

CERTITUDE: EXPERIENCING THE OTHER WORLD

"In Christ Jesus, the life-giving law of the Spirit has made me free from the law of temporality. What the law cannot do, in that it is weak, God has done by sending his own son in the likeness of sinful temporality, and as a sacrifice for sin, condemned sins in that temporality itself, so that the righteousness of temporality might actually be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the temporality, but after the spiritual.

"For they that are after the temporal obviously mind the things of temporality, but they that are after the spirit mind that which is spiritual. For to be temporally-minded is finally death, but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace. Because the temporal mind is enmity against God, that is, idolatry? for it is not subject to the law of God and neither can it be. So then, they that are in the temporal cannot please God. But you are not in the temporal but in the spiritual. If so, the spirit of God dwells in you. Now if any man hath not this spirit he is none of God's. And if this spirit be in you, then temporality is dead. But the spirit is life because it is righteousness. And if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead will raise up your temporal bodies by his spirit that even now dwelleth in you.

"Therefore brethren, we are debtors not to the temporal, to live after the temporal. For if we live after the temporal we shall die, but if we, through the spirit, do mortify the deeds of the temporal we shall live. For as many as are led by the spirit of God they are the Sons of God. For you have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you have received the spirit of adoption. That is' you have become the sons of God, whereby you are enabled to say 'Abba! Father!' The spirit itself hears the witness with our own spirit that we are the children of God."

I do not like to be very far from the Other World chart. It is not that I read it (though I do from time to time); it is just its being there. That is the job of a symbol, and the Other World chart does that job well.

Some people sleep at the table when things get boring, but I play a game. I let my mind go off on something. I look over at the charts and see what thing catches my eye. Usually, I look at the "tranquillity" part. I am passionately interested in tranquillity. I have been working on problemlessness, and have had fun with it.

What I am trying to do now is to make it clear to myself that all the states of being on the chart are the practical dimensions of my own existence. And I mean that in the most mundane sense. For instance. I know that every night my wife comes in and drops the universe on my head with a twinkle in her eye, and a tone in her voice that leads me to believe she is out to give this old man a problem. That is what I mean by getting down to the nitty-gritty of life. That is, you do not just live in the Other World every once in a while. The Other World is there to live in all the time. And finding your way, at least for me, means that one must be able to articulate every little mundane thing in his life through the states of being abstractly postured on the massive Other World chart.

Tranquillity has to do with certitude, and with peace, joy and endlessness. I myself "did" endlessness a year ago and I do not feel comfortable thinking about it. Yet, I have no trouble when I come to the "Joy" part. I think the moment we grasped Spontaneous Gratitude, we had the gimmick that gave us leverage to thrust it into the midst of life - and then life was just Joy. By that, I do not mean what people mean when they say, "You are not happy enough." What foolishness!

In any event, I feel as if I have worked on problemlessness and have some clarity on the subject - enough so that I am somewhat comfortable talking about it.

Now I have turned my mind to Certitude. Probably the most significant break-in of illumination in the area of Certitude came some time ago. I was up North a little ways and went to a restaurant for lunch. When I left the restaurant, I noticed I was walking to the parking lot with an unusual "lilt." It was as if every hunk of soil I put my foot on welcomed my foot. Can you imagine a guy walking the way I was walking? When I became aware of that, I became aware of what was happening inside of me. It was the awareness, suddenly, that this universe is just very pleased to have me in it. More than that, the universe has always been pleased to have me be a part of it.

It is difficult for me to describe, really, what that realization did for me in terms of the affections. Ordinarily, I do not like sunny days. I like rainy days. Nevertheless, it was a sunny day and it was at that moment, I felt, as never before, that the air belonged to me and I belonged to the air. It then dawned on me that not only was the universe glad to have me in it, but that I was glad to have the universe in me. Something of a union took place. Mark you, we will never get to the bottom of the holy life unless we take utterly seriously the concept of union as the Mystics speak of it. However, we must get the concept out of the metaphysical and into the phenomenological. In any event, the universe and I were one with one another without either of us losing his identity. I was certain the universe was continuing to know itself as the universe and that I was going on, knowing myself as Joseph. Yet, in that moment, it was as if all the meaning in all the happenings of all of life coagulated into one, and the whole universe was bled out, overflowing with meaning. We have understood how the meaning in every situation can be bled out - that the meaning is always tucked away inside a little egg. And the spirit person has to find ways to make every one of these little eggs break open, in every situation: good ones, bad ones, painful ones and joyous ones.

I was speaking with one of our number who has been away for a month. He said it was like going outside the cloister. He met the business community head-on for the first time since we have begun to talk about Resurgence. He said he found Resurgence dripping all over the place. Then he said he had an amazing awareness: It was as if he discovered just how much God loves the world. Oh, I tell you, if that is not Resurgence, I do not know what is. As I listened to him, I became a bit overwhelmed and, being the introverted character I am, I translated his statement into myself. It dawned on me that every time God gets up in the morning, he does not have to decide over again whether he loves Joseph. Now, I know that every morning when I get up I have to decide all over again to love God. But it is not the other way around. Well, what this colleague was telling me is what I experienced that day. That God is just plain pleased to have me in his universe. On the other side of that, you become aware you are just pleased to be in God's universe, or that God is part of your universe.

Now what I have described here, very poorly, is the state of being we have called Certitude. When you become aware of it, you discover that Certitude has nothing whatsoever to do with reason. We have used Albert Camus' insight that, for lucid men there is one little word that always in-truces itself into every situation and every idea: "Why." And the lucid man finally knows there are not three good answers to Why. He has grasped the irrational, in its nakedness. Therefore, no certitude could ever be rational. Nor is it objective. When people point to this evidence, or that evidence they are foolish. I think the Hunter Warrior knows the secret: That everything, minus nothing, dies. I do not know how we are going to classify those entities that are beyond being re-circulated, like plastic, but I am convinced that even they will pass away. Once you have grasped that, then nothing external to you could ever bring you any kind of certitude.

My mind has gone back to Rudolph Bultmann these days. To his description of his inverted states of being: The daily care, the reaching out after love, the seeking for knowledge - wrapping the universe up, being concerned about doing something that would last and then realizing finally with a clear conscience, that there is never any solution to your daily care, and that is what life is in relation to your longing. There is no comfort and that is the way life is love. No one is ever going to love you the way you need to be loved. There is no kind of intellectual solution. Not only the little nitty-gritty things shall pass away, but the great and magnificent things shall also pass as history flows by. If we think some way or other in the future we are going to have easier consciences, then we are children.

It is in the midst of this awareness that the Certitude I am talking about becomes real. It is as if there are two certitudes: the one I just described with the Bultmann illustration, and the one I pointed to with the experience of being aware that the universe is glad to have you in it. Now this second kind of Certitude indicates that the Certitude is neither inside nor out. It is a state of being. And the state of being one finds himself in is his state of being.

In the universe itself, this is what Jesus meant when he said, "I am the Truth." Certitude is not knowledge. It is not the process of rationalization. It is state of being - the state of being that is the awareness of one's being. When you grasp the universe as glad to have you, you mean it is glad to have you as you are. It is this crummy old man of sixty-two that the universe addressed that day with everything. I am the Truth. Now, as long as you have some kind of external yard stick, or internal rational measuring stick relative to truth, to say "I am the Truth," is a

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pretentious statement. But, when you are aware there is no measure, then to say, "I am the Truth" is to say God loves me and I love God.

It is interesting how Jesus expressed this to the disciples. He could not do it directly. He could not say, "Now you go out and say "I am the Truth". No, he did it indirectly. He told them, "You are the light of the world." That always stirs my mind a bit. For in this moment of Certitude, our fathers in the past always associated the light with this interior awareness. There is internal illumination. My great grandmother used to say, "It's light both ways." When you fool with Certitude, you also fool with peace, joy, and endlessness.

Any of these could be used to describe what I have been discussing, but one must be careful not to mix certitude up with a psychologistic approach. That is it is incorrect to say that you have Peace in that moment and therefore you have Certitude. Certitude is its own certitude. It is a state of being that has nothing to do with Peace; though it is very clear to me that you have to have Peace.

What I read to you out of Romans is the part when His spirit witnesses with our spirit. That is the classic passage on Certitude. It talks about the Certitude in which one becomes aware of the fact that he is a child of God. And this is where it points to endlessness. It is not that you are a child of God because of anything. You are a child of God only because God made you his child. There is nothing you can ever do, or nothing you ever did, that would ever change the fact that you are just a child of God.

The Sanctification lectures deal with the heavens breaking open in the midst of deep humiliation, weakness, the sense of hostility, and the sense of suffering. It is then that the universe breaks open and ... "Thou art my beloved son." I like the poetry which comes out of the Hebrew-Christian tradition: God is Father. I get angry at people who worry about God being a personal God. To talk about God being a personal God, one finally has to get intimate and tell about the time in which he became aware that the universe was pleased with him - just as he is. Or that God called him: "Thou art my son in whom I am well pleased." Only then do you say to this incomprehensible reality: "My Father. Abba. I have fallen in love with the Mystery. I don't know why I just do."

That is the indicative out of which our moral acts flow, out of which the poetry with which we identify ourselves oozes. The word I like best to describe this is "assurance" - assurance over and beyond all self doubt. Over and beyond all that has to do with the Mystery, or with God. Blessed assurance: the drive, the thrust of life; the momentum that issues from the state of being which never goes away, but is forever. I call this Blessed Assurance.

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