

The Loss of Certainty

(November 30, 1965)

Dictated without notes

⁵¹ We said before that the abilities which man possesses are only shadows of his true abilities. The soul's true functions are knowing, loving, and creating. The intrusion of the ability to perceive, which is inherently judgmental, was introduced only after the Separation. No one has been sure of anything since then. You will also remember that I made it very clear that the Resurrection was the return to knowledge, which was accomplished by the union of my will with the Father's.

⁵² Since the Separation, the words "create" and "make" are inevitably confused. When you make something, you make it first out of a sense of lack or need, and second, out of something that already exists. Anything that is made is made for a specific purpose. It has no true generalisability. When you make something to fill a perceived lack, which is obviously why you would make anything, you are tacitly implying that you believe in the Separation. Knowing does not lead to doing, as we have frequently observed already. What appears to be contradictory about the difference between knowing and perceiving, and Revelation and miracles, is again the fallacy that is the root cause of all subsequent errors. The miracle was associated with perception, and not with knowing. However, we also noted that prayer is the medium of miracles, and also the natural communication of the Creator and the Created. Prayer is always an affirmation of knowledge, not of accurate perception. That is why unless perception has entered into it, it calls on Revelation.

⁵³ The confusion between your own creation and what you create is so profound that it has literally become impossible to know anything, because knowledge is always stable. It is quite evident that human beings are not. Nevertheless, they are perfectly stable as God created them. In this sense, when their behavior is unstable, they are obviously disagreeing with God's idea of the Creation. This is a fundamental right of man, although not one he would care to exercise if he were in his Right Mind. The problem that is bothering you most is the fundamental question which man continually asks of himself, but which cannot properly be directed to himself at all. He keeps on asking "himself" what he is. This implies that the answer is not only one which he knows, but one which is up to him. The first part of this statement is perfectly true, but the second part is not. We have frequently commented on the absolute necessity of correcting all fallacious thinking which associates man in any way with his own Creation.

⁵⁴ Man CANNOT perceive himself correctly. He has no image at all. The word "image" is always perception related, and is not a product of knowing. Images are symbolic, and stand for something else. The current emphasis on "changing your image" is a good description of the power of perception, but it implies that there is nothing to KNOW. Prayer is the medium of miracles, not because God created perceptions, but because God created YOU. At the beginning of this course, we said that YOU are a miracle. Therefore, the miracle worker is a miracle NOT of his own creation. Unless perception rests on some knowing basis, it is so unstable that it

doesn't mean anything. Knowing is not open to interpretation, because its meaning is its own. It is possible to interpret meaning, but this is always open to error because it involves the perception of meaning. All of these wholly needless complexities are the result of man's attempt to regard himself both as separated and unseparated at the same time. It is impossible to undertake a confusion as fundamental as this without engaging in further confusion.

⁵⁵ Methodologically, man's mind has been very creative. But, as always occurs when method and content are separated, it has not been utilized for anything but an attempt to escape a fundamental and entirely inescapable impasse. This kind of thinking cannot result in a creative outcome, though it has resulted in considerable ingenuity. It is noteworthy, however, that this ingenuity has almost totally divorced him from knowledge. Knowledge does not require ingenuity at all. When we say "the truth shall set you free," we mean that all this kind of thinking is a waste of time, but that you are free of the need of engaging in it. Note again that the functions of the Soul were not referred to as abilities. This point requires clarification, because abilities are beliefs which are BASED on the scarcity fallacy, since they do not mean anything apart from within-group comparisons. As you yourself never fail to point out, "nobody has none of an ability, and nobody has all of it." That is, of course, why the curve never rests on the line. The clear-cut implications of relativity, which properly inheres in this statement, DEMONSTRATE that abilities are not functions of the Soul. The Soul's functions are NOT relative. They are ABSOLUTE. They are OF God and BY God, and therefore God-like.

⁵⁶ Prayer is a way of asking for something. When we said that prayer is the medium of miracles, we also said that the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven HAVE everything. Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense becomes utterly without meaning. Essentially, a prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that we may be able to RECOGNIZE something we already have.

In electing the ability to perceive instead of the will to know, man placed himself in a position where he could resemble his Father ONLY by perceiving miraculously. But he lost the knowledge that he HIMSELF is a miracle. MIRACULOUS CREATION was his own Source, and also his own real function.

⁵⁷ "God created man in his own image and likeness" is correct in meaning, but the words are open to considerable misinterpretation. This is avoided, however, if "image" is understood to mean "thought," and "likeness" is taken as "of a like quality." God DID create the Son in His own Thought, and of a quality like to His own. There IS nothing else. Perception is impossible WITHOUT a belief in "more" and "less." Unless perception, at every level, involves selectivity, it is incapable of organization. In all types of perception, there is a continual process of accepting and rejecting, of organizing and reorganizing, and of shifting and changing focus. Evaluation is an essential aspect of perception, because a judgment MUST be made for selection. "Lack of lack" is a concept which is meaningless to a perceiver, because the ability to perceive at all RESTS ON lack.

⁵⁸ What happens to perceptions if there ARE no judgments, and there is nothing BUT perfect equality? Perception is automatically useless. Truth can only be KNOWN. All of it is equally true, and knowing any part of it IS to know all of it. Only perception involves partial awareness. Knowledge transcends ALL of the laws which govern perception. Partial KNOWLEDGE is impossible. It is all One, and has no separate parts. (e. the parts have NOT separated.) This IS the real knowledge. You who are really one with it need but know YOURSELF and your knowledge is complete. To know God's miracle is to know Him.

⁵⁹ Forgiveness is the healing of the perception of separation. Correct perception of EACH OTHER is necessary ONLY because minds have willed to see themselves AS separate beings. Each Soul knows God completely. This IS the miraculous power of the Soul. The fact that each Soul has this power completely is a fact that is entirely alien to human thinking, in which if any ONE has everything, there is nothing LEFT. God's miracles are as total as His Thought, because they ARE His thoughts. God shines in them all with perfect light. If they recognize this light anywhere, they know it universally. Revelation cannot be explained, because it IS knowledge. Revelation HAPPENS. It is the only REALLY natural happening, because it reflects the nature of God.

⁶⁰ As long as perception lasts, prayer has a place. Since perception rests on lack, those who perceive have not totally accepted the Atonement and given over themselves to truth. Perception IS a separated state, and the perceiver DOES need healing. Communion, not prayer, is the natural state of those who know. God and HIS miracles are inseparable.

All words, at best, are preparatory. THE word is really a thought. No one WORD is universally meaningful, because a word is a symbol, but thought is not divisible by creation. The original name for "thought" and "word" was the same. The quotation should read "In the beginning was the thought, and the thought was with God, and the thought WAS God." How beautiful indeed are the thoughts of God, who live in His light. Your worth is beyond perception because it is beyond doubt.

Do not perceive yourself in different lights. KNOW yourself in the One Light, where the miracle which is you is perfectly clear.

(The following paragraph within the brackets, which came at this point in time, is inserted here from the Special Messages section.)

[Bill special note for Helen:
(December 1, 1965)

The dominance-submission problem is related to the perception of helping others VERSUS helping the self. This is a misperception resulting from the failure to recognize the equal worth of both individuals in the interaction. There can be NO confusion on this point, and no strain, if this confusion is not introduced (through misperception, naturally.) Such confusion may be experienced partly by Helen at

times when Bill is trying to help her. She is likely to feel that this puts her in a subordinate position, since she thinks she should be the therapist. Obviously, there is no problem once it is recognized that the equal worth of each person precludes this misperception, since BOTH GAIN in such a transaction. It is impossible for anybody to ever lose anything when this is fully RECOGNIZED. This is what recognizing your brother is all about.]

(December 7, 1965)

The prerequisites for therapy must include the following conditions:

1. The procedure must involve the recognition rather than the denial of the importance of thought.
2. The exact equality of everyone who is involved. This must include Me.
3. No one is either therapist or patient. (Bill should add "teacher or pupil.")
4. Above all EVERYONE involved must want to give up everything that is NOT true. The reason for the negative emphasis here is that therapy implies something HAS gone wrong. Even though the purpose is to correct, those who are ill ARE negative.
5. Therapy is EXACTLY the same as all other forms of miracle-working. It has no separate laws of its own. All of the points that were given for miracles apply to therapy because, UNLESS therapy proceeds from miracle-mindedness, it CANNOT heal.
6. The therapist (hopefully) does have the role of being the better perceiver. (This is also, again hopefully, true of the teacher.) It does not follow that he is the better knower. Temporarily, the therapist or teacher can help in straightening out twisted perceptions, which is also the only role that I would ever contribute myself. All therapy should do is try to place EVERYONE involved in the right frame of mind to help one another. It is essentially a process of true courtesy, including courtesy to Me.

Any form of mental illness can truthfully be described as an expression of viciousness. We said before that those who are afraid are apt to be vicious. If we were willing to forgive other people's misperceptions of us, they could not possibly affect us at all. There is little doubt that you can explain your present attitudes in terms of how people used to look at you, but there is no wisdom in doing so. In fact, the whole historical approach can justifiably be called doubtful.

As you have so often said, no one has adopted ALL of his parents' attitudes as his own. In every case, there has been a long process of choice, in which the individual has escaped from those he himself vetoed, while retaining those he voted FOR. Bill has not retained his parents political beliefs, in spite of the particular kind of newspapers that constituted their own reading matter in this area. The reason why he could do this was because he believed he was free in this area.

There must be some acute problem OF HIS OWN that would make him so eager to accept their misperception of his own worth. This tendency can ALWAYS be regarded as punitive. It cannot be justified by the inequality of the strengths of parents and children. This is never more than temporary, and is largely a matter of maturational and thus physical difference. It does not last unless it is held onto.

When Bill's father came to his new office and "destroyed" it, it is quite apparent that Bill MUST have been willing to let it be destroyed. The many times that he has commented on this event alone would suggest the extreme importance of this misrepresentation in his own distorted thinking. Why should anyone accord an obvious misperception so much power? There cannot be any real justification for it, because even Bill himself recognized the real problem by saying "How could he do this to me?" The answer is HE didn't.

Bill has a very serious question to ask himself in this connection. We said before that the purpose of the Resurrection was to "demonstrate that no amount of misperception has any influence at all on a Son of God." This demonstration EXONERATES those who misperceive, by establishing beyond doubt that they have NOT hurt anyone. Bill's question, which he must ask himself very honestly, is whether he is willing to demonstrate that his parents have NOT hurt him. Unless he is willing to do this, he has NOT forgiven them.

The essential goal of therapy is the same as that of knowledge. No one can survive independently as long as he is willing to see himself through the eyes of others. This will always put him in a position where he MUST see himself in different lights. Parents do not create the image of their children, though they may perceive images which they do create. However, as we have already said, you are not an image. If you SIDE WITH image-makers, you are merely being idolatrous.

Bill has no justification whatever for perpetuating ANY image of himself at all. He is NOT an image. Whatever is true of him is wholly benign. It is essential that he KNOW this about himself, but he cannot know it while he chooses to interpret himself as vulnerable enough to BE hurt. This is a peculiar kind of arrogance, whose narcissistic component is perfectly obvious. It endows the perceiver with sufficient unreal strength to make him over, and then acknowledges the perceiver's miscreation. There are times when this strange lack of real courtesy appears to be a form of humility. Actually, it is never more than simple spite.

Bill, your parents did misperceive you in many ways, but their ability to perceive was quite warped, and their misperceptions stood in the way of their own knowledge. There is no reason why it should stand in the way of yours. It is still true that you believe they DID something to you. This belief is extremely dangerous to your perception, and wholly destructive of your knowledge. This is not only true of your attitudes toward your parents, but also of your misuse of your friends. You still think that you MUST respond to their errors AS IF they were true. By reacting self-destructively, you are GIVING them approval for their misperceptions.

No one has the right to change himself according to different circumstances. Only his actions are capable of appropriate variation. His belief in himself is a constant, unless it rests on perceptual acuity rather than knowledge of what he is.

It is your DUTY to establish beyond doubt that you are totally unwilling to side with (identify with) anyone's misperceptions of you, including your own. If you become concerned with totally irrelevant factors, such as the physical condition of a classroom, the number of students, the hour of the course, and the many elements which you may choose to select for emphasis as a basis for misperception, you have lost the knowledge of what ANY interpersonal relationship is for. It is NOT true that the difference between pupil and teacher is lasting. They meet IN ORDER to abolish the difference. At the beginning, since we are still in time, they come together on the basis of inequality of ability and experience. The aim of the teacher is to give them more of what is temporarily his. This process has all of the miracle conditions we referred to at the beginning. The teacher (or miracle worker) gives more to those who have less, bringing them closer to equality with him, at the same time gaining for himself.

The confusion here is only because they do not gain the same things, because they do not NEED the same things. If they did, their respective, though temporary roles would not be conducive to mutual profit. Freedom from fear can be achieved by BOTH teacher and pupil ONLY if they do not compare either their needs or their positions in regard to each other in terms of higher and lower.

Presumably, children must learn from parents. What parents learn from children is merely of a different order. Ultimately, there is no difference in order, but this involves only knowledge. Neither parents nor children can be said to HAVE knowledge, or their relationships would not exist AS IF they were on different levels. The same is true of the teacher and the pupil. Children have an authority problem ONLY if they believe that their image is influenced BY the authority. This is an act of will on their part, because they are electing to misperceive the authority and GIVE him this power.

A TEACHER with an authority problem is merely a pupil who refuses to teach others. He wants to maintain HIMSELF in a position where he can be misused and misperceived. This makes him resentful of teaching, because of what he insists it has done to him.

The ONLY way out of this particular aspect of the desert is still to leave. The way this is left is to release EVERYONE involved, by ABSOLUTELY REFUSING to engage in any form of honoring error. Neither teacher nor pupil is imprisoned by learning unless he uses it as an attack. If he does this, he will be imprisoned whether he actually teaches or learns, or refuses to be engaged in the process at all.

The role of a teacher, properly conceived, is one of leading himself and others out of the desert. The value of this role can hardly be underestimated, if only because it was one to which I very gladly dedicated my own life. I have repeatedly asked MY

pupils to follow me. This means that, to be effective teachers, they MUST interpret teaching as I do. I have made EVERY effort to teach you ENTIRELY without fear. If you do not listen, you will be unable to avoid the VERY obvious error of perceiving teaching as a threat.

It is hardly necessary to say that teaching is a process whose purpose is to produce learning. The ultimate purpose of ALL learning is to abolish fear. This is necessary so that knowledge can happen. The role of the teacher is NOT the role of God. This confusion is all too frequently made, by parents, teachers, therapists, and the clergy. It is a real misunderstanding of both God and His miracles. Any teacher who believes that teaching is fearful CANNOT learn because he is paralyzed. He also cannot really teach.

Bill was quite right in maintaining that this course is a prerequisite for his. However, he was really saying much more than that. The purpose of this course IS to prepare you for knowledge. So is the only real purpose of ANY legitimate course. All that is required of you as a teacher is to follow Me.

Whenever anyone decides that he can function only in SOME roles but not in others, he cannot BUT be attempting to make a compromise which will not work. If Bill is under the misbelief that he is coping with the fear problem by functioning as an administrator and as a teacher of interns, but NOT as a teacher of students, he is merely deceiving himself. He owes himself greater respect. There is nothing as tragic as the attempt to deceive one's self, because it implies that you perceive yourself as so unworthy that deception is more fitting for you than truth. Either you can function in all of the roles you have properly undertaken to fill, or you cannot function effectively in any of them. This IS an all or none decision. You CANNOT make inappropriate level distinctions within this choice. You are either capable or not. This does not mean that you can DO everything, but it DOES mean that you are either totally miracle-minded or not. This decision is open to NO compromise whatever. When Bill says that he cannot teach, he is making the same mistake that we spoke of before, when he acted as if universal laws applied to everyone except him. This is not only arrogant, but patently untrue. Universal laws MUST apply to him, unless he does not exist. We will not bother to argue about this.

Descartes engaged in a very interesting teaching procedure, and one from which he himself learned a great deal. He began with doubting the existence of everything, except himself. He insisted that his own existence was not open to doubt, and rebuilt his entire thought system on the one premise "I think, therefore I am." It is noteworthy that he arrived at accepting the entire system he originally doubted, solely on the basis of this ONE piece of knowledge. There was, however, a distinct shift in his own perception. He no longer really questioned the reality of what he perceived, because he KNEW he was there.

We mentioned before that Bill is not too sure of this, and that is why we suggested that he concentrate on "Lord, here I am." A teacher is unlikely to be effective unless he begins with BEING THERE. Bill, this is not really open to question. You will lose all

your fear of teaching and relating in any form once you know who you are. There is no point whatever in remaining in the prison of believing that this is up to you. You do NOT exist in different lights. It is this belief which has confused you about your own reality. Why would you want to remain so obscure to yourself?