

August 3, 1972

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS ON THE OTHER WORLD

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Reflec- tions on Theolog- ical Edge	Justifi- cation and Sanctifi- cation The Holy Spirit	The Christ Happen- ing and The Other World	Journey to the Center	Sin/ Grace re Justifi- cation and Sanctifi- cation	Care of Souls	Cabaret and the Church	The Return

1. (JWM) Where at this moment is your theological edge? By an edge I mean the place where you do not have the answer but you are stewing on it, the one that keeps you awake at night, the one that you have to put brackets around in order to do your everyday work, the one that just eats away at you, which makes you fearful and excited at the same time. Where is your theological stew? And try not to get just one; try to get the one, or close to the one, right now in your life, not yesterday, not tomorrow, but right now. I'd prefer, if you would, that you wouldn't use some broad word like "Christology." Get it a little more narrowed down than that. And under that, just to play over against your own, where do you suspect that the rest of the order are really not very clear? Where do you think, if we had brains enough, we ought to be really concerned?

2. (George Walters) The relationship between anger at this world and passion for this world.

3. (JWM) I am delighted you put that in non-theological language, George, but if you had to locate that problem in a theological construct, where would you put it?

4. (Walters) Incarnating the Word.

5. (JWM) If you had to choose between the category of soteriology [the concept of salvation] and the Christian life, or soteriology and pneumatology [the concept of the Holy Spirit], where would you put it?

6. (Walters) I know that my anger is not going away, and neither is the passion, and I do not know how to hold the tension. I do not think it is soteriology; I guess it is pneumatology.

7. (JWM) All right. What are you angry at these days, George? Can you locate that, or is it objectless?

8. (Walters) It is more objectless. If you are asking for illustrations, I could list them all day long. It is sociological. You point to

sociological givens that have to be changed and you cannot change them without saying yes to them.

9. (Bill Grow) Is not the event in the New Testament that is behind this the cleansing of the temple? There is Jesus; both his anger and his passion are demonstrated. And behind them, what we are talking about is the sovereignty of God. Or the Lordship, Jesus' Lordship, in the anger and the passion.

10. (JWM) Anybody, where are you trying to think through for fresh clarity?

11. (David McCleskey) The question of how the glory of being is lived and articulated to encompass both the agony and the wonder of living, in the particular and in the inclusive.

12. (JWM) If you had to take a theological category to put that under, what would it be, as you see it?

13. (McCleskey) It is easy one way -- sanctification.

14. (Fred Hess) And within the area of sanctification, it is beatification.

15. (Joe Slicker) Mine is like that, too. It is the relationship between justification and sanctification, not intellectually, but in relation to your spirit life, or your spirit discipline, the Christian life, to use the theological category. It starts with your picking out the manifestation of the states of being or your legacies or souvenirs. How do you weld that into a new kind of Christian living, a pattern of life, a life-style for our day?

16. (JWM) All right. Somebody else, where is your edge?

17. (Bill Norton) How is Jesus the one who is always with you in the tension between this and the other world?

18. (Bill Schlessinger) The tension between sin's intransigence and the sovereignty of grace. In relation to me, it has to do with why I keep showing up the way I keep showing up after all that has happened to me. In relation to the people I work with, it is why people keep deciding to go to Hell.

19. (Jim Bishop) The text I have is, "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long." And, the poetry I put with that is that day by day, and of course minute by minute, how to turn flesh and blood into spirit, or how to give constant attention or intention to the expenditure that becomes cruciformity. When you asked earlier what name there is in that, it seems to me that it is sanctification in method, or how to get methods of sanctifying.

20. (Pat Scott) My name for Schlessinger's and several of these is the struggle with sinlessness--being the sinless one.

21. (JWM) What great theological rubric would you put that under?

22. (Scott) I am not sure what Christian living is, but it is like style. It is no more self-depreciation.

23. (Fred Buss) Mine is in the same area. I just had to string together a long line of verbs. It comes down to winning, although I did not get winning in there. Maybe it is beatification. It is the continued dance in, around, and over vocating God, choosing life, electing marriage and being prior.

24. (John Baggett) Mine is similar to some of the others. It has to do with the relationship of the existential to the essentialistic, or to put it theologically, with the sovereignty of God and the will of man. And practically, it has to do with the issue of the relationship of your decisions to your states of being. What part does your power of decision play in creating states of being and how does it relate to the relationship you take to states of being? Or to put it another way, it has to do with the relationship of living in the Word in relationship to the states of being, as opposed to living in unfaith in relation to the states of being.

25. (Joe Thomas) The way I articulated the same question, being a Methodist, is the whole issue of falling from grace. Or whenever I experience myself in the other world, my question to myself is, "How am I living in this all the time?" Then I wake up the next day and find that I am not doing it.

26. (JWM) You have just heard articulated that glorious Christian doctrine of backsliding.

27. (Charles Moore) I do not know if I have the right word, out of the King James Version. I think it was: concupiscence. Is that the word? The way I interpret it is greatly delighting in certain of your colleagues, and then lying awake nights thinking, "Now what was I doing in that conversation?"

28. (JWM) Yes, I think that could come under the rubric of fleshliness.

29. (Tony Elizondo) I think the area of backsliding must be pointing to some reality like sin, or something dressed up in a nice word. But what concerns me is how you would manifest this presence that we have been talking about, and the sense of the other world, without being pious and self-righteous? That probably comes out of the whole background of moralism, self-righteousness.

29a. (JWM) It is very interesting that here following one another are the sin of weakness and the sin of strength, or lust and pride coming right after one another.

30. (Dick Elliot) I have two swirls. One is apostasy, doubt, and one is atonement; the experience of the mystery and the awe in the midst of history, and myself knowing that both are true, but apparently irreconcilable, or I experience them as irreconcilable--being a heretic.

31. (Kay Lush) When you are all burned out by life, how do you keep from being a zombie? Or how do you separate zombie-ism from blissfulness, tranquillity.

32. (JWM) You are saying that we sit around in our sentimentality and think, "Poor Jesus, he only lived 33 years." But what Kay is saying there leads me to, "What would a burned out man do for the next 33 years, if he had lived?"

33. (David Zahrt) I put down going on and on, but without passion, a sort of a pseudo, a self-deceiving sense after sanctification as going on and on without passion.

34. (JWM) You have to say more on that one for me, David.

35. (Zahrt) Well, having the stamina to go on after you are burnt out and feeling some interior righteousness by just going on, you are operating by brute force, but you are not willing your passion.

36. (Elizondo) I think the problem is where you get your motivation once you have been burned out. I mean you are crucified, you are dead. And of course you get transmuted into some sort of strange thing, so that with Paul you say, "Well, should I just go ahead and be dead now? Why not? That would be much better. But I will stay." But the motivation has got to be like Paul's when he said something like, "It is Christ who lives in me."

37. (Lane Erskine) Is there a phrase for hoarding up your grace?

38. (JWM) Yes, a very good one, supererogation.

39. (Erskine) One of the great besetting sins the Church is still up against is allowing the brother to slip into the occasion of sin. I guess the phrase I want is hoarding up your own and not risking it to prevent somebody else from slipping into the occasion of sin.

40. (JWM) Well, this is interesting. I believe that what I have been calling representationalism and a religious order are inseparable. The danger of it is that it slips into a wooden type of supererogation, in which you store up merit to give to others. But I believe that you can see that behind it is an ontological reality. We Protestants can criticize the Catholic Church all we want, but we have to be careful to realize that what we see is the solidification of a deep human reality. No clergyman would be worth his salt if he did not see that on his righteousness, on his authenticity in Jesus Christ, were riding many lives. And to even remotely talk about being like Jesus, or the little Christ as Luther spoke of it, and not see that is ridiculous. Finally, the whole world, the salvation of the whole world depends upon your life, my life, of integrity. That's what Jesus saw, I think, himself.

41. Well, it is intriguing that everything on the board, actually, has to do with sanctification, even the way it was articulated.

42. Baggett's statement struck me. Have you ever noticed in the history of the Church that when there was a great awakening, there was a recovery of the sovereignty of God? always. There is a bit of irony here. We have talked many times about how the sovereignty of God relative to man is necessity. The Muslim has seen this with fantastic clarity.

From the point of view of the divine, his sovereignty is his utter freedom. But I suspect that at any moment in history, when man recovers his sense of freedom it is a breaking loose from a concept of the sovereignty of God which has been reduced into an intellectual system. That is to say, God's sovereignty has been defined by man's reason rather than by God's freedom--that is to say, the Mystery has been taken out. A breakloose of the sense of being a human being always comes over against that, or man recovers his freedom. But in the midst of that then, man discovers the sovereignty of God.

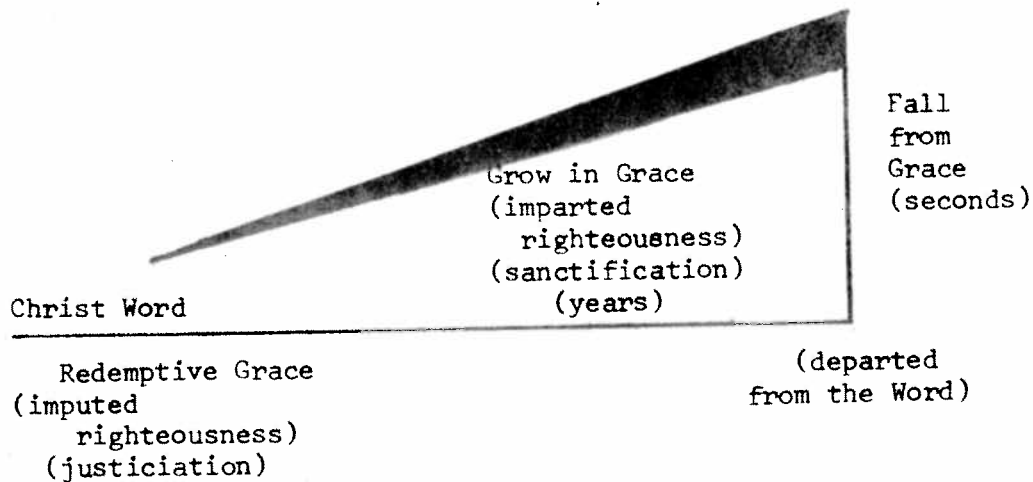
43. In the first 6 pages of Kierkegaard's Philosophical Fragments, he says that when you spend your freedom- it is spent. He says it is similar to taking a penny, and buying a lollipop. Your penny is your freedom; and if you buy a lollipop, you do not have a penny any more, you have a lollipop. This is to say that every hunk of freedom I have becomes my fate. Do you see that? If I use my freedom to murder someone today, then my fate is that I am a murderer.

44. I suspect that we have been in a time in history where there has been an emphasis upon the human, upon freedom. Now what happens in history is that there is a movement toward a recovery of the divine, and of necessity. The times of the emphasis upon the human are, to use theological language, the great moments of justification, or the recovery of the Word, which is always in life. The times of the emphasis on the divine are moments of justification or the manifestation of the Word which is always in life. The great struggle of sin on the side of justification might very well be with pride. Lust would be the fundamental problem on the side of sanctification, although each of them would always be present in both. When Tony first mentioned self-righteousness or pride, I was not so sure, but now I am much surer. Pride is where sanctification turns into something you created in yourself, rather than resting every moment upon the grace of God, which, when you stop and think about it, is the way it is.

Emphasis of the Times:	Human Freedom	Divine Necessity
Theological Emphasis:	Justification	Sanctification
Sin:	Pride	Lust (and pride)

45. There is one point where I think Wesley is exactly right in his theology of sanctification. First, he says, redemptive grace hits. That is where you hear the Christ word, RS-I, and that is imputed righteousness. From that point, you grow in grace, you grow in imparted righteousness. But then he held the paradoxical idea that, while it takes time, years, to grow in grace, it takes only a second to fall from grace, if you departed from the Word. And when you fall, you are back down at the bottom again, that sanctification is not just initially dependent upon justification; it is forever dependent upon justification. This is the point where Calvin and Wesley are reconciled. Calvin said that sanctification was always at the point of redemptive grace, that in principle, you were justified and sanctified together. He was holding the truth that Wesley articulated

here. There is no doubt that the realm of the Other World deals with the problem of justification or sanctification. Of course, it would have many faces and many forms

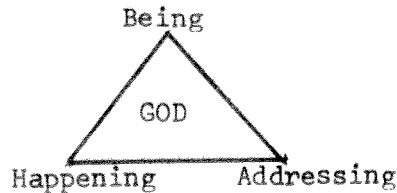


46. (Herman Green) I keep waiting to hear something about how the Other World is the theology of the Holy Spirit. If you talk about justification and sanctification being the same thing and the Holy Spirit simply becoming the comforter, and you talk about being in justification and now looking at recovering the meaning of sanctification, I think the whole realm of the recovery of the Holy Spirit, as that which relates you back to the sovereignty of God, the place where decision is struggled for in the nonrational dimension of life, is something we need to consider. I have not had too much of the doctrine of the Holy Spirit; at least I do not have one.

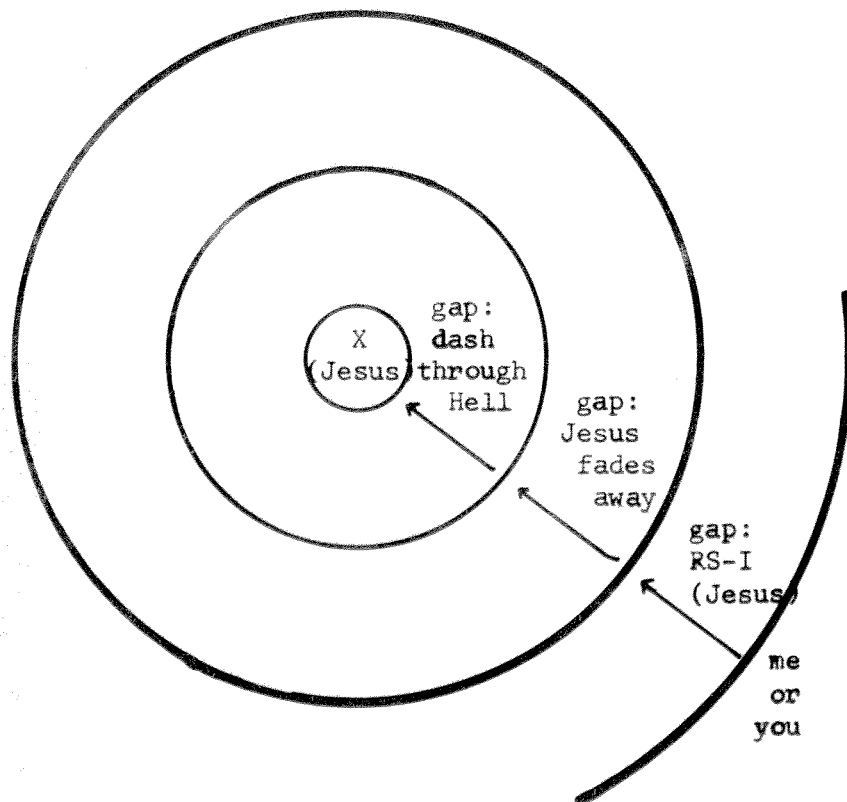
47. (JWM) Well, did you know there are some theologians who believe that it has never been thought out in the whole history of the Christian Church? Whether you look at Roman Catholic or Protestant systematic theologies, it is very interesting that the amount of space given to God and to Christology is always tremendous, but it begins to narrow down considerably as it gets to the Holy Spirit. Although I'm afraid to mark the ages of history by Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, if you are going to organize your thinking, as we tend to do, around the trinitarian formula, we are at the moment of emphasis upon the Holy Spirit. There is no doubt about that. That includes the body of Christ, the mission in civilization to the world, and the Christian life. Those are focal points. Now so many ages have been called the Age of the spirit that I'd want to be careful. But I think the point has to be well taken.

48. (Robert Porter) Where that question focuses for me is in the doctrine of the ascension and the doctrine of heaven. The Holy Spirit somehow or other is related and I think it has to do with the Other World also. The question for me really is "What is the ontological reality in life that the doctrine of the ascension held?" I do not think we have ever really thought that through, but it has to do with the Holy Spirit.

49. (JWM) Yes. As we go along here, we always have to keep in mind being, happening, addressing. This, as you know, is our holding image of the doctrine of God in which is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When you do the Christ happening, you have to do the **same** thing. When you do the Holy Spirit, you have to do the same thing.



50. Now I want to recall some of the things I said the other day as a place for us to start. In using the poetry "to the center," it's the gaps that are important. You have to draw a line that represents me and you. Then comes the gap of RS-I, or the Word, or the Christ happening, as we call it. In this first tap, Jesus is the gate, the door, the entrance. He who enters by any other way is a deluded person, a thief, a robber. So it was in the beginning and ever shall be. In any invention of humanness from the beginning of time, the entrance into the other world was through that happening. We will lay aside for a moment the problem that is obvious there. What you are saying is that nobody ever came to self-consciousness except in an RS-I course, in any culture, in any time in history. That's what you are saying.



51. The interesting thing is that when you get to the center, there is nothing there except the gate. This is "Every knee shall bow." It is not until you reach that center that you understand that it was that Word that led you all the way. You experience a fantastic experience of utter isolation from the Word as you make your dash to the pole through darkness, desert, and Hell. More and more I appreciate the statement in the Apostle's Creed, "He descended into Hell." But I tell you, that is thinking back after the experience. This is the most intense experience of absolute isolation that anybody, I think, could have. So Jesus gets us into the first gate, and then we are catapulted to the center alone; he disappears.

52. In this second gap he slowly fades away and then in the last gap he disappears. And you are utterly isolated. There is nothing unexperiential about this. You know it as well as you know your own name. You came to the Order out of RS-I, as excited as anything. The presence was there, however you want to speak of it. "My life is received, hallelujah." And then all of the tough times, all of the darkness, and all of the unbelievable pains of apostasy, which come in the form of "Who said all this?" You know that experience. This is where one of two things happens. Either you leave or you go through the Hell. If you get through the Hell, then you discover what to me is almost the most shocking discovery of life, that the Logos becomes Logos. When you reach that center, there is never any leaving. You can put it in different ways, but there is never any leaving. You are ruined. That is one of the things you have to mean when you say you are burned out. And you never can get over being burned out. There is no question of anybody leaving. They can commit suicide, but they cannot leave.

53. Then you discover that this gate was all there is; there is nothing more. You are at the center, and you just want to stay there with the Word. In that pitch darkness--no, no--that pitch darkness there--I was going to say was light, but that's not it. The pitch darkness becomes light itself. But nothing ever becomes light; the darkness is light. The fact that you will never know anything--that is why it is that you know everything. It is the unbelievable breaking through to the awareness that you are never, never, never going to know anything. That is the light.

54. That is why nobody can ever tell you anything again. You know it all. You have the secret the keystone, the "Rosetta stone" of the universe. Why, nobody would ever budge from there. That's the point where, as Kierkegaard puts it, Jesus said, "I have to leave you." It is not that he had other business to do. But he had to leave or you would have just stayed there in that darkness which is light. Therefore, Jesus turns off the switch.

55. And this is a funny kind of thing. It is not like the horrible agony of Hell. It is more painful than that. It is a time of deep sorrow. If you can see deep sorrow as more painful than being roasted over an open fire, then you are close to that kind of sorrow. It is as if you did not understand before. As you made the dash to the pole, you kept thinking, "This is not the way; it just could not be; it just could not be this way." You cannot have that any more. And it is the same experience. This is exactly the way it is. And you know that forever. That's why there is no escape. And therefore that pain is even more when Jesus goes away.



56. This poetry is inadequate, but it is as if in despair you return to the suffering world. At that moment, and not before, when you pick up the burden of being responsible for the whole world, then and only then do you know what the poetry in the New Testament means when Jesus says, "Lo, and lo, go ye into all the world, and every time you see anybody, quickly, quickly, quickly, before they get away, baptize them; wherever you go, baptize them; wherever you go, baptize them; grab them quick and baptize them." There is no moralism about putting them through a catechumen class; you grab them and baptize them and put the holy sign on them. "And lo, I will be with you."

57. You have to understand that that is not a pronouncement from some guy named Jesus to the rest of us. This is an experience of humanness. You discover that the Word, which is the entrance and which finally is all there is, is with you to the end. It is as if that light going out at the center is like Jesus disappearing, and this time at the center is all suffering humanity. That is another way of talking about the return--just suffering humanity. That means that you have one everlasting task and that is to pour yourself out for mankind. That is like joining the great hosts. There is no choice.

58. How should you put it? Religious orders are just a sign that you are joining the great hosts, and this is why you can never leave. Where could you go? Because everywhere that you go you have the same job, just to pour out your life. And when you say you cannot stay because, "This prior is crummy", or "that prior is crummy", or some of this kind of stuff, you know very well that that has never been your problem since you have been here at the center. Your problem is that you do not want to lay down your life. Otherwise you would not have any trouble leaving here if you found exactly the place to go. Nobody would have any trouble. What you would come and say is "Ordain me to go and live among the lepers in India." There would not be any trouble. This group would be so happy they would sing, "Glory hallelujah!" That is not the way people try to leave. Usually they want to leave because they think there is a better life somewhere. You have no struggle with leaving if you are just going to the same crummy life of laying down your life for the sake of others. It is then you discover, "Lo, I am with you always."

59. That is why final power in the Christian life is to be found only in the Mountain of Care. Even though you cannot prove it to anybody, it is only to the degree that you care for all men that you have spirit power. That is why that power belongs in agape. Of course there is power when the breakthrough is there in the River of Consciousness. But it is not power until that breakthrough picks up the Mountain of Care. Only then is it power. And the Mountain of Care means your death. "Lo, I am with you always."

60. There has not been a person in our midst who has been in any of these states and was not aware of them. How do you put it? It is like the boys in the fiery furnace. The king looked into the furnace and counted them, "One, two, three....four." So the others said, "What do you mean? That can't be." So the king looked in again. "One, two, three....four." There was nothing there. "Well, let's try it again. One, two, three....four." Nothing was there. Now there was no one in the room who was not aware of that state of being, if he was sensitive. To use our jargon, the fourth that

was not there was the contentless Word, or the nothingness of my acceptance. That is always present when the awe overtakes me in terms of "My God, I know myself," or in the spirit awareness of "My God, I am known."

61. One of my favorite awarenesses (if you are allowed to have favorite ones) is the one on joy and happiness, when suddenly it dawns on you that there is no criterion, in any way whatsoever, for happiness. You grasp that either my life is what happiness is, or there is no happiness. Do you follow me? And then comes the great indicative resolve, by that I mean it was given to you. The indicative resolve always happens like this: "My God! I'm happy." And it is the same old crummy life: It does not get any of your children out of jail; your wife does not seem to improve one iota. This is not a rational process, you know. It is just a state of being. And it is then you go, "One, two, three....four---" Let me try that again. "One, two, three....four. Nothing there." All of these states of being are founded upon, are given substance by, and are consummated in "God loves me", and that is the Son, and that is the Word.

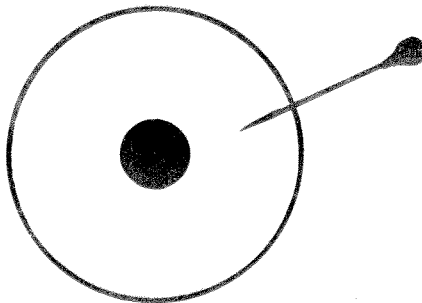
62. But the flip of that is that the contentless Word never saved anybody. This is hard to say. Only that contentless Word as it is filled with ME ever saved anybody--namely me. And to fill that contentless Word with me (now I get to the ontological) does not mean with my gray hair or my sixty years or my fat stomach, although those are all me. The me is that fat stomach and the gray hair in those Other World states of being. That is the content. When you see me having been transformed with a contentless Word, you find a human being who is manifesting the great indicative resolves of these states of being. This is all you can see; you cannot see the rest. God-in-Jesus Christ gives me back to ME and I am BACK. He does not add anything to me. He simply takes away my illusions of this world, which I have made into my other world, and gives me the Other World in the midst of this world, which is manifest in the great indicative resolves of my life, which you can see but not understand. A person says, "Who is that weird character over there who could have been making \$30,000 but is doing this and that." That person sees the eternal, which is not to see those indicative resolves; but these practical manifestations are what disturb him and what are part of the awe that changes his life. This is to say that it is our lives, our presence, that evangelizes the globe.

63. Now you probably can get this into better poetry. But this is the key to an articulation in the post-modern world of the necessary, inseparable relationship between justification and sanctification. Be it good or bad; agree with it or do not agree with it, that is what it is aimed at.

64. I want to deal a bit now with something from one of the lectures on the Other World. It has to do with the part in which you discover, "My God, I am the Logos." It is as if Jesus is sitting on the throne. It is not God sitting there, just Jesus. When you embrace this king of the universe, or prostrate yourself at the feet of Jesus, "where every knee shall bow", and then you look up--he is not there any more. God is sitting on the throne. (This keeps you from a "Jesus unitarianism.") You look around, and you say, "Where is Jesus?" Now in the lecture it was said the reason that you cannot find him is that there is no mirror in the room. Now, I think that is just fantastic. I have forgotten that. Obviously, you become the Christ happening the rest of your life.

65. Then at the center, you shut your eyes for a moment in a reverent acceptance of the center and open them again, and guess what is there? All of that is there. That is why, in the lecture at the center, I said that you look through the darkness and Wanda Lee is there; Joe is there; the Man is there. And when you see that, imputed righteousness is transposed into imparted righteousness. And Calvin was right; there is no separation of justification and sanctification. God does not add something to justification; the Christ happening pulls away the veil--and not only the veil of moralistic sin. He pulls away the veil that keeps us from seeing the Other World, the states of being, who we are before God. He pulls away that veil and you ARE the son of God, the child of God, the MAN.

66. You know in RS-I, how we sometimes use the illustration of Jesus with the hatpin bursting illusions. It is that hatpin that delivers someone to the ontological reality which is the states of being. If you put it in terms of history, for the last 55 years the great theological recovery has been the recovery of the hatpin. And now we are trying to articulate what is there when our illusions are burst. And we discover nothing new but what man always was in his relationship to the Other World, to God. Here is the sovereignty of God coming back again.



67. (Carlos Zervigon) Do you not have to say that the first time that happens, in principle, you are at the center, and that sanctification would have something to do with knowing more and more that that is true?

68. (JWM) Yes, I think so. You are at the center right at the moment you have RS-I; you have to be at the center. And when you get to the center, you discover exactly what was in RS-I--nothing more and nothing less.

69. (Carlos Zervigon) Every time it happens, you know all over again what happens.

70. (JWM) Yes, I think that is true.

71. (Gene Marshall) Creation and fall has a tangential relationship to this. The fallen man is still the creation, the creation that is fallen. When redemption comes to him, in the first instance it looks like something from outer space. It is an intrusion from the outside. But it casts him into a deathly struggle between his own actuality and his own sin. I remember a line from St. John of the Cross which was very redemptive one time when, on the other side of RS-I, just HELL comes into your life in terms of your immediate experience of it. St. John of the Cross says this is not damnation. It is purgation. This is healing going on in your life. It is not that you have lost the way; you are on the way. I remember that was just an incredibly redemptive word at that particular moment.

72. (JWM) That is a good word. The only reason why you can have these "visits to the Other World" or whatever, or that any man in the world can understand this, is because sin is not the introduction of an alien substance; it is a perversion of essence. Therefore, though it comes to a man like "My God, I must have learned that in another world", it is his essential nature that he has clouded around with his illusions, but never finally blotted out. Sin perverts; it does not introduce the alien. Therefore, everyman knows about this. That is who he is.

73. (John Baggett) Something that was helpful to me was that illusions or sin have to do with wanting some states of being and not wanting others. That is the moral dimension, too. It is trying to build another world out of some states of being and denying others, rather than seeing all states of being as the glorious existence you have from God.

74. (JWM) Yes, and this is another way of dealing with imputed/imparted righteousness. On the other side of having accepted the Word, it is obvious that I am my happiness. I am my certitude. I am my endlessness. I am my peace. But you only see that through the awareness that whatever goes on in this universe has accepted your being. Then you SEE it. You worry about your vocation. Once you understand you are accepted in the universe, there is not any decision. You KNOW your vocation is to minister unto all mankind every moment for the rest of your life. That is what you mean by an indicative. There is not any imperative. When you hear that Word, then you delight in the fact you showed up in history. It is an indicative. If somebody says, "What is Jesus the Christ?" Well, he is 'happiness'. I did not say that right. He is "I am happiness." He is "I am certitude." He is "I am peace." He is "I am endlessness." He is "I am responsibility." He is "I am spiritual power." He is "I am a bundle of sympathy." He is "I am a delight in this world." That is the content in the Christ happening.

75. (Sarah Buss) I am confused here by what Tillich does in the sermon "You Are Accepted." In paragraph 12 he talks about grace relative to the Ground of Being, then relative to the other, and then to the self. It seems to me that it ought to go Ground of Being, and then self, and then other. The prostration we were talking about is grace relative to the Ground of Being and the grace relative to self is the experience of Jesus. There is not any separation from self in the midst of saying "Yes" to the ground of those states of being; and it is, therefore, after the experience of grace relative to the self that it comes relative to the other. You experience that there is no separation any longer with everyman once you yourself have said "Yes" to those states of being.

76. (JWM) Yes, I think that is right. Those three entities--Ground of Being, myself, and my neighbor--become amalgamated--not metaphysically. But you see when the mystics talked about the experience of union, they were not kidding. Their interpretation of it was in a metaphysics that has no meaning for us anymore. For me to say that I am substantially the ground of my being is nonsense; or to say, "I am one with David McCleskey substantially,"--I cannot even understand that. But in terms of phenomenological experience (if that is not redundant) that is exactly what it is. When Jesus said, "This is my mother and these are my brothers", he was not playing some game; he was telling you the way it is. To put it in our language, when you grasp yourself in the awareness that we are talking about, you know the rest of

your life that you are not a self except in relation to your neighbor. And finally this means that everybody in the whole wide world that ever lived or ever will live is your NEIGHBOR. I mean he is the character living next door to you. And there is no separation any more. You do not live out of the imperative that you ought to love Jack. There is an indicative that you care for Jack. And Jack is the last fat lady.

77. (Ruth Marshall) Joe, we have said that the states of being have no progression; but it seems to me that we have been talking about a kind of progression in relation to the gaps; and that ring before the center is maybe the purgation that St. John talks about. It seems to me you do not experience the Sea of Tranquility until you have experienced that purgation.

78. (JWM) The moment that you be the relationship to the mystery, that moment you be your relationship of consciousness, your relationship of tranquility, your relationship of agape. There is no progression. You be. The structure in that chart of the Other World is for the sake of the poor human mind. If we were angels, we would have direct intuition; you would not have to build that chart.

79. (David Scott) One of the most unnerving parts of discovering yourself in that lightning bolt called "the journey to the center" is that you discover how much you are a rational creature. You are experiencing all of it and your rational mind tells you this must be a preparation for something else. Or you are in the midst of utter Hell and you realize that you have not been so tranquil in your whole life--and your first response rationally is that it ought not be that way. I mean, if I am in Hell, I am in Hell. That is part of the unnervingness of that experience that we are just beginning to be able to live with. What drives most of us over the edge is that we are experiencing our states of being just exactly like we have them spelled out; but we are trying to experience them as there were a progression, or that "one day I am going to get to the Sea."

80. (Fred Hess) Joe, you said that there was the experience of feeling yourself not led at all when you are going through the dark night. Then you later look back and you know you were being led the whole time--you said that was the leading of the Word. It seems to me that that is the leading of the Holy Spirit, and that is why Jesus had to say, "I will give you a Paraclete (ministering spirit)." It was as if he saw the disciples experience themselves as not being led, and he had to give them a name for that experience so they would understand they were being led when they did not experience it as being led. This would be a reason why there is so little written about the Holy Spirit--the only time you ever see you are being led is when you look at the experience of not being led, through the Word. And so you sense you are right about the Word that shows you that you were being led the whole time rather than about the leading that was experienced as not being led.

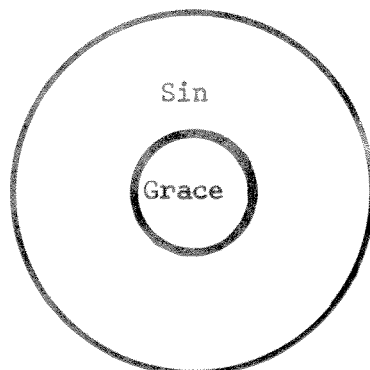
81. (JWM) Sin, descent, ascent and ascent, descent, sin. I want to come to this in a moment. I am glad you used the word "Paraclete" rather than the Holy Spirit--for a moment. As Jesus put it, "Unless I go away you will not have a Paraclete, but if I go away you will have a Paraclete." Now they had themselves a paraclete before they ever saw Jesus. But they did not know that this was a Paraclete. That is to say, if you take any of the 64 states of being and spin them to anyone in the world, he will know what they are

all about. In our lectures on the Other World we have to use illustrations which cannot possibly be adequate. We have to deal analogically (it is the only way possible), and analogies are not the realities by any means whatsoever. But they communicate to another person, for analogies enable him to recall that he has had peaks in his own relationship to God all his life. That is how he knows. That is the paraclete before you know you have a Paraclete.

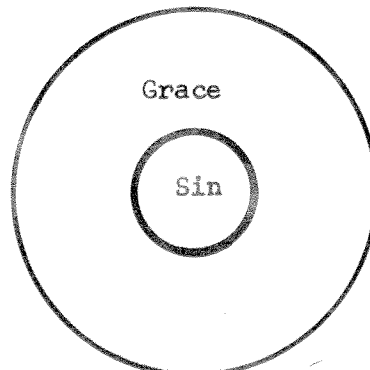
82. When Jesus goes away, so to speak, you are left to rely entirely upon the fact that: "I say so." Only that is not an intellectual statement. It is your guts. There is the Paraclete. When he goes away any external reference is taken from you. That throws you back on all you had from the very beginning, and that is knowing the way life is. Then that paraclete you always had becomes the Paraclete. The spirit that has always been there, my spirit, becomes the Holy Spirit. What I am trying to say is that there is nothing magical, mystical, or religious in the Holy Spirit or the Paraclete business. It is part of humanness itself. God and Christ and Holy Spirit are not superimpositions.

83. This brings me to where I think you have your crucial problems with it, Fred. My crucial problem is the problem of sin in relationship to this, and in one sense that is all there is. This involves the entrance or descent into the center, and then the return or ascent. It is hard to get that said to yourself in precise terms. The other problem for me is the "blinking." It is the descent/ascent/sin all together. Descent/ascent/sin.

84. Let us look at sin for just a moment. When you are dealing with justification, you are dealing with sin in the midst of which is forgiveness. Now when you are dealing with sanctification, you become self-consciously aware of that and it gets exactly reversed. You are dealing with sin in the context of grace, or forgiveness:



Justification



Sanctification

There is no less or more sin in either case. There is a different context of approach to yourself. When you first enter into the Other World, you can bet that you are going through your sin to your forgiveness. But when your eyes are open, it is clear you are always going through God's forgiveness to your sin. I tell you, those are two entirely different experiences. Can you remember when you knew the Christ Word, but you were always living out of your sin--in God's grace?

85. The inversion of that is the Other World--you are living out of God's grace into your sin. This is not ethereal. It is extremely practical. Yet

it is hard to say. You have to talk about yourself and it sounds like it is pretention. It is utter absolute prostration before the sovereignty of a loving God. I am trying to say to you that I do not sin. I mean that. It is as though God's forgiveness is there just an instant before I sin. Now I sinned, but his forgiveness beats me. That is hard to communicate. Every time I say, "My God, I sinned", it is as if God says, "You bum, you did not. You are forgiven." Then in your whole life you live out of God's grace as a sinner--instead of living out of your sinfulness that God forgives. The negative side of that is the experience in justification of great relief. In sanctification you go around feeling like a bum all the time who is dancing and joyous and happy but feeling like a bum who has peace and certitude. It is just the flip of it.

86. Well, waves of temporal peace sweep your soul. That is what you know when you have been a very bad boy, and you discover afresh that God has forgiven you for that sin. That is when you are working on that pole of justification. And that pole is true; you are not saying it is not true. When you are working on the pole of sanctification, you live out of the fact that "My life is pleasing to the Lord." Or, God delights in me. Can you think of living a life out of that? Mark you, you are the same fragile, stupid, weak, wicked, sinful character; but you are living out of God's eternal approval, in which you know you could not ever do anything that would make God love you less. That is a different posture in life.

87. (Sarah Buss) I have thought for a long time that we ought to have, practically speaking, the absolution pronounced before we did accountability in House Church; then you have the ritual of accountability, and then maybe have a ritualistic line of the absolution after that.

88. (Bill Grow) That is why the Presbyterians begin the worship service with praise.

89. (Charles Moore) That would be a great way to symbolize a great turn.

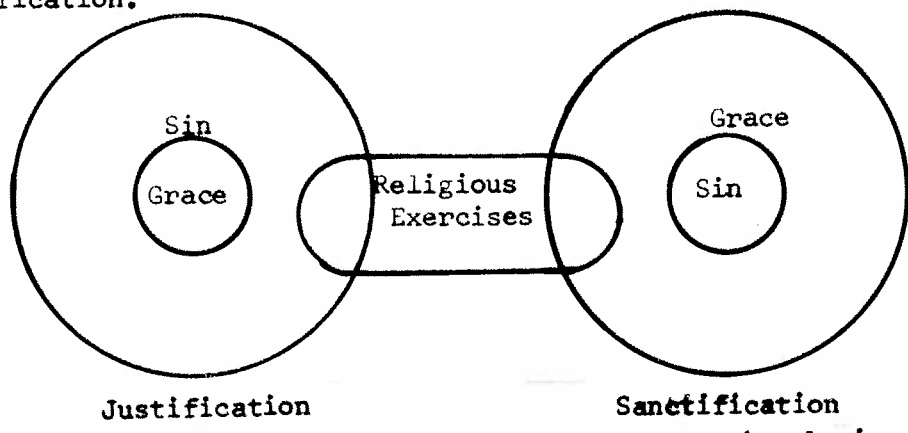
90. (Jim Bishop) I like Sarah's idea. If you did it before and after you might be sure.

91. (David Scott) We always say that worship is confession, praise, and dedication. It is as if you decide to stick the drama in the midst of a dynamic called confession, praise, and dedication; and then one day you wake up to the fact that worship is actually a dynamic and not a rational structure.

92. (John Cock) I keep flipping to the pastoral side of all this. What does this mean evangelistically for us in terms of RS-I, of priorship, of dealing with human souls? I have experienced very deeply this year the "indicative". I think I understand what Luther was talking about. I have a real guilt twinge when I am not going out communicating verbally "You are accepted." It is as if I have become a purist in articulating the indicative. However, I realize, for example, with an order youth that has a really bad problem, somehow that is not what needs to happen to that child. It does not bring him to the next step of his journey. He is in a tailspin and somehow this pronouncing the indicative comes as a two-by-four blow over the head. What you said earlier about being the pedagogue in the midst of living out of the radical indicative--that is where I grind my gears most

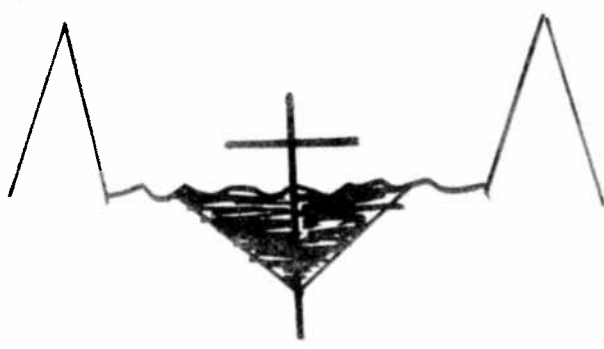
in trying to be the evangelist that the world needs right now. It has to do with RS-I. I find myself coming down hard at times with the judgment pole on what I would call infants in the journey when they say such stuff as life is "joy and bliss" and whatnot, and I know they do not know what they are talking about. They are in some cess pool rather than the Sea of Tranquility. I do not know if you want to deal with that tangent.

93. (JWM) I want to because that has to do with the descent. RS-I is the prompter to the descent. Let me back up for a moment. Religious exercises have nothing whatsoever to do with salvation. Religious exercises have to do with whether at any given moment you are going to behold the one possibility of living or the other possibility of living--justification or sanctification.



Finally, they are the same because God is the sovereign loving one. But you can see what people meant when they talked about a second state of grace. You can see that very clearly. Here is one state of grace. Here is another and they are not the same thing. But there is only one state of grace. That is why it becomes nonsense when people make sanctification their cause. This comes back to RS-I.

94. My second problem was the descent. There is no indirect movement from this world into the next. Would that there was. When you say that anybody there knows what you are talking about, you find that knowing what you are talking about and being in the Other World are quite different. This is not a good analogy. But it is as if there is a mountain over here and there is a mountain over there.



One is this world and one is that other world. You get a guy up on top of the first mountain and he can see, "Yeah, yeah, I know about that." But there is no airplane to carry you across. The way is rough and rugged. This is what you mean by the dark night of the soul, in which you move down



into the valley and down finally into the canyon of darkness and aridity and Hell itself, into self-doubt that would make the angels weep--or, as we like to say, onto the cross, death to yourself. There is no other way to be in the Other World--although you can know about it--except through the crucifixion. And although you are using an analogy, you will not find the crucifixion to be some kind of imagined state. It is the most real thing you have ever struggled with in your whole life. When people say to me they do not know what it means to die their death, inside I say to myself, "Liar." They know very well what it means to die their death. The way they fake out of having to do it is to say they do not understand it. Unless you go through the valley of the shadow of death, you do not know about the Other World. In the Other World, that shadow is always there. You go through the descent into Hell and discover it is lifelong. When you enter, you will find that the descent into Hell is part of what this other mountain is all about--go and look. And it is there forever. But it does not come to you the same way looking from the second mountain. You see the descent into Hell and the descent into Hell from here is just the one little box. But that means that it is through the whole thing forever.

95. (Gene Marshall) There is a terrific problem here in terms of the care of souls. When the soul's care has come to a crisis, time and time again the Word is something like, "God has assigned you to be in this valley, so be in it." I have often found the theme of that song, "The way of the cross leads home--There is no other way but this," to be helpful here. A man who is in that valley has to get that word said to himself or he panics.

96. (Sarah Buss) And then the question comes, "How do you take this ontology and embody it in sociological forms?" This is not guaranteeing it. But we always relate something like rites of passage to one's physical age; it may well be that they are actually related to one's capacity to bring self-consciousness to his whole past journey. It is this journey which is rehearsed and symbolized in the rite of passage itself. The descent is like being sent out to kill the deer or whatever. That is why the rite of passage needs to be earlier than it is in our culture. You cannot postpone that issue once a person is confronted with that capacity. If you do not have a way for him to bring self-consciousness to that experience when he is ready to bring self-consciousness to it, then the sociological crisis comes.

97. (John Cock) For me, it is this issue of Jesus. (I guess I will always be a classical theologian.) In this summer assembly I saw in the words of Jesus that that man was always bringing, to whatever situation he was in, the critical urgency which precipitated the decision of a man in whatever stage of journey he was. And I realized that our ecclesiola members were grounded in the ontology of the Other World and had a fabulous 20-year vision, but they were experiencing no existential urgency. And they went to see the movie "Cabaret" and were a different bunch of people. They were ready to make a decision in some strange way. But nothing bothers me more than listening to Jesus, now that I understand what the indicative is. How in the world...? I cannot ever get him in a box somehow.

98. (JWM) In that movie "Cabaret", man, who did not know the Other World, but who always has to have another world, was creating his own other world. It is interesting to follow that through in terms of its external form. It

is exactly the same form as the real Other World. This is what Kierkegaard calls "active defiance." From the outside you cannot tell the difference between a man of faith and a man of active defiance. Kierkegaard is right. Man takes the abstract formula and uses it for his own ends. The abstract formula is exactly the same--a relationship that relates itself to itself--but he creates his own external. He becomes the creator of God rather than the creature of God. But the form is the same. I could not figure out for a long time why the Nazi had to be in there. But it was because this other world is always in the midst of this world, too. External circumstances gave man his false other world which was rehearsed in the Cabaret with the dancing girls, the music, and so on.

99. (Bruce Banknight) That is to say, you did not know whether you were on the stage or in the world by the end of the film.

100. (Charles Moore) You know, I just thought of this. We are up against the most satanic form of that in the work that we are doing in the local congregation. People take the symbols from the local church and make a perverted other world, and say, "Well, this is the Church. This is the Other World." No wonder our work is hard.

101. (David Scott) Run that by again, Charles, and say a little more.

102. (Charles Moore) When the local church in its activities, its forms, and everything else sets up perverted symbols as the other world--"After all, I am in the Church and I have separated myself from this world", that other world that is the Church becomes perverted and does not reflect the real Other World any longer. It is very hard to break through the system of justification that is built into it.

103. (JWM) Now, about the ascent, or the return back into this actual world. You have done well in the lectures this summer in getting the paradox into them. That is why the lectures are so hard to give. For the descent and the Other World are not two different things; nor are the ascent and the Other World. When you give the lecture, you would like to leave out that paradox and only talk about walking on a calm sea and not mention that that is a rough sea. The only thing that makes it a rough sea is the ascent. The ascent is coming back to this actual world. (That is the rough sea.) with the same amount of troubles that were there when you started your descent--no more, no less--and so shall it ever be. That is the doom of this world. And as you march back into this world, as you ascend into it, it is as if you pick up this pile of trouble and that pile of trouble and that pile of trouble and that pile of trouble and that pile of trouble and that pile of trouble--which suddenly have become glory. In these piles of trouble every one of the states of being are bubbling forth. That is the ascent. But it is just as painful as the descent; it is a different kind of pain. The ascent is the salvation of the world--that is, picking up the doom of this world, and therefore saving the world, as Gogarten talks about it. I used to think the ascent was that after you had descended, when you climbed right up into Heaven. No!

104. (John Cock) As the Renin said (in Jennings' book, The Ronin) Heaven is at the center of Hell.

105. (JWM) That is it exactly. That is the ascent.

106. (Fred Buss) My spin on that is that instead of hearing like I always have that you are supposed to be like Jesus, that line changes to "I am the one."

107. (JWM) By the way, the ascent is as much without Jesus as the descent. This is the most solitary, forsaken moment in your whole existence. You find yourself saying, "How could anybody else not liking me ever affect me again?" "My God, my God. Why hast thou forsaken me?" You are alone. And it is only when you meet Jesus who has already returned and you know that he will be with you always, that you realize he is the character who was boosting you up all the way or you would never have made it, so to speak.

108. (Joe Crocker) Is that what they had in mind when they always talked about the Second Coming--not just a coming, but the Second Coming?

109. (JWM) There would be a strong branch of the Church that would say that, that the Paraclete was the Second Coming, and that the Paraclete is always coming, and therefore the Second Coming is always there. Certainly that was a strong force in the early Church. They had, as you know, great fights over that issue.

110. (George Walters) How does this relate to the resurrection? Is the resurrection the beginning of the ascent? Is that the way you would talk about that? From the moment you stand up, from then on you are on your way?

111. (JWM) I suppose you would have to say that Jesus was a resurrected man in the tomb or on earth, and he was a resurrected man when he ascended. This is your resurrected man--the returned man, to use the poetry I am using now. The whole dynamic is there. Descent/ascent/sin are like a swirl, but your whole life is not ascent, descent, and this problem of sin. All of those are swirled together into a new reality, and that is the resurrected man. This swirl is not a fixed state. It is always in a swirl. It is almost as if, like on a movie camera, I am never at the center--I am running down and running up at the same time. I am sinning and before I get to sinning, forgiveness meets me; and before I have accepted forgiveness, I am sinning; and before I get to sinning--it is that kind of swirl. That is the Other World in the midst of this world. We are not different from any other man you meet, but we have taken upon ourselves the burden of the doomed world. We have decided. We could have entered Nirvana, but instead we come out and live this crummy life given us, as saints, or as heralds of the reality that this crummy world is God's world. That is what saves civilization. That is what saves mankind. That is what redeems this world. That is what conquers sin, and the grave, and the idols of this world sometimes known as the flesh.

112. (Bob Porter) That means that crucifixion and resurrection are one reality as the visible sign of the Other World in this world. And that means that when you are living in the Other World, there is nothing other than crucifixion and resurrection as you show up in this world.

113. (JWM) Right. That is the paradox you always hold in that Other World.

114. Well, this morning in the practical realm, we have started on the problem of RS-I to any other course we teach. In the theoretical realm, we

have started on the relationship between justification and sanctification; or the relationship of the Christ happening to what we have come to call the Other World. We have started to spell out the new, authentic, ontological morality that the whole world is waiting for. And we have started to describe very concretely the Godly style of life.