap. So you build the bridge or start to build the bridge out over the gap to the other mountain ledge, and when you get about 290 feet out you find that the mountain has moved a mile away. That's what it means to build over an unsteady abyss. You never quite know what you're going to run into. So you retreat back to the other mountain you were on and bracket that problem and put up a big sign that says, "Dead End," and go on and risk yourself out over the abyss again to get hold of something real perhaps this time.

All knowing is a risk. There is no alternative to risking. You can't sit by in your study waiting for some divine mystery to come down and write something truthful on your slate. Knowledge is a risk that you step out into the tomorrows with. It is a creation. A creation, of course, lays hold of life as it is given to you, but it is always a creation.

It comes like this. You're looking back to the past and all you see in the past is that your memory has conked out—all the books in your library are meaningless words stored up in musty old pages. You look out to your future and all you see is wild chaos. Simplistic answers won't touch it. If you try to hold anything together you have an urge to die, because it's so complex and meaningless and difficult to get your mind around. You look out at the exterior situation of the world and it's just whirling with unbelievable complexities. When you see that you feel the same kind of whirl down inside your own interior being.

Now rational creation is just wonderfully glorious. It's like a graph you lay over the very center of that chaos, so that when a really fresh symbol emerges, a really fresh grasp after life emerges, it turns the outward whirling into some form and it turns the inward whirling into some form. It turns a meaningless past on, and it turns a meaningless future into a destiny. That's why one has to know: to lie there in the unformed being is not to be a human being. One is a human being when he reaches out and gives form to his exterior and interior and future and past by that decision. And it's always a risk: once you've given it form, life is always bigger than your form and continually rocks it, and you have

A little later Hosea drew a new picture for Israel out of his own flesh and experience as well. He was as clear as Amos was that God was an almighty destroyer, but Hosea added this kind of note to it—that God was destroying us for our own good. That was the way he put it. God is like a father that chastens us for our sins. He is like a husband whose wife has become a whore and he will buy her back from slavery, and after a period of discipline he will restore her to her holy place. This was the mask of God Hosea created out of his own most personal flesh and brain, and as a creation, you and I know how that one can be perverted. The fatherhood of God was a pretty sick one as it was interpreted to me in my Sunday School class, but in his situation Hosea brought forth a new picture that enabled Israel to relate to the Almighty.

Now this picture of the Almighty itself maybe ought to be spoofed a little bit just to see what they were pointing to. Through the Middle Ages they grappled with the idea that when man pushes his power out to the limit of what his power can do, when he meets what his power cannot do, he meets the omnipotent power. That was their symbolic way of talking about just running into it. Running into the utter brink of life where you were powerless, you met the almightiness of being. In the same way, if you ran out to the limit of what you could know, you'd meet the omnipotent one. Or when you ran out to the limit of what you could be present to, you'd meet that power that was present to all things at all times.

It's as if the key power of all our language of all sorts is rooted back in these fundamental experiences of man—using lions and other kinds of pictures to say what life is all about. I was very intrigued with something said recently about Augustine and Benedict. I had never thought about it before but our word "Benediction" was probably created out of the word Benedict—that is, it was because Benedict was such a hot symbol of the good Word in history that we began to call the good Word the "benediction." Or maybe Augustine—what did he do to the English language? Is awe and August derived from that man's augustness, that man's awefilledness? And think what the concept of burning bush has done to the whole history of the Western world. Well—the active certitude. One knows God through his own creation in creating masks of God. Now God always tears them up, but nevertheless it is only in the building of those pictures that you have any real certainty at the roots of your whole experience of knowing.

IV

The last point has to do with eternal illumination, and we'll talk about it in terms of the Gospel of St. John, that in the beginning was the Word and the Word, or the truth, was with God and the Word was God. And all things were made by him. Then he goes on to say that the light which enlightens every man was coming into the world and was made flesh among us. The truth became flesh. It's not Jesus's teachings we remember as the truth, it's not the doctrines of truth we remember as the truth. The truth was Jesus himself. What's even more shocking about this particular passage is that it goes on to say that those who believe on Him He gives power to become sons of God also, that the light that illumines every man is now resident in Sally McGillicudy who believes on this happening.

What a shocking kind of thing to begin to think through. What does it mean to participate in that happening in such a way that that happening and you become synonymous?—that the light that illuminates every man is now resident in Sally McGillicudy, and if you've ever seen Sally McGillicudy you've seen the eternal truth about life. It's the same kind of statement as when the scriptures say, "You are the light of the world."

Now if Sally McGillicudy really is the light of the world, she has a particular quality about her both socially and internally. On the inside she knows that man never knows everything. There are other people who know more about certain particulars about life than Sally McGillicudy. She knows also that her images about life are always going to be changed. But she knows that she knows all that there ever is to know. All there ever is to be learned will only reinforce what she already knows. She