

I

On Taking Care of Yourself

Grace and Peace be unto you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I want to talk about taking care of myself; that is not exactly true. I think I know a great deal about the subject but I still have the problem of believing that it is very difficult to talk about.

For a long time I have believed it is necessary to have crutches—not psychological crutches, but spiritual crutches—in order to make it. And yet, every person must tailor his own, and, indeed, build his own crutches. This is what makes the subject difficult to talk about. Nonetheless, certain general things can be said.

I want to read something from the 10th Chapter of the Gospel of John:

Jesus answered, "Is it not written in your own law, I the Lord God say you are God's?" Those are called God's to whom the word of God was delivered and the scripture cannot be set aside. Why then do you charge me with blasphemy because I, consecrated and sent into the world by my Father, said, "I am God's own son."

For the time being, and a little while longer, no one can take care of me. I have to take care of myself. I would not want to be pressed too hard to substantiate that statement, but that is the way I sense it. And I further sense that while no one can take care of you, you must take care of yourself. For if you do not, you will not be taken care of and then you will be in trouble. I worry more about this than I ever have before because we have become so sophisticated in the realm of the spirit that we are at the point of no return. It is much closer to the surface with us that it was when we were in swaddling clothes. What frightens me most is, it happens so quickly. It's all over. You are gone before you even know what hit you. This is not true for those in swaddling clothes.

Thinking on this subject reminded me of something one of our colleagues said in a speech the other day. He spoke of throwing a stone up into the air and then, before the stone decides to come plummeting back to earth, there seems to be a pause. In my mind, that is an art. The stone does not go straight up and then straight down like in a vacuum. First, there is a pause.

I came upon that realization in 1971 when we first did the Social Process Triangles. We spoke of contradictions within the establishment and protestations against those contradictions and then some of those protests began to weave themselves together to form a trend. That, we said, was how social revolution takes place. Then a series, a body, a collection of those trends, spinning off from the establishment, wind themselves together to form a space platform, or a position from which they can turn about and re-enter the establishment occasioning a radical revolution.

It is like that with us. We shot off into space and then we made the turn. I was reminded today that most of us were created in the 1950's. We were the revolutionaries before the revolution in the 1960's. Even those who were very young in the 1950's were created then. And now we are gone, so to speak. There are no more of us, or by this time, they would have shown up. Maybe they have changed their face. I believe this is a tribute to the Church. The Church created within it the revolutionaries before society belched forth her revolutionaries. Critical as we might be of the Church, I think that is precisely what happened. It is as if we made the turn first.

The image of a rock being thrown into the air and pausing may not be scientifically accurate, but, to my mind, it speaks to our present situation. The rock pauses before it decides to pick up momentum and begin its fall. We have made the turn—very successfully, I might add. And it has not been easy in the last two years. We have lost some. But as a whole, we are pretty fit. We are scarred in ways we were not two years ago, and we're a lot older, but as a whole, we're pretty fit.

Now we are at the moment of pause. We have developed unbelievable skills in the last twenty years in the process of getting off the ground, of getting loose from that which was yesteryear. We are unbelievably disciplined. And in this process, we have developed a corporateness which allowed us to care for and sustain one another in an unbelievable way. That is why we got around the bend in such good condition. We have built disciplinary structures to get us into the establishment—and we have to develop another kind of discipline. This time it must have the quality of a parachute. It has to drag along behind us. I wish I knew what it looked like, but I don't.

The discipline we have already internalized is not quite adequate. Of course, I am always speaking of corporate discipline when I use the word, but what we have is not quite adequate for where we are. We are going to develop disciplines; and, for the moment, I do not mean external structures. We have to readjust, as if we were recovering from "jet lag." This may be crude, but it is like when you travel to a different culture: if you are not careful, your bowels get upset. People who are accustomed to that culture can drink the water and nothing phases them. But not you, not until you adjust.

Well, we are in the midst of a new hunk of bacteria, so to speak, and we are not yet adjusted. No one in this room is strong enough not to take seriously what I am trying to say. On the other hand, I think we will find, in say eighteen months, if we are still standing, that corporateness will care for us and sustain us in ways we never dreamed of in the past. But, in the meanwhile, we had better take care of ourselves.

There is another way I could have introduced this subject: You and I dread, in an unbelievable way, the experience of the self-conscious Dark Night and the self-conscious Long March. If we went out of existence today and were remembered for only one thing, it would be for plotting the Nether-world, the Nether-land. We did that well. And now, the excruciating pain of being our understanding of the Dark Night and the Long March is within us. What we have is in no way whatsoever an intellectual understanding of it. It is as if we now have robed ourselves in it. This is the most solitary of the solitaries. There is no help for anyone in this area. No one can help.

Now, how do you take care of yourself? My mind goes back to an art professor I knew at the University of Texas. He was the first person to get through my skull that there was such a thing as experiencing your experience. Actually, experiencing your experience is the beginning of profound consciousness. What time is it now—2:00? Think of the innumerable happenings, or hunks of life, that have come to you since this day began. How many of them have slipped by and are gone forever because we did not stand at attention before them? That is experiencing your experience, or consciousness about consciousness. To begin to take care of yourself is to take seriously the experiencing of your experiences; that is, taking seriously the fact that you have only one life, and, by God, every second of it is a whole life. It has nothing to do with the relativity within that life—the good and evil or pleasant and unpleasant situations. It's your life. You stand present to every bit of it. You *eat* and *chew* it.

For me, this requires certain oddities. Now this has nothing to do with you, but in my case, I have decided not to tolerate anyone waking me up in the morning. I have, before Being and God and my own existence, decided that I shall take care of getting up every morning. I don't always make it, and it burns me up when I don't make it. And I even appreciate it, on those days, for someone to come by and tell me that Christ is risen all over again and that I have not beaten the Lord up. But I intend those days to be rare. So I get up 30 minutes before I have to get up. That is, I can get myself in barely decent condition to meet my fellow human beings in 15 minutes. So I get up 45 minutes before I have to leave. Why? I want to get myself spiritually dressed, it is quite apparent. For me, taking care of myself is getting myself ready to stand at attention before everything that happens. Why, I would not permit anyone to pass me in the morning without my saying "Hi" to them. Why? Not because someone is walking by me but because that walking by me is *my* life.

I am a terrible speaker. Anyone who dies as thoroughly as I do before he gets up to make a speech has to be a terrible speaker. I almost always finish a talk and go waddling off with my tail between my legs, feeling as if I have been a great failure. That is psychological, and I have ways to handle that. However, most of the time I finish a talk filled with a despair of the spirit. When that happens, I know I better immediately take care of it. Ordinarily, I try to find colleagues to help me. But I am doing the helping, not them. I begin to talk with them a bit.

Last Monday I felt terrible after a talk, thinking I had done an outlandish job. I almost crawled down to my cubicle. Then people began to come around and I began taking care of myself. A young squirt— one of my younger colleagues— came in and he thought I was out for comfort. He thought I wanted someone to say something nice. I did, and I can't deny that because part of the psychological is always going to be there. But I was after more than that. I was trying to get hold of what I was despairing over.

If you don't get hold of what you are despairing over, then, down inside of you, it will begin to eat away at you.

What we need is feedback over and beyond the psychological dimension. If I say to you, "By golly, you look good," never stop there. Have me say what or how you are looking nice, right now.

One of us gave a fine speech the other night and I could see by looking at him that he knew he had done a good job. Still, I wanted to tell him. So I sent spies out to locate him and they found him up in his room all by himself. I don't really know what he was doing, but I believe he was after dealing with his situation. Whether he had a glowing, or a sorrow-filled response, he was in his room taking care of himself. He was doing what we sometimes call unwinding. But is unwinding is the only thing you are doing, then it is not enough.

Those of you who have studied the charting method know that one of its crucial principles is to keep one eye on the paragraph and one eye on your gizzard. When you look at your gizzard, you are after getting hold of your feelings. If your response to a paragraph is "Garbage!". Then throw the book away. Or, if you find yourself going "Boy-oh! Tremendous!" Stop immediately and ask yourself why your heart is going pitter-patter. This is a matter of standing at attention to your own existence.

God did not give you emotions because they tingle you. I don't think God is much interested in tingling. He gave you emotions so you could experience your experience. If I feel terrible, if I feel like a failure, my job as a person, as a self, is to find out why I feel this way.

After I gave that outlandish talk, I got clear on why I thought it was so bad and so I stole away for two hours and rewrote it. And if I gave that talk again this morning, you would really think it was something. If you have a fuss with your husband or your wife, that's a great thing, I suppose. But you want to find out why it happened. And I don't mean why it happened in a psychological sense. To rationalize that "Pappa didn't like him when he was a boy so I have to expect this kind of guff from him" won't help. Because you are not interested in him, you are interested in yourself.

For instance, if you make me angry, it has nothing to do with you. It has to do with me. And if you delight me, that has nothing to do with you. It's my delight. Perhaps I wouldn't have had the delight were it not for you, but, once I have got that delight, it's mine. I have to appropriate it. I have to eat it. I have to grasp it.

And my spiritual ablutions in the morning serve no other purpose than to get me on tiptoe so that when I turn the corner coming down the stairs on the first landing, the people will see a human being coming down the stairs. And when folks see me early in the morning, even though I may not feel very "chipper", they encounter someone strutting like a drum major.

One of our colleagues cornered me in a hotel in Korea because he just had to talk. I didn't have time to talk with him; I have no time to listen to people spill out their spiritual "junk". That is not the way to help people. Anyway, he trapped me and out came all his spiritual junk. After he had said three sentences, he really didn't need to say any more. But because I was a Westerner and he was my host, I sat there and listened, even though I knew exactly what he was going to say—down to the last word. He was spelling out the Dark Night of the Soul to the last jot and tittle, interpreting it as something quite, quite different.

Two days ago, a young lady cornered me and—much as I try to avoid these people, she wouldn't be avoided. She showed up in my cubicle at 5 a.m. She said about

three sentences, but this time, because she was in my house, I interrupted her. I picked up on the three sentences she had said and then just spelled out the whole thing to her. Well, her eyes were popping out. She kept thinking, "How did that old man know all this about me?"

The Dark Night of the Soul. You may think I'm naive, but for the first time I understood how the Starets have their power of seeing through something. They may not use these words to express it, but they understand that every so-called problem anyone ever had—when you peel down its artichoke leaves—is simply the experience of humanness itself—nothing other than the Dark Night of the Soul and the Long March of Care. That is what consciousness is.

I have decided that I am going to pull everything that happens to me through the Dark Night. I remember someone sitting me down in a chair a few years ago and slapping me around until I finally realized that every situation literally is a container of spiritual meaning. If the word "spiritual" is too religious for you, then try "transparent meaning", or the "meaning of pure consciousness itself."

How do you take care of yourself? What if a beloved one dies? I have two choices: either I can respond temporally or I can respond transparently. If one of you doesn't like me, I can respond to that spiritually or I can respond temporally by turning to him and trying to reform him or change myself so that he will like me. Something became very clear to me in the last few weeks. In Joseph Campbell's book on schizophrenia and the spirit, he says that when you enter the Other World, either you learn to swim or become a schizo. No doubt this is true. However, it has occurred to me that even if you can swim, you become a schizo. The only difference is, if you have learned to swim, you're in charge of being a schizo rather than letting it take charge of you.

I always say to myself that I lead a double life. I have this life that has relationships to various human beings; and it is a very, very particular life. But I have another life, the one I look through to the transparent meaning of life. It is a different world entirely. And it isn't hard to see how one can be tempted to float off into that world—and you can't even see it. You never finally succeed unless you die as a self, to be sure, because the Other World only exists in this World—but it's another world. And it's not particular; it's universal.

That statement is not an abstract Platonism. It is an empirical statement in the sense that what does not change is the Dark Night of the Soul. In the Other World, I do not have to wait for humiliation, weakness, resentment or suffering. I do not have to wait for dislocation, burned-outness, ineffectivity or unfulfillment. They are all there. If I was at all adequate in articulating this, you would hear what you heard your father's father's father say: You can't touch him. Not even the death of a beloved one can destroy you.

There are times when I would like to be 6-foot-7. I like tall women and tall men because by standing tall, you have the secret of the Dark Night and the Long March. If one becomes his weakness and becomes his humiliation and becomes his dislocation, how could any weakness get to him? I am talking about a man who has become his own

man, one who is taking care of himself. Wouldn't it be funny if the next time your spouse beat you up that you interpreted that fight in its transparentization rather than through the obvious fact that he is a louse? I'm talking about taking care of yourself.

The next thing I want to point to has to do with meditation. Picture the Religious Mode. If you think of one side you have engagement, the intensification of deed and prayer. That is action in the world. On the other side, you have detachment, the intensified word, and meditation. These three things have to do with taking care of yourself so that you can engage yourself unlimitedly. If you don't learn to be a detached human being, you are lost. You must clearly participate in each situation without losing your soul to any situation. This is done by exercises in meditation.

What is meditation? I call it grounding myself in history. I take extremely seriously what I relate myself to in history. I feel that if I would go for one second without knowing myself in relationship to history then I would disappear in a puff of smoke. If I lost for one moment a functional image of myself—and that's not easy—I'd be lost. This also has to do with the interior council. You don't have Amos on the council because he was a nice guy or Luther because he was fat. You use your council to ground yourself, to give yourself a place to stand that will enable you to detach yourself. If I didn't grasp that I was marching with the League, with the community of saints, I could not endure the profundity of consciousness I have. I would have no choice but suicide.

It's as if you have to learn to read the Scriptures without reading them.

This is meditation and without it you have no place to stand for the detachment that is necessary to stand at attention to your life in every situation.

My last point has to do with describing what in one sense is nothing but trusting Being, trusting God. We have no choice whatsoever about God's sovereignty over our lives. No matter who you are or what you believe, we are all under his sovereign rule. It's always true that "if today you sow the wind, you reap the whirlwind," for the sovereignty of God never changes. But you decide about God's care for you; God will rule whether you ask him to or not. If you want Being to take care of you, then you decide you've got to ask for it. You have to give yourself into the hands of Being.

Lots of things have hurt me. One time someone said something to me that implied God didn't know what he was doing. A volcano exploded in me and it wasn't until sometime after that happened that I realized why I responded like I did. That statement flagrantly violated my understanding of what it meant to trust Being. Every situation—not all minus one— but every situation (for one who has asked Being to take care of him) every situation becomes Being taking care of you—even unto death itself.

And when you hear that song "God Will Take Care of You," remember that he'll not do it unless you ask. And that is done by standing on tiptoe—at every situation and in every life circumstance.

In the next few months, you have to take care of yourself spiritually. And you only take care of yourself because you're needed to care for the world. There is no tragedy in all of those colleagues of ours who took their two bags and ran. The tragedy is that the world is in such dire need of those who universally care, even unto their own death.

II

The Substance of Taking Care of Yourself

Do you find that the Bible is coming alive in a new way? It has already come alive to anybody in this room, or we would not be here. But isn't the Bible coming alive even in a new way? If there were a rule that I had to read the Bible, it would turn to dust. The same thing would happen if I read it because somebody said that at 5:00 or 6:00 I had to read it. But, these days, I like to have the Bible close by.

Let your bearing toward one another arise out of your life in Christ Jesus, for the divine nature was his from the first: yet he did not think to snatch at equality with God, but made himself nothing, assuming the nature of a slave. Bearing the human likeness, revealed in human shape, he humbled himself, and in obedience accepted even death—death on a cross. Therefore God raised him to the heights and bestowed on him the name above all names, that at that name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven, on earth and in the depths, and every tongue confess, "Jesus Christ is Lord," to the glory of God the Father.

So you too, my friends, must be obedient. . . you must work out your own salvation in fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you, inspiring both the will and the deed for his own chosen purpose.

(Philippians 2)

I am going to read you a poem. It was written by one of your colleagues. Each one of you should have a copy. I hope you take it home with you.

Life is so painful
so overfull these days
truly—they are the last
aren't they—

The days of your life
are always the last days.
There are no other days
no other days
to be angry

to be a Fighter for the Faith
to loath injustice
and to burn the laws that oppress
rather than give freedom.

Life is joyfilled and
endlessly caring these days
these last days of your life
aren't they—

There is no other time
to be caring
to be with your whole life
the compassionate lover
of the world that you are.

I don't mean to be impertinent to the artist by commenting on that poem, but I do want to say that whenever the church has been alive she has declared to the world: "These are the last days." For the first time in my life that makes sense. For anybody who is alive, these days are our last days.

I want to continue talking about taking care of yourself. If you have not been catapulted into the profound depths of consciousness, you do not have to talk about taking care of yourself. The normal structures of society take care of you pretty well. Once in a while somebody flips out of them and has to receive special treatment; most of us make it to the grave. But once the deeps of consciousness have opened up, and you have dared to walk into those portals of consciousness until the day you die, you are vulnerable in a way that you cannot even describe. You had better take care of yourself.

When I think of taking care of yourself, my mind goes to standing at attention to life. Taking care of yourself is finding the means by which you stand at attention.

I feel as if I have dug through twenty miles of the rubbish that has been piled upon religious exercises through the centuries. But I finally got down to the secret of it all: it is to *experience your experience*. That is underneath all the wisdom and insight about the devotional life. Taking care of yourself begins with standing at attention, and that involves at least four things.

The first of them is checking on your spiritual attire; that begins in the morning. I should think that the thing you would fear most would be appearing spiritually nude at any time. I remember a great phrase from the Christian milieu in which I grew up: "Don't ever be caught anywhere you would not want to be if Jesus were to come." If you could take some lye and a brush and scrub all of the crusty moralism off that phrase, you would get down to something absolutely essential. I do not intend to be caught spiritually nude ever again.

The second thing that is involved in standing at attention is the *external environment*. I would not dwell my days anywhere else than in a place where I chose

what I would be unconsciously addressed by. I might make terrible mistakes, but I would not choose to expose myself to any environment which did not address my profound understanding of my own selfhood.

The third thing is what I call the *crutches of integrity*. Integrity is not a simple thing. Of all the agony that we go through, deciding our integrity is the hardest. One of the crutches of integrity is humor, being able to laugh at yourself and knowing when you have to get other people to laugh at you.

The last thing that has to do with standing at attention is after-brooding. I cannot tolerate anger in myself. I do not go around trying not to get angry; that would be oldmood virtue. You could spend your whole life trying not to be this or that. But I cannot stand myself when I get angry. I hate myself for days at a time.

When I get angry, I try to stop myself immediately. And then I try to remember the point before which I was not angry, and after which I was angry. Then I start pushing, and the moment I begin to grasp why I am angry, then I forget the whole thing. There is no sense of guilt; that is not what I am after in doing this. I am trying to spot what I am angry about. You know that you are never angry about what you think you are angry about. When I have located the real reason for my anger, then I can deal with it. After-brooding is dealing with your responses to life.

The second arena of taking care of yourself is to grasp the substance of it. That substance is the Dark Night of the Soul.

You do not take care of yourself in a vacuum; there is content and it is strange. The content of taking care of yourself is the intensification of the Dark Night of the Soul and the Long March of Love.

The interior dynamics of belief and trust and certitude are, phenomenologically, the awarenesses of humiliation and of weakness and of resentment. I wish somebody years ago had been able to help me understand that this resentment is the fight of God itself. It is not some violation of a moral principle that has nothing to do with my life. How many times, even this morning, I resent, I resent. The last awareness is suffering. I like to call it "salvific suffering".

In the Long March, which is the Dark Night looking outward rather than inward, you grasp that, in the profound depths of consciousness, there is only dislocation. You have read about people of the 1960's being dislocated. I understand that. But it has taken me a long time to see that profound consciousness is always dislocated. There is no home. I am a stranger here. And, in the depths of profound consciousness, life is always a sense of ineffectivity. In these depths, life comes always as depletion, wornout-ness, expendedness. Finally, life always comes as salvific unfulfillment.

The categories of the dynamics of hope are the intensification of these. The intensification of the first set of these categories is what I call *ghostliness*. Everything becomes sheer mystery as the contingency that is humiliation intensifies and the contingency of rootlessness intensifies. Never again are you clear about anything. Never again are you clear that you are right. Never again are you clear about any idea, any concept. There is no ground. All is sheer mystery. Ghostliness—the strange presence, which is forever incomprehensible, consumes your being.

The second category is the intensification of weakness and ineffectivity. It is the experience of *ceaselessness*. It is as if you were on a treadmill. Never again will you have the experience of going anywhere. You experience ceaselessness when you become aware that, after having given your whole life to alleviate the suffering of mankind, when you die there will be just as much human suffering as if you had never lived. So it shall ever be until God rolls up the pathway of Creation itself.

You know how every few days you say, "When I get this done things will be different. Surely they cannot continue this way." That may be true for some people, but not for a man of profound consciousness, not for a man of the spirit, not for a man who has put all of his life on the line. That man experiences the eternity of ceaselessness, and it just about drives him crazy. But unless you have that experience, you know nothing about the profundity of consciousness itself.

The third category is called *nothingness*. This is the intensification of resentment and the intensification of expenditure. You experience yourself as simply not there anymore. I do not mean that as some moralistic, altruistic concept. Quite the opposite! It is a horrible experience to experience yourself just not there anymore, that your relationships are there, but you are not. Then it is that you understand, in a way that profoundly frightens you, that resentment is born out of a sense that you have become the doormat of God himself. When you are filled with resentment toward me, that resentment is not located in me. You can put that in untheological language! Being uses being. That is our life.

The last category, the intensification of salvific suffering and salvific unfulfillment, is *salvific presentness*. It is as if you are not there anymore; Being takes you over and you become the presence of Being in the world. Perhaps you smile when you sing the hymn, "Make me a captive, Lord, and then I shall be free." But remember, you are a captive.

I do not think the church helped me when I was young to see the dread of that which fascinated me, the terror of that which was my glory. I am no longer my own man in any way whatsoever. Whenever you see me strive to be my own man, then you have a clue to the fact that I am not my own man. I am free only in total and abject surrender to Being itself, so that my presence is never again my presence, but only the presence of Being itself.

I am describing the dynamics of hope. And perhaps, after all, you did not want hope as much as you thought you wanted hope. I mean the hope that doth not let you down. I mean the hope that is beyond hope. The hope that is over against your hope. What I have just described is the substance of taking care of yourself.

A few days ago, a young lass came in at 5 o'clock in the morning, sat down and began to talk. Only three sentences had poured out before I saw, clearly, that she had a dose of the Dark Night of the Soul. So I said, "You do not have to say any more". I began to tell her what she had come to tell me. Her head started to nod and I could almost hear her saying to herself, "How in the world does he know exactly what has been going on in me?" The point is that underneath all human illness is The Dark Night of the Soul—not underneath some, but *all* human illness—the Dark Night of the Soul.

Now I understand how the Starets developed the capacity to see through a situation before anything was ever mentioned. In 20 or 40 years in the desert, they developed a discipline that enabled them to understand and to embrace the profundity of consciousness itself. Before someone opens his mouth, you know what is underneath his words. You know that if you had time enough to sit there and pull the leaves of the artichoke aside, you would get back to the same heart. Today's new transcultural human being is discovering the essence of man all over again. And the essence of man—that which we all hold in common— is the Dark Night of the Soul.

You think that you have a problem with your wife? You think that you have a problem with your Prior? You think that you have a problem with some other culture? You think that you have a problem with your assignment? Underneath all of them—the Dark Night of the Soul.

I meet you again and again, and I have this tragedy and I have this glory, and yet more and more it is as if you are not there. Only the Mystery that I encounter in you, (and I could not encounter it except in you) is before me. Before that Mystery there is only humiliation and weakness and resentment and suffering and rootlessness and ineffectivity and expenditure and unfulfillment. Only in the midst of this, only here, nowhere else, are you aware that the heavens open and the voice cries out, "Thou art my beloved son." It is only there that the heavens break loose and you hear the voice, "Blessed art thou."

Taking care of yourself is seeing to it that you do not experience these dynamics one by one but all at once, in every situation. How could you get to me, if I had already eaten my weakness? And eaten my humiliation? And eaten the fact that there is no home for me anymore, save Heaven itself? I am talking about being your own man. I am talking about being a man of the spirit. I am talking about being a man of faith. I am talking about being a Son of God. I am talking about working out your salvation in fear and trembling, knowing that Being itself is depending on you.

My Lord Jesus, before life had a chance to humiliate him, *humbled himself* and found in that humiliation the pride of being God's Son. It is being hurled back on the Word: My life is approved.

"Attention! Here and now! Here and now!" It is being a man of the profound deeps in every situation, for the rest of your life to the glory of God. And do not forget the rest of us. If you do not care for yourself, if you collapse, we have to carry the whole load.

III

Meditation As Taking Care of Yourself

The Yogin and the Stoic, two righteous egos who achieve their very considerable results by pretending, systematically, to be somebody else. But is it not by pretending to be somebody else, even somebody supremely good and wise, that we can pass from insulated Manicheehood to Good Being.

I just discovered that the word "whole" stems from "holy." More important, "health" comes from the word "holy." I like the term "good being." Taking care of yourself is to maintain good being, good presence.

Good Being is knowing who in fact we are; and in order to know who in fact we are, we must first know, moment by moment, who we think we are and what this bad habit of thought compels us to feel and do. A moment of clear and complete knowledge of what we think we are, but in fact are not, puts a stop, for the moment, to the Manicheean charade. If we renew, until they become a continuity, these moments of knowledge of what we are not, we may find ourselves all of a sudden, knowing who in fact we are.

Concentration, abstract thinking, spiritual exercises—systematic exclusions in the realm of thought. Asceticism and hedonism—systematic exclusions in the realms of sensation, feeling and action. But Good Being is in the knowledge of who in fact one is in relation to *all* experiences. So be aware in every context, at all times and whatever, creditable or discreditable, pleasant or unpleasant, you may be doing or suffering. This is the only genuine yoga, the only spiritual exercise worth practicing.

That is from Huxley's *Island*.

I was going to work on the gospel of John. If I had not contained myself I would have hastened to chapters 14, 15, 16 and 17. A little while ago I had the experience of reading it to myself, and I became aware of the fact that although I did not have the slightest idea what it was talking about, I was deeply addressed by it.

Set your troubled hearts at rest. Trust in God always; trust also in me. There are many dwelling-places in my Father's house; if it were not so I would have told you; for I am going there on purpose to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also; and my way there is known to you. Thomas said, "Lord, we do not know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" Jesus replied, "I am the way; I am the truth and I am life. . ."

"If you knew me you would know my Father too. From now on you do know him; you have seen him." Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father and we ask no more." Jesus answered, "Have I been all this time with you and you still do not know me? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. Then how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? I am not myself the source of the words I speak to you; it is the Father who dwells in me doing his own work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father in me; or else accept the evidence of the deeds themselves. In truth, in very truth, I tell you, he who has faith in me will do what I am doing; and he will do greater things still because I am going to the Father. Indeed anything you ask in my name I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it."

I have had fun looking at my notes on Meditation we developed five years ago. I was pleased with how good it was. The titles interest me; in those days we were more "smart-alec" than we are now.

Remember, point one—Meditation is Inherent Community; point two—Meditation is Pristine Dialogue; number three—Meditation is Fanatical Discipline; point four—Meditation is Destinal Armageddon. That must have been good!

Of course, that is not what I want to talk about. I am just assuming what we said then. I think we were right, as we struggled in those days, to try to ground Meditation in humanness, to say that Meditation was an ontological reality. We were right, I think, to see that Meditation is fundamentally the internalization of the community before whom we experience approbation and disapprobation, with whom we dialogue about relating ourselves to our relationship to the situation. It is precisely at this point where, to use ancient Persian imagery, Satan always attacks. Meditation has to do with Satan because Satan has to do with that relationship to our relationships. Meditation has to do with grounding.

In terms of taking care of yourself, we have talked about experiencing your experience in the profound sense. By that I mean, if my wife gets angry with me and I get upset, taking care of yourself has nothing to do with your getting upset. It does not even have anything to do with whether or not you hit her or she hits you. I said yesterday that I experienced myself as schizophrenic, living in two worlds. I literally experience the Other World in the midst of this world. To be present, to stand at attention to your experience in the profound sense means that you have to go through your wife's being angry with you to the meaning of the situation and relate to it. When you see that, you understand that anything which you and I usually call external to ourselves has nothing to do with being in Good Being or Bad Being. You never collapse because something external happened to you. You only collapse in relationship to that other relationship. To put it in secular language, you only collapse when you get in disrelationship with consciousness. External happenings have nothing to do with my consciousness. Whether or not you like me has nothing to do with my consciousness nor does whether or not I like myself. When you begin to see what I am talking about, you become aware that you have no excuses ever again. You have nothing to blame anything on.

When you experience your profound experience, all of us are in exactly the same boat. All my life I have been wanting to say, "You are no different than I am, and I am no different than you are!" This is on the level of profound consciousness. What you are experiencing is *Humiliation*: You may have thought that you were unique in this; *Weakness*: And you thought that you were the only weak one; *Resentment*: In Sunday School they told you that you should not resent things and all your life you have resented every day; and *Suffering*: You have no object of suffering, you are just suffering.

I know also, about this sense of not having any home. After you have been married for years, you might have expected that you would be settled down and at home, but it has not happened. You people who lose your nerve think that the rest of us have found a home. Isn't that true? This is just as true for other categories of the Long March of Care. Although life does not seem stale to me, there is a sameness. I have not had a different experience for as long as I can remember. I am always trying to pick up my humiliation and my weakness, my resentment and my suffering. In the deeps of consciousness, that is the way it is.

What do you do? You can see the relationship of detachment to meditation. If you cannot detach yourself, you cannot meditate, and you can see the relationship in its intensification, which is knowing. When you push knowing to the bottom, all you have is the Word. In prayer you utter, and in contemplation you write. Actually, in prayer you do not utter; prayer is the utterance before the utterance, and in contemplation, the writing is before the writing.

I am not much of a poet, but once I tried to say something poetically about a sunset. The writing before the writing are the images that come to you, without which there is no beautiful sunset. Without those images, you have nothing to do your poetry with. That is contemplation.

Meditation is not utterance and it is not writing; it is reading. It is the reading before the reading. I do not want you to tell me to read a chapter of the Bible every day. I am not against doing that, but I am opposed to doing it as some kind of old piety. The reading before the reading would not have to be the Bible. In principle, it could be anything. Someone told me this morning that it could be a science fiction book or a light novel. I am not opposed to that; I believe in it. However, I think that because of the fact that society has put the Bible aside and put a seal on it means the Bible is absolutely crucial for this reading before the reading.

Just yesterday the 40th chapter of Exodus came to my mind. I read again about how the temple was completed and then was filled with the *doxa*. Another time recently I read Joshua's valedictory speech. Those are meditation. It does not have much to do with rushing off and reading something. It is a dialogue with my being.

I am not going into the council which is in your minds, but you must remember it. You do not dialogue outside of that council, in principle, even if you are reading a book by an author you never heard of.

If this ministers unto you in terms of what I mean by the exercise of meditation, it is screened through that council. These readings that occur to me from time to time keep me grounded. If I lose my ground, I am utterly vulnerable.

I see my ground in three different ways. In the early days every year, often more frequently than that, we would go back in history and get ourselves grounded concretely in history. We would relate ourselves to historical thrusts, to keep our feet on the ground to know who we are. That kind of grounding is crucial. Once you lose your sense of being anchored in remembered history, you are vulnerable to any kind of attack. Your ground, finally, of course, is in the communion of saints. You do not have to use Christian language for that; its equivalent is found in every culture. For our Order, it is the People of God.

The second way you have to be grounded is in humanness. I experience myself as grounded constantly in humanness only as the historical one. It is harder these days to talk about the grounding in history than it was. Right now there is a kind of clarity relative to my grounding in humanness that I never dreamed was even possible. That is because of the Other World chart and our work on the Dark Night of the Soul. The moment that I lose awareness of the fact that the Dark Night of the Soul is the situation of consciousness itself, I am lost.

The third way that I have to keep myself grounded is in Being itself. This is a little more difficult for me to talk about than it was 20 years ago, when all we knew was the decisional dimension of selfhood, that each of us was responsible for deciding who we were. These days I experience myself as captivated by unknowable forces that do my selfhood deciding for me. That is what I mean by Hope appeareth. I am trying to confess to you that every time I take two steps I do not have to decide all over again that I am a believer. I stumble upon myself constantly being a believer. That does not take away the decisional dimension.

Now, what is Meditation? Seen functionally, Meditation is that reading before the reading which defends and protects my honor, my profound integrity. I do not mean

my moral integrity, I mean my *profound integrity*. I mean not my being a believer, but my *being* a believer, that I *be* the presence, that I *be* my trust, that I *be* my concern, I be my power, I be my vocation, I be my peace, I be my certitude, I be my joy unspeakable which is filled with glory. This is what Meditation is.

One of the reasons why I finally dropped Ignatius temporarily is that I did my best to transpose his emphasis upon sin into the post-modern world. I could not find a way to do it, so I dropped it. Meditation is not contemplating sin. As a matter of fact, when you are looking directly at sin, or for sin, you could no more find it than you could find the proverbial needle in a haystack. Your own sin is *disclosed* to you, and the best you can do is to see it out of the corner of your eye. Otherwise you do not see *sin*, you see this false image of yourself that I read about out of that book. In Meditation you are not looking for your sin anyway. When this reading before the reading happens to you, it usually is in the inverse of this sin. It usually jars Good Being into your consciousness. It jars your integrity or your honor. It pushes you back again to the Word.

This is the point where Satan enters. The only way that, in our day, we can deal with the category of sin concretely is to understand that sin has to do with being depth consciousness. Sin is the refusal to be consciousness. It is your rebellion against who you actually are; a contingency, a humiliable entity, a weakable entity. To use theological language, sin is only rebellion against God. And that happens when you refuse the resentment you are, when you refuse the suffering you are, when you say, "I have had enough of this," which means, "I am going to do my best to get myself out of the profound depths of consciousness. I have had enough of it." The tragedy is that once you get that mud on your feet you never get it off. If you have actually fallen into the depth, all that you have ahead of you if you flee from the deeps of profound consciousness is zombieism. Sin is the refusal of being unfulfilled. It is the refusal to endure drained-out-ness. It is the refusal to not have hope in temporality. Do you see that this is precisely the point and the only point where, to use the images of the Persians, Satan attacks?

Meditation is not something you go aside for an hour a day to do. I am extremely suspicious of that. Meditation goes on constantly. This is the constant brooding. There is not a soul in this room who is not grateful for every Bible verse that his parents and his Sunday School teacher forced him to learn. There is not a soul in this room who is not grateful for every adage. My Latin is bad, but my Papa used to make me go to the board and write over and over again, *Labor omnia vincet*.

I am talking about Meditation; I am talking about brooding. I am talking about the glory of having to live with terrible people like you. Why, you are the stuff of Meditation! You do not have to be good, you do not have to live up to all of my expectations or all of your own to supply me with the material of my reading before I read. My wife said that the walk I did up here the other day was not too good. I appreciate that kind of comment. It is the stuff of Meditation. Finally, Meditation is that going-on-ness with whatsoever council you have that enables you, when you are absolutely collapsed into a heap of shaking palsy, to pick yourself up and walk tall. This means that Meditation is the continuing of the profound decision to live life in profound consciousness.

IV

God Will Take Care of You

I am reading from the tenth chapter of John:

It was winter, and the festival of the Dedication was being held in Jerusalem. Jesus was walking in the temple precincts, in Solomon's Cloister. The Jews gathered round him and asked: 'How long must you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah say so plainly.' 'I have told you,' said Jesus, 'but you do not believe. My deeds done in my Father's name are my credentials, but because you are not sheep of my flock you do not believe. My own sheep listen to my voice; I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall never perish; no one shall snatch them from my care. My Father who has given them to me is greater than all, and no one can snatch them out of the Father's care. My Father and I are one.'

Once again the Jews picked up stones to stone him. At this Jesus said to them, 'I have set before you many good deeds, done by my Father's power; for which of these would you stone me?' The Jews replied, 'We are not going to stone you for any good deed, but for your blasphemy. You, a mere man, claim to be a god.' Jesus answered, 'Is it not written in your own Law, "I said: You are gods"? Those are called gods to whom the word of God was delivered—and Scripture cannot be set aside. Then why do you charge me with blasphemy because I, consecrated and sent into the world by the Father, said, "I am God's son"?'

Now, I have tried to say four things: first, taking care of yourself means you experience your experience. My father was a nut on chewing your food. He would sit there and almost count the times we had to chew before we swallowed. It burnt me up as a kid. That came back to my mind last night as I was thinking about experiencing your experience. I think my father wanted cows and he got kids. Second, taking care of yourself has to do with the Dark Night of the Soul, and third it has to do with meditation, and fourth, it has to do with the whole idea of God taking care of you. But, I am not flowing; I am not going anywhere. I am saying the same thing each way.

Standing at attention to your life is something you do not like to do. The bottom of that is the Dark Night of the Soul. Standing at attention is the triggering of what I mean by meditation. And meditation has nothing to meditate on except the Dark Night of the Soul. Whatever machinery it uses, standing at attention to the Dark Night of the Soul is meditation. I want to put it that strongly. And the stirring of the waters of the Dark Night of the Soul is Being's care for Being. That is what I want to talk about for a little bit.

Now, the first thing I want to call attention to is that God is the sovereign of your life. You have no choice about that. That is a faith statement. But now I will change it. There is a sovereign that is unsynonymous with any activity initiated by the subject: that is the absolute sovereign. Now, when you say "God," that is a faith statement. You do not experience it as God who is your sovereign in the raw experience of the fact that you are not running your life. Now, usually, a word that is a nice easy word to use is "faith". But the trouble is we are so trained in abstraction that we think of faith as a philosophical principle rather than a reality that we are phenomenologically aware of. Even when I say, "I showed up a man rather than a woman", I tend to think of being yanked out of my Mama's womb and coming out male rather than female. That is a subtle form of abstraction to the degree that I really experience myself limited in a concrete situation by being male. At that point I am experiencing the over-againstness that I am trying to talk about as sovereign. Male is just one thing. I could go on with the fact that I am 64, I am not 24. These days every time I come upon myself, I am nearing 64.

Now, maybe this is a better way of coming at it. I go around filled with resentment all the time. When I peel back the artichoke and get at the core, I find that resentment is to the volitional aspect of my being as absurdity is to the intellectual dynamic of my being. For instance, I am always out to do something and as yet nothing has come off the way I have set out to do it. Do you understand what I am talking about? There is a factor in every situation that is unsynonymous with my own volition that enters in between my deed and the consequences thereof. And that entree remains unfathomably mysterious. It is the enigmatic power. Now, when I say that resentment is the conative equivalent to absurdity why, you can understand resentment! Here I am a being with consciousness and therefore creativity, and in every, not every other, situation, it is thwarted. And finally, I die and nobody asks me. This is what I mean by the experience of a sovereign power. And of course you and every man, whether he knows it or not, sooner or later, has to say before that one "Faith" or "Father" or the equivalent poetry thereof. Now, about this you have no choice. I speak from "Faith". God is your sovereign and God is my sovereign.

This is point three. People ask these days, "What does it mean to trust?" What does it mean to trust God? I am talking about taking care of yourself. Whatsoever else it means, it means that you self-consciously in every given situation acknowledge, God's sovereignty. We were in a group of people four months after my son, John, died, and someone made a statement that made me feel that John ought not to have died. I cannot describe the explosion that went off in me! It took me a long time to know

something about it, but do you know what the explosion was? I went through hell to maintain the faith posture that I was not simply the subject of fate but my Father was my father. Do you hear what I am talking about? I believe that when you understand the sovereignty of God you never again have any excuse about anything. I am talking about trusting God, not in some abstract theology, but in the concretion of your life. If you can ever blame any situation on anything, then you are not hearing what I mean by trusting God. I am talking about taking care of yourself. You get up one morning and you forget, and you say, "This is a hell of a day." That is sacrilege. That is untrust of God. This is the day God gave you. You let go one day, and you will not notice it, but the next day when you get up you are exactly that much shorter than you were the day before. You do it two days in a row and you are that much shorter. You do it three in a row, and then pretty soon you are there like a heap of shaking palsy collapsed in life. You let one go and the trouble has started. I could go on with that, I won't.

Oh, I have to tell this on myself. Someone once told me that I was the kind of guy who shot and killed the bearer of bad news. Just imagine the general who is fighting a war and his whole right flank has collapsed. If he does not do something about it, everything is gone, but he shoots the guy who brought the news, because it is bad news! And then a few days ago I read in history that in the old days generals did precisely that; they shot the bearer of bad news. I suppose that is where the saying came from originally. Well, you know that is not entirely true about me, but he has a point, as some of you have learned. Anybody is welcome in my cubicle as long as they have good news. Well, so that my boasting will be tempered, to the degree that he is right or in that situation where he is right, that is what I mean by lack of trust in God. Then it is that your caring for yourself is in bad shape.

Now what do you mean when you say God cares for you? To get this in secular language so you will not think it is some religion stuck in here, Being cares for Being. Now, you have noted Being could care less about deeds and could care less about knowledge. Have you noticed that? Evidence of it is that the edges of the pyramids are beginning to round off. Every deed passes away. Or, maybe the best evidence is this find body I have, which is my deed. One of these days they are going to stick it in a 6foot hole and then finally it will not be there anymore. Now what is my being? I do not want to deal with it in abstract philosophy, but in concrete experience. The way I experience my being is to know my knowing and to do my doing. Do you grasp that? When somebody says, now empirically what are you pointing to when you are talking about your being? I am talking about the experience of the intensification of knowing and the intensification of doing, more concretely, of my knowing and my doing. And, by "knowing my knowing", I mean standing present to my knowing. I mean being in the sense of expression, in the sense of manifestation, in the sense of presencing in whatever form, my knowing. I used to sometimes say to a colleague, "You and I must do something." Then the night before we would sit down and make a model and then lay it aside and the next night make another one. What you make models for is to bring them into being, and the way you bring them into being is to appropriate them in your being. That is knowing your knowing. This is why abstract thinking of any kind

whatsoever is finally naught. This is what the existential dynamic of our time has taught us all. This is my being. Knowing my knowing. Almost like eating my knowing. I do not want an idea that I am not. This is what I mean by integrity.

Secondly, being does not care anything about your doing. Somebody asks you now what do you mean? My way of knowing my knowing is doing my doing. In some ways that is a little harder to get said, but in another way it is not. It is the difference between doing a job and sticking the one God-given life you have even into washing a white linen handkerchief. The cross is not something that happened two thousand years ago. It is at the heart of Being itself when you stick your life, the one life you have, which means stick your death into the least of all deeds. That is your being, that is doing your doig. Now, what I am trying to say is Being takes care of being. This is what I mean by endlessness. You know your knowing and you do your doing. . . What does it mean to take care of yourself? Very simple! You know your knowing and do your doing and Being always takes care of being.

My last point has to do with this thing I read. I have been taught in theology that I studied and probably by preachers long before that Jesus never said he was the Son of God. I have come back to that tenth chapter over and over again. The thing that shocks me is that he did make that claim. The fact that he grounded it in the Scripture is beside the point at the moment. That was strategy. No, it was not, it was saying, "Why aren't you saying the same thing?" That is more than strategy. He stood up, "I am the son of God". It was the tenth chapter that rocked me into seeing that precisely in the aliveness of the Dark Night of the Soul, precisely there and only there one hears the heavens open and the voice saying "Thou art my beloved son". But the Jews could not hear that day what Jesus had heard as he said "I am the son. I am the son of God." What does it mean to take care of yourself? You cannot divorce it from standing at attention to life. It would not even dawn on you to say "I am God's son". If the meditation were not happening symbolically with the council that is internalized in yourself, you would never agree or dare. If you were not taking into yourself the humiliation and the weakness and the resentment and the suffering and the dislocation and the sense of ineffectivity and expenditure and unfulfillment, you could not even dream of making such a statement. I wish for one second I were not quite so fat and not quite so short. I would like to stand tall before you. I am God's son. It is like in Faust, the broken sword picked up with the hilt showing, there is the cross and Satan flees. I am proud, as I hope you are proud, this day and every day to be a son of God. I hope always when I feel the pressures that I will not forget to throw my shoulders back. I hope I do it so you can see it. I am a son of God. I am not what you think I am. I am not what I think I am. I am not what anybody thinks I am. I am what God thinks I am, therefore I say, I am a son of God. Take care of yourself.

V

On Being A Son of God

"A little while and you will see me no more. Again a little while and you will see me." Some of his disciples said to one another, "What does he mean by this 'a little while and you'll not see me and again a little while and you will see me?' And, what does he mean by this 'because I am going to my Father?'" And, so they spoke right up. "What is this 'a little while'? We do not know what it means." Jesus knew all along that they were wanting to ask him about this. "So, you are discussing what I said— a little while and you will not see me and again a little while and you will see me. In very truth I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world will be glad, but though you will be plunged into grief, your grief will become joy. The woman in labor is in pain because her time is come, but if the child is born she forgets the anguish in her joy that a child has been born into the world. So it is with you, you are sad of heart, but you shall see again and then you will be joyful and no one shall ever rob you of that joy. When that day comes you will ask nothing of me. In very truth I tell you that if you ask the Father for anything in my name He will give it to you. Up to now you have not asked a single thing in my name. But now, ask and you shall receive that this joy of yours may be complete. Until now I have been using figures of speech; a time is coming when I shall no longer use figures of speech but tell you the Father in plain words."
(John 16)

I want to do two things. I will try to draw together a clear statement of the four things I have talked about, and then I want to outline what I meant to point to in taking care of yourself.

Taking care of yourself is to discipline yourself constantly to experience your experience by standing at attention in every here and now. For a long time I spoke about the internalization of discipline. I do not believe that a person can discipline himself alone. This group fundamentally is corporate, but you can internalize the corporateness of that discipline, which is really one way of talking about a council.

Secondly, taking care of yourself is to discipline yourself constantly to participate in the double reflection that is meditation. Then third, taking care of yourself is to

discipline yourself constantly to appropriate the double paradox that depth consciousness is, or the interior dynamics of faith, hope and love, or the Dark Night and the Long March. You may think it strange, but if you took out of me the poetry we call the Dark Night of the Soul and the Long March, I feel as if I would suddenly disappear. The experience of resentment, suffering, humiliation and depletion is the experience of all these states occurring at the same time. The whole experience of the Dark Night of the Soul and the Long March happens simultaneously and in every second. The impact is similar to the wisdom of those words, "If you see the face of God, you die." I am trying to communicate what I mean by discipline as over against the bootstrap business. Discipline becomes an indicative. Taking care of yourself is to discipline yourself constantly to surrender into Being's care for Being. I like the phrase, "leaning on the everlasting arms." I do not know what language you like. These days it is as though we were children discovering again the awareness of profound consciousness. It is as though we are participants, like Kazantzakis, in the first scream of the ape towards consciousness.

Now, let me speak on meditation. Meditation has to do with the role I consciously play in taking care of myself. I have not stated that clearly. It has to do with the solitary offices that we have worked on for years. Meditation only takes place in a concrete situation. That is to say, only when you get the tragic news that four young people you care about are suffering does meditation take place. Only when you are walking up and down before the assignment board not knowing what to do does meditation take place. A situation that pries loose profundity of consciousness itself occasions meditation. You cannot rule out any intrusion unsynonymous with your own intent as a possible occasion for meditation. Meditation does not have to do with sin; it has to do with redemption. It does not have to do with guilt, it does not have to do with the past, but always the future. A situation is toward the future.

Secondly, meditation has to do with being the guardian of profound living. Whatsoever triggers meditation grinds you right down into the bottom of consciousness. Meditation has to do with the angels and the saints. They only talk ontologically. If some voice says you were a naughty boy, that is fine, but that was not the talk of the saints or angels. Meditation deals with the ontological. Remember those nets for fishing? Meditation, like those nets, keeps you from escaping from that which has opened up for you.

Next, meditation is the endless dialogue of life. Someone said "What is going on in meditation is that God and Satan are talking and you are caught in the crunch." It is the dialogue of life where there is mortal combat with Satan. Meditation is never present except in that combat. It sics you on, so to speak, and at the same time it is the sword that you use; meditation is that without which we cannot be conqueror. Meditation automatically operates, but only when it is triggered. In one sense, of course, meditation is always going on; the disciplined man brings self-consciousness to it. You experience something like this when you pull the trigger, then get out of the way of the consequences. This dialogue of life floods you constantly, but you dam it up. The man of meditation has learned how to get out of the way, or to trigger it, in each situation.

Someone has said the subject of meditation could be most anything. My Sunday School teacher, my father, somebody. A couple of times when I was a kid I had my mouth washed out with soap. You can see it did not entirely cure things. I was pressured into thinking that if you thought good thoughts, noble thoughts, pure thoughts, . . . I don't need to go on, you had parents too. Now I agree that in principle, anything can come into that dialogue. This, of course has to do with the selection of the council, or bringing to self-consciousness what your council is. If you don't know anything about Luther, then Luther can play only a very small role on your council. Why is it, then, that I should read Shakespeare or poetry, or the Bible? Why is it I should read Amos? It is obvious. Why should I read the lives of the saints? Meditation does not have to do with sitting and reading the Bible. You might say that is an exercise related to something that is different from meditation. I was trained to think that you went to church for the sake of going to church, rather than for the sake of leaving the church and living a life. I was taught to read the Bible because of the exercise of reading the Bible itself. You can see how people did that rather than for the purpose of a meditative life which enables me to constantly be grounded in the profundity of consciousness or in my relationship to the mystery.

I made a talk one time, and my subject was "I Am a God Man." I was trying to say that we have been captured by the mystery, enslaved by the mystery. Two times this morning I almost did something really ridiculous. I was sitting in my cubicle thinking about the weight of the morning when I almost stood up and said "I am too a son of God!" I believe you say this to Satan not the world. I almost said that aloud a second time when we were looking at those names on the board and we were talking about those four kids a bit. I almost said, "I am too the son of God!" You remember Jesus prefaced the 10th chapter of John with the statement that he is the son of God, consecrated and sent into the world. He was consecrated first, then he was sent, then third into the world. That is who I understand myself to be after the reality of my acceptance by God has been drowned by the Dark Night of the Soul and the Long March of Care. Who am I? I am the believing one. I don't believe in this, that or the other thing. I am the believing one. Who am I? That is my consecration. It is like that hymn, "make a captive Lord, and then I shall be free." It is as if sometimes I get all balled up and feel that God requires of me that I be this or that, or I do this or that, or that I come off with this accomplishment. Until the day I die, I am required to be a believing one. Secondly, in that circle, I am the caring one. I don't necessarily want to be a believing one and there are times when I don't want to be a caring one. All morning I just wish I had never heard of caring. I am a believing, caring one. I am the elected one. That is the category of being which has no substance. It is the intensification of knowing that you were sent to be a believer and a carer.

When I stand up and say before Satan or whosoever, "I am the son of God," this is what I mean. I mean I am going to be what I am sent to be—a believer and a carer. That always means until death do us part.

The purpose of meditation is to get you to your feet in a concrete situation that has opened before you the profundity of consciousness which is the Dark Night of the

Soul. It is to say before yourself, the world, God and Satan, "I am God's son." You can turn off the meditative flow just as soon as you get to your feet and talk to whomsoever, and you do not care if they agree with you. In fact there is nothing to agree about or disagree about. "I am God's son." As a matter of fact, I think I will finish the situation today and stand right up tall and say "I am God's son." How about you? How about all of us? "I am God's son."