

JWM - Grief and Endlessness

The Lord be with you.

And with thy spirit.

Let us pray: Lord of all power and might who art the author and giver of all good things, graft in our hearts the love of thy name and increase in us true religion. Nurture us with all goodness and of thy great mercy keep us in the same. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Now, what is your Christian name? My Christian name is Joseph. And who gave you this name? My sponsors gave me this name in baptism, wherein I was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven. And what did your sponsors then promise for you? My sponsors did then promise and vow three things in my name. First, that I should renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and the vanity of this wicked world and all of the sinful lusts of the flesh. Secondly, they promised and vowed on my behalf that I should believe all of the articles of the Christian faith. And, thirdly, that I should keep God's holy will and commandments and walk in the same all the days of my life. And do you not think that you are bound, therefore, so to do? Yes, verily, and by God's help I will. And I heartily thank our heavenly Father that he hath called me to this state of salvation through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, and I pray unto God to give me his grace that I may continue in the same to the very end of my life. Now you said that your sponsors promised and vowed that you should believe all of the articles of the Christian faith -- would you please recite those articles of the Christian faith? All right. I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, his only son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. He descended into Hell, and on the third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into Heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge both the quick and the dead. I believe in

JWM - 2

the Holy Ghost, the Holy Catholic Church, the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen. Now, what do you chiefly learn in these articles that you believe? Well, first I learned to believe in God, the Father, who hath made me and all the world. And, secondly, I learned to believe in God, the Son, who hath redeemed me and all the world. Thirdly, to believe in God, the Holy Ghost, who sanctifyeth me and all the People of God. And this Holy Trinity, one God, I praise and I magnify by saying Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without any end. Amen. Now, you said your sponsors promised and vowed that you would keep God's Holy Will and commandments -- tell me now, how many of these commandments are there? Well, there are ten commandments, given in the olden time to the people of Israel. And what does our Lord Jesus Christ teach you about these commandments? Well, my Lord Jesus Christ teaches us that they are summed up in two commandments: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul, and with all thy strength. This is the first and great commandment. The second one is like unto it: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as you love yourself. Oh what, then, do you chiefly learn from these ten commandments? Well, I learned two things from these commandments, my duty toward God and my duty toward my neighbor. What is your duty toward God? Well, my duty toward God is to believe in him. And fear him. And then to love him with all my heart and with all my mind and with all my soul and with all my strength. Well, what is your duty toward your neighbor? My duty toward my neighbor is to love him as myself and to do unto all men as I would that they should do unto me; to love, honor and help my father and my mother; to honor and obey the civil authority; to submit myself to my governor, to my teachers, to my spiritual pastors; and to order myself in that lowliness and reverence which becometh a servant of God and mankind; and not to hurt

anybody by any word or any deed and to bear no malice and no hostility in my heart and to keep my body in temperance, in soberness and in chastity and keep my hands from picking and stealing from others and to be true and just in all my dealings and to keep my tongue from speaking evil and lying and slandering other people and not to covet or desire any other man's honor or goods, but to learn and labor truly, to earn my own being and my own living and to do my duty in that state of life under which it shall please God to call me from time to time. Now, do you know this, that you are not able to do these things yourself, nor are you able to walk in the commandments of God? Know ye this that you are not able to serve him without very special grace which you must learn at all times to call for by diligent prayer? What is a prayer that our Lord has taught us to pray under these circumstances? Why, it's the Lord's Prayer. Well, let us pray it, as Christ, our Saviour, has taught us. All right. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into ~~temptation~~ trials, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory for ever and ever. Amen. All right. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with you from this time and forever more. Amen.

Now, what do you think of that? That's the Office of Instruction that came out of the ancient church. ^{Do} /You feel like about every other day they should haul you up on the carpet and ask you about these matters? When I stumble across such things, I find a new glow in my heart of appreciation that I'm a part of the Church of Jesus Christ in history. With all of our stumblings in the church and ~~stumbings~~ fumbings and all of the blots on the sacred escutcheon, I am proud to be a part of it.

Now, I want to talk about the Other World, and I am more and more convinced that it's Lecture No. 64 up there which is the key, and as you know last week for some of you I fooled around a little bit in that arena. And I want to fool again, and I'm not sure that I'm much clearer. But I believe that we're not going to be able to get that Other World into the mind and being of the Last Fat Lady if we are not able to say with precise clarity what we mean in the Sea of Tranquility by the life of endlessness in the post-modern world. You probably have become aware as you've studied the chart of the Other World that, though finally there is not progression--there is only inter-relatedness and inter-action; of the 4 or 16 or 64 states of being delineated there all of them are in every one of them. To push one button is finally to turn them all on. I would like, however, to see one day somebody holding that basic principle, or two principles that they are all in one and that to touch one is to touch them all, with a kind of obvious progression that is there. And here is a paradox, I think, and I believe when we think it through clearly we'll see that it is a paradox that belongs to the essence of the Other World itself. Under the rubric of salvation is once and for all but of the essential nature of once and for allness, that means ever againness. It's something like that kind of a problem that you're dealing with. And, as you look/^{ed}at the charts after the first several blushes of coming to terms with various parts, you could sense something of that progression. For instance, when you think of the 16 states of being, the 4th one in each of the four areas is really an intensification. In the first one it is the adoration of God--falling in love with the mystery. In the second one it's the intensification of self-knowledge which is to be found only in that state of being in which you in fear and trembling become overwhelmingly aware of the fact that you are absolutely and utterly accountable for your be in history. Only at that moment are you able to see through everything, and do you know yourself even

JWM - 5

those parts of yourself it is impossible for you to ever know. Only when you grasp the fact that one day, and I want to put it in this kind of language, you shall stand before the throne of being in itself and account for this fantastic opportunity that you have^{had}/to live yourself one mighty life and die yourself one mighty death. Only when you grasp that you are going to account for this life of yours, the way you expended it, the way you appropriated it, the way you forged it, do you really know what the consciousness of the consciousness about consciousness is. Only then are you intensified, rarified spirit. And then the fourth category in the area of that Mountain of Care, and I suppose in many ways this is the hardest one on the board, save the one I want to talk about in a moment.

All my life, I suppose, and I suppose all your life at one level of consciousness or another, you've struggled with what spiritual power is. I think perhaps you only know what it means to love Christianly--I don't mean some other kind of love--when you understand that Christian love is a release, is a bestowal of unbelievable power that other men do not possess. I've even fooled with the idea that again and again the church has slipped into a kind of sentimentalistic concept of love precisely because of that power, for the gift of daring to care, not for your own little family and your own little self, your own little church, your own little nation, your own little anything -- I say the gift that comes is the gift of power to enable people to serve people. And without that gift, ~~xxxx~~ perhaps you've noticed, most of your efforts on behalf of other people are like the seeds that were sown on the rocky soil. This is not a matter of pride. This power of agape. It's a matter of wrenching humility. That's the intensification of the Mountain of Care. The intensification of the Sea of Tranquility is that state of being which for lack of more adequate terms at the moment I call endlessness. It's the intensification of the fulfillment of certitude, fulfillment of serenity, and

JWM - 6

the fulfillment of joy in the midst of blazing uncertainty, tumultuous anxiety and tragic . Joyfulness. The intensification of that is that state of being--I'd like to say that 100 times--that state of being which is endlessness, end-less-ness. But also it's intensification of the love of God, the power of agape, and the inescapable knowledge that you and you alone give an account of the investment of your life in be.

Now I want to back off a little bit and talk — I sometimes think that such a chart as that or Teresa's Seven Mansions, though they are utterly necessary because we are rational people, destroy the very thing that your soul reaches for and that something in your mind points to. But, if you didn't do that, you'd have sheer chaos. I suppose that pithistimologically I've never gotten over the Kantian insight, which he got from Aristotle obviously, that at this moment 40 billion impacts are made upon my sense mechanism providing sensar which, if my rational facilities did not have some way of organizing, I would never have what Kant called knowledge or understanding. It's something like that in the states of being. These are--I want to qualify Kant--the relative socially conditioned categories that organize the billion and one states of being that are constantly attacking your interior deeps which enable you to be present to the states of being. But at the same time they get in the way. The moment that they are organized, then the numinal dimension is reduced into the phenominal in which you were dealing with the real one step removed. And harken well to that, even if you don't understand it. Harken well to it. The states of being that I have, this is but a screen that enables me to be present.

Now I'm coming back at that indirectly, and I'm coming through the state of being that I've lived with for a while now--grief. I like to think that the guy who invented that word was an artist. Grrrrr. Eeeeeee. Ffffff. In a way, that tells all. I'm more and more persuaded that the invention of

JWM - 7

words is the communication of being states. Anyway, you and I, if we work in the Other World, and you understand this perhaps better than I do, are moving from being teachers, though we have to teach, from being prophets, though we have to prophesize, from being priests, though we have to mediate, to being pastors--only, God, that word still dries up my mouth, shepherds, carers. And the reason why pseudo-clerics such as myself in our lifetime got trapped into pastoral counseling in which we used a pseudo-other world to give us our clues to states of being is because we had no chart of the other world. You and I are going to have to be dealing with many states of being. One of them, of course, is grief. This is a tragic world. And I wonder now (I'm 60 years old), I doubt (and this is an exaggeration of course) I doubt if there has been any pastoral ministry in the dimension of grief even one time anywhere in the world since I was born. There may be exceptions but not many. As evidence of that, you'd be surprised at the way clergy and religious people have tried to minister unto me in the last two weeks. About all you can say is thank you and go on. Anyway, you have to begin by recognizing a mistake, and that's crucial. I'll try to do this very briefly, and it's nothing new. It's old. You've known it all a long time.

The first experience, of course, is you're stunned. I was not stunned at my father's death. I cannot remember being stunned ever before. I'm trying to locate this as grief in my life. Now this stunned is first of all your future is cut off. Stunned is not some ethereal word, I mean it's dealing with your guts underneath your guts. When you say your future is severed, that means your life is ^{frozen} through, and it is absolutely frozen and not simply a part of it. That's crucial. There is a total cutting off of your future which is a frozenness. And then there is an experience of being rendered immobile. Everything stops, time dims out, and it is very difficult even to see any movement whatsoever, even a rustling of leaves or the passing of an

JWM - 8

automobile, and you experience this in terms of the flow of time within your mind which is your thought process. While at the same time you become sensitive in an extremely super sense. I do not mean like in other kinds of experiences you've had in the past where your perception or your capacity to see through something is intensified. That's not there at all. But you are aware of every single thing that is happening, and you've got to throw that over against the fact that time in itself has stopped, that some way or another you do not miss a thing. For instance, if you were in the presence of this state of being in somebody else, you had better not go trim your fingernails in public or probe your probosis--it'll be seen. And you'll see in a moment why that is true. But there is no depth perception, there is no seeing through. Quite the contrary. The curtain is down.

Then you are aware of a kind of a thick quietness, a thick silence. And you know that there's noise going on. It's like that would be a fine time to live in Garfield Park along the Expressway on the West Side of Chicago where the noise is always there. You would know it's going on, but you wouldn't hear anything. The silence itself seems utterly objective. And in a strange kind of fashion, then, you are forced to hear everything. You do not miss a thing. But all you experience is silence.

Now I'm going on a little bit with this, but you've got to begin to sense that here you're dealing with a crucial part of our theology that's in RS-1 in the last 20 years. What you are describing here in depth is contingency. Do you grasp that? ~~What~~ But you are describing it now, not through intellectual constructs or concepts, but through the language of state of being. And this is fine and proper. You wouldn't get anybody baptized with RS-1 if you started the way I've started here. This is not for the initiates. It's for your old hands in the way. My theological point here is that, if the job of the serving order is to care for the movement, now you're going to

JWM - 9

be caring for people who have been at it for five years, ten years, fifteen years or more, then you and I have got to learn how to care for them and to care for them in the deeps. Many of them have failed along the way because we did not know how. You don't beat yourself over the head. Only an insincere revolutionary has time to beat himself over the head. What you don't know, you don't know. You give what you have to give, and if later you have more you give more.

Now a second way to run through the state of being of grief is the experience of being empty. And it's a sudden sense of being absolutely drained. The crude illustration that I have is: you've been at some bathtubs, I suppose, not any over on the West Side, where the suction is so great that when you pull out the plug—shhhhh it all goes out at once. It's been a long time since I experienced that, but you're drained out. The bottom falls. Some of you remember in our studying of Tillich early, in the last chapters of Courage to Be, where he deals with spiritual vitality and then relates spiritual and physical vitality. This draining is the draining of spiritual vitality like that, and with it you experience the loss of physical vitality. There is a total evacuation of your universe. You're aware immediately that something is missing, and yet it doesn't come to you as something is missing. It's as if suddenly everything is missing. Like, well you've seen some mystery stories where there was, say, a big furnished room and somebody got killed in it, and you were there, and then you go to the police, and you come back and it's an empty room. Remember some of those mystery stories? It's like you've never seen it before, but you know, you thought you knew, it an hour before, but it's an empty room. I mean your universe is gone. You've got to understand clearly that I am not describing what might happen. I am describing what does happen, or you don't have this state of being. This is not my subjectivity that I'm fooling with in any way whatsoever. Therefore,

JWM - 10

meaninglessness. Now also to direct your attention, but later I want to come back to it, you will begin to see a cloud appear. That's not the cloud of apostasy, the cloud of the desert, the cloud of the darkness which the spirit man ~~lives~~ always lives with. That is not some kind of an ephereal image or idea you have in your head. That's the real stuff. When you bite on it, it says ouch. Adler's concept of the hole at the center of being become-s very real to you in the sense that the ~~wide~~ hole is broadened in such a fashion that it utterly consumes your whole inner being. It becomes like a stovepipe, one of those straight ones, no bottom. Period. It doesn't funnel into a hole. Then this hole seems, you feel it with fascination, as if it's utterly unbridgable. There is no way whatsoever to ever get a bottom. You have to grasp that or you don't get really the straight bottom. Then it is that you become aware of your own fragility. I mean--I like that word. I don't like the words "You become aware of your own death." Of course, you become aware of your own death, but it's far more subtle than that. I've often said many of you, we've got some wild ones in our group who can go off on ~~cloud~~ cloud 9 at the snap of your fingers, but you see all the rest of us can go off on cloud 9 with the snap of our fingers. That's what I mean by fragility. Or ^{some} ~~any~~, under this hardship or that hardship, collapse in the way. You and I have got to remember that we are just as collapsable as the one who stumbled over a daisy and gave up his mission. That kind of fragility is there. It's like you grasp that you could be blown over if somebody stood at the right place and blowed. You experience yourself as that fragile. You're not there. There's nothing to blow over. It's emptied. It's drained. Therefore, a puff could send you.

The other way people in history have talked about this, as you well know, is with the category of weightedness or heaviness. Isn't it funny that when God gives us a chance in our time in history to think through into the deep secrets of the spirit dimension of life--you take that thing I read this

JWM - 11

morning. Oh, wasn't that rich? What I'm trying to say is that, when you think through to the bottom, you begin to grasp the unlogical wisdom that was there in your fathers which you and I lost because our immediate fathers had lost it. When you push through, you begin to see that they knew what they were talking about, and you can find many ~~xxxxxx~~ books on these subjects. Certainly a strange heaviness comes, and it comes just as of immediately. You become aware, I think, that your mind is heavy. It's almost as if you feel your brain is heavy, and then you become aware that your body is heavy, and then unbelievably you become aware that your life is heavy. And I mean heavy. It's like there's no resting place down here. Like in many of the moons you came out the grief-stricken baack man in his seemingly impossible situation in life. You have that deep sense of the burden of life itself. It's like nobody could ever tell you again that life is a ball. The first thing you would say when they said that is bullshit. Then you'd be willing to entertain that. I mean that's what you experience. Life is nothing but sheer burden. Then you are obviously tired beyond anything you could even dream of without a sleepy bone in your body. The same experience of weightedness comes, and you've heard people speak of this, you become suddenly old. At first I thought well that's because I'm 60. Then it got through my skull that it had nothing to do with whether you were 20 or whether you were 60. I felt like I was 100 years old. But so does the 20 years old. He's 100 years old, no more, no less, just 100 years old. Again, you can smell, but only from a distance--it's got nothing to do with age, but only a mature spirit person can begin to smell the grief that is in this. Like earlier when I said you're dealing with contingency, not awareness. I've got to hurry on this.

The other experience of weightedness is everything becomes trivia. Everything becomes trivia. Some people are not bright enough, not to bring up some practical problems, and you know it's not because you have a respect for

JWM - 12

somebody's grief. Horseshit on that. It's not that. It's like if you want any sensible answer, this is not the time to bring up a problem that you've got because this person, it's got nothing to do with intention, he just does not care about anything. You could even come up and say that your wife and 12 children were burnt to death in a fire. He would not care. I'm not talking about what ought to be. I'm just telling you the way it is in this, and you're going to have to minister to people. Then everything becomes raw intentionality. This is a flip. If you decide to move a foot over here, I mean that doesn't just happen. Normally you decide to move a foot over here. You decide to walk into that room. You have to stand there and decide to walk into that room. If you decide to look Pat in the eye, you've got to decide to look Pat in the eye. All of the spontaneity is gone. Life is burden.

I'll go on quickly. Another way people have talked about this is that you experience radical abstraction of yourself. That you experience not being there. I'd better hurry with this. This is what people mean when they say they are out of their mind. They are abstracted from themselves. And yet they experience themselves as being there, but they are not there. It is somebody else that is there where they are. I could fool with that for a long time. While you who are not there are casually observing what is happening to somebody else that is there, this is what I call negative transcendancy in which you are out in front of yourself unintentionally and with unfreedom in utter disrelationship. Now that's just your immediate state of being. But you can't stop there. Because if you stop there, then in the other world it's obvious there are problems. But everybody knows that in the other world there are no problems, no burdens, no hostility. Therefore, you can't stop there because that's just one big mess of problems.

Now I don't quite know how to talk about it, but it's got to do with every state up there. It's like in the midst of this the spirit begins to

JWM - 13

operate. And it's not like it wasn't operating and then it starts. It's like you become aware of the spirit operating. And here is where obviously temptation enters, for what I mean by spirit operating is the same thing as temptation enters. And this is crucial, but I'll have to hurry with it. First of all sets in self-pity. There's a subjective side and an objective side to it. I don't need to spell/out ^{it} in detail, but inside you experience yourself as persecuted. Outside it's whatever reality there is in this world is being unfair. It's asking just one ounce too much. It's the sense that it's got something against you. This isn't good or bad, it's the way it is. I tell you you go through your life, and you think of your wife, you think of your first boy, you think of your second boy, you think of your third boy. And I don't need to spell out these in detail. And then you go into your range of collegiality in history. And then you go in to what your mission has been in history, and you flood it over with self-pity. And no morality here. This is an ontological state of being. And at the moment you don't think this, but later you'll see, only on the other side of what I'm going to talk about in a moment, that this is exactly true of every human being's life. And he's aware of this in the midst of the shock -- everyone. It shows on some people's faces more than it does on others. But here is intensified life has mistreated me. Not her, not him. It has mistreated me. And your being is consumed with self-pity, and you know every ounce of what you're saying is true.

The second thing that happens is what I call flagellation of pride. Some people I suppose who operate on the moral level would think that at times of grief you think of the things that you've done wrong in life. That's not true.