

I suppose if we had not known it before, we certainly realize it now; this business of being a Spirit Man takes some hard-headed thinking and planning. I do not think I could conceive of anything more dangerous than a Spirit Man's just sloppily moving into one day after another. It takes an immense amount of intentionality to walk that razor's edge--and it is a razor edge. You remember how the book The Razor's Edge spoke to us when the Word was just breaking through, when the question was "Who am I?" That was a razor's edge. We have now been hurled into a new kind of a world where the razor's edge is keener and sharper, more dangerous and life long.

It is as if the first thing you have to resolve is that you are going to care for yourself. I do not quite like the way that sounds, because the Spirit Man obviously never again can care for himself. He is too busy caring for the other. This care for the self is more like the care about always not caring for the self, in order that he can care for others (if you can get that double twist).

Now, what has happened is a radicalizing, interiorizing, and rationalizing of the spirit dimension of life as you and I have known it up to now. This radicalizing is a deepening and a profounding of your life. If what happened this summer happened to you, you are vividly, dramatically aware of that. Nobody can see it, but you are more aware of this than of anything else. I am trying to get said that you can not point: "Lo here, Lo there", or say, "Look at me now." But you know that whatever figures you use the bottom has been blown out of your life.

If I were teaching Tillich's paper, again, I would hit Paragraph 10 like I had never hit it before; not because I would want to, but rather, because I could not help it. You are aware of your Mystery, your Greatness and your Depth as you never were before in your life. You have to go into your Greatness, into your Mystery and into your Depth before you can talk about the kind of awareness I am talking about-- the profundity.

The second thing is the interiorization. You were a Spirit Man, of course, and that is interiorization. But, this is an interiorization of interiorization. What you feel like is that the guy you were yesterday is out there. Now, it is all inside of here.

Now, do not let me mis-state myself. You have a sense of the objectivity of this beyond any sense of the objectivity you had yesterday. Something has been forcefully and comprehensively interiorized in you. Yesterday you lived in the spirit, now the spirit lives in you.

Do not be surprised, if from now on you sense you are outside yourself twenty-four hours a day. If you have any sensitivity to the spirit, if that happened to you, you sense that right now. That intentionality and attentionality has intensified one thousandfold; you are present as you never were in your whole life. At the same time, you are beside yourself. It is as if you hit me but your fist goes right through. I am not there. I am not there, while I am the most present thereness I have ever been.

It is crucial you know these things, yet I am not telling you anything you do not know. This is a part of taking care of the care you are to others.

The third category I use is "rationalized"; what I mean by that is that experiencing every part of your being as fitting together as it never fit before. You sense you are radically human; you sense your wholeness. That is what the word "integrity" means--that you are one, that you are "together."

You will notice this frightens you because you and I have had to trade on the fact that we were the great outsiders; we were the people who knew they were not "together." I say this wholeness is a tremendous but uneasy experience. I am trying to say that you should not be afraid of it.

How do you take care of yourself? You will discover that you know what Paul meant by praying without ceasing. It is almost unconscious prayer. I intentionally use the word "unconscious" here. It is perpetual spinning down inside of you, it is becoming aware of that which is unsynonymous with yourself praying.

This is not news to you. You remember that in writing about prayer Tillich says you do not pray, the Holy Spirit prays in you. Isn't it great that a man like Tillich, ten or twenty years ago, could tell you that. Your mind said yes, but you had no idea what he meant. Now, you have an idea what that means and, if you are like me, it is a shocking, startling, astounding new awareness. There is a treasure to it. You sense that now your whole presence is nothing but a Prayer.

This is not something religious. This intensification of consciousness has always been at any moment in history. The intensification of consciousness has never been associated with religion, but as religious awareness.

Now I know why the Holy Spirit has not permitted us in the last ten years to rush out and set up a solitary office. Thank God, he led us to experiment here and there and elsewhere or we would not be here if we had not. Only now are we ready to begin to be serious, and I mean only to begin. For we are children.

Secondly, caring for yourself has to do with Contemplation. You will discover a weird going-on-ness in you relative to contemplation. There is a montage in our minds which was the screen for reality--the reality which is the relationship to reality.

I would like to return to talking about waterfalls and mountains and deserts and so on, but today I do not need to do so. Yesterday, for the self-conscience awareness of this relationship you needed an external montage; you had to understand that every time you had experienced awe, whether it was in the coming of the rising of the sun, in a moment of tragedy, or whatever else, the montage was present. The montage you had experienced in the past seemed to be outside of you. Now you are going to be aware of the interior montage of your being. You can shut your eyes to that unreal reality outside and real reality keeps on going.

I do not divorce these in any way whatsoever. This is an intensification of the pour-soi, which is never divorced from the en-soi. Kierkegaard described the circumspect man as one who had so developed internally that his imagination was capable of pulling him into despair. What I have just been describing is the same kind of awareness on the positive rather than the negative side. When you become that circumspect man just one little thought can collapse the universe for you. But

the naive man needs a big stick to wake him up.

The same thing on the reverse side is that your life is going to be the Contemplation. You understand that here I am trying to come tangentially at facing a hard question. Our fathers in the past said "union," But I have the world between me and God. That is the Achilles Heel, as I call it, of Mysticism. I am not trying to avoid that at all. That is where mysticism walks into the swamp. The awe never goes away, it is as if you are the awe.

I do not know as much about the exercise of Contemplation as I used to. But, I know that it is externalizing all I have been talking about. There may have been many people up there upon the mountain with Jesus but only Peter, James, and John saw radiance. I used to try to turn on the spigot of Jesus and now it is an artesian well; sometimes you wish that you could turn it off. What I am trying to say is that you keep the exercise in spite of the pain and fright.

The last thing is Meditation. We have gotten to know the Christ very well. But you will notice that we have been slowly "sneaking up" on Jesus. When I say "Jesus," I mean the eschatological hero; if you want to say "Harry Jones," that is fine. But I mean the Jesus-Eschatological-Hero. If that is what you mean by "Harry Jones," call him that. We are not trying to defend an abstract doctrine here. Part of what I mean by calling Jesus the eschatological hero is that he is one of my companions on the way. Luke says, "He set his face steadfastly toward Jerusalem and walked on ahead." I imagine that was the time the disciples experienced ontological humiliation. I believe Jesus is my comrade on the way and we are marching along together. It is in my humiliated moments that I am aware I am with the rest of the sinners and Jesus is walking on ahead.

But Luther is also a companion-on-the-way. So is Amos. But then I experience transparency. When I rush to talk to Amos, he turns toward me and I see the face of Jesus. That is the intensification of Meditation. But you understand that this is going to happen to you, and it does not make any difference whether you call it Harry Jones or Jesus.

Now you have to externalize what I am talking about. I do not know how to so that except to read the Gospel with a new set of eyes. But I should go beyond that because Luther said Jesus was hiding behind every bush of the old Testament. You see he knew then what I am just finding out: "They sought him here, they sought him there...." Only the word now is un-elusive Pimpernel.

--Joseph W. Mathews--

Note: many pages of notes in
Joi's handwriting not scanned.

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