

The Uses of Time

³ The ego IS an ally of time, but NOT a friend. For it is as mistrustful of death as it is of life, and what it wants for you, IT cannot tolerate. The ego wants YOU dead, but NOT itself. The outcome of its strange religion MUST therefore be the conviction that it can pursue you BEYOND the grave. And out of its unwillingness for you to find peace, even in the death it WANTS for you, it offers you immortality in hell. It speaks to you of Heaven, but assures you that Heaven is not for you. How can the guilty hope for Heaven? The belief in hell is inescapable to those who identify with the ego. Their nightmares and their fears are all associated with it.

⁴ The ego teaches that hell is IN THE FUTURE, for this is what ALL its teaching is directed to. HELL IS ITS GOAL. For, although the ego aims at death and dissolution as an end, IT does not believe it. The goal of death, which it craves for you, leaves IT unsatisfied. No-one who follows the ego's teaching is without the FEAR of death. If death were thought of merely as an end of pain, would it be FEARED? We have seen this strange paradox in the ego's thought-system before, but never so clearly as here. For the ego must SEEM to KEEP FEAR FROM YOU, to keep your allegiance. Yet it must ENGENDER fear, in order to maintain ITSELF.

⁵ Again, the ego tries, and all too frequently succeeds, in doing both, but using dissociation for holding its contradictory aims together, so that they SEEM to be reconciled. The ego teaches thus: Death is the end, as far as hope of Heaven goes. But, because you and ITSELF cannot be separated, and because it cannot conceive of its OWN death, it will pursue you still, BECAUSE YOUR GUILT IS ETERNAL. Such is the ego's version of immortality. And it is THIS the ego's version of time supports.

⁶ The ego teaches that Heaven is here and now, because the FUTURE is hell. Even when it attacks so savagely that it tries to take the life of someone who hears it temporarily as the ONLY voice, it speaks of hell even to him. For it tells him hell is HERE, and bids him leap from hell into oblivion. The only time the ego allows anyone to look upon, with some amount of equanimity, is the PAST. And even then, its only value is that it is no more.

⁷ How bleak and despairing is the ego's use of time! And how TERRIFYING! For underneath its fanatical insistence that the past and future be the same, is hidden a far more insidious threat to peace. The ego does not advertise its final threat, for it would have its worshippers still believe that IT can offer the ESCAPE from it. But the belief in guilt MUST lead to the BELIEF IN HELL, and ALWAYS DOES. The only way in which the ego allows the fear of hell to be experienced is to BRING HELL HERE, but ALWAYS as a foretaste of the future. For no-one who considers himself as DESERVING hell, can believe that punishment will end in peace.

⁸ The Holy Spirit teaches thus: There IS no hell. Hell is only what the ego has made OF THE PRESENT. The BELIEF in hell is what PREVENTS you from UNDERSTANDING the present, because YOU ARE AFRAID OF IT. The Holy Spirit leads as steadily to Heaven, as the ego drives to hell. For the Holy Spirit, Who knows ONLY the present, uses it to UNDO the fear by which the ego would make the present useless. There is NO ESCAPE from fear, in the ego's use of time.

For time, according to its teaching, is nothing but a teaching device for COMPOUNDING guilt, until it becomes all-encompassing, and demands vengeance forever.

⁹ The Holy Spirit would undo ALL of this NOW. Fear is NOT of the present, but ONLY of the past and future, which do not exist. There is no fear in the present, when each instant stands clear and separated from the past, without its shadow reaching out into the future. Each instant is a clean, untarnished birth, in which the Son of God emerges FROM the past, into the present. And the present EXTENDS FOREVER. It is so beautiful and so clean and free of guilt, that nothing but happiness is there. No darkness is remembered, and his immortality and joy are NOW.

¹⁰ This lesson takes NO time. For what IS time, WITHOUT a past and future? It HAS taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to BE what you ARE. Begin to practice the Holy Spirit's USE of time, as a teaching aid to happiness and peace. Take this very instant, NOW, and think of it as ALL THERE IS of time. Nothing can reach you here, out of the past, and it is here that you are COMPLETELY absolved, COMPLETELY free, and WHOLLY without condemnation. From this holy instant, wherein holiness is born, you will go forth in time without fear, and with no sense of change WITH time.

¹¹ Time is inconceivable without change, and holiness does NOT change. Learn from this instant more than merely hell does not exist. IN THIS REDEEMING INSTANT LIES HEAVEN. And Heaven will NOT change, for the birth into the holy present is SALVATION from change. And change is an illusion, taught by those who could not see themselves as guiltless. There is no change in Heaven, because THERE IS NO CHANGE IN GOD. In the holy instant, in which you see yourself as bright with freedom, you WILL remember God. For remembering Him IS to remember freedom.

¹² Whenever you are tempted to be dispirited by the thought of HOW LONG it would take to change your mind so completely, ask yourself, "How long is an instant?" Could you not give so SHORT a time to the Holy Spirit, for your Salvation? He asks no more, for He has no need of more. It takes far longer to teach you how to be willing to GIVE Him this, than for Him to use this tiny instant to offer you the whole of Heaven. In exchange for this instant, He stands ready to give you the remembrance of Eternity.

¹³ You will never give this holy instant to the Holy Spirit on behalf of YOUR release, while you are unwilling to give it to your brothers on behalf of THEIRS. For the instant of holiness is SHARED, and CANNOT be yours alone. Remember, then, when you are tempted to attack a brother, that HIS instant of release is YOURS. Miracles ARE the instant of release you offer, and will RECEIVE. They attest to YOUR willingness to BE released, and to offer time to the Holy Spirit, for HIS use of it. How long is an instant? It is as short for your brothers as it is for you. Practice GIVING this blessed instant of freedom to all who are ENSLAVED by time, and thus make time their friend FOR them. The Holy Spirit gives their blessed instant TO you, through your giving it. As you GIVE it, He offers it to YOU.

¹⁴ Be not unwilling to give what you would receive of Him, for you join WITH Him in giving. In the crystal cleanness of the release you GIVE, is YOUR INSTANTANEOUS escape from guilt. You MUST be holy, if you OFFER holiness. How long is an instant? As long as it takes to re-establish perfect sanity, perfect peace, and perfect love for everyone, for God, and for YOURSELF. As long as it takes to remember immortality, and your immortal creations, who share it with you. As long as it takes to exchange hell for Heaven. Long enough to transcend ALL of the ego's making, and ascend unto your Father.

¹⁵ Time is your friend, if you leave it to the Holy Spirit to use. He needs but very little, to restore God's Whole power to you. He Who transcends time FOR you, understands what it is FOR. Holiness lies not in time, but in Eternity. There never WAS an instant in which God's Son could lose his purity. His changeless state is BEYOND time, for his purity remains forever beyond attack, and without variability. Time stands still in his holiness, and changes not. And so it is no longer time at all. For, caught in the single instant of the eternal sanctity of God's creation, it is TRANSFORMED into forever. GIVE the eternal instant that eternity may be remembered FOR you in that shining instant of perfect release. Offer the miracle of the holy instant through the Holy Spirit and leave His giving it to you to Him.