NOTES ON THE TEXT
OF
A COURSE IN MIRACLES
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Introduction

This document, "Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles,*" is the compilation of my notes on a series of lectures given by Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D. entitled "Classes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles.*" Wapnick's lectures were given on each chapter of the Text and highlight the key themes of each chapter within the context of the Course's general teaching and purpose.

Here is a compilation of excerpts from the text of *A Course in Miracles* showing how the Course describes its purpose:

"The goal of the curriculum, regardless of the teacher you choose, is 'know thyself.' There is nothing else to seek. The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. Yet the reason for the course is that you do not know what you are. What could God give but knowledge of Himself? What else is there to give? The belief that you could give and get something else, something outside yourself, has cost you the awareness of Heaven and of your Identity. This is not a course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application. This is a course in how to know yourself." - *A Course in Miracles*

As you will realize, *A Course in Miracles* could easily be titled "*A Course in Self Knowledge,*" as ultimately the *miracle* is a radical shift in Identity.

My "Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*" follows the structure of Wapnick's lecture series and is based on the key themes of each chapter within the context of the Course's general teaching and purpose. I have referenced the same quotes Wapnick used and provided my notes based on Wapnick's brilliant commentaries in his lectures.

Wapnick's Heaven-Knowledge Chart follows this Introduction and is referenced throughout his series of lectures and my notes. You will find it very helpful in your understanding of the Course as it illustrates the Course's key terms in context, and provides a visual overview of the Course's theory and mythology.

Following the Heaven-Knowledge Chart is the Preface which is an excerpt from the section of the Course's Preface entitled "What it Says." The preface is a minor masterpiece in itself as it provides a brilliant overview of the Course's non-dual philosophy and metaphysics.

"Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*" is meant to facilitate and deepen your understanding of the spiritual masterpiece that is *A Course in Miracles,* and supplement your self-study of the Course.

Stephen Wingate
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From the Preface of A Course in Miracles

What It Says

Nothing real can be threatened.
Nothing unreal exists.
Herein lies the peace of God.

This is how A Course in Miracles begins. It makes a fundamental distinction between the real and the unreal; between knowledge and perception. Knowledge is truth, under one law, the law of love or God. Truth is unalterable, eternal and unambiguous. It can be unrecognized, but it cannot be changed. It applies to everything that God created, and only what He created is real. It is beyond learning because it is beyond time and process. It has no opposite; no beginning and no end. It merely is.

The world of perception, on the other hand, is the world of time, of change, of beginnings and endings. It is based on interpretation, not on facts. It is the world of birth and death, founded on the belief in scarcity, loss, separation and death. It is learned rather than given, selective in its perceptual emphases, unstable in its functioning, and inaccurate in its interpretations.

From knowledge and perception respectively, two distinct thought systems arise which are opposite in every respect. In the realm of knowledge no thoughts exist apart from God, because God and His Creation share one Will. The world of perception, however, is made by the belief in opposites and separate wills, in perpetual conflict with each other and with God. What perception sees and hears appears to be real because it permits into awareness only what conforms to the wishes of the perceiver. This leads to a world of illusions, a world which needs constant defense precisely because it is not real.

When you have been caught in the world of perception you are caught in a dream. You cannot escape without help, because everything your senses show merely witnesses to the reality of the dream. God has provided the Answer, the only Way out, the true Helper. It is the function of His Voice, His Holy Spirit, to mediate between the two worlds. He can do this because, while on the one hand He knows the truth, on the other He also recognizes our illusions, but without believing in them. It is the Holy Spirit's goal to help us escape from the dream world by teaching us how to reverse our thinking and unlearn our mistakes. Forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's great learning aid in bringing this thought reversal about. However, the Course has its own definition of what forgiveness really is just as it defines the world in its own way.

The world we see merely reflects our own internal frame of reference – the dominant ideas, wishes and emotions in our minds. "Projection makes perception" (Text p. 445). We look inside first, decide the kind of world we want to see and then project that world outside, making it the truth as we see it. We make it true by our interpretations of what it is we are seeing. If we are using perception to justify our own mistakes – our anger, our impulses to attack, our lack of love in whatever form it may take – we will see a world of evil, destruction, malice, envy and despair. All this we must learn to forgive, not because we are being "good" and "charitable," but because what we are seeing is not true. We have distorted the world by our twisted defenses, and are therefore seeing what is not there. As we learn to recognize our perceptual errors, we also learn
to look past them or "forgive." At the same time we are forgiving ourselves, looking past our
distorted self-concepts to the Self That God created in us and as us.

Sin is defined as "lack of love" (Text p. 11). Since love is all there is, sin in the sight of the Holy
Spirit is a mistake to be corrected, rather than an evil to be punished. Our sense of inadequacy,
weakness and incompletion comes from the strong investment in the "scarcity principle" that
governs the whole world of illusions. From that point of view, we seek in others what we feel is
wanting in ourselves. We "love" another in order to get something ourselves. That, in fact, is
what passes for love in the dream world. There can be no greater mistake than that, for love is
incapable of asking for anything.

Only minds can really join, and whom God has joined no man can put asunder (Text p. 356). It
is, however, only at the level of Christ Mind that true union is possible, and has, in fact, never
been lost. The "little I" seeks to enhance itself by external approval, external possessions and
external "love." The Self That God created needs nothing. It is forever complete, safe, loved and
loving. It seeks to share rather than to get; to extend rather than project. It has no needs and
wants to join with others out of their mutual awareness of abundance.

The special relationships of the world are destructive, selfish and childishly egocentric. Yet, if
given to the Holy Spirit, these relationships can become the holiest things on earth – the miracles
that point the way to the return to Heaven. The world uses its special relationships as a final
weapon of exclusion and a demonstration of separateness. The Holy Spirit transforms them into
perfect lessons in forgiveness and in awakening from the dream. Each one is an opportunity to
let perceptions be healed and errors corrected. Each one is another chance to forgive oneself by
forgiving the other. And each one becomes still another invitation to the Holy Spirit and to the
remembrance of God.

Perception is a function of the body, and therefore represents a limit on awareness. Perception
sees through the body's eyes and hears through the body's ears. It evokes the limited responses
which the body makes. The body appears to be largely self-motivated and independent, yet it
actually responds only to the intentions of the mind. If the mind wants to use it for attack in any
form, it becomes prey to sickness, age and decay. If the mind accepts the Holy Spirit's purpose
for it instead, it becomes a useful way of communicating with others, invulnerable as long as it is
needed, and to be gently laid by when its use is over. Of itself it is neutral, as is everything in the
world of perception. Whether it is used for the goals of the ego or the Holy Spirit depends
entirely on what the mind wants.

The opposite of seeing through the body's eyes is the vision of Christ, which reflects strength
rather than weakness, unity rather than separation, and love rather than fear. The opposite of
hearing through the body's ears is communication through the Voice for God, the Holy Spirit,
which abides in each of us. His Voice seems distant and difficult to hear because the ego, which
speaks for the little, separated self, seems to be much louder. This is actually reversed. The Holy
Spirit speaks with unmistakable clarity and overwhelming appeal. No one who does not choose
to identify with the body could possibly be deaf to His messages of release and hope, nor could
he fail to accept joyously the vision of Christ in glad exchange for his miserable picture of
himself.
Christ's vision is the Holy Spirit's gift, God's alternative to the illusion of separation and to the belief in the reality of sin, guilt and death. It is the one correction for all errors of perception; the reconciliation of the seeming opposites on which this world is based. Its kindly light shows all things from another point of view, reflecting the thought system that arises from knowledge and making return to God not only possible but inevitable. What was regarded as injustice done to one by someone else now becomes a call for help and for union. Sin, sickness and attack are seen as misperceptions calling for remedy through gentleness and love. Defenses are laid down because where there is no attack there is no need for them. Our brothers' needs become our own, because they are taking the journey with us as we go to God. Without us they would lose their way. Without them we could never find our own.

Forgiveness is unknown in Heaven, where the need for it would be inconceivable. However, in this world, forgiveness is a necessary correction for all the mistakes that we have made. To offer forgiveness is the only way for us to have it, for it reflects the law of Heaven that giving and receiving are the same. Heaven is the natural state of all the Sons of God as He created them. Such is their reality forever. It has not changed because it has been forgotten.

Forgiveness is the means by which we will remember. Through forgiveness the thinking of the world is reversed. The forgiven world becomes the gate of Heaven, because by its mercy we can at last forgive ourselves. Holding no one prisoner to guilt, we become free. Acknowledging Christ in all our brothers, we recognize His Presence in ourselves. Forgetting all our misperceptions, and with nothing from the past to hold us back, we can remember God. Beyond this, learning cannot go. When we are ready, God Himself will take the final step in our return to Him.

Excerpt from the Preface of *A Course in Miracles*
CHAPTER ONE
THE MEANING OF MIRACLES

Main Theme: The "Miracle."

Introduction: You will find it helpful to print the Heaven-Knowledge Chart now so you can refer to it easily. It is imperative that you become familiar with the Chart, as it illustrates the non-dual thought system of the Course, shows the key terms in context, and provides a visual overview of the Course's theory and mythology.

The ego's strategy is to keep the Son of God mindless, unaware of his capacity to choose the Holy Spirit and remember his true Identity as Christ. The belief in the reality of the separation from God leads to sin, guilt and fear in the ego mind (the wrong mind), which leads to the projection of the world and body as a distraction device. Special relationships are formed in the world as an attempt to fill the sense of lack, and to "get rid" of the sin, guilt and fear experienced in the ego mind.

The miracle facilitates a shift in identity from "I am a separate ego-body" to "I am the Self or Christ." People and bodies in the world appear to have many different problems requiring many different solutions. The first Miracle Principle says all miracles are the same because there is only one problem and one solution. The one problem is the belief in the separation from God, and the one solution is the Atonement which is the realization that the separation from God never happened.

The miracle is never "external" or in the world. The miracle happens in the mind of the Son of God at the point of the decision maker when he chooses the Holy Spirit as his teacher and the Oneness of Christ as his Identity; rather than the ego as his teacher and the separate body as his identity.

The miracle shifts the problem and solution from the effect (the body and world) to the cause (the mind).

Miracle Principle 1 - There is no order of difficulty in miracles. One is not "harder" or "bigger" than another. They are all the same. All expressions of love are maximal. (Reference 1 p3 I.1.1-4)

The whole thought system of the Course is represented in the first Miracle Principle.

Miracle Principle 49 - The miracle makes no distinction among degrees of misperception. It is a device for perception correction, effective quite apart from either the degree or the direction of the error. This is its true indiscriminateness. (R2 p6 I.49.1-3)

Miracle Principle 17 - Miracles transcend the body. They are sudden shifts into invisibility, away from the bodily level. That is why they heal. (R3 p4 I.17.1-3)

The "shift" is of focus from the body to the mind. "Invisibility" refers to the Son of God in the mind as the decision maker. The miracle is a shift in focus from the visible to the invisible.

Miracle Principle 23 - Miracles rearrange perception and place all levels in true perspective. This is healing because sickness comes from confusing the levels. (R4 p4 I.23.1-2)

"Levels" refer to the level of mind as the cause, and the level of body and world as the effect. Problems must be addressed at the cause (the mind) to get real results. Working at the level of effect (the body and world) treats only the symptom, but does not resolve the real cause.

Miracle Principle 30 - By recognizing spirit, miracles adjust the levels of perception and show them in proper alignment. (R5 p5 I.30.1)

The term "body" includes the physical and psychological body. The ego revels in attempting to "fix" problems at the body-psyche level because the body-psyche is a mindless smokescreen and distraction from the real problem and solution which is at the level of the mind — the decision maker or Son of God.

Miracle Principle 37 - A miracle is a correction introduced into false thinking by me [Jesus]. It acts as a catalyst, breaking up erroneous perception and reorganizing it properly. This
places you under the Atonement principle, where perception is healed. (R6 p5 I.37.1-3)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. The belief in separation from God is the only problem. And the only solution is the Atonement — the realization that separation from God never happened. There is one problem and one solution.

It is important to understand why we focus on problems in the body and world rather than in the mind. When we believe we have separated from God we experience sin, guilt and fear in the mind that we find so unbearable we attempt to "get rid" of it by projecting it out and making the body and world. We then believe that our problems are indeed "out there" in the body and world rather than "in here" in our own mind.

**Miracle Principle 5 - Miracles are habits, and should be involuntary. They should not be under conscious control. (R7 p3 I.5.1-2)**

Miracle Principles 5, 8 and 10 (References R7, R8 and R9) seem to imply that miracles are something we do in the world of bodies. This is not the case. The miracle takes place in the mind only. The miracle shifts the focus of attention from the body and world to the decision maker in the mind where the power of belief is. The mind's belief in sin (separation from God), guilt (over the selfishness of separation), and fear (of punishment and loss) leads to the mind making a body and world onto which it projects the sin, guilt and fear. All power is of the mind, not the body and world. All healing is of the mind, not the body.

**Miracle Principle 8 - Miracles are healing because they supply a lack; they are performed by those who temporarily have more for those who temporarily have less. (R8 p3 I.8.1)**

**Miracle Principle 10 - The use of miracles as spectacles to induce belief is a misunderstanding of their purpose. (R9 p3 I.10.1)**

Refer to the Chart. We could say the main purpose of the Course is for us to realize the power of our mind; not the power to manifest miracles in the world, but to realize the power of the mind to believe in the dream. All power that appears to be in the world's dream was given by the mind of the dreamer (the Son of God). All power over the dream world is in the mind of the dreamer.

There is no power of evil in the world. The power is in the mind that believes in evil, separation, sin, guilt and fear. We must realize that sin, guilt and fear are in the mind (the cause), and not in the body and world (the effect).

**Miracle Principle 12 - Miracles are thoughts. Thoughts can represent the lower, bodily level of experience, or the higher, spiritual level of experience. One makes the physical, and the other creates the spiritual. (R10 p3 I.12.1-3)**

Wrong-minded thoughts "make" the physical body and world. Right-minded thoughts "create" the spiritual. The term "create" refers to God — God creates. The term "make" refers to the ego — the ego "makes" the dream world and body.

**Miracle Principle 14 - Miracles bear witness to truth. They are convincing because they arise from conviction. Without conviction they deteriorate into magic, which is mindless and therefore destructive; or rather, the uncreative use of mind. (R11 p4 I.14.1-3)**

Miracles reflect the Truth. Truth is of God. Miracles are illusions that reflect the truth. "Magic" is the attempt to solve problems in the world and body rather than in the mind.

**You are free to believe what you choose, and what you do attests to what you believe. (R12 p7 II.1.9)**

We are free within the illusion to choose what we believe — the ego or the Holy Spirit. Contrast our relative freedom to choose within the illusion with the absolute freedom of Will which is of God and Christ. Within the illusion what we choose (the ego or the Holy Spirit) will reflect our experience in the world. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our guide, we experience peace. When we choose the ego as our guide, we experience conflict.

**You are free to establish your kingdom where you see fit, but the right choice is inevitable if you remember this: (R13 p9 III.5.3)**

Within the illusion we have the freedom to choose to believe in the kingdom of the ego, or the Kingdom of
The miracle joins in the Atonement by placing the mind in the service of the Holy Spirit. This establishes the proper function of the mind and corrects its errors, which are merely lacks of love. Your mind can be possessed by illusions, but spirit is eternally free. (R14 p11 IV.2.6-8)

The proper function of the mind is to choose the Holy Spirit not the ego, and place the mind in the service of the Holy Spirit. The ego's goal is to maintain our belief in separate existence. The Holy Spirit facilitates our acceptance of the Atonement which states the separation never happened.

While you believe you are in a body, however, you can choose between loveless and miraculous channels of expression. You can make an empty shell, but you cannot express nothing at all. You can wait, delay, paralyze yourself, or reduce your creativity almost to nothing. But you cannot abolish it. You can destroy your medium of communication, but not your potential. (R15 p12 V.1.3-7)

We choose between the ego's loveless expressions and the Holy Spirit's miraculous expressions. The medium of communication is the body which can be destroyed. The potential is the mind of the Son of God which cannot be destroyed.

Whatever is true is eternal, and cannot change or be changed. Spirit is therefore unalterable because it is already perfect, but the mind can elect what it chooses to serve. The only limit put on its choice is that it cannot serve two masters. (R16 p13 V.5.1-3)

We choose either the ego or the Holy Spirit. Our mind has the power to choose and believe, and we experience exactly what we choose and believe.

The real purpose of this world is to use it to correct your unbelief. You can never control the effects of fear yourself, because you made fear, and you believe in what you made. In attitude, then, though not in content, you resemble your Creator, Who has perfect faith in His creations because He created them. Belief produces the acceptance of existence. That is why you can believe what no one else thinks is true. It is true for you because it was made by you. (R17 p14 VI.4.1-6)

Do not make the mistake of trying to bring God, the Holy Spirit, or Jesus into your dream world and ask them to help resolve your illusory problems. Bring the illusory problems to the light of God's Truth. Do not bring God into your illusory world. We made the world as a place to hide from God's Oneness. God knows nothing of our dream world. Remember the power of the mind to make up a world and believe it is real. The mind has the power to make illusion appear real.

But although you can perceive false associations, you can never make them real except to yourself. You believe in what you make. (R18 p15 VII.3.7-8)

Within the illusion we are free to believe whatever we want, but it does not make it real. We have the power to make the world and believe in it. The Course teaches us that what we want in the world is painful, and the peace and love we truly want is of God.

This is a course in mind training. All learning involves attention and study at some level. Some of the later parts of the course rest too heavily on these earlier sections not to require their careful study. You will also need them for preparation. Without this, you may become much too fearful of what is to come to make constructive use of it. However, as you study these earlier sections, you will begin to see some of the implications that will be amplified later on. (R19 p16 VII.4.1-6)

It is important to read and study the Course, especially the fundamental concepts illustrated in the Chart and presented in the early chapters. The fundamental concepts must be studied, understood and applied in your daily life so they become experiential. "This is not a Course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application."

References R20, R21 and R22 below address the ego's projection of linear time and space. Sin, guilt and fear projected out of the mind make psychological time. Sin (the separation from God) is the past. Guilt (of selfishness of separation) is experienced in the present. Fear (of punishment for
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the separation) is the future. As the Son of God there is no time and space. Time and space come after sin, guilt and fear are projected out, which also makes the world. The holy instant is timeless, spaceless and free of sin, guilt and fear.

**Miracle Principle 13** - Miracles are both beginnings and endings, and so they alter the temporal order. They are always affirmations of rebirth, which seem to go back but really go forward. They undo the past in the present, and thus release the future. (R20 p4 I.13.1-3)

The miracle happens at the decision making point of the mind (see the Chart) which is timeless and spaceless. The miracle is also known as the holy instant.

**Miracle Principle 47** - The miracle is a learning device that lessens the need for time. It establishes an out-of-pattern time interval not under the usual laws of time. In this sense it is timeless. (R21 p6 I.47.1-3)

Without sin, guilt and fear there is no psychological time; no past, present or future.

The miracle minimizes the need for time. In the longitudinal or horizontal plane [linear time] the recognition of the equality of the members of the Sonship appears to involve almost endless time. However, the miracle entails a sudden shift from horizontal to vertical perception. This introduces an interval from which the giver and receiver both emerge farther along in time than they would otherwise have been. The miracle thus has the unique property of abolishing time to the extent that it renders the interval of time it spans unnecessary. There is no relationship between the time a miracle takes and the time it covers. The miracle substitutes for learning that might have taken thousands of years. It does so by the underlying recognition of perfect equality of giver and receiver on which the miracle rests. The miracle shortens time by collapsing it, thus eliminating certain intervals within it. It does this, however, within the larger temporal sequence. (R22 p8 II.6.1-10)

The horizontal plane refers to linear time which is made by the ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear. The Son of God is beyond time and space. The miracle collapses time. The miracle is illusory but leads out of the illusion to the Son of God beyond time and space.

In the next two passages Jesus addresses his relationship to us and God, and his role in the Atonement.

An elder brother is entitled to respect for his greater experience, and obedience for his greater wisdom. He is also entitled to love because he is a brother, and to devotion if he is devoted. It is only my devotion that entitles me to yours. There is nothing about me that you cannot attain. I have nothing that does not come from God. The difference between us now is that I have nothing else. This leaves me in a state which is only potential in you. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me" does not mean that I am in any way separate or different from you except in time, and time does not really exist. The statement is more meaningful in terms of a vertical rather than a horizontal axis. You stand below me and I stand below God. In the process of "rising up," I am higher because without me the distance between God and man would be too great for you to encompass. I bridge the distance as an elder brother to you on the one hand, and as a Son of God on the other. My devotion to my brothers has placed me in charge of the Sonship, which I render complete because I share it. (R23 p7-8 II.3.7-13;II.4.1-6)

Jesus is the same as us. We are all the One Son of God. Do not make the mistake of worshipping an idol. The Jesus of the Course is not the historical Jesus represented in the Bible. The Jesus of *A Course in Miracles* is a symbol of the non-egoic presence of perfect love in the mind.

I am in charge of the process of Atonement, which I undertook to begin. When you offer a miracle to any of my brothers, you do it to yourself and me. The reason you come before me is that I do not need miracles for my own Atonement, but I stand at the end in case you fail temporarily. My part in the Atonement is the cancelling out of all errors that you could not otherwise correct. (R24 p8-9 III.1.1-4)

Jesus is speaking in symbols. He does not mean that he personally is in charge of the Atonement. He is a
symbol which represents that in each of us which facilitates the Atonement for all of us as the One Son of God. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are symbols that help us remember our oneness with God, and choose not to identify with the ego.

It is important to be aware of our preconceived notions of Jesus and realize he is not what our old ideas have portrayed him to be. He is a symbol that can help us get beyond all symbols and realize the reality of our oneness with God.

You are free to establish your kingdom where you see fit, but the right choice is inevitable if you remember this:

* Spirit is in a state of grace forever.  
* Your reality is only spirit.  
* Therefore you are in a state of grace forever.

Atonement undoes all errors in this respect, and thus uproots the source of fear. Whenever you experience God's reassurances as threat, it is always because you are defending misplaced or misdirected loyalty. When you project this to others you imprison them, but only to the extent to which you reinforce errors they have already made. This makes them vulnerable to the distortions of others, since their own perception of themselves is distorted. (R25 p9-10 III.5.3-10)

The three sentences in italics above are "God's reassurances." Fear of God's reassurances is due to the ego's fear of extinction. Our only reality is the oneness of spirit, not the separate existence of the ego-body. Our loyalty is misdirected when we put our trust in the ego rather than the Holy Spirit. Resistance and fear of what this Course teaches are due to the ego's fear of its own perceived death. Projecting the ego's sin, guilt and fear onto someone else reinforces the other's misperceptions of himself.

**Chapter One Summary**

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is one problem and one solution. The problem is the identification with the separate ego-body. The solution is the realization of my Oneness with God and Christ. As the Son of God I have the power to choose the Holy Spirit or the ego and to believe in what I make. All power over the dream world is in my mind as the decision maker — the Son of God.

**End Chapter One**
CHAPTER TWO
THE SEPARATION AND THE ATONEMENT

Main Theme: This chapter provides an overview of the entire thought system of the Course. It is the only chapter that does so. This chapter also illustrates the importance of recognizing and appreciating the power of the mind.

Introduction: Refer to the Chart to understand the key terms in the context of the overall thought system.

Above the solid horizontal line is Heaven-Knowledge, God, Christ, Self, Oneness: the only Reality. Everything below the line is illusion. This clear, uncompromising distinction between truth and illusion is what distinguishes a non-dual thought system from a dual thought system. The Course is based on a radical, uncompromising, non-dual thought system. Without exception: Truth is absolute and non-dual; Illusion is relative and dual.

In Heaven, cause and effect are one. God is the first and only Cause, and Christ is the Effect. God is love, and love extends itself; this is creation. God's creation is Christ, and yet they are one. There is no separation between God and His creation, Christ; this is non-duality.

God creates and extends; the ego makes and projects.

The mythology of the Course begins with "the tiny mad idea." The tiny mad idea is the idea that Christ, the Son of God, separated from His Father. Separation from the love and oneness of God leads to a sense of lack and incompleteness in the Son, who then turns to the ego in search of love, abundance and wholeness.

With exuberance, the ego presents its case for separation from God to the Son; the Holy Spirit remains calm and silent. The ego advises the Son that he can maintain his separate, individual existence and glorify his specialness independent of God. Still, the Holy Spirit remains serene and quiet. The Son weighs the evidence and decides in favor of the ego for individuality, specialness and separation from God.

Having made his decision for independence, specialness and separation from God, the Son begins to feel a sense of sin, guilt and fear: Sin of his separation from God, guilt over his selfish desire for specialness, and fear of loss and retribution from God for choosing against Him.

To relieve the pain of separation, the ego makes a world of bodies onto which it projects the sense of sin, guilt and fear so the Son can maintain his specialness and be free of the pain of separation. By making a world and projecting the sin, guilt and fear onto it, the true source of the Son's pain (his decision to be separate) is forgotten and hidden in the world behind the veil of Self-forgetfulness and denial.

The miracle, forgiveness and the Atonement remove the veil of Self-forgetfulness, undo the separation and remind the Son of his true Identity as the Son of God; not the son of the ego.

Behind the veil of Self-forgetfulness, problems appear to be in the body and world; therefore, solutions appear to be in the body and world. "Magic" is the term the Course uses for solutions sought in the body and world. Problems are in the mind, and solutions are in the mind. The miracle facilitates a shift from focusing on the body and world to focusing on the mind at the point of the decision maker where the Son can choose again (for the ego or the Holy Spirit).

Introduction to Reference 1: God's Son is one. The Course frequently uses the term "Sons" of God, however there is one Son. All life in the universe is God's One Son — not only human beings; all beings, every grain of sand, the earth, our solar system and every galaxy in the universe are all included in the term "God's Son," or the "Sonship." This is not pantheism which we will address in later chapters.

It should especially be noted that God has only one Son. If all His creations are His Sons, every one must be an integral part of the whole Sonship. The Sonship in its Oneness transcends the sum of its parts. (Reference 1 p33 VII.6.1-3)
Creation is God's extension of love. Creation and extension are of God. Only God creates. Projection is of the ego. The ego makes, projects or miscreates. Other than in the first few chapters these terms (create vs. project) are used consistently in the Course.

There is no emptiness in you. Because of your likeness to your Creator you are creative. No child of God can lose this ability because it is inherent in what he is, but he can use it inappropriately by projecting. The inappropriate use of extension, or projection, occurs when you believe that some emptiness or lack exists in you, and that you can fill it with your own ideas instead of truth. This process involves the following steps:

First, you believe that what God created can be changed by your own mind.
Second, you believe that what is perfect can be rendered imperfect or lacking.
Third, you believe that you can distort the creations of God, including yourself.
Fourth, you believe that you can create yourself, and that the direction of your own creation is up to you.

These related distortions represent a picture of what actually occurred in the separation, or the "detour into fear." None of this existed before the separation, nor does it actually exist now. Everything God created is like Him.

Chapter Three, the following chapter, addresses the "authority problem." The "tiny mad idea" is the idea that we separated from God's love and wholeness. The separation never happened. The ego thinks it knows the solution to the problem of lack, and will not listen to the Holy Spirit or God — this is the "authority problem." The ego set up the split mind (right mind – wrong mind) and made the world in order to maintain its separate existence and authority. The ego must maintain its authority in fear of the Son choosing the Holy Spirit as his guide instead of the ego.

If a light is suddenly turned on while someone is dreaming a fearful dream, he may initially interpret the light itself as part of his dream and be afraid of it. However, when he awakens, the light is correctly perceived as the release from the dream, which is then no longer accorded reality. This release does not depend on illusions. The knowledge that illuminates not only sets you free, but also shows you clearly that you are free. (R3 p18 I.4.6-9)

We are identified with the "hero" of the dream (the ego-body), and we wish to stay asleep in the dream of separation. The light of Atonement shines from outside the dream to guide us out, but we bring the light into the dream so we may stay asleep. This is what the ego (and religions) have done — they attempt to bring the light of reality into the illusory dream. The ego brings the light of truth into the dream hoping to "fix" the dream rather than allowing the light to wake us up and guide us out of the dream to reality. Often the ego will try to bring Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit into the dream to heal the dream.

The Son of God has the power to choose the ego or the Holy Spirit as a guide. It is difficult for the Son of God to believe that the Holy Spirit's gentle smile, silence and defenselessness is salvation. Once the Son as the decision maker chooses the ego as his guide, the maintenance of separation is the ego's goal; its modus operandi is defense and attack.

The Atonement is a total commitment. You may still think this is associated with loss, a mistake all the separated Sons of God make in one way or another. It is hard to believe a defense that cannot attack is the best defense. This is what is meant by "the meek shall inherit the earth." (R4 p20 II.7.1-4)

It is important to understand the fear of letting go of ego identification as it is perceived as extinction by the ego. The ego interprets true freedom as imprisonment and loss because the ego's idea of
freedom is in the specialness of separation. Therefore, Atonement, the realization of oneness, is a threat to the ego's independence. The Holy Spirit corrects this misperception by showing the Son that freedom is in Atonement, not in separation. Again, the Son of God as the decision maker chooses the ego or the Holy Spirit as its teacher. The only true freedom is the freedom of the mind, not the body. Real freedom is the freedom from the belief in the sin of separation, guilt and fear. True freedom is the freedom that comes in our identification with Christ in Spirit.

Before miracle workers are ready to undertake their function in this world, it is essential that they fully understand the fear of release. Otherwise they may unwittingly foster the belief that release is imprisonment, a belief that is already very prevalent. (R5 p24 V.1.1-2)

Corrective learning always begins with the awakening of spirit, and the turning away from the belief in physical sight. This often entails fear, because you are afraid of what your spiritual sight will show you. (R6 p26 V.7.1-2)

The ego is afraid of Atonement because it fears extinction. For salvation we must turn to spirit, true perception or vision rather than the ego's misperception and projections of the body and world.

The Course employs terminology used in the Bible and psychology, and reinterprets them from the ego's wrong-minded view to the Holy Spirit's right-minded view. The psychological term "defense" is used here:

Since the separation, defenses have been used almost entirely to defend against the Atonement, and thus maintain the separation. This is generally seen as a need to protect the body. The many body fantasies in which minds engage arise from the distorted belief that the body can be used as a means for attaining "atonement." (R7 p21 III.1.2-4)

"Defenses" are everything the ego does to defend against the Atonement. The ego's aim is to keep the Son of God out of the mind, and in the mindless body and world. The ego motivates the Son to stay out of the mind by telling him he will be annihilated. The ego makes sin, guilt and fear real, and tells the Son that God will punish him if he stays in the mind. The ego makes the body and world to project the sin, guilt and fear out and to "free" the Son of the pain of separation, the guilt of selfishness, and the fear of punishment.

In reality no separation ever happened; therefore sin, guilt and fear are based on an illusion — "the tiny mad idea." The correct use of denial is to deny that the separation ever happened. The ego's use of denial is to believe the separation is real; sin, guilt and fear are real, but to deny it in me, and project it onto you and the world.

This is the proper use of denial. It is not used to hide anything, but to correct error. It brings all error into the light, and since error and darkness are the same, it corrects error automatically. True denial is a powerful protective device. (R8 p19 II.1.12-14;II.2.1)

It is the Holy Spirit's view that the Atonement can only heal. The Atonement principle is that the separation from God never happened; therefore, sin, guilt and fear are based on an illusion. The reality is that God's Son never separated from the Father.

The Atonement is the only defense that cannot be used destructively because it is not a device you made. The Atonement principle was in effect long before the Atonement began. The principle was love and the Atonement was an act of love. (R9 p19 II.4.1-3)

It was only after the separation that the Atonement and the conditions necessary for its fulfillment were planned. Then a defense so splendid was needed that it could not be misused, although it could be refused. Refusal could not, however, turn it into a weapon of attack, which is the inherent characteristic of other defenses. The Atonement thus becomes the only defense that is not a two-edged sword. It can only heal. (R10 p20 II.4.5-9)

The Holy Spirit denies that the separation ever happened. The ego reinforces the illusion of separation by making it real, and attempting to avoid the sin, guilt and fear by projecting it into the body and world it made.
Sickness or "not-right-mindedness" is the result of level confusion, because it always entails the belief that what is amiss on one level can adversely affect another. We have referred to miracles as the means of correcting level confusion, for all mistakes must be corrected at the level on which they occur. Only the mind is capable of error. The body can act wrongly only when it is responding to misthought. The body cannot create, and the belief that it can, a fundamental error, produces all physical symptoms. Physical illness represents a belief in magic. (R11 p23 IV.2.2-7)

The ego represents the denial of the truth of oneness. The Holy Spirit denies the denial of the truth of oneness. The Atonement needs no defense. The ego uses the body as a distraction from the true cause of illness which is in the mind. The mind is the cause of effects in the body and world. The mind is the cause. The body is the effect. Errors are of the mind and must be corrected in the mind. Miracles correct the level confusion of mind and body. In these early chapters we are laying the foundation for the understanding and application of true forgiveness and healing.

Only the mind can create because spirit has already been created, and the body is a learning device for the mind. Learning devices are not lessons in themselves. Their purpose is merely to facilitate learning. The worst a faulty use of a learning device can do is to fail to facilitate learning. It has no power in itself to introduce actual learning errors. (R12 p23 IV.3.1-5)

The word "create" is used differently in the above passage than in the rest of the Course. The mind makes or projects. Only God creates. In this passage "miscreate" is more appropriate. In the right mind the body is a learning device. In the wrong mind the body is proof that the separation is real, and the body and world is a cause not an effect. In the right mind, the mind is the cause and the body and world are effects. Being sick or upset is caused by the mind, not by the "external" body or world. However, to deny the existence of the body and the world is a mistake.

The body is merely part of your experience in the physical world. Its abilities can be and frequently are over-evaluated. However, it is almost impossible to deny its existence in this world. Those who do so are engaging in a particularly unworthy form of denial. The term "unworthy" here implies only that it is not necessary to protect the mind by denying the unmindful. If one denies the unfortunate aspect of the mind's power, one is also denying the power itself. (R13 p23-24 IV.3.8-13)

The "unmindful" refers to the body. Mistreating the body is a mistake. The body is an effect not a cause. This does not mean we should not take care of the body. The body has no inherent qualities apart from the mind. To deny or attempt to avoid the body is a mistake; as is making the body all-important. The body is neutral. Be kind and gentle to yourself and those identified with the body. Do not force yourself or others to deny the body by using the Course's concepts. Do not make the body or world evil. The body and world have no inherent qualities apart from those assigned by the mind.

All material means that you accept as remedies for bodily ills are restatements of magic principles. This is the first step in believing that the body makes its own illness. It is a second misstep to attempt to heal it through non-creative agents. It does not follow, however, that the use of such agents for corrective purposes is evil. Sometimes the illness has a sufficiently strong hold over the mind to render a person temporarily inaccessible to the Atonement. In this case it may be wise to utilize a compromise approach to mind and body, in which something from the outside is temporarily given healing belief. This is because the last thing that can help the non-right-minded, or the sick, is an increase in fear. They are already in a fear-weakened state. If they are prematurely exposed to a miracle, they may be precipitated into panic. This is likely to occur when upside-down perception has induced the belief that miracles are frightening.

Denying the body or over-emphasizing the body are both distractions from the true source of healing and salvation which is in the mind. The ego's strategy is to keep us focused on and
identified with the body and world. When we relax our attention away from the body and world, go back to the decision making part of our mind and choose to identify with the Holy Spirit, the ego dissolves.

The value of the Atonement does not lie in the manner in which it is expressed. In fact, if it is used truly, it will inevitably be expressed in whatever way is most helpful to the receiver. This means that a miracle, to attain its full efficacy, must be expressed in a language that the recipient can understand without fear. This does not necessarily mean that this is the highest level of communication of which he is capable. It does mean, however, that it is the highest level of communication of which he is capable now. The whole aim of the miracle is to raise the level of communication, not to lower it by increasing fear. (R14 p24 IV.4.1-10; IV.5.1-6)

The language of the Course is often dual so as to meet people where they believe they are: in a body in the world, and to reduce the fear in the mind of the reader. "Magic" works on the level of the body. Magic is treating the body-symptom-effect, rather than the mind-cause.

Tolerance for pain may be high, but it is not without limit. Eventually everyone begins to recognize, however dimly, that there must be a better way. As this recognition becomes more firmly established, it becomes a turning point. (R15 p22 III.3.5-7)

Magic works temporarily but not ultimately. Magic reduces pain. Pain (physical, mental or emotional) is a motivator to choose the Holy Spirit and the Atonement.

Discomfort is aroused only to bring the need for correction into awareness. (R16 p26 V.7.8)

Discomfort is a motivator for change. Pain or discomfort is not Atonement or sacrifice in the traditional Christian sense. We will address the idea of sacrifice, suffering and Atonement in later chapters.

I do not foster level confusion, but you must choose to correct it. (R17 p29 VI.2.1)

You must choose the miracle yourself. You must ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help, not the ego. Jesus and the Holy Spirit help in facilitating the Atonement, not in improving your experience in the world such as: finding a job, a lover, or winning the lottery.

The miracle is a shift in identity from the ego-body to the mind-spirit. The mind is the cause; the body is the effect. Believing the body is the cause, and the mind is the effect is level confusion. You choose to believe separation, sin, guilt and fear in the mind are real, and project them into your body and world; so you must choose again. You have all power over the dream world.

The truth is that you are responsible for what you think, because it is only at this level that you can exercise choice. What you do comes from what you think. (R17A p29 VI.2.6-7)

The level of mind is where problems are made and resolved; not the body. However, do not deny or ignore symptoms of the body. Treat the body lovingly.

You must change your mind, not your behavior, and this is a matter of willingness. You do not need guidance except at the mind level. Correction belongs only at the level where change is possible. Change does not mean anything at the symptom level, where it cannot work. The correction of fear is your responsibility. When you ask for release from fear, you are implying that it is not. You should ask, instead, for help in the conditions that have brought the fear about. These conditions always entail a willingness to be separate. At that level you can help it. You are much too tolerant of mind wandering, and are passively condoning your mind’s miscreations. The particular result does not matter, but the fundamental error does. The correction is always the same. Before you choose to do anything, ask me if your choice is in accord with mine. If you are sure that it is, there will be no fear. (R18 p29 VI.3.4-7; VI.4.1-10)

Mind is the source of behavior. Change happens at the level of mind, not at the level of the body. This does not mean that we should deny or ignore symptoms of the body — treat them! But also
realize the ultimate cause of physical symptoms is in the mind.

Ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help at the level of the mind or cause, not the level of the body or effect. Prayer is not for change in the body or world, but for a shift in vision at the level of mind. Change the mind before the body and world. "Mind wandering" is into the illusory world and body. Correction is always the same — there is no order of difficulty in miracles.

Only your mind can produce fear. (R19 p30 VI.6.7)

Say to yourself that you must somehow have chosen not to love, or the fear could not have arisen. (R20 p30 VI.7.2)

Fear is the choice not to love. When we choose the ego, we are guided by the voice of fear. When we choose the Holy Spirit, we are guided by the Voice for love.

Everyone experiences fear. Yet it would take very little right thinking to realize why fear occurs. Few appreciate the real power of the mind, and no one remains fully aware of it all the time. (R21 p31 VI.9.1-3)

Those who are always fully aware of the power of the mind are living in the real world and are Self Realized. We will elaborate on the "real world" in later chapters.

You prefer to believe that your thoughts cannot exert real influence because you are actually afraid of them. This may allay awareness of the guilt, but at the cost of perceiving the mind as impotent. If you believe that what you think is ineffectual you may cease to be afraid of it, but you are hardly likely to respect it. There are no idle thoughts. All thinking produces form at some level.

Pain, suffering, sin, guilt and fear; as well as pleasure, happiness, forgiveness, innocence and love all have their source in thought. The mind is the source of the entire universe of experience.

You may still complain about fear, but you nevertheless persist in making yourself fearful.

I have already indicated that you cannot ask me to release you from fear. I know it does not exist, but you do not. If I intervened between your thoughts and their results, I would be tampering with a basic law of cause and effect; the most fundamental law there is. I would hardly help you if I depreciated the power of your own thinking. This would be in direct opposition to the purpose of this course. It is much more helpful to remind you that you do not guard your thoughts carefully enough. You may feel that at this point it would take a miracle to enable you to do this, which is perfectly true. You are not used to miracle-minded thinking, but you can be trained to think that way. All miracle workers need that kind of training. I cannot let you leave your mind unguarded, or you will not be able to help me. Miracle working entails a full realization of the power of thought in order to avoid miscreation. (R22 p31 VI.9.10-13;VII.1-2.1-2)

You must realize the power of your mind. Your mind is the cause of the universe. This is a Course in cause and not effect. A Course in Miracles is a mind training course, and is a lifetime's work. Projection puts the problem "out there" in the body and world apart from you. The miracle brings the focus back to the mind and to the realization of our oneness with God.

The miracle worker must have genuine respect for true cause and effect as a necessary condition for the miracle to occur. (R22A p32 VII.2.4)

Mind is cause. The body and world are the effects.

Now we begin to look at our responsibility in the Atonement, forgiveness and healing, and our relationship to others.

The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the Atonement for himself. This means you recognize that mind is the only creative level, and that its errors are healed by the Atonement. Once you accept this, your mind can only heal. By denying your mind any destructive potential and reinstating its purely constructive powers, you place yourself in a position to undo the level confusion of others. The message you then give to them is the truth
that their minds are similarly constructive, and their miscreations cannot hurt them. By affirming this you release the mind from over-evaluating its own learning device, and restore the mind to its true position as the learner.
(R23 p25-26 V.5.1-6)

The sole responsibility of the miracle worker (all the Sons of God) is to accept the Atonement for oneself. Accepting forgiveness for myself is reflected in how I relate to others. When I am forgiven of sin, guilt and fear, I no longer project them onto you. My choice for Atonement through forgiveness is the same choice you can make. Forgiveness is a major theme of the Course; it is introduced in these early chapters and developed throughout.

End Chapter Two
CHAPTER THREE
THE INNOCENT PERCEPTION

Main Themes: True perception or vision; and perception versus Knowledge. The power of the mind is one of the main themes through the whole Course and is addressed in this chapter.

Introduction: Innocent perception is a synonym for true perception or vision. True perception is the correction of the ego's misperception. Chapter Three addresses the nature and structure of the split mind. It is important to know what the mind is to realize and understand its power.

• Consciousness, the level of perception, was the first split introduced into the mind after the separation, making the mind a perceiver rather than a creator. Consciousness is correctly identified as the domain of the ego. The ego is a wrong-minded attempt to perceive yourself as you wish to be, rather than as you are. Yet you can know yourself only as you are, because that is all you can be sure of. Everything else is open to question. The ego is the questioning aspect of the post-separation self, which was made rather than created. It is capable of asking questions but not of perceiving meaningful answers, because these would involve knowledge and cannot be perceived. The mind is therefore confused, because only One-mindedness can be without confusion. A separated or divided mind must be confused. It is necessarily uncertain about what it is. It has to be in conflict because it is out of accord with itself.

(Reference 1 p42 IV.2.1-5;IV.3.1-6)

The terms "right mind" and "wrong mind" are illustrated in the Heaven-Knowledge Chart. The Holy Spirit is in the right mind and represents the memory of God's oneness. The ego is in the wrong mind and represents the perceived separation from God's oneness. Heaven-Knowledge is the One Mind or one-mindedness. Consciousness refers to perception and the world of duality. Non-duality is Heaven-Knowledge, Truth. Forgiveness is the reflection of the oneness of Heaven within the illusory world. In the holy relationship we do not perceive another person's interests as separate from our own — there is no winner or loser, victim or victimizer. Forgiveness is part of the illusion of duality, consciousness or perception, but it undoes the ego's assertion of separate interests; you or me, winner or loser, victim or victimizer, one or the other. When there is the perception of a winner and a loser, everyone loses. In the ego's perception of separation, the ego was the winner and God the loser.

One-mindedness or the One Mind is the non-dualistic world of Heaven's Love. In Heaven, God is not separate from Christ. There is no Creator and created — there is only Love. There is only the Will of God which is Love. Once we are in the split mind there is the duality of the wrong mind and the right mind — both are illusory. Wrong minded thinking roots us deeper into the illusion of separation. Right minded thinking helps us to awaken from the dream of separation from God's love. Forgiveness is the final illusion; it does not lead us to further illusions, but ends all illusions.

Consciousness was the first split introduced into the mind after the separation. Consciousness implies a subject and an object. I am conscious of some thing — a person, a body, a behavior, an idea. In consciousness there is a perceiver and the object of perception. Subject/object duality is in consciousness and is illusory.

Once the split mind arises (right mind - wrong mind) there is a third part of the mind called the decision maker or the Son of God who now must choose between the right mind (the Holy Spirit), and the wrong mind (the ego). These "parts" of the mind are not parts, but functions of the mind. The thought system we choose, either the ego's wrong mind, or the Holy Spirit's right mind, becomes real to us because we believe in what we have made and chosen, not because it is real in itself. Belief is in the power of the mind as the decision maker or Son of God. The Son as the decision maker or the dreamer has all power over the dream world.

The way to correct distortions is to withdraw your faith in them and invest it only in what is true. (R2 p39 II.6.1)

Faith here means trust or belief. Faith in the ego is faithlessness because it is faith in nothing. Faith in the Holy Spirit is faithfulness because the Holy Spirit is the reflection of the real. The power of the mind as
the decision maker is to choose the thought system with which to identify. Once we make the choice it becomes reality for us. The experience of separation of the ego remains with us until we realize there must be a better way, and we withdraw our faith in the ego and put it in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit represents the principle of the Atonement that says the separation from God never happened.

Every system of thought must have a starting point. It begins with either a making or a creating, a difference we have already discussed. Their resemblance lies in their power as foundations. Their difference lies in what rests upon them. Both are cornerstones for systems of belief by which one lives. It is a mistake to believe that a thought system based on lies is weak. Nothing made by a child of God is without power. It is essential to realize this, because otherwise you will be unable to escape from the prison you have made. You cannot resolve the authority problem by depreciating the power of your mind. To do so is to deceive yourself, and this will hurt you because you really understand the strength of the mind. You also realize that you cannot weaken it, any more than you can weaken God. (R3 p49 VII.1-2.1-3)

The Holy Spirit does not "do" anything in our dream world. We get angry with God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit because they do not work on our imaginary problems in our imaginary world. Once we choose the ego, we experience the darkness of the ego's world as real. The light of spirit is perceived as a threat because it shines its light on our dream world and reveals that we and our problems are non-existent. The special separate self is a self that lives only in the darkness of ignorance. To protect the ego-self from perceived extinction we must banish the light. We resist non-dual teachings of true Self Knowledge because they threaten our separate egoic existence and our entire dream world. Rather than face egoic extinction, we attempt to bring the light (God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit) into our dream world. Later in the chapter we will address how religions based in dual thought systems have attempted to bring the light into the dream.

The reason your life seems to get worse rather than better when you first begin to learn and live this Course is explained here:

You have not yet gone back far enough, and that is why you become so fearful. As you approach
the Beginning, you feel the fear of the destruction of your thought system upon you as if it were the fear of death. There is no death, but there is a belief in death. (R5 p51 VII.5.9-11)

The "Beginning" refers to God. "My life" is threatened by the light of forgiveness. The darkness of the ego fears the light of spirit. The more we become the observer of the dream, the weaker the ego-self becomes and this can engender fear. The ego-self is based on separation, sin, guilt and fear being real, and are buried in the unconscious. Observing sin and guilt arise from the unconscious into consciousness can be painful and fearful to the ego as it evokes fear of punishment and extinction. Rather than observing and facing our sin, guilt and fear we often resort to the ego's tactics of defense and attack to avoid the death of our thought system which is believed to be "myself."

When the decision maker takes on the function of observer more and more, we realize the light is not destroying "me," but the ego's thought system that I identified as me. Observing the dynamics of the ego is the way out of separation, ego, death and hell. Being completely aware of the selfishness and pain of the ego thought system is crucial to becoming free of it. The fear of release must be addressed.

Within the dream we are free to believe anything we want. The belief that we separated from and destroyed God and his perfect love and oneness, and established our own separate world that is better than Heaven does not make it so. The Atonement principle says the separation never happened — God and His Oneness were not destroyed. The mind has power to make illusions, but it does not have power to make the illusions real. Seven billion people on this planet each believes they have their own independent existence and are living in the world; belief makes it real to each one, but not to God.

No one, therefore, is able to deny truth totally, even if he thinks he can. (R6 p38 II.1.8)

You cannot make untruth true. (R7 p39 II.6.2)

Belief in illusion does not make illusion real — this thought makes the ego tremble with terror (consciously or unconsciously) fearing its own destruction.

You have not usurped the power of God, but you have lost it. Fortunately, to lose something does not mean that it has gone. It merely means that you do not remember where it is. Its existence does not depend on your ability to identify it, or even to place it. (R8 p48 V1.9.2-5)

The love of God, our true Identity as Christ, is still within our mind; we merely forgot where it is. We lost awareness of God's love first by covering it in the mind with the belief in separation, sin, and guilt; and then burying the sin and guilt by projecting it into the body and world we made. The Atonement principle is in our mind. The world distracts us from the mind by keeping us focused on the body and the world. The miracle reminds us where to look for salvation — in the mind, not in the body and world. The love of God is not in the world, the body or another person. The love of God is only in the mind.

Peace is a natural heritage of spirit. Everyone is free to refuse to accept his inheritance, but he is not free to establish what his inheritance is. (R9 p49 VI.10.1-2)

We are free to refuse to accept our inheritance as Christ, God's one and only Son, but we are not free to alter who we truly are. The Atonement points us back to the right place to realize who we really are — within. First we look outside with the eyes of true perception to realize what we perceive as "outside" in the world was first made "inside" in the mind. And we realize there is no "outside." The inside is projected outside — the two are one.

You can perceive yourself as self-creating, but you cannot do more than believe it. You cannot make it true. And, as I said before, when you finally perceive correctly you can only be glad that you cannot. Until then, however, the belief that you can is the foundation stone in your thought system, and all your defenses are used to attack ideas that might bring it to light. (R10 p50 VII.4.6-9)

Within the dream we believe we are the author of the reality of who we are — but belief in separation does not change the fact that we are one with God. Forgiveness helps us to disidentify with the ego's thought system of separation. We are so afraid of ego death that we avoid or attack any idea that threatens our special separate existence; sometimes directly by
outright denial; sometimes indirectly by trying to bring the light into our darkness by asking God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit to be active in our painful dream world.

Traditional Christianity has fallen into the trap of trying to bring the light into the illusion. In the Bible the sin of separation is made real and God responds to it. In the Course, the sin of separation is something we believe happened, and because we believed in sin it became real for us and we suffer the consequences of guilt and fear. But the sin of separation is not real and God knows nothing of it — there is no separation, no sin, no ego and no world. If God believes in sin He would be the original sinner!

References 11 and 11A below are from the section of the Text "Atonement without Sacrifice" which addresses what traditional Christianity has done with the historical Jesus. The Bible's idea of crucifixion makes sin real which evokes guilt and God's punishment. The ultimate punishment is death. The ego's god believes he has been sinned against and seeks retribution in the form of sacrifice. The ego believes the sin of separation is real and fears God's vengeance; so, to appease God the ego offers Him a "sacrificial lamb" — Jesus.

Atonement with sacrifice says sin is real and you must atone for it with a life of suffering and sacrifice for your sin against God, and pray that He is as insane as you are and accepts your offering! Atonement without sacrifice, as presented in the Course, corrects the error by saying the separation never happened and there is nothing to atone for. In the Course "atone" means to correct or undo; not sacrifice, suffer or pay back.

The idea of Atonement with sacrifice plays a major role (albeit mostly unconscious) in our special relationships. We will address our special love and hate relationships in detail in later chapters.

A further point must be perfectly clear before any residual fear still associated with miracles can disappear. The crucifixion did not establish the Atonement; the resurrection did. Many sincere Christians have misunderstood this. No one who is free of the belief in scarcity could possibly make this mistake. If the crucifixion is seen from an upside-down point of view, it does appear as if God permitted and even encouraged one of His Sons to suffer because he was good. This particularly unfortunate interpretation, which arose out of projection, has led many people to be bitterly afraid of God. Such anti-religious concepts enter into many religions. Yet the real Christian should pause and ask, "How could this be?" Is it likely that God Himself would be capable of the kind of thinking which His Own words have clearly stated is unworthy of His Son? (R11 p36 I.1)

Sacrifice is a notion totally unknown to God. It arises solely from fear, and frightened people can be vicious. Sacrificing in any way is a violation of my injunction that you should be merciful even as your Father in Heaven is merciful. It has been hard for many Christians to realize that this applies to themselves. Good teachers never terrorize their students. To terrorize is to attack, and this results in rejection of what the teacher offers. The result is learning failure. (R11A p37 I.4)

The authority problem is at the core of the mistake in traditional Christian thought. The authority problem is based on the belief that I (the ego) am in conflict with God. This conflict is represented by the terms "battleground" and "kill or be killed" in the ego's wrong minded section of the Heaven-Knowledge Chart. The ego believes "I have usurped God's role on the throne, and He is going to try to take it back from me."

I have spoken of different symptoms, and at that level there is almost endless variation. There is, however, only one cause for all of them: the authority problem. This is "the root of all evil." (R12 p48 VI.7.1-3)

The authority problem is the belief that we (the ego) have separated and taken power from God. The authority problems we have in relationships with others in the world are a shadowy fragment of the original authority problem with God. The ego is often looking to be abused and victimized by authorities. This ego dynamic is addressed more in later chapters.

The issue of authority is really a question of authorship. When you have an authority problem, it is always because you believe you are the author of yourself and project your delusion
onto others. You then perceive the situation as one in which others are literally fighting you for your authorship. This is the fundamental error of all those who believe they have usurped the power of God. This belief is very frightening to them, but hardly troubles God. (R13 p48 VI.8.1-5)

The source of the authority problem is the ego's belief that it separated from and killed God, evoking guilt and demanding punishment which engenders fear. Fear stems from what the authorities may do to me. I believe I have taken God's power and authority, and I fear God or another authority figure will try to take it back from me. My independent existence as a body in a world is proof that I have taken God's life, power and authority.

Knowledge versus perception is an important theme in this chapter and the whole Course. Refer to the Chart. Heaven-Knowledge is a state of oneness. Perception or consciousness is a state of separation.

To be one is to be of one mind or will. When the Will of the Sonship and the Father are One, their perfect accord is Heaven. (R14 p39 II.4.5-6)

The Son of God is part of the Holy Trinity, but the Trinity Itself is One. There is no confusion within Its Levels, because They are of one Mind and one Will. (R15 p39 II.5.4-5)

Heaven is perfect oneness. Once the separation seemed to happen, there appeared to be a dualistic universe instead of a one-minded universe. The dualistic universe is referred to as "perception." Perception is consciousness of a subject/object separation — this is duality. Knowledge or Heaven is non-dual, non-specific and abstract.

The highly specific nature of invention is not worthy of the abstract creativity of God's creations. (R16 p44 V.2.8)

Invention refers to what the mind makes to fill its perceived lack. The world of duality and specifics is also the world of judgment. In the Course, judgment means condemnation. To give up judgment means to give up condemnation. Generally, judgment means selectivity in the world of duality. In Heaven or Knowledge there is nothing to select among — there is only God's wholeness. Once the split mind occurred, judgment was the split mind's foundation.

In the world we must make judgments and select from various elements in the world. Perception is based on choosing for what we deem important, and against the unimportant. Conversely, God's creation is the abstract, unconditional love of all. Our true Identity as Christ is God's extension of His perfect love.

In Christian theology the Last Judgment is the end phase when God or Jesus makes the Final Judgment as to who will be saved (the sheep) and who will be condemned (the goats). The Course reinterprets it and says the Final Judgment is done by you, not God. When you, as the Son of God, look at what the ego has made and decide that the illusory separate existence is not what you want — that is the Final Judgment. The Course's Final Judgment has nothing to do with punishment — it sees the error as an error, not a sin. And then you accept the Atonement, realizing the separation from God was only imagined.

The choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of the loss of peace. Judgment is the process on which perception but not knowledge rests. I have discussed this before in terms of the selectivity of perception, pointing out that evaluation is its obvious prerequisite. Judgment always involves rejection. It never emphasizes only the positive aspects of what is judged, whether in you or in others. What has been perceived and rejected, or judged and found wanting, remains in your mind because it has been perceived. One of the illusions from which you suffer is the belief that what you judged against has no effect. This cannot be true unless you also believe that what you judged against does not exist. You evidently do not believe this, or you would not have judged against it. (R17 p46-47 VI.2.1-9)

"To know" is used as a synonym for Knowledge, Heaven, and Spirit. We judge things as unacceptable and then repress them, making them unconscious. What is repressed will be projected out at some point onto other people and the world. Because we are unaware of what we have repressed, we are sure we are justified in our judgments against others. Forgiveness provides the opportunity for us to find the source of our projected judgments within our mind. Observing what we judge against in others reveals what we have judged and condemned within
ourselves, and offers us the opportunity to forgive, heal and release our self-condemnation, and our judgments of others.

You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment. When you recognize what you are and what your brothers are, you will realize that judging them in any way is without meaning. In fact, their meaning is lost to you precisely because you are judging them. (R18 p47 VI.3.1-3)

We forgive our brothers for what they have not done to us; judgment and sin are in our own mind, not in our brother.

In the presence of knowledge all judgment is automatically suspended, and this is the process that enables recognition to replace perception. You are very fearful of everything you have perceived but have refused to accept. You believe that, because you have refused to accept it, you have lost control over it. This is why you see it in nightmares, or in pleasant disguises in what seem to be your happier dreams. Nothing that you have refused to accept can be brought into awareness. It is not dangerous in itself, but you have made it seem dangerous to you. (R19 p47 VI.3.6;VI.4.1-5)

Recognition means to "know again," and refers to remembering the Knowledge of Heaven. It is difficult to give up judgment because it means the extinction of the ego which is founded in judgment and separation from God. Being "right" is critical to the ego. It is not suggested we give up judgment, but that we do not try to justify our judgments of others, or judge with a need to attack another or defend "yourself." What we refuse to accept, we reject and repress. The object we reject or dissociate (a term we will address in later chapters) is not important, but the fact that we have judged the object as real, negative, harmful or fearful makes it that way for us. Nothing is negative, harmful or fearful in itself, but our belief makes it so.

Repressing sin, guilt and fear led us to make up a wrathful God onto which we project our sin and guilt. People get upset when discussing God and religion because they have a need of seeing evil outside in others, not in themselves. When people defend and are willing to die for a religion or any "ism" you will find the belief in separation, and repressed sin, guilt and fear in their unconscious mind.

The strain of constant judgment is virtually intolerable. It is curious that an ability so debilitating would be so deeply cherished. Yet if you wish to be the author of reality, you will insist on holding on to judgment. (R20 p47 VI.5.6-8)

If you believe you are a separate body living in a world (as you do believe), you wish to be the author of reality. Being in the world means you have separated yourself from God and Heaven. In reality you are an idea in the mind of God, and you never left Him. To maintain our special separate existence, we make up a body and an entire world and then defend it. When we let go of our defense we realize we are the author of nothing, and God is the author of everything. And in truth we are part of all.

Judgment is necessary to remain separate from God. This constant judgment is intolerable. Guilt is intolerable, and judgment comes from guilt. Our guilt over the believed separation is so enormous that we are compelled to deny the guilt in ourselves and project it out by judging everyone else. The cause of our weariness is within us — the belief in separation, sin, guilt, judgment, and protecting the judge (the ego) from annihilation — all of this is exhausting. Our hope is in looking within ourselves for the cure, not in others or the world.

Jesus is speaking of the symbol the world has made of him here:

I was a man who remembered spirit and its knowledge. As a man I did not attempt to counteract error with knowledge, but to correct error from the bottom up. I demonstrated both the powerlessness of the body and the power of the mind. By uniting my will with that of my Creator, I naturally remembered spirit and its real purpose. I cannot unite your will with God's for you, but I can erase all misperceptions from your mind if you will bring it under my guidance. Only your misperceptions stand in your way. Without them your choice is certain. Sane perception induces sane choosing. I cannot choose for you, but I can help you make your own right choice. "Many are called but few are chosen" should be, "All are called but few choose to
Therefore, they do not choose right. The "chosen ones" are merely those who choose right sooner. Right minds can do this now, and they will find rest unto their souls. God knows you only in peace, and this is your reality. (R21 p43 IV.7.3-16)

Because we believe we are a separate body living in a world, we need a symbol of the Atonement in a shape and form we can understand. Jesus' essence is the Atonement, the thought of perfect love in the mind. The person called Jesus is the shape that love takes so we can relate to and understand that perfect love. The Atonement principle manifests through him. We must bring our misperceptions to him; he can not do it for us — this is not a Course in vicarious salvation. Jesus represents the perfect love we can turn to within our mind. His light is, and always has been, within us. Jesus represents the eternal light and love that we are. Our job is to bring our illusions to the light of his truth.

True perception or vision is the undoing of the ego's judgment. The light shines away the cloud of sin and guilt within my mind, and now I see with the vision of true perception. The misperception of the ego is of guilt. The true perception of Jesus or the Holy Spirit is of innocence.

The ego's perception is of judgment, one or the other — if I am innocent, you are guilty. True perception of the Holy Spirit is of oneness. The whole Course is set on the principle of Jesus' saying, "My brother, choose again." Choose for the Atonement, not for separation. Choose the Holy Spirit as your teacher, not the ego.

We must realize we are the decision maker, the Son of God; we have the power to choose the wholeness of God, or the separation of the ego. In the ego's world our choice is who shall I attack or defend today; who shall I love or hate? All choices are among illusions in the ego's world. The whole Course is about returning our awareness to the power to choose in the mind; the power to choose the ego or the Holy Spirit. One is Heaven, the other is hell.

End Chapter Three
CHAPTER FOUR
THE ILLUSIONS OF THE EGO

Main Themes: This chapter introduces and provides a detailed examination of the ego and its thought system. Also, two principles that form the foundation of the Course are the Atonement principle, and the ego's fear of the Atonement. This chapter addresses both principles.

The Course says we are free to accept or reject our inheritance, but not free to determine what our inheritance is. Our inheritance as God's Son is perfectly safe and secure. The ego's thought of separation had no effect on our eternal oneness with God's love — "not one note in Heaven's song was missed." That is the Atonement principle. The separation from God never happened. The ego can only exist if we maintain our belief in separation; hence its fear of the Atonement, and its strategy to keep us identified with the body and world and ignorant of the Holy Spirit.

• You are part of reality, which stands unchanged beyond the reach of your ego but within easy reach of spirit. (Reference 1 p55 I.8.5)

The reality of our identity with spirit remains unchanged regardless of the ego's belief in separation.

Yet His home will stand forever, and is ready for you when you choose to enter it. Of this you can be wholly certain. God is as incapable of creating the perishable as the ego is of making the eternal. (R2 p55 I.11.5-7)

Our eternal home in Heaven is forever unchanged — the ego has no effect on our oneness with God.

The Kingdom of Heaven is you. What else but you did the Creator create, and what else but you is His Kingdom? This is the whole message of the Atonement; a message which in its totality transcends the sum of its parts. You, too, have a Kingdom that your spirit created. It has not ceased to create because of the ego's illusions. (R3 p60 III.1.4-8)

We are the Kingdom of Heaven. Our true Identity as Christ is unaffected by any of the "mad thoughts" of the ego. The separation never happened. The thought system of the world is an illusion. The only reality is Heaven's oneness.

There is no limit to the power of a Son of God, but he can limit the expression of his power as much as he chooses. (R4 p64 IV.8.2)

Within the illusion we are free to believe anything we want, but our belief in illusion has no effect on reality. You, as the Son of God, have all power over the world. You limit your power by choosing to identify with the ego. You assert your power by choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit.

Your ego cannot prevent Him from shining on you, but it can prevent you from letting Him shine through you. (R5 p64 IV.9.6)

The ego cannot stop God's love from shining on us, but through our belief in the ego it can block the awareness of love's presence. We remain one with God even as we are identified with the ego.

The ego is nothing more than a part of your belief about yourself. Your other life has continued without interruption, and has been and always will be totally unaffected by your attempts to dissociate it. (R6 p67 VI.1.6-7)

The ego's thought system of separation had no effect on who we truly are as spirit. Later in these notes we will address the dynamics of the split mind's "dissociation" of the Holy Spirit in the right mind from the ego in the wrong mind.

The mind can distort its function, but it cannot endow itself with functions it was not given. That is why the mind cannot totally lose the ability to communicate, even though it may refuse to utilize it on behalf of being. (R7 p70 VII.3.11-12)

Being is a synonym for Spirit. "Communicate" means to share or extend God's love. The Holy Spirit and Jesus remind us of our ability to communicate the love of God.

The Atonement principle allows us to understand the underlying idea of the whole Course which is the first miracle principle: there is no order of difficulty...
Notes on Chapter Four – The Illusions of the Ego

in miracles. Because the separation from God never happened, the entire world is an illusion; therefore it is simple to heal any problem in the world. We go back to the source of separation in our mind that made all problems, choosing the ego, and choose the Holy Spirit instead, thus healing all illusory problems. The Atonement principle, the fact that the separation from God's perfection never happened, is the reason there is no order of difficulty in miracles. This is the first major theme that forms the foundation of the whole Course.

The second major theme is the ego's fear of the Atonement. The ego's fear of Atonement gives rise to the entire thought system of separation, specialness, individuality, sin, guilt, fear, death and the necessity to flee the mind and make up a body and world. The Atonement principle, and the ego's fear of the Atonement form the foundation for the whole thought system of the Course. It is important to be clear about this to understand the Course, and to express and demonstrate its teaching in your life.

Scarcity is a major theme in the ego's thought system. The ego's scarcity is contrasted with the Holy Spirit's abundance. Specificity is another aspect of the ego's thought system and is contrasted with the Holy Spirit's abstraction. Abstract means non-specific. The Spirit is whole, complete non-specific and abstract. The ego's world is made of separate specifics. The ego is dependent on specifics for its existence. The ego is born in the moment the Son of God believes he has a specific identity, separate from the whole, complete, non-specific and abstract reality of God and Christ. The world of specifics is the seeming witness to the apparent reality of the ego's specificity. The ego's fear is that if the Son chooses Knowledge or abstraction, the ego will disappear.

Abstract thought applies to knowledge because knowledge is completely impersonal, and examples are irrelevant to its understanding. Perception, however, is always specific, and therefore quite concrete. (R8 p56 II.1.4-5)

Knowledge is a synonym for Heaven. Knowledge does not recognize separate persons — it is impersonal. Knowledge is only God, pure Spirit. The appearance of our separate, concrete world of specifics is the projection of our identity with an apparently concrete, separate, specific ego-self. All separate specifics are illusory because only abstract wholeness is real — this is why there is no order of difficulties in miracles. All specific difficulties are illusory and are healed by Knowledge or the oneness of Spirit. It is critical to understand this concept because the whole Course is based on it. There is no order of difficulties in miracles because the specifics of the problem are irrelevant — the specifics are not the problem. The ego made the body and world to make us think that problems exist where they do not — in the body and world.

Ego illusions are quite specific, although the mind is naturally abstract. Part of the mind becomes concrete, however, when it splits. The concrete part believes in the ego, because the ego depends on the concrete. The ego is the part of the mind that believes your existence is defined by separation. (R9 p69 VII.1.2-5)

Abstract means non-specific. The One Mind is perfect wholeness, perfect unity. The concrete is specific and separate. In Heaven there is only perfect oneness, there is no subject/object duality. Without separation there is no ego.

Existence as well as being rests on communication. Existence, however, is specific in how, what and with whom communication is judged to be worth undertaking. Being is completely without these distinctions. (R10 p70 VII.4.1-3)

In the Course, existence is a synonym for the perceptual world — in contrast with Being which is of God. Existence is of a specific, separate, concrete object of the world. Being is the non-specific, abstract, oneness of Spirit or God. Existence, separation and judgment make the foundation of our special relationships (love and hate) which are addressed in later chapters. Being and Knowledge are of oneness, and are abstract and non-specific. There is no specialness or distinctiveness in Heaven. There is no separation of God and Christ — these are dualistic terms we use to express the relationship between God and His Creation, but they are not separate. Creator and creation are one.

Now we will look at some passages that highlight the ego's fear of the Atonement, and more specifically the ego's fear of the Son choosing the Atonement of the Holy Spirit instead of the specialness of the ego. On the Chart, the black dot represents the decision
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

maker which is the part of the Son's mind that chooses the ego or the Holy Spirit. The ego fears the Son will realize that choosing the specificity of the ego was a mistake and will instead choose the abstract non-specificity of the Sonship. That would mean the demise of the ego, hence its fear of extinction. It is important to understand that this fear plays a major role in the strategy of the ego thought system.

Nothing can reach spirit from the ego, and nothing can reach the ego from spirit. Spirit can neither strengthen the ego nor reduce the conflict within it. The ego is a contradiction. Your self and God's Self are in opposition. They are opposed in source, in direction and in outcome. They are fundamentally irreconcilable, because spirit cannot perceive and the ego cannot know. They are therefore not in communication and can never be in communication. Nevertheless, the ego can learn, even though its maker can be misguided. He cannot, however, make the totally lifeless out of the life-given. Spirit need not be taught, but the ego must be. Learning is ultimately perceived as frightening because it leads to the relinquishment, not the destruction, of the ego to the light of spirit. This is the change the ego must fear, because it does not share my charity. My lesson was like yours, and because I learned it I can teach it. I will never attack your ego, but I am trying to teach you how its thought system arose. When I remind you of your true creation, your ego cannot but respond with fear. (R11 p53 I.2.6-14;I.3.1-6)

Spirit and ego are mutually exclusive. Spirit knows nothing of the ego because the ego has no being — it is not real. Spirit does not try to change, correct or fight the ego because the ego is unreal. When the Son learns to choose Spirit, which the whole Course is about, the ego is undone by the Son withdrawing belief in it. God is not in opposition with the ego, but the ego and God are mutually exclusive states. This is not a Course in reconciling opposites (like Jung). Love and fear cannot be reconciled. In the presence of love, fear disappears.

The term "ego" is almost always a synonym for "wrong minded thinking," but in the previous passage when it says "the ego can learn," it refers to the decision making part of the mind. So "ego" in this passage refers to the entire split mind. The decision making part of the mind can learn to change the decision it made for the ego and choose the Holy Spirit.

It is imperative that you understand the depth of the ego's fear of the Atonement because it is your fear of Atonement. These early chapters that expose how the ego's thought system arose lay the foundation for the rest of the Course and learning to forgive. You must understand the deep fear the ego has of its own demise which is the fear of the Atonement principle.

The ego is afraid of the spirit's joy, because once you have experienced it you will withdraw all protection from the ego, and become totally without investment in fear. Your investment is great now because fear is a witness to the separation, and your ego rejoices when you witness to it. Leave it behind! Do not listen to it and do not preserve it. Listen only to God, Who is as incapable of deception as is the spirit He created. (R12 p55 I.10.1-5)

The ego's fear is that we will realize our mistake and choose the Holy Spirit instead. The ego is nothing more than our belief in it. The strength the ego and the world seem to have is derived from the power of the decision maker to choose and believe its choice is real. Heaven is totally unaffected by this, but in the dream, we believe Heaven was affected and God is angry! The ego does not want us to realize this is all made up. No fear — no ego. No ego — no "me." In Chapter Five the Holy Spirit is described as being God's Voice — the Voice that says, "Choose again."

Undermining the ego's thought system must be perceived as painful, even though this is anything but true. Babies scream in rage if you take away a knife or scissors, although they may well harm themselves if you do not. In this sense you are still a baby. You have no sense of real self-preservation, and are likely to decide that you need precisely what would hurt you most. (R13 p57 II.5.1-4)

Later in the Text it is made clear that "specialness" is what we believe we need most, and scream in rage at the thought of our specialness being taken away. We believe anything that reinforces our separate identity will benefit us. We value anyone or anything onto which we can project our sin and guilt. Projecting our sin and guilt allows us to maintain our separate identity without the sin and guilt. Anyone or
anything that protects the ego-self is defended. I will scream and yell if my ego-self protection is threatened. Any teaching that threatens our specialness and individuality we will fight against — all of this is born of the fear of Atonement.

Children do not know what is good for them, nor do we. Clinging to the ego-self is hurting us, not helping. The Holy Spirit's offer of Atonement will help us, but being like children we scream and yell when our beloved toys are threatened!

The ego is the mind's belief that it is completely on its own. The ego's ceaseless attempts to gain the spirit's acknowledgment and thus establish its own existence are useless. Spirit in its knowledge is unaware of the ego. It does not attack it; it merely cannot conceive of it at all. While the ego is equally unaware of spirit, it does perceive itself as being rejected by something greater than itself. (R14 p58 II.8.4-8)

We all are trying to get God to pay attention to us. This is why the ego wrote the Bible. In the Bible, God pays attention to us: He creates us; He loves us; He hates us; He murders us; He saves us. Each intervention proves God recognizes us. From the ego's point of view, it does not matter if God loves us or hates us, saves us or destroys us — as long as He notices us.

In the Course, God does not know about individuals. This is not terrible, this is joyful. God's not knowing us is an expression of the Atonement principle — the separation never happened. Because the separation never happened, God cannot know a separate ego. And strictly speaking, the ego knows nothing of spirit. The ego's real threat is of the decision maker or the Son of God who has the power to withdraw his belief in the ego's existence, and the ego would disappear back into the nothingness from which it came.

It is surely apparent by now why the ego regards spirit as its "enemy." The ego arose from the separation, and its continued existence depends on your continuing belief in the separation. The ego must offer you some sort of reward for maintaining this belief. All it can offer is a sense of temporary existence, which begins with its own beginning and ends with its own ending. It tells you this life is your existence because it is its own.

Against this sense of temporary existence spirit offers you the knowledge of permanence and unshakable being. No one who has experienced the revelation of this can ever fully believe in the ego again. How can its meager offering to you prevail against the glorious gift of God? (R15 p60 III.3.1-8)

Spirit has no "enemy." The ego is terrified the Son will withdraw his belief in it. Existence is specificity. The ego offers the "reward" of special separate existence. The ego's god offers eternal life — if you are good and do what he tells you! Or punishment in hell if you do not do as the ego's god tells you. Everybody's ego god is different in terms of good and evil.

Spirit offers permanent, unshakable Being. The ego does not want permanent, unshakable Being because it does not exist in the non-specific, abstract oneness of eternal Being. Egos exists only in separation. Loss of individual existence is the ego's terror.

The oneness of God's love is covered over first by the belief in sin and guilt in the mind, and second by making a body and world onto which it projects its sin and guilt out of the mind and onto the body and world it made. Once we are identified as a body in the world, we are mindless, unaware of our mind's power to choose, and unaware of our real identity as God's Son.

There is a kind of experience so different from anything the ego can offer that you will never want to cover or hide it again. It is necessary to repeat that your belief in darkness and hiding is why the light cannot enter. (R16 p61 III.5.1-2)

Belief is the key word. The light is the Atonement principle in the mind that is first covered by the darkness of the ego's belief in separation, sin, guilt and fear; and then veiled by making a body and world onto which we project the sin and guilt. Once we believe that sin and guilt are in the world, the source of our problem (belief in separation in the mind) is forgotten and veiled by the body and world.

In your own mind, though denied by the ego, is the declaration of your release. God has given you everything. This one fact means the ego does not exist, and this makes it profoundly afraid. (R17 p62 III.9.1-3)
In the presence of God's love the ego ceases to exist. "God has given us everything" is a statement of the principle of abundance, contrasted with the ego's scarcity. The absence of God's abundance is the ego's scarcity and lack which the ego tries to compensate for by offering us "special" love to make up for God's unconditional love we have chosen against — special relationships are covered in later chapters.

The ego exerts maximal vigilance about what it permits into awareness, and this is not the way a balanced mind holds together. The ego is thrown further off balance because it keeps its primary motivation from your awareness, and raises control rather than sanity to predominance. The ego has every reason to do this, according to the thought system which gave rise to it and which it serves. Sane judgment would inevitably judge against the ego, and must be obliterated by the ego in the interest of its self-preservation.

(R18 p65 V.1.3-6)

The primary motivation of the ego is to keep us mindless which preserves its separate identity. The ego tells us it wants us to be happy, that we can only be happy as an individual and having our "specialness" needs met. It does not tell us the only way we can be truly happy is to choose the oneness of the Holy Spirit. The ego's thought system and the body and world it made have one purpose — to preserve the ego's special separate existence.

Sane judgment is in the right mind with the Holy Spirit who represents the Atonement. The ego conceals the Atonement under the thought system of sin, guilt and fear in the mind, and then by making a body and world onto which it projects the sin and guilt and fear real and telling us God will punish us for our sin which motivates us to leave the mind and hide in the body and world. The ego then projects the sin and guilt onto other bodies and the world so the Son can retain his innocence.

But remember that laws are set up to protect the continuity of the system in which the lawmaker believes. It is natural for the ego to try to protect itself once you have made it… (R22 p54 I.5.4-5)

The ego's strategy is to protect itself. The threat to the ego's existence is in the mind, the decision maker's power to choose. The threat is not from God, Jesus or the Holy Spirit. The ego's strategy is to make us mindless by making a body and a world and having us identify with the body — not the mind.

Body appetites are not physical in origin. The ego regards the body as its home, and tries to satisfy itself through the body. But the idea that this is possible is a decision of the mind, which has become completely confused about what is really possible. (R23 p58 II.7.7-9)

The mind is the source of the body's appetites, desires and needs; the body is nothing without the mind. The body has no "needs" to satisfy. The ego's need to survive is satisfied by keeping us mindless and having us identify with the body and its special "needs."

The passage below is one of the clearest descriptions of what the ego does and how it makes it virtually impossible to question what it does. The ego transfers its thought system of separation from the mind to the body and world, causing us to forget we made the body and world. The reason we chose the ego and its identity with the body was to protect us from the wrath of God that would result in our death. The ego says the body will protect us — but the body
The body is the ego's home by its own election. It is the only identification with which the ego feels safe, since the body's vulnerability is its own best argument that you cannot be of God. This is the belief that the ego sponsors eagerly. Yet the ego hates the body, because it cannot accept it as good enough to be its home. Here is where the mind becomes actually dazed. Being told by the ego that it is really part of the body and that the body is its protector, the mind is also told that the body cannot protect it. Therefore, the mind asks, "Where can I go for protection?" to which the ego replies, "Turn to me." The mind, and not without cause, reminds the ego that it has itself insisted that it is identified with the body, so there is no point in turning to it for protection. The ego has no real answer to this because there is none, but it does have a typical solution. It obliterates the question from the mind's awareness. Once out of awareness the question can and does produce uneasiness, but it cannot be answered because it cannot be asked. (R24 p66 V.4)

The mind here is the decision maker or the Son to whom the ego speaks. We feel there is something wrong with us as a separate body in the world, but we don't know what is wrong because the ego has hidden the decision maker from our awareness. The ego says the body will protect you and make you safe, but we eventually realize we are not safe as a body in the world, and we make up a theology that says, "It is all the will of God." Chapter 13 declares that if our world is the real world, God is indeed cruel. Because we believe we are a body in a world we try to "fix" the body and world to resolve our perceived problems; but the solution is only in the mind.

The passage below addresses one of the ego's strategies to maintain its existence.

By becoming involved with tangential issues, it hopes to hide the real question and keep it out of mind. The ego's characteristic busyness with nonessentials is for precisely that purpose. Preoccupations with problems set up to be incapable of solution are favorite ego devices for impeding learning progress. In all these diversionary tactics, however, the one question that is never asked by those who pursue them is, "What for?" This is the question that you must learn to ask in connection with everything. What is the purpose? Whatever it is, it will direct your efforts automatically. When you make a decision of purpose, then, you have made a decision about your future effort; a decision that will remain in effect unless you change your mind. (R25 p66-67 V.6.4-11)

The "real question" is why did we choose the ego in the first place? From the Course's point of view the whole world is a "tangential issue," and veils the real question. The purpose of the ego's world is to be a smokescreen to dissuade us from choosing the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. It is important to question the purpose of our body, the world and our behaviors and activities in the world. Sickness of the body and conflict in the world serve to distract the decision maker. Conversely, we can use the body and the world as a classroom to become free and get back to our mind and ultimately to our true identity as spirit. Jesus and the Holy Spirit serve as inner teachers who guide us out of the world, back to the mind and our Identity with God.

Jesus uses positive reinforcement as motivation to learn his teaching.

You have very little trust in me as yet, but it will increase as you turn more and more often to me instead of to your ego for guidance. The results will convince you increasingly that this choice is the only sane one you can make. No one who learns from experience that one choice brings peace and joy while another brings chaos and disaster needs additional convincing. Learning through rewards is more effective than learning through pain, because pain is an ego illusion, and can never induce more than a temporary effect. The rewards of God, however, are immediately recognized as eternal. Since this recognition is made by you and not the ego, the recognition itself establishes that you and your ego cannot be identical. You may believe that you have already accepted this difference, but you are by no means convinced as yet. The fact that you believe you must escape from the ego shows this; but you cannot escape from the ego by humbling it or controlling it or punishing it. (R26 p67-68 VI.3.1-8)
By forgiving we feel better. By judging and condemning we feel worse. Controlling or punishing the ego keeps it firmly in place. Generally, we learn better through reward than punishment.

How can you teach someone the value of something he has deliberately thrown away? He must have thrown it away because he did not value it. You can only show him how miserable he is without it, and slowly bring it nearer so he can learn how his misery lessens as he approaches it. This teaches him to associate his misery with its absence, and the opposite of misery with its presence. It gradually becomes desirable as he changes his mind about its worth. I am teaching you to associate misery with the ego and joy with the spirit. You have taught yourself the opposite. You are still free to choose, but can you really want the rewards of the ego in the presence of the rewards of God? (R27 p68 VI.5)

We threw away our Identity as Christ because we value our special separate egoic identity. Releasing our separate self interests, and embracing shared interests brings joy. Holding on to the ego's separate interests brings misery. Learning to release the ego's selfishness takes time and is made easier with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit. Becoming aware of and looking at the ego is an important theme in the Course. Our relationship with Jesus or the Holy Spirit as our inner teacher helps us to choose the oneness and love of God rather than the separation of the ego.

You dream of a separated ego and believe in a world that rests upon it. This is very real to you. You cannot undo it by not changing your mind about it. If you are willing to renounce the role of guardian of your thought system and open it to me, I will correct it very gently and lead you back to God. (R28 p54 I.4.4-7)

When we ask for his guidance, Jesus helps us look at the ego thought system so we may choose again. Observing the ego mind and its dynamics is another important theme in the Course which helps us bring the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit, and facilitates healing.

It has never really entered your mind to give up every idea you ever had that opposes knowledge. You retain thousands of little scraps of fear that prevent the Holy One from entering. Light cannot penetrate through the walls you make to block it, and it is forever unwilling to destroy what you have made. No one can see through a wall, but I can step around it. Watch your mind for the scraps of fear, or you will be unable to ask me to do so. I can help you only as our Father created us. I will love you and honor you and maintain complete respect for what you have made, but I will not uphold it unless it is true. I will never forsake you any more than God will, but I must wait as long as you choose to forsake yourself. Because I wait in love and not in impatience, you will surely ask me truly. I will come in response to a single unequivocal call. Watch carefully and see what it is you are really asking for. Be very honest with yourself in this, for we must hide nothing from each other. If you will really try to do this, you have taken the first step toward preparing your mind for the Holy One to enter. We will prepare for this together, for once He has come, you will be ready to help me make other minds ready for Him. How long will you deny Him His Kingdom? (R29 p61-62 III.7-8)

There are only two thoughts we can have: separation or Atonement. The experience of separation in a world of bodies is a projection of separation in the wrong mind or ego. The oneness of spirit, the Atonement, is the reflection of God's Love in the right mind or the Holy Spirit. As we bring our dark thoughts of separation and fear to the light of Jesus' love they disappear. Separation and fear are dissolved by oneness and love.

Think honestly what you have thought that God would not have thought, and what you have not thought that God would have you think. Search sincerely for what you have done and left undone accordingly, and then change your mind to think with God's. This may seem hard to do, but it is much easier than trying to think against it. (R30 p63 IV.2.4-6)

The thoughts you have and cherish are of your special separate egoic existence. You have not thought of the Atonement, your oneness with spirit. It is easier to turn to the Holy Spirit than the ego; it only seems difficult at first.

Watch your mind for the temptations of the ego, and do not be deceived by it. (R31 p63 IV.6.1)
Notes on Chapter Four – The Illusions of the Ego

The temptation is to believe that the ego’s thought system of separation is to your benefit, and the Holy Spirit's thoughts of Atonement are to your detriment. The temptation is to believe that judgment, specialness, attack and defense will make you happy, safe, strong, secure and loved; and forgiveness will make you unhappy, vulnerable, weak and insecure.

- Forgiveness is a central theme in the Course and is touched upon in these early chapters. If we want to join with God, we must join with our brothers. We cannot reject or exclude our brothers if we are to return Home.

In learning to escape from illusions, your debt to your brother is something you must never forget. It is the same debt that you owe to me. Whenever you act egotistically towards another, you are throwing away the graciousness of your indebtedness and the holy perception it would produce. The term "holy" can be used here because, as you learn how much you are indebted to the whole Sonship, which includes me, you come as close to knowledge as perception can. The gap is then so small that knowledge can easily flow across it and obliterate it forever.

(R32 p67 VI.2.1-5)

The Sonship is one. All are included. None is excluded. By accepting and forgiving our brothers, we are accepting and forgiving ourselves. Forgiveness facilitates the Atonement — the realization of oneness.

I will go with you to the Holy One, and through my perception He can bridge the little gap. Your gratitude to your brother is the only gift I want. I will bring it to God for you, knowing that to know your brother is to know God. If you are grateful to your brother, you are grateful to God for what He created. Through your gratitude you come to know your brother, and one moment of real recognition makes everyone your brother because each of them is of your Father. (R33 p69 VI.7.1-5)

Your brother is not separate from God. To reject or exclude your brother is to reject and exclude Jesus and God. Rejecting and excluding your brother is rejecting and excluding part of yourself because your brother and Jesus are projections of your mind. By forgiving your brother, you are forgiving a part of yourself you had previously condemned and rejected. To condemn or reject even one person is to condemn and reject yourself, God and the whole Sonship.

As you come closer to a brother you approach me, and as you withdraw from him I become distant to you. Salvation is a collaborative venture. It cannot be undertaken successfully by those who disengage themselves from the Sonship, because they are disengaging themselves from me. God will come to you only as you will give Him to your brothers. Learn first of them and you will be ready to hear God. That is because the function of love is one. (R34 p69 VI.8)

The Sonship is one. There are no exceptions. The oneness of God's Son is crucial to understand now and is developed over the rest of the Course.

- Teaching and learning is a key theme in the Course, and is developed in later chapters and especially in the Manual for Teachers. The key realization is that teaching and learning are the same; just as giving and receiving are the same. You receive what you give. Giving love, you receive it. To learn peace, you must teach it. This teaching and learning is of the mind, not the world.

I need devoted teachers who share my aim of healing the mind. (R35 p56 I.13.7)

To learn healing of the mind, we teach it by demonstrating it. To learn separation, judgment and condemnation, we teach it by demonstrating it.

Your mission is very simple. You are asked to live so as to demonstrate that you are not an ego… (R36 p68 VI.6.2-3)

The ego is specialness, separation, sin, guilt, fear, conflict, anger, war, hate and death. To demonstrate is to teach. To teach is to learn. Teach only love and oneness, and you learn it. Teach separation and fear, and you learn it.

End Chapter Four
Main Theme: In Chapter Five we are formally introduced to the Holy Spirit. It is the first time in the Course the Holy Spirit is addressed in detail. The Holy Spirit is the loving teacher of oneness that guides us through the chaos of the separation of the ego. The Holy Spirit is always with us but is covered over by the loud voice of the ego.

It is important to be aware that the Course uses dualistic and anthropomorphic words and symbols that represent the ego, God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit; and we should not take the words and symbols literally. The underlying content of the Course is to be taken literally, but not the form. The Holy Spirit is a thought in our mind that represents the memory of our oneness with God.

The Holy Spirit has the task of undoing what the ego has made. He undoes it at the same level on which the ego operates, or the mind would be unable to understand the change.

(Reference 1 p79 III.5.5-6)

The Holy Spirit speaks to us on the same level at which we believe we are — separate bodies in a world. We perceive most of our problems are in our special relationships, so the Holy Spirit addresses our special relationships and that is where our healing occurs. In reality there are no relationships between bodies; relationships are the projections of thought in our mind. As long as we believe we are bodies in relationship with other bodies, the Holy Spirit helps us heal our relationships. In reality healing only occurs in the mind. Strictly speaking it is not the Holy Spirit who heals, we heal, because we chose the ego which is the source of our problems, and we choose the Holy Spirit Who reminds us of our oneness with God's love that heals all problems. The Course uses what the ego made, and reinterprets and transforms it to facilitate healing.

There are many examples of how the ego's interpretations are misleading, but a few will suffice to show how the Holy Spirit can reinterpret them in His Own light.

(R2 p87 VI.5.1)

The ego uses our perceived problems to keep us prisoner of the body and world. The Holy Spirit uses problems in the world as a classroom to help free us from identification with the body and world. This next passage represents the loving and gentle strength with which the Holy Spirit operates in our mind.

The Voice of the Holy Spirit does not command, because It is incapable of arrogance. It does not demand, because It does not seek control. It does not overcome, because It does not attack. It merely reminds. It is compelling only because of what It reminds you of. It brings to your mind the other way, remaining quiet even in the midst of the turmoil you may make. The Voice for God is always quiet, because It speaks of peace. Peace is stronger than war because it heals.

(R3 p76 II.7.1-8)

The Holy Spirit does not take action in our world or body. It does not heal sickness in the body or resolve conflicts in our world for us. The Holy Spirit is the quiet presence in our mind that reminds us of what we have forgotten — our oneness with God. When we choose to identify with the separation and conflict of the ego, the Holy Spirit is the Voice that reminds us to choose again.

Our original problem was not the "tiny mad idea" (that we separated from God), but our problem is that we believed it and took it seriously. As a later section in the Course says, "we remembered not to laugh." Even when we feel embroiled in our world of "serious" problems, the tender loving smile of the Holy Spirit is with us and reminds us there is another way to see this.

The ego made the world as it perceives it, but the Holy Spirit, the reinterpreter of what the ego made, sees the world as a teaching device for bringing you home. The Holy Spirit must perceive time, and reinterpret it into the timeless. He must work through opposites, because He must work with and for a mind that is in opposition. Correct and learn, and be open to learning. You have not made truth, but truth can still set you free. Look as the Holy Spirit looks, and understand as He understands. His understanding looks back to God in remembrance of me. He is in communion with God always, and He is part of you. He is
Notes on Chapter Five – Healing and Wholeness

your Guide to salvation, because He holds the remembrance of things past and to come, and brings them to the present. He holds this gladness gently in your mind, asking only that you increase it in His Name by sharing it to increase His joy in you. (R4 p80 III.11)

The Workbook for Students refers to the world as "the place where starved and thirsty creatures come to die." The ego made the world as an attack on God's oneness. The Holy Spirit uses the world we made to help us realize the world can have another purpose. We are not asked to deny the body or the world, but to see them differently. We cannot skip steps in our understanding. We need a gradual approach with a patient teacher who will help us look at the body and world differently at a pace that will not evoke fear. We must look at the world and realize it is a projection of the mind. So we use what we see in the world to get back to what our mind has chosen — the ego's conflict and separation rather than God's love and oneness.

The two statements below address the fact that ideas make our world.

If you can accept the concept that the world is one of ideas… (R5 p73 I.1.14)

Everything is an idea. (R6 p73 I.2.4)

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are ideas in our mind that represent symbols of the right minded choice for the Atonement rather than the ego's wrong minded choice for separation. I am an idea. You are an idea. The world is an idea. The ego is an idea. God is an idea. Everything is an idea.

The Holy Spirit is the idea of healing. Being thought, the idea gains as it is shared. Being the Call for God, it is also the idea of God. Since you are part of God it is also the idea of yourself, as well as of all His creations. The idea of the Holy Spirit shares the property of other ideas because it follows the laws of the universe of which it is a part. It is strengthened by being given away. (R7 p78 III.2.1-6)

Ideas are strengthened as they are shared. The more love you extend, the more you feel. The more guilt you project, the more you feel. Forgiveness is the way we share the Atonement. The Holy Spirit is an idea in the mind that represents the choice for God's oneness and shared interests. The ego is an idea in the mind that represents the choice for separation and selfish interests. The Holy Spirit serves as a reminder that we can choose the oneness of God's love rather than the ego's separation. The Course comes as a Text and Workbook because we must learn to remember the true identity of who we are, and unlearn our identity with the ego. We must learn the difference between reality and illusion.

Now we will address again two important themes of the Course; first, the Atonement principle, and second, the ego's fear of the Atonement principle. It is crucial to understand these two key themes of the Course.

Knowledge is always ready to flow everywhere, but it cannot oppose. Therefore you can obstruct it, although you can never lose it. (R8 p74 I.4.10-11)

Free will means we can choose to deny Knowledge, which is the synonym for Heaven in the Course. We are free to deny the Holy Spirit's presence, but it is still always with us. We can choose to drown out the beautiful melody of the Holy Spirit with the raucous shrieking of the ego, but the melody is still with us.

Your will is still in you because God placed it in your mind, and although you can keep it asleep you cannot obliterate it. (R9 p75 II.1.5)

Our will is an extension of God's Will as Christ or Spirit; we can choose to ignore it, but we cannot obliterate the Will of God. The Will of God is perfect Love.

You cannot lose it, but you cannot know it. It is therefore "lost" to you until you choose right. (R10 p76 II.7.13-14)

The Knowledge of God's oneness can be forgotten temporarily, but not lost forever. The Holy Spirit reminds us the love of God is always with us.

He is your remaining communication with God, which you can interrupt but cannot destroy. (R11 p77 II.8.3)

The Holy Spirit is our communication link to God. We can hide God's Will under the ego's thought
system of separation, but we cannot destroy God's Will of oneness. This is the Atonement principle: the separation never happened, and the love of God within us is totally unaffected.

…when you do not think like God, you are not really thinking at all. Delusional ideas are not real thoughts, although you can believe in them. (R12 p85 V.6.12-13)

This is the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego: you are free to believe any insane thought you want, but having thoughts and believing them does not make them real. We can have the most insane thoughts imaginable, and we all do, but it does not make them true. The fact that we alone believe in our insane thoughts, or ten people, or ten million people believe in our insane thoughts, does not make them real or true. It only means we have ten million people who are as deluded as we are.

Remember the Kingdom always, and remember that you who are part of the Kingdom cannot be lost. (R13 p86 VI.3)

Do you really believe you can make a voice that can drown out God's? Do you really believe you can devise a thought system that can separate you from Him? (R14 p88 VII.1.1-2)

The insanity is that we believe we can separate from God. The good news is we can make a voice that seems to drown out God, but does not. It only means for the moment we may not hear God's Voice. The melody of the Holy Spirit is always within.

Now we will address the ego's fear of the Atonement.

The principle of Atonement and the separation began at the same time. When the ego was made, God placed in the mind the Call to joy. This Call is so strong that the ego always dissolves at its sound. That is why you must choose to hear one of two voices within you. One you made yourself, and that one is not of God. But the other is given you by God, Who asks you only to listen to it. (R15 p75 II.3.1-6)

Strictly speaking, God did not do anything; nothing needs to be done; nothing happened. The Biblical God is active in the world; the Biblical God is the ego's god. The true God does nothing in the world. If God were to take action in our dream world that would make God insane. The Course uses dual language and anthropomorphic symbology to speak to us at the level we can understand: as a body in a world. The ego's god must act in the world. The true God does nothing in the world because the world is our projected illusion.

It is the ego who told us that the Holy Spirit in our mind is God's General who is going to capture us and bring us back to God Who will destroy us. That is the ego's myth that drives us out of our mind, literally and figuratively, and makes the world. Jesus uses the same myth, but changes the meaning of the symbols. The Holy Spirit is placed in our mind to be a gentle reminder of God's love for us and to guide us home to Heaven. Do not mistake the symbols for reality.

The ego knows, as we do, that if the Son hears the Holy Spirit, Who is the Voice for God, the Son may choose the Holy Spirit which will lead to the dissolution of the ego. Therefore, the ego's strategy is to keep us focused in the world and identified with the body so we will remain mindless and unable to choose against the ego and for the Holy Spirit.

One reason the Bible is the most popular book in the Western world is because the Bible says God did create us as individual bodies, reinforcing the ego's special separate existence.

His is the glory before which dissociation falls away, and the Kingdom of Heaven breaks through into its own. (R16 p76 II.4.3)

Dissociation is the psychological dynamic of splitting off. Dissociation is represented in the Chart by the split between the ego's wrong mind and the Holy Spirit's right mind. It is the dissociation of the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle that allows the ego to thrive. As separate egos we are afraid of the Holy Spirit because when we bring the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit's Atonement the ego disappears.

By choosing one you give up the other. The choice for the Holy Spirit is the choice for God. (R17 p76 II.5.3)
By choosing the Holy Spirit we are choosing against the ego, against our special, individual existence.

This vision frightens the ego because it is so calm. Peace is the ego's greatest enemy because, according to its interpretation of reality, war is the guarantee of its survival. The ego becomes strong in strife. (R18 p79-80 III.8.6-8)

The "vision" of the Holy Spirit is the Atonement. People love to fight because it makes the ego strong. The ego began with the thought that we were at war with God. And the war continues in the way we live our lives in conflict.

Despite the ego's attempts to conceal this part, it is still much stronger than the ego, although the ego does not recognize it. (R19 p80 III.10.4)

The ego does not know anything about the Holy Spirit. The ego's fear is that a power greater than itself, the Son of God, can choose the Holy Spirit. The power is in the Son as the decision maker.

The ego can keep you in exile from the Kingdom, but in the Kingdom itself it has no power. (R20 p81 IV.3.4)

Again, it is crucial to understand the major themes of the Atonement and the ego's fear of Atonement. It is important to understand and appreciate how strong the ego's desire to maintain its separate existence is. We all will literally fight to the death to maintain our special separate existence. Whether we identify with a national, political, religious or racial group; or with our individual identity as a body; we are terrified of the non-specific, abstract nature of God's love and will kill to maintain our separate existence. The main reason people are unable to live this Course is that they are terrified (consciously or unconsciously) of the loss of their individual, special existence.

The ego does not perceive sin as a lack of love, but as a positive act of assault. This is necessary to the ego's survival because, as soon as you regard sin as a lack, you will automatically attempt to remedy the situation. And you will succeed. The ego regards this as doom, but you must learn to regard it as freedom. (R21 p84 V.4.10-13)

In truth, sin is a call for love. All behavior is either an expression of love or a call for love. Sin is a lack of love. The remedy for a lack of love is the extension of love. To survive, the ego needs sin to be real, not merely a lack of love. Therefore, unconditional love evokes terror in the ego; as unconditional love means the end of the ego's specialness.

It tries to usurp all the functions of God as it perceives them, because it recognizes that only total allegiance can be trusted. (R22 p85 V.5.9)

As long as we are identified with the body and forget we have a mind, the ego has our total allegiance. When we chose the ego we chose it totally. The ego's fear is that we will change our mind. When you first begin turning to the Holy Spirit rather than the ego, the ego strikes back viciously because it perceives you as a traitor. Anything less than full allegiance to the ego is perceived as an attack.

Excluding yourself from the Atonement is the ego's last-ditch defense of its own existence. It reflects both the ego's need to separate, and your willingness to side with its separateness. This willingness means that you do not want to be healed. (R23 p89 VII.3.4-6)

The way the ego protects itself is by excluding the decision making part of the mind from the Atonement. It excludes the decision maker by keeping the focus on the body and world, and away from the mind.

One of the ego's chief weapons in its war against our choosing God is guilt. The ego uses guilt as a way to preserve the belief in sin. Guilt means we have sinned, and because of our sin we deserve to be punished which evokes fear.

If you identify with the ego, you must perceive yourself as guilty. Whenever you respond to your ego you will experience guilt, and you will fear punishment. The ego is quite literally a fearful thought. However ridiculous the idea of attacking God may be to the sane mind, never forget that the ego is not sane. It represents a delusional system, and speaks for it. Listening to the ego's voice means that you believe it is possible to attack God, and that a part of Him has been torn away by you. Fear of retaliation from without follows, because the severity of the guilt is so acute that it must be projected. (R24 p84 V.3.5-11)
Sin is the belief that we separated from God; guilt arises because of our belief in separation from God, and fear is of the punishment we will suffer for separating from God.

I said before that illness is a form of magic. It might be better to say that it is a form of magical solution. The ego believes that by punishing itself it will mitigate the punishment of God. Yet even in this it is arrogant. It attributes to God a punishing intent, and then takes this intent as its own prerogative. (R25 p84-85 V.5.4-8)

First we make up a wrathful, vengeful God, and then out of fear of our made up God we decide to punish ourselves so God does not have to punish us. We believe we have sinned against God and so we punish ourselves to mitigate our guilt.

In a sense the whole Course is about making a decision. We are at the point where the ego is afraid of the Atonement principle and does its best to drown out the Voice of the Holy Spirit. Its strategy is to convince us that the sin of separation is real, have us feel guilty over separating from God, and fear God's wrath for separating from Him. Then we make a body and world onto which we can project our sin and guilt. By keeping us focused on the world, we forget we have a mind that made the original choice for the ego and separation, and can choose again for the Holy Spirit and oneness of God. This process is referred to as the double shield of oblivion. Sin, guilt and fear in the mind comprise the first shield against the Holy Spirit's Voice. The projection of the world and identification with the body form the second shield. At some point we realize there must be another way and we can make another choice.

The Holy Spirit is in you in a very literal sense. His is the Voice that calls you back to where you were before and will be again. It is possible even in this world to hear only that Voice and no other. It takes effort and great willingness to learn. It is the final lesson that I learned, and God's Sons are as equal as learners as they are as Sons. (R25A p75-76 II.3.7-11)

The place we are called back to is the decision maker or the Son of God — a place we never left. We all have the same power to learn to choose the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. It takes effort and great willingness to learn because of our identification with the ego, the body and world; and the ego's fear of dissolution.

The Holy Spirit calls you both to remember and to forget. You have chosen to be in a state of opposition in which opposites are possible. As a result there are choices you must make. In the holy state the will is free, so that its creative power is unlimited and choice is meaningless. Freedom to choose is the same power as freedom to create, but its application is different. Choosing depends on a split mind. The Holy Spirit is one way of choosing. God did not leave His children comfortless, even though they chose to leave Him. The voice they put in their minds was not the Voice for His Will, for which the Holy Spirit speaks. (R25B p76 II.6)

The Holy Spirit calls us to forget the ego and remember our oneness with God. We are in a state of opposition because we believe we are at war with God for our own individual existence. Our conflicts and wars in the world are a reflection of the original war with God. We simply reenact the original war over and over again in our lives. There are groups of people in the U.S. who reenact the Civil War each year as a memorial. In our daily lives we reenact the original Civil War with God in each conflict we fight.

Once we make a world of opposites, we can choose between the voice for the ego or the Holy Spirit. Free will only has meaning within the illusion. God's Will in Heaven is absolutely free.

The Holy Spirit is your Guide in choosing. He is in the part of your mind that always speaks for the right choice, because He speaks for God. (R25C p76-77 II.8.1-2)

Both Heaven and earth are in you, because the call of both is in your mind. The Voice for God comes from your own altars to Him. These altars are not things; they are devotions. Yet you have other devotions now. Your divided devotion has given you the two voices, and you must choose at which altar you want to serve. The call you answer now is an evaluation because it is a decision. The decision is very simple. It is made on the basis of which call is worth more to you. (R26 p77 II.8.5-12)
By "earth" he means the ego. Although the term "decision maker" is not used in the Course, clearly it is implied. Altars represent a choice: whether we are devoted to and worship at the altar of the ego which is dripping with blood; or the altar of the Holy Spirit which is strewn with the lilies of forgiveness. Jesus is teaching us that when we choose the ego we feel separation, pain and suffering. When we choose the Holy Spirit we feel wholeness, love and peace.

This next passage addresses the process of making a decision for the ego or the Holy Spirit. The decision we make determines our experience; no one else. This realization is the beginning of true forgiveness.

Whenever you are not wholly joyous, it is because you have reacted with a lack of love to one of God's creations. Perceiving this as "sin" you become defensive because you expect attack. The decision to react in this way is yours, and can therefore be undone. It cannot be undone by repentance in the usual sense, because this implies guilt. If you allow yourself to feel guilty, you will reinforce the error rather than allow it to be undone for you. Decision cannot be difficult. This is obvious, if you realize that you must already have decided not to be wholly joyous if that is how you feel. Therefore, the first step in the undoing is to recognize that you actively decided wrongly, but can as actively decide otherwise. Be very firm with yourself in this, and keep yourself fully aware that the undoing process, which does not come from you, is nevertheless within you because God placed it there. Your part is merely to return your thinking to the point at which the error was made, and give it over to the Atonement in peace. Say this to yourself as sincerely as you can, remembering that the Holy Spirit will respond fully to your slightest invitation:

I must have decided wrongly, because I am not at peace. I made the decision myself, but I can also decide otherwise. I want to decide otherwise, because I want to be at peace. I do not feel guilty, because the Holy Spirit will undo all the consequences of my wrong decision if I will let Him. I choose to let Him, by allowing Him to decide for God for me. (R27 p89-90 VII.5-6)

There is no order of difficulties in miracles because the cause of my distress is not in the world — whether my problem is a hang nail or cancer; an argument with a friend or a World War. The cause of my distress is in my mind, not in the illusory body or world. There is no hierarchy of illusions, and there is no order of difficulty in miracles. The one problem is the mistaken choice I made for the ego's separation and conflict; and the one solution is choosing the Holy Spirit's oneness and love.

The Holy Spirit does not "do" anything with our problems in the world. We bring our problems to the light of the Holy Spirit, and in the light they dissolve. The choice for despair and suffering, or true hope and peace is ours, not the Holy Spirit's.

The passage below describes what forgiveness is without mentioning the term. We cannot get to Heaven if we exclude anyone; this is the importance of forgiveness. Salvation is a collaborative venture. Excluding, rejecting, judging or condemning another is in fact excluding, rejecting, judging and condemning myself. I cannot feel peace, love and wholeness if I exclude anyone. To crucify one is to crucify the whole Sonship, including myself.

It increases in you as you give it to your brother. Your brother does not have to be aware of the Holy Spirit in himself or in you for this miracle to occur. He may have dissociated the Call for God, just as you have. This dissociation is healed in both of you as you become aware of the Call for God in him, and thus acknowledge Its being. There are two diametrically opposed ways of seeing your brother. They must both be in your mind, because you are the perceiver. They must also be in his, because you are perceiving him. See him through the Holy Spirit in his mind, and you will recognize Him in yours. What you acknowledge in your brother you are acknowledging in yourself, and what you share you strengthen.

The Voice of the Holy Spirit is weak in you. That is why you must share It. It must be increased in strength before you can hear It. It is impossible to hear It in yourself while It is so weak in your mind. It is not weak in Itself, but It is limited by your unwillingness to hear It. If you make the mistake of looking for the Holy Spirit in yourself alone your thoughts will frighten you because, by adopting the ego's viewpoint, you are undertaking an ego-alien journey with the ego as guide. This is bound to produce fear. (R28p78 III.2.7-10;III.3-4)
The "Call" for God is a synonym for the Voice for God or the Holy Spirit. Anger, judgment and condemnation are never justified. We may feel anger, judgment and condemnation, but they are never justified. No one can be excluded from forgiveness and love if you are to return to Heaven. In Heaven all is one.

The Holy Spirit atones in all of us by undoing, and thus lifts the burden you have placed in your mind. By following Him you are led back to God where you belong, and how can you find the way except by taking your brother with you? My part in the Atonement is not complete until you join it and give it away. As you teach so shall you learn. I will never leave you or forsake you, because to forsake you would be to forsake myself and God Who created me. You forsake yourself and God if you forsake any of your brothers. You must learn to see them as they are, and understand they belong to God as you do. How could you treat your brother better than by rendering unto God the things that are God's? (R29 p82 IV.6)

The "things that are God's" refer to the Sonship. All of us are of God with no exceptions. It can be a challenge for us to accept everyone as part of our self and part of God. The desire to project our sin and guilt out of ourselves and onto another can be a challenge to overcome, but it is impossible to know the love and peace of God while judging or condemning even one other person. This is the importance of all-inclusive, unconditional forgiveness.

My mind will always be like yours, because we were created as equals. It was only my decision that gave me all power in Heaven and earth. My only gift to you is to help you make the same decision. This decision is the choice to share it, because the decision itself is the decision to share. It is made by giving, and is therefore the one choice that resembles true creation. I am your model for decision. By deciding for God I showed you that this decision can be made, and that you can make it. I have assured you that the Mind that decided for me is also in you, and that you can let it change you just as it changed me. This Mind is unequivocal, because it hears only one Voice and answers in only one way. You are the light of the world with me. Rest does not come from sleeping but from waking. The Holy Spirit is the Call to awaken and be glad. (R30 p77 II.9;II.10.1-5)

The decision for the ego is the decision to exclude. First we exclude God, and then we exclude everybody else. Choosing the Holy Spirit is the decision to share. I realize my shared Identity with God; God and I are one. In my shared Identity with God, I am one with you. We all share God's being and are one in Him.

The capital "M" Mind is the One Mind of God. The Call of the Holy Spirit is the Call to awaken from the dream. In awakening is true rest.

"Teaching" does not refer to teaching the Course or its philosophy. We teach by choosing to listen to the Holy Spirit in our mind, and as we learn from the Holy Spirit we teach what we learn by demonstrating it.

At this point in the Text we begin to see more and more beauty in the writing style of the Course.
God in your heart and in your hands, to hold and share. The heart is pure to hold it, and the hands are strong to give it. We cannot lose. My judgment is as strong as the wisdom of God, in Whose Heart and Hands we have our being. His quiet children are His blessed Sons. The Thoughts of God are with you. (R32 p83 IV.8)

End Chapter Five
CHAPTER SIX
THE LESSONS OF LOVE

Main Themes: In Chapter Four we were formally introduced to the ego, and we addressed the ego's strategy of trying to confuse us by having us believe we are a body instead of a mind. In Chapter Five the development of the ego's thought system was continued and we saw the introduction of the concept of guilt. We also saw the formal introduction of the Holy Spirit. And now in Chapter Six we see the further development of the ego thought system, and how once we have guilt it is inevitable that we project it. The main way guilt is projected is through anger and attack. We will see how and why the ego projects its thought of guilt. Also in this chapter we will address the lessons of the Holy Spirit and what they mean to us. Each chapter in the Text contains the whole thought system of the Course, but focuses on one or two particular themes.

God created His Sons by extending His Thought, and retaining the extensions of His Thought in His Mind. All His Thoughts are thus perfectly united within themselves and with each other. The Holy Spirit enables you to perceive this wholeness now. (Reference 1 p97 II.8.1-3)

The passage above is a statement of the Atonement principle; the fact that the separation never happened. And we are all perfectly united within the Mind and love of God. We will soon see how having, being, giving and receiving are all one and are not separate. We have the love of God because we are the love of God. And giving the love of God is receiving the love of God because we are all one in God.

The full awareness of the Atonement, then, is the recognition that the separation never occurred. (R2 p98 II.10.7)

The line above is another direct statement of the Atonement principle. Full awareness of the Atonement is the full awareness in our experience that we are absolutely whole and complete, in and as God's unconditional love.

The ego can accept the idea that return is necessary because it can so easily make the idea seem difficult. Yet the Holy Spirit tells you that even return is unnecessary, because what never happened cannot be difficult. However, you can make the idea of return both necessary and difficult. (R3 p98 II.11.1-3)

The ego can only exist in conflict and difficulty, so it even makes the remembering of our true identity as the wholeness of God's love seem difficult.

Hear, then, the one answer of the Holy Spirit to all the questions the ego raises: You are a child of God, a priceless part of His Kingdom, which He created as part of Him. Nothing else exists and only this is real. (R4 p101 IV.6.1-2)

The Holy Spirit's answer is always a form of the Atonement principle.

The wholeness of the Kingdom does not depend on your perception, but your awareness of its wholeness does. It is only your awareness that needs protection, since being cannot be assailed. (R5 p111 V.C.8.3-4)

Our true nature is Being, which is our reality as Christ. We are free to ignore or attack our oneness with God, but we cannot change God's Truth. The ego's fear is that we will choose God's oneness over the ego's specialness and separation, and causes the ego to develop its strategy to cover the Voice of the Holy Spirit with sin and guilt, and then make a body and world onto which it can project the sin and guilt, further hiding the truth of our Identity with God under the veil of the world of bodies.

How else can you find joy in a joyless place except by realizing that you are not there? You cannot be anywhere God did not put you, and God created you as part of Him. (R6 p97 II.6.1-2)

The ego fears the truth that we are not bodies living in a state of separation. We are free to believe we are separate from God, but believing does not make it so.

Since the Holy Spirit is in your mind, your mind can also believe only what is true. The Holy Spirit can speak only for this, because He speaks for God. He tells you to return your whole mind to God, because it has never left Him. If it has never left Him, you need only perceive it as it is to be returned. The full awareness of the Atonement,
then, is the recognition that the separation never occurred. The ego cannot prevail against this because it is an explicit statement that the ego never occurred. (R7 p98 II.10.3-8)

The ego is terrified of the mind because the mind can choose the Holy Spirit which would lead to the dissolution of the ego. The ego makes us mindless so we will not choose against its special separate existence. The ego's purpose for making the body and the world is to keep us out of the mind where we would realize our mistaken choice and choose again. You must understand the ego's strategy in order to understand this Course and its practical application in your life. The ego is terrified of the Atonement because the Atonement means the end of the ego. The ego cannot exist in the state of perfect oneness, which means you, as you believe yourself to be, cannot exist in the state of perfect oneness. This is your great terror and so you will literally fight to the death to maintain your egoic specialness.

Your Godlike mind can never be defiled. The ego never was and never will be part of it, but through the ego you can hear and teach and learn what is not true. (R8 p99 III.1.6-7)

The right mind or the Holy Spirit in our mind cannot be lost or defiled. The ego or wrong mind cannot touch our right mind. Separation cannot know oneness.

Remember that the Holy Spirit is the Answer, not the question. The ego always speaks first. It is capricious and does not mean its maker well. It believes, and correctly, that its maker may withdraw his support from it at any moment. If it meant you well it would be glad, as the Holy Spirit will be glad when He has brought you home and you no longer need His guidance. The ego does not regard itself as part of you. Herein lies its primary error, the foundation of its whole thought system. (R9 p100 IV.1)

"What are you?" is the ego's question. The maker of the ego is the decision making part of the mind — the decision maker. "You" refers to the Son of God as the decision maker. The ego fears the decision maker because only he can undo the ego by choosing the Holy Spirit. And that is why the ego must keep us focused in the world, identified with a body, and out of the decision making part of our mind. Jesus cannot undo the ego; the Holy Spirit cannot undo the ego; God knows nothing of the illusory ego — only we as the Son of God can undo the ego by choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit instead.

The most inventive activities of the ego have never done more than obscure the question, because you have the answer and the ego is afraid of you. (R10 p101 IV.2.9)

You must understand the ego's fear in order to understand this Course, and to understand yourself, your behavior and your difficulty in applying what you are learning in your daily experience.

You have chosen a sleep in which you have had bad dreams, but the sleep is not real and God calls you to awake. There will be nothing left of your dream when you hear Him, because you will awaken. Your dreams contain many of the ego's symbols and they have confused you. Yet that was only because you were asleep and did not know. When you wake you will see the truth around you and in you, and you will no longer believe in dreams because they will have no reality for you. Yet the Kingdom and all that you have created there will have great reality for you, because they are beautiful and true. (R11 p101-102 IV.6.3-8)

You, the Son of God as the decision maker, have chosen to identify yourself with the ego's nightmare of special separate existence as a body in a world. The ego's thought system is the dream: sin, guilt, fear, the battleground, hate, attack, murder, the body and world. The Course is given to facilitate our waking up from the dream of separation to the truth of our Identity as Christ with God in Heaven. The ego's fear is that we will wake up; therefore it fights like hell to keep us mindless and asleep in its dream world. The dynamics of the ego and its strategy are exposed as we continue through the Text.

Many thought I was attacking them, even though it was apparent I was not. An insane learner learns strange lessons. What you must recognize is that when you do not share a thought system, you are weakening it. Those who believe in it therefore perceive this as an attack on them. This is because everyone identifies himself with his thought system, and every thought system centers on what you believe you are. (R12 p106 V.B.1.5-9)
The reason people rejected Jesus is because he represented the Atonement which meant the dissolution of the ego's existence. Jesus and the Holy Spirit represent the thought system that leads to the dissolution of the specialness of the ego. The ego's thought system says we are separate from God; sin and guilt are real; the body and world are real; and we are bodies living in the world. Our separate, special identity is rooted in and dependent upon the ego's thought system. The Holy Spirit's thought system says the separation never happened; sin and guilt are illusions; the body and world are illusory projections of mind; and our true identity is one with spirit. If we as the Son of God choose the Holy Spirit, the ego is dissolved. This is why the ego does everything it can to keep us focused on the body and world and out of the decision making part of our mind. Any threat of the ego's thought system is perceived as an attack on its life and it will attack back to defend against the perceived attack.

Upside down as always, the ego perceives the first lesson [To have, give all to all] as insane. In fact, this is its only alternative since the other possibility, which would be much less acceptable to it, would obviously be that it is insane. The ego's judgment, here as always, is predetermined by what it is. The fundamental change will still occur with the change of mind in the thinker. Meanwhile, the increasing clarity of the Holy Spirit's Voice makes it impossible for the learner not to listen. For a time, then, he is receiving conflicting messages and accepting both. The way out of conflict between two opposing thought systems is clearly to choose one and relinquish the other. If you identify with your thought system, and you cannot escape this, and if you accept two thought systems which are in complete disagreement, peace of mind is impossible. If you teach both, which you will surely do as long as you accept both, you are teaching conflict and learning it. Yet you do want peace, or you would not have called upon the Voice for peace to help you. Its lesson is not insane; the conflict is. There can be no conflict between sanity and insanity. Only one is true, and therefore only one is real. (R13 p107 V.B.4-6.1-2)

The first lesson of the Holy Spirit is "To have, give all to all." We will cover the lessons of the Holy Spirit later in this chapter. Our conflict is between two opposing thought systems in the mind: the ego, and the Holy Spirit. Until we choose the Holy Spirit wholly, this conflict will be projected out into the world in the form of disputes, anger, hostility and war. This Course is given to facilitate a change in the mind of the thinker and to resolve our internal conflict, not to resolve or change anything at all in the world. The world is an effect. The mind is the cause. This is a Course in cause and not effect.

In the next passage we will see how the ego's strategy involves the body. It is vitally important that you recognize the purpose that your body serves. When you understand the purpose of the body and world, the ego's strategy will become crystal clear.

The ego cannot hear the Holy Spirit, but it does believe that part of the mind that made it is against it. It interprets this as a justification for attacking its maker. It believes that the best defense is attack, and wants you to believe it. Unless you do believe it you will not side with it, and the ego feels badly in need of allies, though not of brothers. Perceiving something alien to itself in your mind, the ego turns to the body as its ally, because the body is not part of you. This makes the body the ego's friend. It is an alliance frankly based on separation. If you side with this alliance you will be afraid, because you are siding with an alliance of fear. The ego uses the body to conspire against your mind, and because the ego realizes that its "enemy" can end them both merely by recognizing they are not part of you, they join in the attack together. This is perhaps the strangest perception of all, if you consider what it really involves. The ego, which is not real, attempts to persuade the mind, which is real, that the mind is the ego's learning device; and further, that the body is more real than the mind is. No one in his right mind could possibly believe this, and no one in his right mind does believe it. (R14 p101 IV.4-5)

Again, in the passage above, "you" are the Son of God as the decision maker. The ego has no awareness of oneness, love or the Holy Spirit. The ego is born in separation, selfishness and fear. But it is aware that it owes its existence to the mind's power to choose it, and it is aware of every threat to its existence. The ego's terror is that the Son, its maker, will choose against it. The Son can end the ego in an instant — the holy instant. So the ego attacks its maker by making it mindless and
identifying with the body and making the body its principal ally.

When your body and your ego and your dreams are gone, you will know that you will last forever. Perhaps you think this is accomplished through death, but nothing is accomplished through death, because death is nothing. Everything is accomplished through life, and life is of the mind and in the mind. The body neither lives nor dies, because it cannot contain you who are life. If we share the same mind, you can overcome death because I did. Death is an attempt to resolve conflict by not deciding at all. Like any other impossible solution the ego attempts, it will not work. God did not make the body, because it is destructible, and therefore not of the Kingdom. The body is the symbol of what you think you are. It is clearly a separation device, and therefore does not exist. (R15 p104 V.A.1-2.1-3)

The ego would love to believe that this Course will make "me," this physical, psychological body, better, more holy and more loving, and teach me to heal other bodies and eventually the world. This Course is about healing the separation from God in the mind, and has nothing at all to do with healing the ego, the body or the world.

To "get rid" of my sin and guilt I need something onto which I can project it; this is the purpose of the ego's body and its world of bodies. In the next few passages we will address the ego's strategy of dissociation and projection of sin, guilt and fear.

We have said before that the separation was and is dissociation, and that once it occurs projection becomes its main defense, or the device that keeps it going. The reason, however, may not be so obvious as you think. What you project you disown, and therefore do not believe is yours. You are excluding yourself by the very judgment that you are different from the one on whom you project. Since you have also judged against what you project, you continue to attack it because you continue to keep it separated. By doing this unconsciously, you try to keep the fact that you attacked yourself out of awareness, and thus imagine that you have made yourself safe.

Yet projection will always hurt you. It reinforces your belief in your own split mind, and its only purpose is to keep the separation going. It is solely a device of the ego to make you feel different from your brothers and separated from them. The ego justifies this on the grounds that it makes you seem "better" than they are, thus obscuring your equality with them still further. Projection and attack are inevitably related, because projection is always a means of justifying attack. Anger without projection is impossible. The ego uses projection only to destroy your perception of both yourself and your brothers. The process begins by excluding something that exists in you but which you do not want, and leads directly to excluding you from your brothers. (R16 p96 II.1.5-6; II.2-3)

The relationship of anger to attack is obvious, but the relationship of anger to fear is not always so apparent. Anger always involves projection of separation, which must ultimately be accepted as one's own responsibility, rather than being blamed on others. Anger cannot occur unless you believe that you have been attacked, that your attack is justified in return, and that you are in no way responsible for it. Given these three wholly irrational premises, the equally irrational conclusion that a brother is worthy of attack rather than of love must follow. What can be expected from insane premises except an insane conclusion? The way to undo an insane conclusion is to consider the sanity of the premises on which it rests. You cannot be attacked, attack has no justification, and you are responsible for what you believe. (R17 p91 in.1)

You, as the ego, use dissociation and projection in an attempt to "free" yourself of sin, guilt and fear by putting it in someone or something else, and out of yourself. Through projection of your sin and guilt, you are able to maintain your face of innocence and rest comfortably in the arms of your specialness!

The previous passages serve as an introduction to a section in the Text in which Jesus uses himself as a model for how we should deal with attack in the world. This section of the Text addresses the story of the crucifixion of Jesus as someone who was attacked and killed, and shows his response. Jesus says to use him as a model for learning forgiveness; that is how to meet attack without attack. Being in your wrong mind you will perceive any threat to your ego as an attack, and you will attack back. Being in your right mind, you will perceive attack
only as a call for love and not an attack on you at all — this is true forgiveness.

God created you to create. You cannot extend His Kingdom until you know of its wholeness.  
(R18 p97 II.8.4-5)

If you believe the darkness of separation, guilt and attack are real, you cannot know the light of God's wholeness, and you cannot extend His love. The passage below touches on our responsibility in facilitating the Atonement through forgiveness.

The Holy Spirit was given you with perfect impartiality, and only by recognizing Him impartially can you recognize Him at all. The ego is legion, but the Holy Spirit is One. No darkness abides anywhere in the Kingdom, but your part is only to allow no darkness to abide in your own mind. This alignment with light is unlimited, because it is in alignment with the light of the world. Each of us is the light of the world, and by joining our minds in this light we proclaim the Kingdom of God together and as one.  
(R19 p99 II.13)

Forgiveness must begin in you and be extended unconditionally to everyone. If you accuse anyone of sin, guilt or attack you are saying they are children of darkness, and the light of the world does not shine in them. If I do not see the light shining in every single member of the Sonship, it is because there is a spot of darkness of guilt in my own mind that I have made real, and I want to exclude it and get rid of it by projecting it out onto you.

In the passage below Jesus refers to the crucifixion and his defenseless response. The key here is not the form of his response (his action in the world), but the content (the response in his mind). Whether or not the crucifixion of Jesus happened as portrayed in the Bible is irrelevant here. The story of the crucifixion has become a part of Western culture and is used as a symbol for teaching purposes in the Course.

I have made it perfectly clear that I am like you and you are like me, but our fundamental equality can be demonstrated only through joint decision. You are free to perceive yourself as persecuted if you choose. When you do choose to react that way, however, you might remember that I was persecuted as the world judges, and did not share this evaluation for myself. And because I did not share it, I did not strengthen it. I therefore offered a different interpretation of attack, and one which I want to share with you. If you will believe it, you will help me teach it.  
(R20 p92 I.5)

Jesus made the firm and unequivocal decision for the Holy Spirit so there is no ego to defend. Persecution is not done to us; persecution is a perception or interpretation in our mind based on the need to see sin and guilt in someone else. Jesus sees all attack as an expression of fear, and fear is the expression of a call for love. He suggests that whenever we feel attacked or unfairly treated, to think of him. If you choose to respond to attack with attack it is because of the decision you made in your mind, not because of external events.

The Holy Spirit is a strong yet gentle Voice that reminds us we can choose to wake up from our nightmare of separate existence as Jesus did. The next few passages illustrate the teaching methods of the Holy Spirit.

How can you wake children in a more kindly way than by a gentle Voice that will not frighten them, but will merely remind them that the night is over and the light has come?  
(R21 p104 V.2.1)

That is why the Holy Spirit never commands. To command is to assume inequality, which the Holy Spirit demonstrates does not exist.  
(R22 p103 IV.11.1-2)

In the world, we all share the same insanity of the ego; in Heaven, we all share the same Identity as Christ. The ego always perceives differences. The Holy Spirit always perceives our common Identity with God.

Now we continue highlighting the teaching methods the Holy Spirit uses to awaken sleeping children.

You merely reassure them that they are safe now. Then you train them to recognize the difference between sleeping and waking, so they will understand they need not be afraid of dreams. And so when bad dreams come, they will themselves call on the light to dispel them. A wise teacher teaches through approach, not avoidance.  
(R23 p104 V.2.3-5;V.3.1)
Jesus and the Holy Spirit teach through love which is approach; not through projection, fear and attack which is avoidance.

The Holy Spirit never itemizes errors because He does not frighten children, and those who lack wisdom are children. Yet He always answers their call, and His dependability makes them more certain. Children do confuse fantasy and reality, and they are frightened because they do not recognize the difference. The Holy Spirit makes no distinction among dreams. He merely shines them away. His light is always the Call to awaken, whatever you have been dreaming. Nothing lasting lies in dreams, and the Holy Spirit, shining with the light from God Himself, speaks only for what lasts forever. (R24 p104 V.4)

Jesus' and the Holy Spirit's role is to help us wake up from our dream of separation. The content of the dream is not important. What is important is that we realize we have chosen the dream of separation which has brought us pain and suffering. And that we choose instead to wake up from the dream and realize the truth of our Identity with God. There is no order of difficulty in miracles because all problems are in our dream of separation and are healed by waking up from the dream. The miracle is the change of mind that shifts from the ego's deluded perception to the true perception of the Holy Spirit.

To the Holy Spirit, there is no order of difficulty in miracles. This is familiar enough to you by now, but it has not yet become believable. Therefore, you do not understand it and cannot use it. We have too much to accomplish on behalf of the Kingdom to let this crucial concept slip away. It is a real foundation stone of the thought system I teach and want you to teach. (R25 p105 V.A.4.1-5)

Our entire existence is rooted in the belief in our independence from God. Realizing we never separated from God heals all problems. This is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles.

All good teachers realize that only fundamental change will last, but they do not begin at that level. Strengthening motivation for change is their first and foremost goal. It is also their last and final one. Increasing motivation for change in the learner is all that a teacher need do to guarantee change. Change in motivation is a change of mind, and this will inevitably produce fundamental change because the mind is fundamental. (R26 p106 V.B.2)

Change can only occur in the mind. Jesus shows us how choosing the ego brings us pain, and choosing the Holy Spirit brings perfect peace and joy. This motivates us to persevere, to learn this Course and apply its principles in our daily lives. It can be a challenge for us to let go of our identity with the ego, therefore Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always with us providing guidance and love.

You have taught yourself to believe that you are not what you are. You cannot teach what you have not learned, and what you teach you strengthen in yourself because you are sharing it. Every lesson you teach you are learning. That is why you must teach only one lesson. If you are to be conflict-free yourself, you must learn only from the Holy Spirit and teach only by Him. You are only love, but when you deny this, you make what you are something you must learn to remember. I said before that the message of the crucifixion was, "Teach only love, for that is what you are." This is the one lesson that is perfectly unified, because it is the only lesson that is one. Only by teaching it can you learn it. "As you teach so will you learn." If that is true, and it is true indeed, do not forget that what you teach is teaching you. And what you project or extend you believe. (R27 p99-100 III.1.8-10;III.2)

You are a child of love in truth, not a child of the ego.

The only way to have peace is to teach peace. By teaching peace you must learn it yourself, because you cannot teach what you still dissociate. Only thus can you win back the knowledge that you threw away. An idea that you share you must have. It awakens in your mind through the conviction of teaching it. Everything you teach you are learning. Teach only love, and learn that love is yours and you are love. (R28 p100 III.4.3-9)

Learning to accept the Atonement, which is accepting our oneness with God's love, is a process that happens over time. Salvation is instantaneous. In the holy instant we realize we are one with God, and
the separation never happened. But the old habits of the ego mind and identity with the body can take time to unlearn so that our realization of our Identity with God becomes stable. It can take time to overcome the ego's tremendous fear of annihilation.

The ego can accept the idea that return is necessary because it can so easily make the idea seem difficult. (R29 p98 II.11.1)

Now we will address the three lessons of the Holy Spirit. The first lesson is, "To have, give all to all." This lesson undoes the ego's idea, "To have, take all from all" (which is not part of the Course). The original ego thought was, "To have, take all from God." This is the ego's principle of one or the other. If God has life, I do not have it. If I take it, it is mine and God does not have it. This transfers to our daily life this way: to have innocence, I must take yours and give you my sin and guilt.

Egos do join together in temporary allegiance, but always for what each one can get separately. The Holy Spirit communicates only what each one can give to all. He never takes anything back, because He wants you to keep it. Therefore, His teaching begins with the lesson:

To have, give all to all.

This is a very preliminary step, and the only one you must take for yourself. It is not even necessary that you complete the step yourself, but it is necessary that you turn in that direction. Having chosen to go that way, you place yourself in charge of the journey, where you and only you must remain. This step may appear to exacerbate conflict rather than resolve it, because it is the beginning step in reversing your perception and turning it right-side up. This conflicts with the upside-down perception you have not yet abandoned, or the change in direction would not have been necessary. Some remain at this step for a long time, experiencing very acute conflict. At this point they may try to accept the conflict, rather than take the next step towards its resolution. Having taken the first step, however, they will be helped. Once they have chosen what they cannot complete alone, they are no longer alone. (R30 p107 V.B.3)

The first lesson of the Holy Spirit brings us back to the mind where the Holy Spirit operates and teaches that having, being, giving and receiving are the same. This works the same way with love or guilt. The second lesson of the Holy Spirit is "To have peace, teach peace to learn it." The ego's lesson was, "To have separation, teach attack to learn separation." The second lesson of the Holy Spirit makes it clear that I want peace, and ensures that I join with the peace of the Holy Spirit in my mind rather than the conflict of the ego.

The first step in the reversal or undoing process is the undoing of the getting concept. Accordingly, the Holy Spirit's first lesson was "To have, give all to all." I said that this is apt to increase conflict temporarily, and we can clarify this still further now. At this point, the equality of having and being is not yet perceived. Until it is, having appears to be the opposite of giving. Therefore, the first lesson seems to contain a contradiction, since it is being learned by a conflicted mind. This means conflicting motivation, and so the lesson cannot be learned consistently as yet. Further, the mind of the learner projects its own conflict, and thus does not perceive consistency in the minds of others, making him suspicious of their motivation. This is the real reason why, in many respects, the first lesson is the hardest to learn. Still strongly aware of the ego in yourself, and responding primarily to the ego in others, you are being taught to react to both as if what you do believe is not true. (R31 p107 V.B.3)

The sin, guilt, fear, hatred and violence that I see in you and the world are projected from my own mind — I see myself in you and the world.

Therefore, His second lesson is:

To have peace, teach peace to learn it.

This is still a preliminary step, since having and being are still not equated. It is, however, more advanced than the first step, which is really only the beginning of the thought reversal. The second step is a positive affirmation of what you want. This, then, is a step in the direction out of conflict, since it means that alternatives have been considered, and one has been chosen as more desirable. Nevertheless, the term "more desirable" still implies that the desirable has
degrees. Therefore, although this step is essential for the ultimate decision, it is clearly not the final one. Lack of order of difficulty in miracles has not yet been accepted, because nothing is difficult that is wholly desired. To desire wholly is to create, and creating cannot be difficult if God Himself created you as a creator.

(R32 p108 V.B.7.4-5;V.B.8)

The third lesson of the Holy Spirit is "Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom." The ego's version is "Be vigilant only for the ego and its kingdom of guilt." The ego makes sin and guilt real in ourselves, then denies its presence in us, and is vigilant of the guilt in everybody else. This third lesson of the Holy Spirit shifts our vigilance to our mind and the peace of the Holy Spirit rather than the ego's conflict in the world we made. Now we are to be continually watchful with Jesus for our temptation to go back to the ego. We know we have gone back to the ego when we are not at peace and we are blaming other people for what we are feeling.

We said before that the Holy Spirit is evaluative, and must be. He sorts out the true from the false in your mind, and teaches you to judge every thought you allow to enter it in the light of what God put there. Whatever is in accord with this light He retains, to strengthen the Kingdom in you. What is partly in accord with it He accepts and purifies. But what is out of accord entirely He rejects by judging against. This is how He keeps the Kingdom perfectly consistent and perfectly unified. (R33 p108-109 V.C.1.1-6)

We are to be vigilant and watchful of our thoughts of judgment, condemnation, separation and specialness, and bring them to the light of the Holy Spirit's love to help purify our mind. When we are not at peace we are to stop and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance to help us see with the vision of Christ.

Therefore, the Holy Spirit's third lesson is:

**Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom.**

This is a major step toward fundamental change. Yet it still has an aspect of thought reversal, since it implies that there is something you must be vigilant against. It has advanced far from the first lesson, which is merely the beginning of the thought reversal, and also from the second, which is essentially the identification of what is more desirable. This step, which follows from the second as the second follows from the first, emphasizes the dichotomy between the desirable and the undesirable. It therefore makes the ultimate choice inevitable. While the first step seems to increase conflict and the second may still entail conflict to some extent, this step calls for consistent vigilance against it. I have already told you that you can be as vigilant against the ego as for it. This lesson teaches not only that you can be, but that you must be. It does not concern itself with order of difficulty, but with clear-cut priority for vigilance. This lesson is unequivocal in that it teaches there must be no exceptions, although it does not deny that the temptation to make exceptions will occur.

(R34 p109-110 V.C.2.7-8;V.C.3.1-5)

Learning the lessons of the Holy Spirit happens in the world of duality, but our attention is shifting from the world, back to the mind; and from the wrong mind of the ego, back to the right mind of the Holy Spirit. This is a process that happens over time. More and more we are choosing for the peace of the Holy Spirit, and against the conflict of the ego. It can take time to overcome the temptation of the ego, but Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always with us providing loving guidance and support.

You learn first that having rests on giving, and not on getting. Next you learn that you learn what you teach, and that you want to learn peace. This is the condition for identifying with the Kingdom, since it is the condition of the Kingdom. You have believed that you are without the Kingdom, and have therefore excluded yourself from it in your belief. It is therefore essential to teach you that you must be included, and that the belief that you are not is the only thing that you must exclude. The third step is thus one of protection for your mind, allowing you to identify only with the center, where God placed the altar to Himself.

(R35 p110 V.C.6.7-1)

Vigilance means to be watchful for all the ways I try to exclude, judge, condemn, attack and blame others, and turn to the Holy Spirit and His peace instead. The altar to God is the center in the right mind with the Holy Spirit at the memory of God and His love. Turning to the Holy Spirit and away from the ego is a process that happens over time.
The third step, then, is a statement of what you want to believe, and entails a willingness to relinquish everything else. The Holy Spirit will enable you to take this step, if you follow Him. Your vigilance is the sign that you want Him to guide you. Vigilance does require effort, but only until you learn that effort itself is unnecessary. You have exerted great effort to preserve what you made because it was not true. Therefore, you must now turn your effort against it. Only this can cancel out the need for effort, and call upon the being which you both have and are. This recognition is wholly without effort since it is already true and needs no protection. It is in the perfect safety of God. Therefore, inclusion is total and creation is without limit. (R36 p111 V.C.10)

Vigilance and effort are required because of the ego's great fear of extinction, and its resistance to giving up its face of innocence and its special independent existence. Initially, vigilance of the dynamics of the ego can be quite painful, as we are realizing that all of the sin, guilt, fear, conflict, hate, and war we perceived as outside of us, is actually within us. As we are more and more willing to bring the darkness of our hidden guilt to the light of the Holy Spirit's love and forgiveness, our experience turns from pain and suffering to happiness and great peace.

Again, the three lessons of the Holy Spirit:

- To have, give all to all.
- To have peace, teach peace to learn it.
- Be vigilant only for God and His Kingdom.

End Chapter Six
Main Themes: The first theme of this chapter is the Oneness of Heaven, and the reflection of oneness in the mind which is forgiveness and healing. The second theme is the ego's belief in separation in the mind, and the reflection of separation which is the body and the world. The ego's strategy includes sickness and attack. Forgiveness is the correction for thoughts of attack. Healing is the correction for thoughts of sickness. The oneness of Heaven is defended against by the ego's belief in separation. This chapter provides a detailed exposition of the ego's strategy to maintain its separate existence.

The creative power of God and His creations is limitless, but they are not in reciprocal relationship. You communicate fully with God, as He does with you. This is an ongoing process in which you share, and because you share it, you are inspired to create like God. Yet in creation you are not in a reciprocal relation to God, since He created you but you did not create Him. (Reference 1 p112 I.1.1-4)

The purpose of the passage above is to correct the ego's notion that it is more powerful than God. When the ego believed it separated from God it said God is not the first cause, I am the first cause, and I am my own creator; meaning we are now self-created rather than God-created. The passage above corrects the fundamental error of the ego's thought system. In Heaven there is no separate God, Christ, Creator and creation. These are dualistic terms that are symbolic expressions of our perfect unity in Heaven.

As God's creative Thought proceeds from Him to you, so must your creative thought proceed from you to your creations. Only in this way can all creative power extend outward. God's accomplishments are not yours, but yours are like His. He created the Sonship and you increase it. You have the power to add to the Kingdom, though not to add to the Creator of the Kingdom. You claim this power when you become vigilant only for God and His Kingdom. By accepting this power as yours you have learned to remember what you are. Your creations belong in you, as you belong in God. You are part of God, as your sons are part of His Sons. To create is to love. Love extends outward simply because it cannot be contained. Being limitless it does not stop. It creates forever, but not in time. God's creations have always been, because He has always been. Your creations have always been, because you can create only as God creates. Eternity is yours, because He created you eternal. (R2 p112 I.2.3-9;I.3)

God's creation is not of the world of time and space. In Heaven, God extends Himself as love, and His extension is called Christ. Christ is part of God and has the same ability to create, and His extension of Himself as love is called creation. They are all one. The words are symbols for the sharing or extension of love beyond time and space. The perfect oneness and love of God can be reflected in the world of space and time as forgiveness and healing. The love of God is reflected in the mind and world when, with the Holy Spirit, we choose to forgive.

To will with God is to create like Him. God does not limit His gifts in any way. You are His gifts, and so your gifts must be like His. Your gifts to the Kingdom must be like His gifts to you. I gave only love to the Kingdom because I believed that was what I was. What you believe you are determines your gifts, and if God created you by extending Himself as you, you can only extend yourself as He did. Only joy increases forever, since joy and eternity are inseparable. God extends outward beyond limits and beyond time, and you who are co-creator with Him extend His Kingdom forever and beyond limit. Eternity is the indelible stamp of creation. The eternal are in peace and joy forever. (R3 p113 I.4.5-8;I.5)

When you identify with God's love, His love is extended through you. When you identify with the ego's separation, sin, guilt and fear, they are projected through you. In Heaven joy is our eternal state.

God does not take steps, because His accomplishments are not gradual. He does not teach, because His creations are changeless. He does nothing last, because He created first and for always. It must be understood that the word "first" as applied to Him is not a time concept. He is first in the sense that He is the First in the Holy
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Trinity Itself. He is the Prime Creator, because He created His co-creators. Because He did, time applies neither to Him nor to what He created. The "last step" that God will take was therefore true in the beginning, is true now, and will be true forever. What is timeless is always there, because its being is eternally changeless. It does not change by increase, because it was forever created to increase. If you perceive it as not increasing you do not know what it is. You also do not know Who created it. (R4 p113 I.7.1-12)

The use of dualistic terms in the Course is symbolic only. God, Christ and the Holy Spirit are one and are absolutely non-dual. Terms that imply time, space, separation and duality (first, last, Creator, creation, Father, Son) are symbolic only and are not to be taken literally. God is one. Reality is one. There is no duality, separation, time or space in God, reality or truth.

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The Atonement principle is a major theme through the whole Course and is addressed again below.

You may not know your own creations, but this can no more interfere with their reality than your unawareness of your spirit can interfere with its being. (R5 p132 IX.3.7)

Ignorance of love does not interfere with love's eternal being.

Your creations are protected for you because the Holy Spirit, Who is in your mind, knows of them and can bring them into your awareness whenever you will let Him. (R6 p133 IX.5.1)

The Holy Spirit is in your mind, not your body. You must choose to allow the Holy Spirit to bring love (your creations) into your awareness. The thought of the Holy Spirit is the memory in our right mind of who we are as Christ. When we remember our Identity with God, His love extends or flows through us, as us.

Disobeying God's Will is meaningful only to the insane. In truth it is impossible. Your Self-fullness is as boundless as God's. Like His, It extends forever and in perfect peace. Its radiance is so intense that It creates in perfect joy, and only the whole can be born of Its Wholeness. Be confident that you have never lost your Identity and the extensions which maintain It in wholeness and peace. (R7 p133 IX.6.5-9;IX.7.1)

God's Will is that we are one with his love. The ego does not want to hear that it is insane to believe we are separate, so its strategy is to deny and bury the Voice for God.

It is surely clear that you can both accept into your mind what is not there, and deny what is. Yet the function God Himself gave your mind through His you may deny, but you cannot prevent. It is the logical outcome of what you are. The ability to see a logical outcome depends on the willingness to see it, but its truth has nothing to do with your willingness. Truth is God's Will. (R8 p134 X.2.1-5)

Our function in Heaven is to create which is to extend the love of God. Our function in the world is to forgive and accept the Atonement for ourselves. We can deny the truth of God's Will, but we cannot make the truth untrue.

You cannot make the meaningless meaningful. This can only be an insane attempt. (R9 p126 VI.11.10-11)

The separation never happened. Believing in separation from God cannot make it true. The ego's fear is that we will realize we made a mistake in choosing to identify with the ego and the body, and we will choose the Holy Spirit instead. The ego is terrified that we will choose for the Holy Spirit which means the end of the ego.

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Now we turn to the ego's strategy to keep us identified with the body and world, and out of our mind. All of the apparent problems of the body and world: sickness, death, famine, conflict, and war are all part of the ego's strategy to keep us focused outside the mind where we could make the decision against the ego and for the Holy Spirit which would mean the end of the ego.

How can you who are God's meaning perceive yourself as absent from it? You can see yourself as separated from your meaning only by experiencing yourself as unreal. This is why the ego is insane; it teaches that you are not what you are. That is so contradictory it is clearly impossible. It is therefore a lesson you cannot
really learn, and therefore cannot really teach. Yet you are always teaching. You must, therefore, be teaching something else, even though the ego does not know what it is. The ego, then, is always being undone, and does suspect your motives. Your mind cannot be unified in allegiance to the ego, because the mind does not belong to it. Yet what is "treacherous" to the ego is faithful to peace. The ego's "enemy" is therefore your friend. (R10 p116 III.2.4-14)

God's meaning is love, peace, oneness, and eternity. We become absent or unaware of God's meaning by being absent from the mind, focused on and identified with the body. By seeing problems in the body and world, and seeking solutions there, we remain ignorant of the true source of problems and solutions which is in the mind. This is the ego's strategy to maintain its separate existence: keep the Son mindless by being attached and identified to the body and world. The ego, the body and the world are not of God, and therefore are not real. To maintain the appearance of separation we must believe we are something that is not real in the eyes of God. To break the belief in separation we must get back to our mind, realize we made a mistake in choosing to identify with the ego, and choose again — this time for the Holy Spirit.

To be in the Kingdom is merely to focus your full attention on it. As long as you believe you can attend to what is not true, you are accepting conflict as your choice. Is it really a choice? It seems to be, but seeming and reality are hardly the same. You who are the Kingdom are not concerned with seeming. Reality is yours because you are reality. This is how having and being are ultimately reconciled, not in the Kingdom, but in your mind. The altar there is the only reality. The altar is perfectly clear in thought, because it is a reflection of perfect Thought. Your right mind sees only brothers, because it sees only in its own light. (R11 p117 III.4)

The ego wants us to focus on the body and world, not the Kingdom of God. The altar is at the decision maker where we choose to identify with the Holy Spirit, and be devoted to the perfect love of God.

The Oneness of the Creator and the creation is your wholeness, your sanity and your limitless power. This limitless power is God's gift to you, because it is what you are. If you dissociate your mind from it you are perceiving the most powerful force in the universe as if it were weak, because you do not believe you are part of it. Perceived without your part in it, God's creation is seen as weak, and those who see themselves as weakened do attack. The attack must be blind, however, because there is nothing to attack. Therefore they make up images, perceive them as unworthy and attack them for their unworthiness. That is all the world of the ego is. Nothing. It has no meaning. It does not exist. Do not try to understand it because, if you do, you are believing that it can be understood and is therefore capable of being appreciated and loved. That would justify its existence, which cannot be justified. You cannot make the meaningless meaningful. This can only be an insane attempt. (R12 p125-126 VI.10.4-6;VI.11)

Here again we are reminded of the power of our mind to choose the Atonement which reminds us of our true Identity with the ultimate power of the One Mind as Christ. The images of others we make in our mind and project into the world form the basis of our "special" love and hate relationships. The world is a projection of sin, guilt and fear in our mind. Special relationships provide a battleground and dumping ground for our sin and guilt, and serve to justify and maintain the ego's special separate existence. It is critical to understand the ego's strategy in order to be free of it. Without waking up to the ego and its strategy to keep you identified with the body and world, you remain asleep to the truth of who you really are.

We have said that without projection there can be no anger, but it is also true that without extension there can be no love. These reflect a fundamental law of the mind, and therefore one that always operates. It is the law by which you create and were created. It is the law that unifies the Kingdom, and keeps it in the Mind of God. To the ego, the law is perceived as a means of getting rid of something it does not want. To the Holy Spirit, it is the fundamental law of sharing, by which you give what you value in order to keep it in your mind. To the Holy Spirit it is the law of extension. To the ego it is the law of deprivation. It therefore produces abundance or scarcity, depending on how you choose to apply it. This choice is up to you, but it is not up to you to decide whether or
not you will utilize the law. Every mind must project or extend, because that is how it lives, and every mind is life.

The ego's use of projection must be fully understood before the inevitable association between projection and anger can be finally undone. The ego always tries to preserve conflict. It is very ingenious in devising ways that seem to diminish conflict, because it does not want you to find conflict so intolerable that you will insist on giving it up. The ego therefore tries to persuade you that it can free you of conflict, lest you give the ego up and free yourself. Using its own warped version of the laws of God, the ego utilizes the power of the mind only to defeat the mind's real purpose. It projects conflict from your mind to other minds, in an attempt to persuade you that you have gotten rid of the problem. (R13 p129-130 VIII.1-2)

Scarcity is the result of our belief in our separation from God's abundance. Deprivation is the projection of the belief in scarcity. The ego blames others for its scarcity by claiming it is being deprived by others. By projecting the cause of scarcity onto others, the ego hides the true source of scarcity which is the mind's choosing the ego's separation rather than the Holy Spirit's love and abundance. By choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit, God's love and abundance are extended through me. By choosing to identify with the ego, the ego's scarcity, sin and guilt are projected through me. The mind's purpose is to choose the Holy Spirit and return to the abundance and wholeness of God. The purpose of this Course is to help us strip away the veil made by the ego so we can see the insanity of the ego's thought system and choose again.

The belief that by seeing it outside you have excluded it from within is a complete distortion of the power of extension. That is why those who project are vigilant for their own safety. They are afraid that their projections will return and hurt them. Believing they have blotted their projections from their own minds, they also believe their projections are trying to creep back in. Since the projections have not left their minds, they are forced to engage in constant activity in order not to recognize this. You cannot perpetuate an illusion about another without perpetuating it about yourself. There is no way out of this, because it is impossible to fragment the mind. To fragment is to break into pieces, and mind cannot attack or be attacked. The belief that it can, an error the ego always makes, underlies its whole use of projection. It does not understand what mind is, and therefore does not understand what you are. Yet its existence is dependent on your mind, because the ego is your belief. (R14 p130 VIII.3.8-12;VIII.4.1-6)

Belief in separation, sin and guilt is our problem which is in the mind. By making a world and projecting our sin and guilt onto the world, we forget the true source of our problem — our decision in our mind to identify with the ego. Ideas leave not their source. Sin and guilt do not leave the mind by projecting them onto the world. We are all part of the same mind, dreaming we are separate.

_Do not be afraid of the ego._ It depends on your mind, and as you made it by believing in it, so you can dispel it by withdrawing belief from it. Do not project the responsibility for your belief in it onto anyone else, or you will preserve the belief. When you are willing to accept sole responsibility for the ego's existence you will have laid aside all anger and all attack, because they come from an attempt to project responsibility for your own errors. (R15 p131 VIII.5.1-4)

The ego needs friends and enemies onto whom it can project its sin and guilt, and maintain its face of innocence. The ego made the world as a dumping ground for its sin and guilt.

The whole purpose of this course is to teach you that the ego is unbelievable and will forever be unbelievable. You who made the ego by believing the unbelievable cannot make this judgment alone. By accepting the Atonement for yourself, you are deciding against the belief that you can be alone, thus dispelling the idea of separation and affirming your true identification with the whole Kingdom as literally part of you. (R16 p131 VIII.7.1-3)

The ego is terrified of the power of our mind's ability to choose against it. The ego's strategy is to keep our focus on the illusory body and world, and out of our mind for fear we will choose against it.
True learning is constant, and so vital in its power for change that a Son of God can recognize his power in one instant and change the world in the next. That is because, by changing his mind, he has changed the most powerful device that was ever given him for change. This in no way contradicts the changelessness of mind as God created it, but you think that you have changed it as long as you learn through the ego. This places you in a position of needing to learn a lesson that seems contradictory – you must learn to change your mind about your mind. Only by this can you learn that it is changeless. (R17 p121 V.7.5-9)

We must learn that the source of all conflict is in the mind, not in the body and world.

The mind that accepts attack cannot love. That is because it believes it can destroy love, and therefore does not understand what love is. If it does not understand what love is, it cannot perceive itself as loving. This loses the awareness of being, induces feelings of unreality and results in utter confusion. Your thinking has done this because of its power, but your thinking can also save you from this because its power is not of your making. Your ability to direct your thinking as you choose is part of its power. If you do not believe you can do this you have denied the power of your thought, and thus rendered it powerless in your belief.

The ingeniousness of the ego to preserve itself is enormous, but it stems from the very power of the mind the ego denies. This means that the ego attacks what is preserving it, which must result in extreme anxiety. That is why the ego never recognizes what it is doing. It is perfectly logical but clearly insane. The ego draws upon the one source that is totally inimical to its existence for its existence. Fearful of perceiving the power of this source, it is forced to depreciate it. This threatens its own existence, a state which it finds intolerable. Remaining logical but still insane, the ego resolves this completely insane dilemma in a completely insane way. It does not perceive its existence as threatened by projecting the threat onto you, and perceiving your being as nonexistent. This ensures its continuance if you side with it, by guaranteeing that you will not know your own safety. (R18 p123-124 VI.2-3)

The ego is represented in the Course using anthropomorphic terms; as if it is an evil person who is plotting and scheming against us — this is only symbolic. The ego is the thought of separation in the mind; it is a thought system based on the one thought of separation from God. Apart from belief in the thought of separation, the ego does not exist. The deep anxiety we all feel inside of us is rooted in the fear that at any moment God could annihilate us, and if we get back to our mind we will annihilate ourselves by choosing against the ego-self. So we project our fear and anxiety onto a source outside our mind so we can deal with it. We project our fear of annihilation onto other people, groups, germs, diseases or anything we feel we can attack and kill, hoping to relieve our fear of extinction. The source of our fear is not in other people, groups or diseases; the source of our fear is in our mind's belief in separation and the concomitant guilt and fear.

I have repeatedly emphasized that the ego does believe it can attack God, and tries to persuade you that you have done this. If the mind cannot attack, the ego proceeds perfectly logically to the belief that you must be a body. By not seeing you as you are, it can see itself as it wants to be. Aware of its weakness the ego wants your allegiance, but not as you really are. The ego therefore wants to engage your mind in its own delusional system, because otherwise the light of your understanding would dispel it. (R19 p125 VI.8.1-5)

The Kingdom is the result of premises, just as this world is. You may have carried the ego's reasoning to its logical conclusion, which is total confusion about everything. If you really saw this result you could not want it. The only reason you could possibly want any part of it is because you do not see the whole of it. You are willing to look at the ego's premises, but not at their logical outcome. (R20 p133 X.1.1-5)

The ego's premise that the separation from God is real leads to the logical outcome that the world is real and is filled with real problems, real bodies, and real people who interact with each other. In order to be free of the ego and its projections we must look at it closely and realize it is based on an insane thought system, and then choose against it.

This next passage addresses the Catholic Eucharist.
I do not want to share my body in communion because this is to share nothing. Would I try to share an illusion with the most holy children of a most holy Father? Yet I do want to share my mind with you because we are of one Mind, and that Mind is ours. (R21 p122 V.10.7-9)

And now we turn to the Answer to the ego's thought of separation from God.

I said before that the ego's friend is not part of you, because the ego perceives itself at war and therefore in need of allies. You who are not at war must look for brothers and recognize all whom you see as brothers, because only equals are at peace. Because God's equal Sons have everything, they cannot compete. Yet if they perceive any of their brothers as anything other than their perfect equals, the idea of competition has entered their minds. Do not underestimate your need to be vigilant against this idea, because all your conflicts come from it. It is the belief that conflicting interests are possible, and therefore you have accepted the impossible as true. Is that different from saying you perceive yourself as unreal? (R22 p116 III.3)

The ego's friend is the body, and is not part of the truth of who we are. The body is a projection of the wrong mind, which also is not the truth. The original separation was from God, and the original competition was with God (from the ego's point of view). The original separation and competition get projected onto the world and are experienced as conflict and competition with others in the world. It is important to be aware and vigilant of the ego's need to be in competition and make conflict with others in the world. In truth the source of conflict is in our mind's decision to be separate from God.

Though not named specifically, the theme of forgiveness is being developed here in these early chapters, and becomes more prominent as we get further into the Course.

Whenever you deny a blessing to a brother you will feel deprived, because denial is as total as love. It is as impossible to deny part of the Sonship as it is to love it in part. Nor is it possible to love it totally at times. You cannot be totally committed sometimes. Denial has no power in itself, but you can give it the power of your mind, whose power is without limit. If you use it to deny reality, reality is gone for you. Reality cannot be partly appreciated. That is why denying any part of it means you have lost the awareness of all of it. (R23 p127 VII.1.1-8)

When we hold a grievance against somebody or we find fault with somebody we are attacking ourselves. The Son of God is one. Reality is one. When we say one part of the Sonship is imperfect we are saying the whole is imperfect because the Sonship is one and cannot be divided. All your thoughts of condemnation, judgment and attack are aimed at yourself because you are the one Son of God.

When a brother acts insanely, he is offering you an opportunity to bless him. His need is yours. You need the blessing you can offer him. There is no way for you to have it except by giving it. This is the law of God, and it has no exceptions. What you deny you lack, not because it is lacking, but because you have denied it in another and are therefore not aware of it in yourself. Every response you make is determined by what you think you are, and what you want to be is what you think you are. What you want to be, then, must determine every response you make. You do not need God's blessing because that you have forever, but you do need yours. The ego's picture of you is deprived, unloving and vulnerable. You cannot love this. Yet you can very easily escape from this image by leaving it behind. You are not there and that is not you. Do not see this picture in anyone, or you have accepted it as you. All illusions about the Sonship are dispelled together as they were made together. Teach no one that he is what you would not want to be. Your brother is the mirror in which you see the image of yourself as long as perception lasts. And perception will last until the Sonship knows itself as whole. You made perception and it must last as long as you want it. (R24 p127 VII.2-3)

Every time you meet someone it is a Holy encounter because it offers you the opportunity to recognize the projections of your guilt that you placed upon the other, and forgive it. The way we remember the truth of who we are is by seeing the face of Christ in someone else. If I want to know which teacher I chose, the ego or the Holy Spirit, I watch what I am feeling and thinking about others. If I do not feel love and peace then I have chosen the ego, and I
must choose again. Forgiveness of others leads me back to my mind where the original conflict was born in my decision to be separate from the love of God.

Do not withhold your gifts to the Sonship, or you withhold yourself from God! (R25 p132 IX.1.3)

You cannot experience the love of God if you exclude even one person.

Exclude any part of the Kingdom from yourself and you are not whole. (R26 p132 IX.4.3)

When a mind has only light, it knows only light. Its own radiance shines all around it, and extends out into the darkness of other minds, transforming them into majesty. The Majesty of God is there for you to recognize and appreciate and know. Recognizing the Majesty of God as your brother is to accept your own inheritance. God gives only equally. If you recognize His gift in anyone, you have acknowledged what He has given you. (R27 p137 XI.5.1-6)

To know and experience the love and peace of God, we cannot separate our brothers into good people and bad people. God's love is unconditional and all inclusive. To maintain its existence the ego needs "bad" people onto whom it can project its guilt, and "good" people who serve to reflect its face of innocence.

The Kingdom of God includes all His Sons and their children, who are as like the Sons as they are like the Father. Know, then, the Sons of God, and you will know all creation. (R28 p137 XI.7.10-11)

"All creation" is who we are as Christ. The way I know myself as spirit is by seeing the oneness in all. Seeing God's love and oneness in all can take a lot of work because the ego fears the loss of its specialness.

Healing is not different from forgiveness; it is the correction for another form of guilt. Guilt projected onto a brother in the form of conflict is corrected by forgiveness. Guilt projected onto the body in the form of sickness is corrected by healing. Healing has nothing to do with the body, as forgiveness has nothing to do with our brother. Forgiveness is in the mind and healing is in the mind.

Healing does not come directly from God, Who knows His creations as perfectly whole. Yet healing is still of God, because it proceeds from His Voice and from His laws. It is their result, in a state of mind that does not know Him. The state is unknown to Him and therefore does not exist, but those who sleep are unaware. Because they are unaware, they do not know. (R29 p117 IV.1.4-8)

God does not heal nor forgive because He sees only perfect wholeness and love. The law of healing comes from the law of love. Healing in the world is the reflection of God's laws of love, oneness and wholeness; just as the Atonement principle is the reflection of God's oneness in the world. In God's eyes there is only perfect love, wholeness and oneness. God knows nothing of separation, sin, guilt, conflict, war, sickness or disease because they are not real. The world loves the Bible because the ego's god knows all about our sin, guilt, sickness and disease. The Bible's god not only knows about the world, but he creates it. The ego loves to bring God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit into the world to resolve our problems and heal our bodies, because if God knows the world and our individual bodies, our separate ego identities must be real.

The miracles the Holy Spirit inspires can have no order of difficulty, because every part of creation is of one order. This is God's Will and yours. The laws of God establish this, and the Holy Spirit reminds you of it. When you heal, you are remembering the laws of God and forgetting the laws of the ego. (R30 p118 IV.2.3-6)

There is no order of difficulties in miracles or in healing because there is only one problem; we turned to the ego rather than the Holy Spirit. And there is one solution; we turn to the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. You experience disquiet, disease and discomfort in your life because you turned the wrong way in your mind; you chose the ego over the Holy Spirit. The laws of God are reflected in the world when we realize we all have shared interests and we are all the same. The laws of the ego are reflected in the world when we decide we have separate interests, and we are all different.

All abilities should therefore be given over to the Holy Spirit, Who understands how to use them properly. He uses them only for healing, because He knows you only as whole. By healing you learn
of wholeness, and by learning of wholeness you learn to remember God. You have forgotten Him, but the Holy Spirit understands that your forgetting must be translated into a way of remembering. The ego's goal is as unified as the Holy Spirit's, and it is because of this that their goals can never be reconciled in any way or to any extent. The ego always seeks to divide and separate. The Holy Spirit always seeks to unify and heal. As you heal you are healed, because the Holy Spirit sees no order of difficulty in healing. Healing is the way to undo the belief in differences, being the only way of perceiving the Sonship as one. This perception is therefore in accord with the laws of God, even in a state of mind that is out of accord with His. The strength of right perception is so great that it brings the mind into accord with His, because it serves His Voice, which is in all of you. (R31p118-119 IV.4-5)

The relationships we made to maintain our separate egoic existence are used by the Holy Spirit as a classroom to unlearn what the ego taught us about who we are, and to remember the truth of who we are as God's Son. The ego and the Holy Spirit are spoken of in the Course as if they are people. Again, anthropomorphic terms are used as symbols that represent the thought systems of the ego and the Holy Spirit in our mind. The ego thought system is of separation from God. The Holy Spirit's thought system is of oneness with God. Healing is not of the body; healing is of the separation in the mind. We all share God's oneness, and we all share the ego's separation. (R31p118-119 IV.4-5)

Only minds communicate. Since the ego cannot obliterate the impulse to communicate because it is also the impulse to create, it can only teach you that the body can both communicate and create, and therefore does not need the mind. The ego thus tries to teach you that the body can act like the mind, and is therefore self-sufficient. Yet we have learned that behavior is not the level for either teaching or learning, since you can act in accordance with what you do not believe. To do this, however, will weaken you as a teacher and a learner because, as has been repeatedly emphasized, you teach what you do believe. An inconsistent lesson will be poorly taught and poorly learned. If you teach both sickness and healing, you are both a poor teacher and a poor learner.

Healing is the one ability everyone can develop and must develop if he is to be healed. Healing is the Holy Spirit's form of communication in this world, and the only one He accepts. He recognizes no other, because He does not accept the ego's confusion of mind and body. Minds can communicate, but they cannot hurt. The body in the service of the ego can hurt other bodies, but this cannot occur unless the body has already been confused with the mind. This situation, too, can be used either for healing or for magic, but you must remember that magic always involves the belief that healing is harmful. (R32 p120 V.2; V.3.1-6)

Only the mind identified with the Holy Spirit can create, not the body. Sickness and healing are of the mind, not the body. Healing of the mind is fearful to the ego because the healing of the mind means the end of the ego.

Magic always sees something "special" in the healer, which he believes he can offer as a gift to someone who does not have it. He may believe that the gift comes from God to him, but it is quite evident that he does not understand God if he thinks he has something that others lack. (R33 p120 V.4.4-5)

The unhealed healer says, I have something that you do not have. We are all healers because we all have the power to change our mind from identifying with the separation of the ego, to identifying with the oneness of the Holy Spirit — and this is true healing. Both healing and forgiveness are the undoing of the belief in separation in the mind.

The unhealed healer wants gratitude from his brothers, but he is not grateful to them. That is because he thinks he is giving something to them, and is not receiving something equally desirable in return. His teaching is limited because he is learning so little. His healing lesson is limited by his own ingratitude, which is a lesson in sickness. (R34 p121 V.7.1-4)

If you have a gift of healing, of course you should use it, but do not fall for the illusion of specialness.

End Chapter Seven
CHAPTER EIGHT
THE JOURNEY BACK

Main Theme: This chapter glorifies the oneness of God and Heaven, and our oneness with God, the Holy Spirit, Jesus and all our brothers.

When I said, "All power and glory are yours because the Kingdom is His," this is what I meant: The Will of God is without limit, and all power and glory lie within it. It is boundless in strength and in love and in peace. It has no boundaries because its extension is unlimited, and it encompasses all things because it created all things. By creating all things, it made them part of itself. You are the Will of God because that is how you were created. Because your Creator creates only like Himself, you are like Him. You are part of Him Who is all power and glory, and are therefore as unlimited as He is. (Reference 1 p141 II.7)

Our true reality is in our Identity with God. This is the light of the Atonement principle to which we are asked to bring our dark thoughts of separation, sin and guilt.

The Will of the Father and of the Son are One, by Their extension. Their extension is the result of Their Oneness, holding Their unity together by extending Their joint Will. This is perfect creation by the perfectly created, in union with the perfect Creator. The Father must give fatherhood to His Son, because His Own Fatherhood must be extended outward. You who belong in God have the holy function of extending His Fatherhood by placing no limits upon it. Let the Holy Spirit teach you how to do this, for you can know what it means only of God Himself. (R2 p142 III.3)

Our function in Heaven is to create which is to extend God's love. And our function in the world is to forgive and heal. In the world we are to turn to Jesus and the Holy Spirit for guidance and support.

If God's Will for you is complete peace and joy, unless you experience only this you must be refusing to acknowledge His Will. His Will does not vacillate, being changeless forever. When you are not at peace it can only be because you do not believe you are in Him. Yet He is All in all. His peace is complete, and you must be included in it. His laws govern you because they govern everything. You cannot exempt yourself from His laws, although you can disobey them. Yet if you do, and only if you do, you will feel lonely and helpless, because you are denying yourself everything. (R3 p143 IV.1)

In our deluded mind we are able to believe that we can be outside the law of love, but believing does not make it true. It is within our power to deny the love of God, or choose again for the Holy Spirit and God's wholeness.

Can you be separated from your identification and be at peace? Dissociation is not a solution; it is a delusion. The delusional believe that truth will assail them, and they do not recognize it because they prefer the delusion. Judging truth as something they do not want, they perceive their illusions which block knowledge. Help them by offering them your unified mind on their behalf, as I am offering you mine on behalf of yours. Alone we can do nothing, but together our minds fuse into something whose power is far beyond the power of its separate parts. By not being separate, the Mind of God is established in ours and as ours. This Mind is invincible because it is undivided.

The undivided will of the Sonship is the perfect creator, being wholly in the likeness of God, Whose Will it is. You cannot be exempt from it if you are to understand what it is and what you are. By the belief that your will is separate from mine, you are exempting yourself from the Will of God which is yourself. Yet to heal is still to make whole. Therefore, to heal is to unite with those who are like you, because perceiving this likeness is to recognize the Father. If your perfection is in Him and only in Him, how can you know it without recognizing Him? The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself. There is no separation of God and His creation. (R4 p146 V.1-2.1-8)

Recognizing God in ourselves and in our brothers forms the basis of forgiveness. Forgiveness facilitates the realization of oneness by helping us to
see God in ourselves and our brothers. The Atonement principle is stated here — there is no separation of God and His Creation.

We are the joint will of the Sonship, whose Wholeness is for all. We begin the journey back by setting out together, and gather in our brothers as we continue together. Every gain in our strength is offered for all, so they too can lay aside their weakness and add their strength to us. God's welcome waits for us all, and He will welcome us as I am welcoming you. Forget not the Kingdom of God for anything the world has to offer. (R5 p148 VI.1)

We join with our brothers through forgiveness and realizing our shared interest in returning Home together. This is a reminder that our strength is in our oneness with God, and our weakness is in separation from God. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher we experience peace and joy, when we choose the ego as our teacher we experience conflict and pain.

Let us glorify Him Whom the world denies, for over His Kingdom the world has no power. No one created by God can find joy in anything except the eternal; not because he is deprived of anything else, but because nothing else is worthy of him. What God and His Sons create is eternal, and in this and this only is Their joy. Listen to the story of the prodigal son, and learn what God's treasure is and yours: This son of a loving father left his home and thought he had squandered everything for nothing of any value, although he had not understood its worthlessness at the time. He was ashamed to return to his father, because he thought he had hurt him. Yet when he came home the father welcomed him with joy, because the son himself was his father's treasure. He wanted nothing else.

God wants only His Son because His Son is His only treasure. You want your creations as He wants His. Your creations are your gift to the Holy Trinity, created in gratitude for your creation. They do not leave you any more than you left your Creator, but they extend your creation as God extended Himself to you. Can the creations of God Himself take joy in what is not real? And what is real except the creations of God and those that are created like His? Your creations love you as you love your Father for the gift of creation. There is no other gift that is eternal, and therefore there is no other gift that is true. (R6 p148 VI.3-5.1-8)

The story of the prodigal Son represents the story of our decision to separate from God, our experience of sin and guilt for choosing to be separate from Him, and our fear of returning Home. This story illustrates a major theme in the Course which is the experience of sin, guilt and fear in our mind which leads us to make the world onto which we project our sin, guilt and fear. But in truth ideas leave not there source whether we identify with the ego's sin, guilt and fear, or with the Holy Spirit and God's love, our projections and creations stay with us — there is no separation. The ego leads us to believe that ideas do leave their source and the separation is real.

I share with God the knowledge of the value He puts upon you. My devotion to you is of Him, being born of my knowledge of myself and Him. We cannot be separated. Whom God has joined cannot be separated, and God has joined all His Sons with Himself. Can you be separated from your life and your being? The journey to God is merely the reawakening of the knowledge of where you are always, and what you are forever. It is a journey without distance to a goal that has never changed. Truth can only be experienced. It cannot be described and it cannot be explained. I can make you aware of the conditions of truth, but the experience is of God. Together we can meet its conditions, but truth will dawn upon you of itself.

What God has willed for you is yours. He has given His Will to His treasure, whose treasure it is. Your heart lies where your treasure is, as His does. You who are beloved of God are wholly blessed. Learn this of me, and free the holy will of all those who are as blessed as you are (R7 p150 VI.9-10)

The "conditions" of truth are peace and forgiveness, and as we repeatedly turn to the Holy Spirit throughout our day we are reawakened to the truth of our oneness with God. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are symbols that represent guides who help us remember our Identity as God's Son, and overcome our fear of loss of our separate egoic identity.
Knowledge is not the motivation for learning this course. Peace is. This is the prerequisite for knowledge only because those who are in conflict are not peaceful, and peace is the condition of knowledge because it is the condition of the Kingdom. Knowledge can be restored only when you meet its conditions. This is not a bargain made by God, Who makes no bargains. It is merely the result of your misuse of His laws on behalf of an imaginary will that is not His. Knowledge is His Will. If you are opposing His Will, how can you have knowledge? I have told you what knowledge offers you, but perhaps you do not yet regard this as wholly desirable. If you did you would not be so ready to throw it away when the ego asks for your allegiance.

The distractions of the ego may seem to interfere with your learning, but the ego has no power to distract you unless you give it the power to do so. The ego's voice is an hallucination. You cannot expect it to say "I am not real." Yet you are not asked to dispel your hallucinations alone. You are merely asked to evaluate them in terms of their results to you. If you do not want them on the basis of loss of peace, they will be removed from your mind for you.

Every response to the ego is a call to war, and war does deprive you of peace. Yet in this war there is no opponent. This is the reinterpretation of reality that you must make to secure peace, and the only one you need ever make. Those whom you perceive as opponents are part of your peace, which you are giving up by attacking them. How can you have what you give up? You share to have, but you do not give it up yourself. When you give up peace, you are excluding yourself from it. This is a condition so alien to the Kingdom that you cannot understand the state that prevails within it. (R8 p138 I.1-3)

Knowledge is the synonym for love, truth, reality and Heaven. Our motivation for learning this course is the peace that comes when we are free of all conflict and pain. The root of all conflict and pain is the ego's conflict with God. When we have true Self Knowledge our conflict and pain is released and we experience our natural state of peace. In our world of conflict, peace comes through forgiveness. We are afraid of Self Knowledge, forgiveness and peace because we are terrified of the loss of our special, independent existence — which can only exist in self ignorance, blame and conflict. When we choose to turn to Jesus and the Holy Spirit they help us overcome our fear, and experience the love and peace of God. Forgiveness of those with whom we believe we are in conflict facilitates the realization of our oneness with God and our experience of peace.

You might well ask how the voice of something that does not exist can be so insistent. Have you thought about the distorting power of something you want, even if it is not real? There are many instances of how what you want distorts perception. No one can doubt the ego's skill in building up false cases. Nor can anyone doubt your willingness to listen until you choose not to accept anything except truth. When you lay the ego aside, it will be gone. The Holy Spirit's Voice is as loud as your willingness to listen. It cannot be louder without violating your freedom of choice, which the Holy Spirit seeks to restore, never to undermine. (R9 p157 VIII.8.1-7)

It is the decision maker in your mind that has freedom of choice, and can decide to lay aside the ego. And that is the ego's fear.

The ego, which always wants to weaken the mind, tries to separate it from the body in an attempt to destroy it. Yet the ego actually believes that it is protecting it. This is because the ego believes that mind is dangerous, and that to make mindless is to heal. But to make mindless is impossible, since it would mean to make nothing out of what God created. The ego despises weakness, even though it makes every effort to induce it. The ego wants only what it hates. To the ego this is perfectly sensible. Believing in the power of attack, the ego wants attack. (R10 p159 IX.6)

The ego uses the power of the mind to establish its existence, and then strives to keep us out of the decision making part of our mind by having us identify with the body. The ego believes in the power of attack because it believes its attack on God gave it separate existence. We then attacked the Voice for God by rejecting the Holy Spirit's Atonement principle that does not recognize our individuality, and we chose to make a body and identify with it and the ego instead of the Holy Spirit. And as the body we attack every other body (humans, animals, germs etc.) that threatens our separate existence as bodies.
Sickness is divided purpose; we are divided within ourselves. In sickness, minds and bodies are seen as having separate interests. Healing is unified purpose; we are unified within ourselves. In healing, minds and bodies are seen as having shared interests. The ego's purpose is attack and mindlessness. The Holy Spirit's purpose is forgiveness and mindfulness. The miracle restores to the mind its power as the decision maker. The ego perceives a battleground of separate interests and split purposes. The Holy Spirit perceives a classroom of shared interests and the common purpose of forgiveness and healing.

Attitudes toward the body are attitudes toward attack. The ego's definitions of anything are childish, and are always based on what it believes the thing is for. (R11 p155 VIII.1.1-2)

The ego's purpose is to maintain its separate existence through attack, and its purpose for the body is to use it as a weapon of attack. The Holy Spirit's purpose is to unite through forgiveness, and it uses the body as a communication device for Atonement and forgiveness.

The body exists in a world that seems to contain two voices fighting for its possession. In this perceived constellation the body is seen as capable of shifting its allegiance from one to the other, making the concepts of both health and sickness meaningful. (R12 p155 VIII.2.1-2)

In the wrong minded perception of the ego, it is in a war for its own survival with the right mind of the Holy Spirit. Health and sickness are of the mind, not the body. Health is a reflection of our choice for the Holy Spirit. Sickness is a reflection of our choice for the ego.

Sickness is a way of demonstrating that you can be hurt. It is a witness to your frailty, your vulnerability, and your extreme need to depend on external guidance. The ego uses this as its best argument for your need for its guidance. It dictates endless prescriptions for avoiding catastrophic outcomes. The Holy Spirit, perfectly aware of the same situation, does not bother to analyze it at all. If data are meaningless there is no point in analyzing them. The function of truth is to collect information that is true. Any way you handle error results in nothing. The more complicated the results become the harder it may be to recognize their nothingness, but it is not necessary to examine all possible outcomes to which premises give rise in order to judge them truly.

A learning device is not a teacher. It cannot tell you how you feel. You do not know how you feel because you have accepted the ego's confusion, and you therefore believe that a learning device can tell you how you feel. Sickness is merely another example of your insistence on asking guidance of a teacher who does not know the answer. The ego is incapable of knowing how you feel. When I said that the ego does not know anything, I said the one thing about the ego that is wholly true. But there is a corollary; if only knowledge has being and the ego has no knowledge, then the ego has no being. (R13 p156 VIII.6-7)

The Holy Spirit teaches you to use your body only to reach your brothers, so He can teach His message through you. This will heal them and therefore heal you. Everything used in accordance with its function as the Holy Spirit sees it cannot be sick. Everything used otherwise is. Do not allow the body to be a mirror of a split mind. Do not let it be an image of your own perception of littleness. Do not let it reflect your decision to attack. Health is seen as the natural state of everything when interpretation is left to the Holy Spirit, Who perceives no attack on anything. Health is the result of relinquishing all attempts to use the body lovelessly. Health is the beginning of the proper perspective on life under the guidance of the one Teacher Who knows what life is, being the Voice for Life Itself. (R14 p157 VIII.9)

The Holy Spirit's purpose of the body and the world is to serve as a classroom to learn the truth of who we are.

That is why healing is a collaborative venture. I can tell you what to do, but you must collaborate by believing that I know what you should do. Only then will your mind choose to follow me. Without this choice you could not be healed because you would have decided against healing, and this rejection of my decision for you makes healing impossible. Healing reflects our joint will. This is obvious when you consider what healing is
Healing is the way in which the separation is overcome. Separation is overcome by union. It cannot be overcome by separating. The decision to unite must be unequivocal, or the mind itself is divided and not whole. Your mind is the means by which you determine your own condition, because mind is the mechanism of decision. It is the power by which you separate or join, and experience pain or joy accordingly. My decision cannot overcome yours, because yours is as powerful as mine. If it were not so the Sons of God would be unequal. All things are possible through our joint decision, but mine alone cannot help you. Your will is as free as mine, and God Himself would not go against it. I cannot will what God does not will. I can offer my strength to make yours invincible, but I cannot oppose your decision without competing with it and thereby violating God's Will for you. (R15 p145 IV.4.8-11; IV.5)

Health is therefore nothing more than united purpose. If the body is brought under the purpose of the mind, it becomes whole because the mind's purpose is one. Attack can only be an assumed purpose of the body, because apart from the mind the body has no purpose at all. (R16 p154 VII.13.4-6)

All power over the body and world is in your mind. The body has no purpose or power apart from the mind. Symptoms of the body are effects; the cause of symptoms is in the mind. The mind is the cause, the body and world are effects.

When the ego tempts you to sickness do not ask the Holy Spirit to heal the body, for this would merely be to accept the ego's belief that the body is the proper aim of healing. Ask, rather, that the Holy Spirit teach you the right perception of the body, for perception alone can be distorted. Only perception can be sick, because only perception can be wrong. (R17 p157 IX.1.5-7)

Sickness and healing are of the mind only, not the body. Let that sink in.

All forms of sickness, even unto death, are physical expressions of the fear of awakening. They are attempts to reinforce sleeping out of fear of waking. This is a pathetic way of trying not to see by rendering the faculties for seeing ineffectual. (R18 p158 IX.3.2-4)

Sickness is the ego's defense against awakening to the truth of our Identity with God. Sickness is the ego's witness that the separation from God is real and the body is our true identity. Without sickness and conflict the ego dissolves. The faculties for seeing are in the right mind with the Holy Spirit. By identifying with the body the ego makes our faculties for seeing veiled and ineffectual. The body is the ego's way of distracting us from the power of our mind to choose for the Holy Spirit's oneness, and against the ego's separation.

Healing is release from the fear of waking and the substitution of the decision to wake. The decision to wake is the reflection of the will to love, since all healing involves replacing fear with love. The Holy Spirit cannot distinguish among degrees of error, for if He taught that one form of sickness is more serious than another, He would be teaching that one error can be more real than another. His function is to distinguish only between the false and the true, replacing the false with the true. (R19 p158 IX.5)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles because there is no hierarchy of illusions. All sickness and all healing is rooted in our one decision for the separation of the ego, or the wholeness of the Holy Spirit. Sickness and healing have nothing to do with the body. We choose guilt, separation and sickness; or we choose forgiveness, union and health. There is one problem and one solution.

When you meet anyone, remember it is a holy encounter. As you see him you will see yourself. As you treat him you will treat yourself. For I am always there with you, in remembrance of you. The goal of the curriculum, regardless of the teacher you choose, is "Know thyself." There is nothing else to seek. Everyone is looking for himself and for the power and glory he thinks he has lost. Whenever you are with anyone, you have another opportunity to find them. Your power and glory are in him because they are yours. The ego tries to find them in yourself alone, because it does not know where to look. The Holy Spirit teaches you that if you
look only at yourself you cannot find yourself, because that is not what you are. Whenever you are with a brother, you are learning what you are because you are teaching what you are. He will respond either with pain or with joy, depending on which teacher you are following. He will be imprisoned or released according to your decision, and so will you. (R20 p142 III.4-5.1-10)

Every time we meet someone we have the choice to realize our shared interests, allowing the love of God to extend through us; or to see separate interests, projecting the ego's sin, guilt and fear through us. We see in our brother what we believe we are. We see the love, peace and oneness of Christ; or the fear, conflict and separation of ego. Therein lies the importance of Self Knowledge. Our experience of ourselves and our brothers is rooted in our identity of self. The Holy Spirit tells us that freedom comes in realizing we are the same, and imprisonment comes in believing we are different. The ego tells us that freedom comes from separation, conflict and attacking our brothers; and imprisonment comes from our brothers attacking and imprisoning us.

We have two teachers we can choose between: the ego or the Holy Spirit.

Your past learning must have taught you the wrong things, simply because it has not made you happy. On this basis alone its value should be questioned. If learning aims at change, and that is always its purpose, are you satisfied with the changes your learning has brought you? Dissatisfaction with learning outcomes is a sign of learning failure, since it means that you did not get what you wanted. (R21 p138 I.4)

The motivation for learning this Course is to experience peace and happiness.

There is nothing so frustrating to a learner as a curriculum he cannot learn. His sense of adequacy suffers, and he must become depressed. Being faced with an impossible learning situation is the most depressing thing in the world. In fact, it is ultimately why the world itself is depressing. The Holy Spirit's curriculum is never depressing, because it is a curriculum of joy. Whenever the reaction to learning is depression, it is because the true goal of the curriculum has been lost sight of. (R22 p152 VII.8)

The Holy Spirit teaches peace and happiness through union with God and our brothers. The ego teaches conflict and anger through separation from God and our brothers.

The curriculum of the Atonement is the opposite of the curriculum you have established for yourself, but so is its outcome. If the outcome of yours has made you unhappy, and if you want a different one, a change in the curriculum is obviously necessary. The first change to be introduced is a change in direction. A meaningful curriculum cannot be inconsistent. If it is planned by two teachers, each believing in diametrically opposed ideas, it cannot be integrated. If it is carried out by these two teachers simultaneously, each one merely interferes with the other. This leads to fluctuation, but not to change. The volatile have no direction. They cannot choose one because they cannot relinquish the other, even if it does not exist. Their conflicted curriculum teaches them that all directions exist, and gives them no rationale for choice. (R23 p139 I.5)

We cannot learn from two different teachers who are teaching diametrically opposed curricula. We must choose one or the other. The Holy Spirit's curriculum leads to peace through our identity with spirit. The ego's curriculum leads to conflict through our identity with the body and world. The two curricula are mutually exclusive. There is no peace in the world. There is no conflict in Heaven.

The Holy Spirit leads you steadily along the path of freedom, teaching you how to disregard or look beyond everything that would hold you back. We have said that the Holy Spirit teaches you the difference between pain and joy. That is the same as saying He teaches you the difference between imprisonment and freedom. You cannot make this distinction without Him because you have taught yourself that imprisonment is freedom. Believing them to be the same, how can you tell them apart? Can you ask the part of your mind that taught you to believe they are the same, to teach you how they are different? (R24 p140 II.4.4;II.5)

The difference between imprisonment and freedom is absolute. If we choose Jesus or the Holy Spirit as our teacher to guide us Home, we cannot be with the ego
and the world. There is no compromise, and this is the ego's fear.

In the Course, Jesus is not the historical figure we think of as a man with a body living in the world. Jesus is a symbol of the perfect love and wholeness of God and represents our Identity with Him. Jesus is the presence of God's love in our mind.

I am come as a light into a world that does deny itself everything. It does this simply by dissociating itself from everything. It is therefore an illusion of isolation, maintained by fear of the same loneliness that is its illusion. I said that I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. That is why I am the light of the world. If I am with you in the loneliness of the world, the loneliness is gone. You cannot maintain the illusion of loneliness if you are not alone. My purpose, then, is still to overcome the world. I do not attack it, but my light must dispel it because of what it is. Light does not attack darkness, but it does shine it away. If my light goes with you everywhere, you shine it away with me. The light becomes ours, and you cannot abide in darkness any more than darkness can abide wherever you go. The remembrance of me is the remembrance of yourself, and of Him Who sent me to you.

You were in darkness until God's Will was done completely by any part of the Sonship. When this was done, it was perfectly accomplished by all. How else could it be perfectly accomplished? My mission was simply to unite the will of the Sonship with the Will of the Father by being aware of the Father's Will myself. This is the awareness I came to give you, and your problem in accepting it is the problem of this world. Dispelling it is salvation, and in this sense I am the salvation of the world. The world must therefore despise and reject me, because the world is the belief that love is impossible. If you will accept the fact that I am with you, you are denying the world and accepting God. My will is His, and your decision to hear me is the decision to hear His Voice and abide in His Will. As God sent me to you so will I send you to others. And I will go to them with you, so we can teach them peace and union.

(R25 p144 IV.2-3)

If you want to be like me I will help you, knowing that we are alike. If you want to be different, I will wait until you change your mind. I can teach you, but only you can choose to listen to my teaching. How else can it be, if God's Kingdom is freedom? Freedom cannot be learned by tyranny of any kind, and the perfect equality of all God's Sons cannot be recognized through the dominion of one mind over another. God's Sons are equal in will, all being the Will of their Father. This is the only lesson I came to teach. (R26 p145 IV.6.3-9)

Love does not impose; it reminds patiently. We must make the choice for the Holy Spirit and God, or the ego, because we are free to choose.

Freedom is the only gift you can offer to God's Sons, being an acknowledgment of what they are and what He is. Freedom is creation, because it is love. Whom you seek to imprison you do not love. Therefore, when you seek to imprison anyone, including yourself, you do not love him and you cannot identify with him. When you imprison yourself you are losing sight of your true identification with me and with the Father. Your identification is with the Father and with the Son. It cannot be with One and not the Other. If you are part of One you must be part of the Other, because They are One. The Holy Trinity is holy because It is One. If you exclude yourself from this union, you are perceiving the Holy Trinity as separated. You must be included in It, because It is everything. Unless you take your place in It and fulfill your function as part of It, the Holy Trinity is as bereft as you are. No part of It can be imprisoned if Its truth is to be known. (R27 p146 IV.8)

The Sonship is one and all inclusive — absolutely no one is excluded.

There is no separation of God and His creation. You will realize this when you understand that there is no separation between your will and mine. Let the Love of God shine upon you by your acceptance of me. My reality is yours and His. By joining your mind with mine you are signifying your awareness that the Will of God is One. God's Oneness and ours are not separate, because His Oneness encompasses ours. To join with me is to restore His power to you because we are sharing it. I offer you only the recognition of His power in you, but in that lies all truth. As we unite, we unite with Him. Glory be to the union of God and
His holy Sons! All glory lies in Them because They are united. The miracles we do bear witness to the Will of the Father for His Son, and to our joy in uniting with His Will for us. When you unite with me you are uniting without the ego, because I have renounced the ego in myself and therefore cannot unite with yours. Our union is therefore the way to renounce the ego in you. The truth in both of us is beyond the ego.

(R28 p147 V.2.8-12;V.3-4.1-3)

We join with the reflection of God's oneness by joining with Jesus who represents God's love and wholeness in our mind. By joining with Jesus and the Holy Spirit, we realize we share with our brothers the same Identity with God. We also share the same insanity of the ego, and further, we share the same interest of awakening from our dream of separation. With the help of Jesus and the Holy Spirit we are to remember that our identity with our brothers and with Christ is one.

Ours is simply the journey back to God Who is our home. Whenever fear intrudes anywhere along the road to peace, it is because the ego has attempted to join the journey with us and cannot do so. Sensing defeat and angered by it, the ego regards itself as rejected and becomes retaliative. You are invulnerable to its retaliation because I am with you. On this journey you have chosen me as your companion instead of the ego. Do not attempt to hold on to both, or you will try to go in different directions and will lose the way. The ego's way is not mine, but it is also not yours. The Holy Spirit has one direction for all minds, and the one He taught me is yours. Let us not lose sight of His direction through illusions, for only illusions of another direction can obscure the one for which God's Voice speaks in all of us. Never accord the ego the power to interfere with the journey. It has none, because the journey is the way to what is true. Leave all illusions behind, and reach beyond all attempts of the ego to hold you back. I go before you because I am beyond the ego. Reach, therefore, for my hand because you want to transcend the ego. My strength will never be wanting, and if you choose to share it you will do so. I give it willingly and gladly, because I need you as much as you need me.

(R29 p147-148 V.5.4-9;V.6)

Our entire physical universe including our physical existence, the very life we think is our own, rests on the ego's thought that the love and wholeness of God is to be feared. More specifically, our choosing the love of God is to be feared. "Do not accept the Atonement" is the core belief of our thought system as individuals.

The passage below is an excellent summary of the whole chapter.

The Name of God's Son is One, and you are enjoined to do the works of love because we share this Oneness. Our minds are whole because they are one. If you are sick you are withdrawing from me. Yet you cannot withdraw from me alone. You can only withdraw from yourself and me. You have surely begun to realize that this is a very practical course, and one that means exactly what it says. I would not ask you to do things you cannot do, and it is impossible that I could do things you cannot do. Given this, and given this quite literally, nothing can prevent you from doing exactly what I ask, and everything argues for your doing it. I give you no limits because God lays none upon you. When you limit yourself we are not of one mind, and that is sickness. Yet sickness is not of the body, but of the mind. All forms of sickness are signs that the mind is split, and does not accept a unified purpose.

The unification of purpose, then, is the Holy Spirit's only way of healing. This is because it is the only level at which healing means anything. The re-establishing of meaning in a chaotic thought system is the way to heal it. Your task is only to meet the conditions for meaning, since meaning itself is of God. Yet your return to meaning is essential to His, because your meaning is part of His. Your healing, then, is part of His health, since it is part of His Wholeness. He cannot lose this, but you can not know it. Yet it is still His Will for you, and His Will must stand forever and in all things.

(R30 p159 IX.7.3-6;IX.8-9)

End Chapter Eight
CHAPTER NINE
THE ACCEPTANCE OF THE ATONEMENT

Main Themes: Forgiveness and the Atonement.

Introduction: Forgiveness is the correction for the ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear. The Atonement is the realization that the separation from God never happened.

Learning the truth of who we are is remembering the truth of who we are. We unlearn what we are not, a separate ego-body, and remember what we are, the Son of God. The ego is terrified that we will remember who we are because it means the "death" of the ego. The ego's fear of "death" is projected onto the world of bodies, hence virtually everyone and everything is a threat to the ego's existence, leaving it in a constant state of panic. The ego's primary fear is that the decision maker will decide against the ego and for the Holy Spirit.

Reality cannot "threaten" anything except illusions, since reality can only uphold truth. The very fact that the Will of God, which is what you are, is perceived as fearful, demonstrates that you are afraid of what you are. It is not, then, the Will of God of which you are afraid, but yours. Your will is not the ego's, and that is why the ego is against you. What seems to be the fear of God is really the fear of your own reality. It is impossible to learn anything consistently in a state of panic. If the purpose of this course is to help you remember what you are, and if you believe that what you are is fearful, then it must follow that you will not learn this course. Yet the reason for the course is that you do not know what you are. (Reference 1 p160 I.1.3-5;I.2)

The Holy Spirit helps us go beyond the level of identity with form to our true identity with spirit. To ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help in the world on the level of form and behavior is exactly what the ego wants us to do because it keeps us identified with the body; asleep and buried in the world of illusion.

When you ask the Holy Spirit for what would hurt you He cannot answer because nothing can hurt you, and so you are asking for nothing. Any wish that stems from the ego is a wish for nothing, and to ask for it is not a request. It is merely a denial in the form of a request. The Holy Spirit is not concerned with form, being aware only of meaning. The ego cannot ask the Holy Spirit for anything, because there is complete communication failure between them. Yet you can ask for everything of the Holy Spirit, because your requests to Him are real, being of your right mind. Would the Holy Spirit deny the Will of God? And could He fail to recognize it in His Son?

You do not recognize the enormous waste of energy you expend in denying truth. What would you say of someone who persists in attempting the impossible, believing that to achieve it is to succeed? The belief that you must have the impossible in order to be happy is totally at variance with the principle of creation. God could not will that happiness depended on what you could never have. The fact that God is Love does not require belief, but it does require acceptance. It is indeed possible for you to deny facts, although it is impossible for you to change them. If you hold your hands over your eyes, you will not see because you are interfering with the laws of seeing. If you deny love, you will not know it because your cooperation is the law of its being. You cannot change laws you did not make, and the laws of happiness were created for you, not by you. (R2 p162 I.10-11)

When we ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with specific things in the world on the level of form and behavior, we are asking for "nothing." The help that Jesus and the Holy Spirit provide is to help us remember the truth of who we are beyond the world of form. They do not help us fix problems or accomplish goals in our dream world. When accepted, their help takes us beyond the illusory world to the real world. The help we ask them for is help with forgiveness and help choosing the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. By asking for help on the level of form and behavior we are doing exactly what the ego wants us to do. The ego wants to keep us focused on the body and the world, asleep under the veil of Self forgetfulness, mindless and unaware of our power to choose to remember our true Identity as Christ. The memory of our true Identity as Christ means the dissolution of the ego. Therefore the ego
is ecstatically happy when we pray for help on the level of form.

There are two identities from which we can choose: the ego or the Holy Spirit. When we choose the "littleness" of the ego we choose for "grandiosity." When we choose the "magnitude" of the Holy Spirit we choose for our "grandeur." The littleness of the ego's grandiosity, and the magnitude of the Holy Spirit's grandeur are referred to as the "two evaluations" of ourselves in this section and are further developed later in the Course.

It is perfectly obvious that if the Holy Spirit looks with love on all He perceives, He looks with love on you. His evaluation of you is based on His knowledge of what you are, and so He evaluates you truly. And this evaluation must be in your mind, because He is. The ego is also in your mind, because you have accepted it there. Its evaluation of you, however, is the exact opposite of the Holy Spirit's, because the ego does not love you. It is unaware of what you are, and wholly mistrustful of everything it perceives because its perceptions are so shifting. The ego is therefore capable of suspiciousness at best and viciousness at worst. That is its range. It cannot exceed it because of its uncertainty. And it can never go beyond it because it cannot be certain.

The ego does not love us because it does not know us. The ego only knows we have the power to choose to identify with it, thereby sustaining its existence; or to choose against identifying with it, thereby dissolving it. That is why the ego is always suspicious and vicious (paranoid, neurotic and psychotic) — it fears its own dissolution.

You, then, have two conflicting evaluations of yourself in your mind, and they cannot both be true. You do not yet realize how completely different these evaluations are, because you do not understand how lofty the Holy Spirit's perception of you really is. He is not deceived by anything you do, because He never forgets what you are. The ego is deceived by everything you do, especially when you respond to the Holy Spirit, because at such times its confusion increases. The ego is, therefore, particularly likely to attack you when you react lovingly, because it has evaluated you as unloving and you are going against its judgment. The ego will attack your motives as soon as they become clearly out of accord with its perception of you. This is when it will shift abruptly from suspiciousness to viciousness, since its uncertainty is increased. Yet it is surely pointless to attack in return. What can this mean except that you are agreeing with the ego's evaluation of what you are? (R3A p176 VII.4)

The two evaluations of yourself are in your mind, not in the body or world. Your problem is one of identity which is in your mind, not in the body or world. You have one problem, your mistaken identity with the ego and body; and one solution, your true identity as spirit. When you begin to choose to identify with the grandeur of spirit, the ego can become extremely suspicious and vicious. It is important to be vigilant of the ego's fear, suspiciousness and viciousness, and understand its motives. The ego is spoken of here and in the whole Course in anthropomorphic terms as if it is a person. It is not a person. The ego is a thought system that is based on the belief in separation from God. When I identify with the thought system of separation it becomes "me." It is this "me" that is fearful, suspicious and vicious when its existence is threatened. And because you have identified with the ego's thought system of separation it is "you." Identified with the ego thought system, you are suspicious, vicious, paranoid, neurotic and psychotic. Identified with the thought system of the Holy Spirit, you are the Son of God. When you are beyond all thought, you are God Himself.

If you choose to see yourself as unloving you will not be happy. You are condemning yourself and must therefore regard yourself as inadequate. Would you look to the ego to help you escape from a sense of inadequacy it has produced, and must maintain for its existence? Can you escape from its evaluation of you by using its methods for keeping this picture intact? (R3B p176VII.5)

The Holy Spirit never looks at the past; it is always in the present. The ego never looks at the present; it is always in the past. To be get beyond our identity with the ego we must get guidance from beyond the ego. The Holy Spirit is beyond the ego and can help us choose to go beyond to spirit. If we turn to the ego for help, we stay asleep, buried in the same deluded thought system that is the reason for all our problems in the first place. We must be aware of the tendency of the ego to try to bring the truth into the illusion.
The truth is absolute. To realize the truth you must be completely out of the illusion. Truth and illusion are mutually exclusive.

You cannot evaluate an insane belief system from within it. Its range precludes this. You can only go beyond it, look back from a point where sanity exists and see the contrast. Only by this contrast can insanity be judged as insane. With the grandeur of God in you, you have chosen to be little and to lament your littleness. Within the system that dictated this choice the lament is inevitable. Your littleness is taken for granted there and you do not ask, "Who granted it?" The question is meaningless within the ego's thought system, because it would open the whole thought system to question. (R3C p176 VII.6)

The decision maker is the sane point in you that is beyond the ego's insanity. The decision maker is the Son of God, the dreamer or observer that is beyond insanity. When the decision maker decides to go back to his mind he becomes the observer, and observes the insanity of the ego thought system. You must go beyond the ego to understand the ego. You cannot understand the ego from within the ego. The miracle brings us back to the decision maker as the observer where we can look at both dreams; the ego's nightmare of separation, and the Holy Spirit's happy dream of the Atonement. From that point we see the contrast of the ego's insanity with the sanity of the Holy Spirit, and we can choose again. This is the way out of our nightmare.

I have said that the ego does not know what a real question is. Lack of knowledge of any kind is always associated with unwillingness to know, and this produces a total lack of knowledge simply because knowledge is total. Not to question your littleness therefore is to deny all knowledge, and keep the ego's whole thought system intact. You cannot retain part of a thought system, because it can be questioned only at its foundation. And this must be questioned from beyond it, because within it its foundation does stand. The Holy Spirit judges against the reality of the ego's thought system merely because He knows its foundation is not true. Therefore, nothing that arises from it means anything. He judges every belief you hold in terms of where it comes from. If it comes from God, He knows it to be true. If it does not, He knows that it is meaningless. (R3D p176-177 VII.7)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles because every problem comes from our belief in our identity as a separate ego-body. All problems are resolved by realizing our true identity as the one Son of God. It is up to us to choose. Our problems are not caused by other people, bodies or the world, but only by our mistaken choice — with help from the Holy Spirit our mistaken choice can be corrected.

Grandeur is of God, and only of Him. Therefore it is in you. Whenever you become aware of it, however dimly, you abandon the ego automatically, because in the presence of the grandeur of God the meaningfulness of the ego becomes perfectly apparent. When this occurs, even though it does not understand it, the ego believes that its "enemy" has struck, and attempts to offer gifts to induce you to return to its "protection." Self-inflation is the only offering it can make. The grandiosity of the ego is its alternative to the grandeur of God. Which will you choose? (R4 p177 VIII.1)

The ego is immobilized in the presence of God's grandeur, because His grandeur establishes your freedom. Even the faintest hint of your reality literally drives the ego from your mind, because you will give up all investment in it. Grandeur is totally without illusions, and because it is real it is compellingly convincing. Yet the conviction of reality will not remain with you unless you do not allow the ego to attack it. The ego will make every effort to recover and mobilize its energies against your release. It will tell you that you are insane, and argue that grandeur cannot be a real part of you because of the littleness in which it believes. Yet your grandeur is not delusional because you did not make it. You made grandiosity and are afraid of it because it is a form of attack, but your grandeur is of God, Who created it out of His Love.

From your grandeur you can only bless, because your grandeur is your abundance. By blessing you hold it in your mind, protecting it from illusions and keeping yourself in the Mind of God. Remember always that you cannot be anywhere except in the Mind of God. When you forget this, you will despair and you will attack. The ego
depends solely on your willingness to tolerate it. If you are willing to look upon your grandeur you cannot despair, and therefore you cannot want the ego. Your grandeur is God's answer to the ego, because it is true. Littleness and grandeur cannot coexist, nor is it possible for them to alternate. (R5 p178 VIII.4-6.1-4)

Truth is absolute. We either identify with the darkness of ego or with the light of the Holy Spirit. The two are mutually exclusive. Identification with the grandeur and magnitude of God means the end of the grandiosity and littleness of the ego. Rather than face annihilation, the ego attempts to bring the light of God into its darkness. In the light of the Holy Spirit, the separation from God never happened; therefore sin, guilt and fear are not real. In the darkness of the ego, the separation from God, sin, guilt and fear are real; and the ego claims it will help us with forgiveness and Atonement for our sin.

The ego, too, has a plan of forgiveness because you are asking for one, though not of the right teacher. The ego's plan, of course, makes no sense and will not work. By following its plan you will merely place yourself in an impossible situation, to which the ego always leads you. The ego's plan is to have you see error clearly first, and then overlook it. Yet how can you overlook what you have made real? By seeing it clearly, you have made it real and cannot overlook it. (R6 p169 IV.4.1-6)

Once the ego makes sin and guilt real in the mind, it then makes a world of people onto which it projects the sin and guilt. This makes the ego innocent of sin, and others guilty. The "spiritual" ego then says, "Yes, you are guilty, but I will forgive you!"

The ego's plan for forgiveness is far more widely used than God's. This is because it is undertaken by unhealed healers, and is therefore of the ego. Let us consider the unhealed healer more carefully now. By definition, he is trying to give what he has not received. (R7 p171 V.1.1-4)

The unhealed healer has not accepted true healing for himself. True healing is the acceptance of the Atonement which is the realization that separation from God never happened. The unhealed healer believes that separation, sin, guilt, the body and world are real and are in need of forgiveness and healing. The healed healer has realized the separation from God never happened; and sin, guilt, fear, the body and world are not real. This realization is the Atonement. The Atonement is the healing the healed healer shares through the miracle.

The Course addresses the unhealed healer in the context of theology and psychology. The theologian makes the error of sin real and attempts to resolve it through a religious act of sacrifice, atonement or spiritual discipline on behalf of a god who also believes in sin. The therapist believes that guilt is real and attempts to resolve it by bringing the light of psychological truth to the problem of guilt. Neither approach addresses the source of the problems of sin, guilt, fear, paranoia, neurosis, or psychosis which is belief in the original sin of separation from the wholeness of God's perfect love.

If the way to counteract fear is to reduce the importance of the mind, how can this build ego strength? Such evident inconsistencies account for why no one has really explained what happens in psychotherapy. Nothing really does. Nothing real has happened to the unhealed healer, and he must learn from his own teaching. His ego will always seek to get something from the situation. The unhealed healer therefore does not know how to give, and consequently cannot share. He cannot correct because he is not working correctively. He believes that it is up to him to teach the patient what is real, although he does not know it himself.

What, then, should happen? When God said, "Let there be light," there was light. Can you find light by analyzing darkness, as the psychotherapist does, or like the theologian, by acknowledging darkness in yourself and looking for a distant light to remove it, while emphasizing the distance? Healing is not mysterious. Nothing will change unless it is understood, since light is understanding. A "miserable sinner" cannot be healed without magic, nor can an "unimportant mind" esteem itself without magic. Both forms of the ego's approach, then, must arrive at an impasse; the characteristic "impossible situation" to which the ego always leads. It may help someone to point out where he is heading, but the point is lost unless he is also helped to change his direction. The unhealed healer cannot do this for him, since he cannot do it for himself. (R8 p172 V.5-7.1-3)
The ego can only exist in separation and specialness. In the realization of oneness, the ego is dissolved. The ego made the world of separate bodies to witness to its special separate existence. The next series of passages reflect the importance of realizing that the Sonship is one.

If you would know your prayers are answered, never doubt a Son of God. Do not question him and do not confound him, for your faith in him is your faith in yourself. (R9A p164 II.4.1-2)

Can you ask of the Holy Spirit truly, and doubt your brother? (R9B II.4.4)

As you hear him you will hear me. Listening to truth is the only way you can hear it now, and finally know it. (R9C p164 II.4.7-8)

What can so holy a brother tell you except truth? But are you listening to it? Your brother may not know who he is, but there is a light in his mind that does know. (R9D p164 II.5.6-8)

Salvation is of your brother. The Holy Spirit extends from your mind to his, and answers you. You cannot hear the Voice for God in yourself alone, because you are not alone. (R9E p164-165 II.6.3-5)

You will not trust the guidance of the Holy Spirit, or believe that it is for you unless you hear it in others. (R9F p165 II.6.8)

Hear of your brother what you would have me hear of you, for you would not want me to be deceived. (R9G p165 II.6.12)

If you would hear me, hear my brothers in whom God's Voice speaks. (R9H p165 II.7.5)

Believe in your brothers because I believe in you, and you will learn that my belief in you is justified. (R9I p165 II.8.1)

Hear only God's Answer in His Sons, and you are answered. (R9J p165 II.8.7)

Our individual existence as separate bodies living in a world of separate bodies is predicated on the belief in our original separation from God. Believing in our separate existence as a body, we see our brothers as bodies separate from us and God. We need to see our brothers as separate from us in order to maintain our special separate existence, and to have someone onto whom we can project our sin and guilt. As we begin to realize we are not separate from our brothers, and the Sonship is one, our individual egoic identity begins to dissolve, and we realize our oneness with Christ. Forgiveness facilitates our realization of oneness with our brothers and plays a key role in the Atonement.

If your brothers are part of you, will you accept them? Only they can teach you what you are, for your learning is the result of what you taught them. What you call upon in them you call upon in yourself. And as you call upon it in them it becomes real to you. God has but one Son, knowing them all as One. (R10 p174 VI.3.1-5)

Rejecting, judging, and condemning anyone at all keeps the ego's identity safe and secure in its dream of separation, conflict and pain. Our brothers are mirrors who reflect back to us what we believe we are. If we see sin and guilt in our brothers, we believe we are guilty and sinful. When we reject and condemn our brother, we are rejecting and condemning a part of ourselves we want to deny and keep hidden. By forgiving our brother we are actually forgiving ourselves. And this is how forgiveness facilitates the Atonement. We see the darkness in our brother, we realize the darkness is a projection of our self image, and we bring it to the light of forgiveness. This is true forgiveness. This is true healing. True forgiveness and true healing facilitate the realization of our oneness with God.

If what you do to my brother you do to me, and if you do everything for yourself because we are part of you, everything we do belongs to you as well. Everyone God created is part of you and shares His glory with you. His glory belongs to Him, but it is equally yours. You cannot, then, be less glorious than He is. (R11 p174 VI.3.8-11)

We are not to deny the foolish behavior of our brothers, but we are to look beyond the behavior to the Christ in them.

Neither God's light nor yours is dimmed because you do not see. Because the Sonship must create as one, you remember creation whenever you
recognize part of creation. Each part you remember adds to your wholeness because each part is whole. Wholeness is indivisible, but you cannot learn of your wholeness until you see it everywhere. (R12 p174 VI.4.3-6)

Forgiveness facilitates the realization of wholeness by refusing to reject, judge or condemn any part of the Sonship.

You are not yet awake, but you can learn how to awaken. Very simply, the Holy Spirit teaches you to awaken others. As you see them waken you will learn what wakening means, and because you have chosen to waken them, their gratitude and their appreciation of what you have given them will teach you its value. They will become the witnesses to your reality, as you were created witness to God's. Yet when the Sonship comes together and accepts its Oneness it will be known by its creations, who witness to its reality as the Son does to the Father. (R13 p174 VI.5)

The oneness of God, Heaven, and Spirit are reflected in the world through forgiveness, and seeing the one light of Christ in all our brothers.

God's meaning is incomplete without you, and you are incomplete without your creations. Accept your brother in this world and accept nothing else, for in him you will find your creations because he created them with you. You will never know that you are co-creator with God until you learn that your brother is co-creator with you. (R14 p175 VI.7.7-9)

I remember my function in Heaven, which is extending the love of God, by learning to undo the barriers of separation I made in my mind and the world. I begin to undo the barriers of separation through forgiveness of my brothers, and realizing we have shared interests rather than separate interests. Our shared interest is in awakening from the nightmare of separation to the truth of our wholeness with God.

How do we facilitate healing, and correct errors and foolish behavior in our brothers? These next passages address how to do so in our daily lives.

To the ego it is kind and right and good to point out errors and "correct" them. This makes perfect sense to the ego, which is unaware of what errors are and what correction is. Errors are of the ego, and correction of errors lies in the relinquishment of the ego. When you correct a brother, you are telling him that he is wrong. He may be making no sense at the time, and it is certain that, if he is speaking from the ego, he will not be making sense. But your task is still to tell him he is right. You do not tell him this verbally, if he is speaking foolishly. He needs correction at another level, because his error is at another level. He is still right, because he is a Son of God. His ego is always wrong, no matter what it says or does.

If you point out the errors of your brother's ego you must be seeing through yours, because the Holy Spirit does not perceive his errors. This must be true, since there is no communication between the ego and the Holy Spirit. The ego makes no sense, and the Holy Spirit does not attempt to understand anything that arises from it. Since He does not understand it, He does not judge it, knowing that nothing the ego makes means anything. When you react at all to errors, you are not listening to the Holy Spirit. He has merely disregarded them, and if you attend to them you are not hearing Him. If you do not hear Him, you are listening to your ego and making as little sense as the brother whose errors you perceive. (R15 p166 III.2-4.1-3)

When a brother behaves insanely, you can heal him only by perceiving the sanity in him. If you perceive his errors and accept them, you are accepting yours. If you want to give yours over to the Holy Spirit, you must do this with his. Unless this becomes the one way in which you handle all errors, you cannot understand how all errors are undone. How is this different from telling you that what you teach you learn? Your brother is as right as you are, and if you think he is wrong you are condemning yourself. (R16 p167 III.5)

It is not up to you to change your brother, but merely to accept him as he is. (R17 p167 III.6.4)

To perceive errors in anyone, and to react to them as if they were real, is to make them real to you. (R18 p167 III.6.7)
Atonement is for all, because it is the way to undo the belief that anything is for you alone. To forgive is to overlook. Look, then, beyond error and do not let your perception rest upon it, for you will believe what your perception holds.

Forgiveness that is learned of me does not use fear to undo fear. Nor does it make real the unreal and then destroy it. Forgiveness through the Holy Spirit lies simply in looking beyond error from the beginning, and thus keeping it unreal for you. Do not let any belief in its realness enter your mind, or you will also believe that you must undo what you have made in order to be forgiven. What has no effect does not exist, and to the Holy Spirit the effects of error are nonexistent. By steadily and consistently cancelling out all its effects, everywhere and in all respects, He teaches that the ego does not exist and proves it.

The only meaningful contribution the healer can make is to present an example of one whose direction has been changed for him, and who no longer believes in nightmares of any kind. The light in his mind will therefore answer the questioner, who must decide with God that there is light because he sees it. And by his acknowledgment the healer knows it is there. That is how perception ultimately is translated into knowledge. The miracle worker begins by perceiving light, and translates his perception into sureness by continually extending it and accepting its acknowledgment. Its effects assure him it is there.

A therapist does not heal; he lets healing be. He can point to darkness but he cannot bring light of himself, for light is not of him. Yet, being for him, it must also be for his patient. The Holy Spirit is the only Therapist. He makes healing clear in any situation in which He is the Guide. You can only let Him fulfill His function. He needs no help for this. He will tell you exactly what to do to help anyone He sends to you for help, and will speak to him through you if you do not interfere. Remember that you choose the guide for helping, and the wrong choice will not help. But remember also that the right one will. Trust Him, for help is His function, and He is of God. As you awaken other minds to the Holy Spirit through Him, and not yourself, you will understand that you are not obeying the laws of this world. But the laws you are obeying work. "The good is what works" is a sound though insufficient statement. Only the good can work. Nothing else works at all. This course offers a very direct and a very simple learning situation, and provides the Guide Who tells you what to do. If you do it, you will see that it works. Its results are more convincing than its words. They will convince you that the words are true. By following the right Guide, you will learn the simplest of all lessons:

By their fruits ye shall know them, and they shall know themselves.

Our only function in the world is to accept the Atonement for ourselves. Accepting the Atonement for ourselves is accepting forgiveness and the love of God for ourselves. Knowing we are forgiven and loved is our only function in the world. Knowing we are forgiven and loved, the love of God naturally extends through us to the whole Sonship.

End Chapter Nine
CHAPTER TEN
THE IDOLS OF SICKNESS

Main Theme: This chapter is a variation on the theme of the first two Commandments in the Bible.

From Exodus Chapter 20: "I am the Lord thy God which has brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. First Commandment: Thou shall have no other God's before me. Second Commandment: Thou shall not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shall not bow down thyself to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord thy God, am a jealous God."

Introduction: In the Course, the ego is the false god we make and worship. We make the ego and identify with it as if it is our self; we worship it, bow down to it and build shrines to it. We celebrate our birthday and memorialize our death because we worship at the shrine of the false ego-self. In the Course, God is perfect wholeness and perfect love; God is the only reality; there is nothing separate from Him. The Atonement principle in the Course says the separation from God never happened, therefore there is no separate self, and the ego is an illusion. The Course's view of the Biblical God is similar to the Gnostics view.

In the Course, the first and original idol is the ego's self image and its thought system within our mind. The ego is born with the belief that the separation from God is real and is a sin that evokes guilt and fear of God's revenge. To "get rid" of its sense of sin and guilt in the mind, the ego makes a body and world onto which it projects its sin and guilt, hoping to maintain its face of innocence and avoid the wrath of God. By making the body and world the ego has its second idol: the body and its special love and hate partners. The ego uses its idols of special relationship, both love and hate, as a dumping ground for its sin and guilt. The making and worshipping of false idols is called sickness.

You have not attacked God and you do love Him. Can you change your reality? No one can will to destroy himself. When you think you are attacking yourself, it is a sure sign that you hate what you think you are. And this, and only this, can be attacked by you. What you think you are can be very hateful, and what this strange image makes you do can be very destructive. Yet the destruction is no more real than the image, although those who make idols do worship them. The idols are nothing, but their worshippers are the Sons of God in sickness. (Reference 1 p184 III.1.1-8)

The ego is the original idol made by the Son of God by believing he is separate from his Father. Worshipping the original idol is the Son of God's original sickness. The second idol made by the Son of God is the body, onto which the original sickness of the mind is projected, so that the original sickness in the Son's mind is reflected in the body and its special relationships in the world — both love and hate.

To believe that a Son of God can be sick is to believe that part of God can suffer. Love cannot suffer, because it cannot attack. The remembrance of love therefore brings invulnerability with it. (R2 p185 III.3.1-3)

To believe a Son of God is sick is to worship the same idol he does. God created love, not idolatry. All forms of idolatry are caricatures of creation, taught by sick minds too divided to know that creation shares power and never usurps it. Sickness is idolatry, because it is the belief that power can be taken from you. Yet this is impossible, because you are part of God, Who is all power. A sick god must be an idol, made in the image of what its maker thinks he is. And that is exactly what the ego does perceive in a Son of God; a sick god, self-created, self-sufficient, very vicious and very vulnerable. Is this the idol you would worship? Is this the image you would be vigilant to save? Are you really afraid of losing this? (R3 p185 III.4)

You could accept peace now for everyone, and offer them perfect freedom from all illusions because you heard His Voice. But have no other gods before Him or you will not hear. God is not jealous of the gods you make, but you are. You would save them and serve them, because you believe that they made you. You think they are your father, because you are projecting onto them...
the fearful fact that you made them to replace God. Yet when they seem to speak to you, remember that nothing can replace God, and whatever replacements you have attempted are nothing. Very simply, then, you may believe you are afraid of nothingness, but you are really afraid of nothing. And in that awareness you are healed. You will hear the god you listen to. You made the god of sickness, and by making him you made yourself able to hear him. (R4 p186 III.8.2-7;III.9)

To understand and benefit from this Course it is crucial that you take the abstract concepts presented here and apply them to yourself in your daily life in a very practical way. It is important to be vigilant of your thoughts, feelings and all activities of your mind in your daily life, and turn to the Holy Spirit or Jesus for guidance. "This is not a course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application."

To accept other gods before Him is to place other images before yourself. You do not realize how much you listen to your gods, and how vigilant you are on their behalf. Yet they exist only because you honor them. Place honor where it is due, and peace will be yours. It is your inheritance from your real Father. You cannot make your Father, and the father you made did not make you. Honor is not due to illusions, for to honor them is to honor nothing. Yet fear is not due them either, for nothing cannot be fearful. You have chosen to fear love because of its perfect harmlessness, and because of this fear you have been willing to give up your own perfect helpfulness and your own perfect Help.

Only at the altar of God will you find peace. And this altar is in you because God put it there. His Voice still calls you to return, and He will be heard when you place no other gods before Him. You can give up the god of sickness for your brothers; in fact, you would have to do so if you give him up for yourself. For if you see the god of sickness anywhere, you have accepted him. And if you accept him you will bow down and worship him, because he was made as God's replacement. He is the belief that you can choose which god is real. Although it is clear this has nothing to do with reality, it is equally clear that it has everything to do with reality as you perceive it.

All magic is an attempt at reconciling the irreconcilable. All [true] religion is the recognition that the irreconcilable cannot be reconciled. Sickness and perfection are irreconcilable. If God created you perfect, you are perfect. If you believe you can be sick, you have placed other gods before Him. God is not at war with the god of sickness you made, but you are. He is the symbol of deciding against God, and you are afraid of him because he cannot be reconciled with God's Will. If you attack him, you will make him real to you. But if you refuse to worship him inwhatever form he may appear to you, and wherever you think you see him, he will disappear into the nothingness out of which he was made. (R5 p186-187 III.10.3-11;III.11;IV.1)

The laws of God work only for your good, and there are no other laws beside His. Everything else is merely lawless and therefore chaotic. (R6 p188 IV.4.4-5)

The only true laws are the laws of God which are the laws of love, oneness and eternal life.

When you have experienced the protection of God, the making of idols becomes inconceivable. There are no strange images in the Mind of God, and what is not in His Mind cannot be in yours, because you are of one mind and that mind belongs to Him. It is yours because it belongs to Him, for to Him ownership is sharing. And if it is so for Him, it is so for you. His definitions are His laws, for by them He established the universe as what it is. No false gods you attempt to interpose between yourself and your reality affect truth at all. Peace is yours because God created you. And He created nothing else. (R7 p188 IV.6)

The experience of the protection of God is a direct experience of your Identity with God's love and oneness, and the complete absence of separation of yourself and all being. God's protection is the knowledge and experience that you are one with God, there is only God, so there is nothing to be protected from.

Blasphemy is a Biblical term and is an expression of an attack on God; for example, when we take other gods before Him, when we are not reverent of God or are disrespectful toward Him. In the Course,
blasphemy is not of God, but is directed at yourself because you are blaspheming against your true Self by believing you are the ego and body which is a parody and travesty of the truth of who you are as Christ.

The rituals of the god of sickness are strange and very demanding. Joy is never permitted, for depression is the sign of allegiance to him. Depression means that you have forsworn God. Many are afraid of blasphemy, but they do not understand what it means. They do not realize that to deny God is to deny their own Identity, and in this sense the wages of sin is death. The sense is very literal; denial of life perceives its opposite, as all forms of denial replace what is with what is not. No one can really do this, but that you can think you can and believe you have is beyond dispute. (R8 p189 V.1)

The strange and demanding rituals are those that worship the god of ego, separation and specialness.

Allegiance to the denial of God is the ego's religion. The god of sickness obviously demands the denial of health, because health is in direct opposition to its own survival. But consider what this means to you. Unless you are sick you cannot keep the gods you made, for only in sickness could you possibly want them. Blasphemy, then, is self-destructive, not God-destructive. It means that you are willing not to know yourself in order to be sick. This is the offering your god demands because, having made him out of your insanity, he is an insane idea. He has many forms, but although he may seem to be many different things he is but one idea – the denial of God. (R9 p190 V.3)

Sickness and health are of the mind only. The body is a projection of the mind. Sickness is the belief that we are separate from God. Health is the realization that we are one with God. Only the mind has power to believe in sickness or health. Only the mind has the power to choose to deny the truth of our Identity as God's Son, and identify with the ego's son — which is the body.

Now we turn our attention to the power of our mind to choose.

You do not know your creations simply because you would decide against them as long as your mind is split, and to attack what you have created is impossible. But remember that it is as impossible for God. (R10 p182 I.1-2)

We do not know who we are as Christ, we do not know ourselves as beings that create as God does because we have chosen to push away the memory of our Identity with the magnitude of God, and identify ourselves with the littleness of the ego.

You will remember everything the instant you desire it wholly, for if to desire wholly is to create, you will have willed away the separation, returning your mind simultaneously to your Creator and your creations. Knowing Them you will have no wish to sleep, but only the desire to waken and be glad. Dreams will be impossible because you will want only truth, and being at last your will, it will be yours. (R11 p182 I.4)

When we choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher, and remember Christ as our true Identity, we let go of the worship of our false idols: the idol of individuality and the idol of sickness. The reality of God's oneness does not depend on our decision, but our awareness of God's oneness is dependent on our decision.

Unless you first know something you cannot dissociate it. Knowledge must precede dissociation, so that dissociation is nothing more than a decision to forget. What has been forgotten then appears to be fearful, but only because the dissociation is an attack on truth. You are fearful because you have forgotten. And you have replaced your knowledge by an awareness of dreams because you are afraid of your dissociation, not of what you have dissociated. When what you have dissociated is accepted, it ceases to be fearful. (R11A p183 II.1)

Dissociation refers to splitting off thoughts that you do not want. In the previous passage, dissociation refers to the separation of the ego from God or the Holy Spirit, represented by the right mind and the wrong mind in the Chart. We made the decision to split ourselves from the Holy Spirit and identify with the ego, which is the decision to forget (dissociate) the truth of our oneness with God. Each and every moment of our day we are actively choosing to dissociate from and forget our true Identity with
God, and remember our false identity of the ego. The line "you are afraid of your dissociation" means our fear is that we have actively chosen against the wholeness and love of God, and believe He will punish us for it. Our mind is so powerful that it can make up the entire story of the original sin of separation from God, and the concomitant guilt and fear, and actually believe it!

Reality can dawn only on an unclouded mind. It is always there to be accepted, but its acceptance depends on your willingness to have it. To know reality must involve the willingness to judge unreality for what it is. To overlook nothingness is merely to judge it correctly, and because of your ability to evaluate it truly, to let it go. Knowledge cannot dawn on a mind full of illusions, because truth and illusions are irreconcilable. Truth is whole, and cannot be known by part of a mind. (R12 p187 IV.2)

As we observe the darkness of the ego in our daily lives with the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit, we are able to realize the ego's unreality and let it go. As the dark clouds of the ego dissolve, the reality of our true Identity with Christ is known.

If you perceive other gods your mind is split, and you will not be able to limit the split, because it is the sign that you have removed part of your mind from God's Will. (R13 p187 IV.3.4)

Your gods do not bring chaos; you are endowing them with chaos, and accepting it of them. All this has never been. Nothing but the laws of God has ever been, and nothing but His Will will ever be. You were created through His laws and by His Will, and the manner of your creation established you a creator. (R14 p188 IV.5.3-6)

The "you" who has power to endow the ego's gods is the decision maker. The world has no power in itself; all power is in the decision maker's belief. The decision maker is the Son of God. The Son's function in Heaven is to create; his function on earth is to forgive. Forgiveness undoes the belief in separation, and facilitates the memory of the Son's Identity with the Father.

Refer to the Heaven-Knowledge Chart. Above the solid horizontal line is Truth. Everything below the line is illusion. This must be understood in order to understand the Course. There is no truth in illusion, and there is no illusion in truth. This is why there is no order of difficulties in miracles, and no hierarchy of illusions. The true God is in Heaven, and is not in the world. The gods in the world are false idols born in the illusion of the Son's separation from the Father.

Son of God, you have not sinned, but you have been much mistaken. Yet this can be corrected and God will help you, knowing that you could not sin against Him. You denied Him because you loved Him, knowing that if you recognized your love for Him, you could not deny Him. Your denial of Him therefore means that you love Him, and that you know He loves you. Remember that what you deny you must have once known. And if you accept denial, you can accept its undoing. (R15 p190 V.6)

We did not separate from God, we did not blaspheme God; we made a mistake in our identity by choosing to be the son of the ego, rather than the Son of God. And we can correct our mistaken choice by choosing again, because the power of choice is within our mind. The mind of the Son has all power over the world, because he made the world. You are the Son of God.

You are not sick and you cannot die. But you can confuse yourself with things that do. Remember, though, that to do this is blasphemy, for it means that you are looking without love on God and His creation, from which He cannot be separated. (R16 p191 V.8.3-5)

Your Father created you wholly without sin, wholly without pain and wholly without suffering of any kind. If you deny Him you bring sin, pain and suffering into your own mind because of the power He gave it. Your mind is capable of creating worlds, but it can also deny what it creates because it is free. You do not realize how much you have denied yourself, and how much God, in His Love, would not have it so. Yet He would not interfere with you, because He would not know His Son if he were not free. To interfere with you would be to attack Himself, and God is not insane. When you deny Him you are insane. Would you have Him share your insanity? (R17 p191 V.9.9-11;V.10.1-5)
There is no power in the world. All power is in the Son's mind. The ego, the body and the world are projections of mind; powerless in themselves. The Son is free to choose to identify with the illusions he made, or to identify with the reality of spirit. God created His Son free. God cannot save us. Jesus cannot save us. This is not a Course in vicarious salvation. Only we can save ourselves.

Now we will look at the mind's power of projection.

Nothing beyond yourself can make you fearful or loving, because nothing is beyond you. Time and eternity are both in your mind, and will conflict until you perceive time solely as a means to regain eternity. You cannot do this as long as you believe that anything happening to you is caused by factors outside yourself. You must learn that time is solely at your disposal, and that nothing in the world can take this responsibility from you. (R18 p181 in.1.1-4)

All time and space is a projection of your mind. Your mind is so powerful that it can make a world and believe that the world made you. And this is exactly what you have done!

Do not forget, however, that to deny God will inevitably result in projection, and you will believe that others and not yourself have done this to you. You must receive the message you give because it is the message you want. You may believe that you judge your brothers by the messages they give you, but you have judged them by the message you give to them. (R19 p189 V.2.1-3)

You are the maker of your brothers and your world. You project the messenger, write the message, and deliver it to yourself.

Your Father has not denied you. He does not retaliate, but He does call to you to return. When you think He has not answered your call, you have not answered His. He calls to you from every part of the Sonship, because of His Love for His Son. (R20 p190 V.7.1-4)

You have denied the Father, He has not denied you. You denied the Father by believing you separated from Him. There is no division in God. The separation happened not in reality, but in your imagination. The face of Christ is in every brother when we choose to see Him as He is.

Now we turn to the Atonement principle, which states that the separation from God's love never happened.

You can violate God's laws in your imagination, but you cannot escape from them. They were established for your protection and are as inviolate as your safety. (R21 p181 in.1.5-6)

God's laws are of perfect unity, love and eternal life. And His laws are inviolate, except in your imagination.

Everything that was created is therefore perfectly safe, because the laws of God protect it by His Love. Any part of your mind that does not know this has banished itself from knowledge, because it has not met its conditions. Who could have done this but you? Recognize this gladly, for in this recognition lies the realization that your banishment is not of God, and therefore does not exist. You are at home in God, dreaming of exile but perfectly capable of awakening to reality. Is it your decision to do so? You recognize from your own experience that what you see in dreams you think is real while you are asleep. Yet the instant you waken you realize that everything that seemed to happen in the dream did not happen at all. You do not think this strange, even though all the laws of what you awaken to were violated while you slept. Is it not possible that you merely shifted from one dream to another, without really waking? (R22 p182 I.1.4-7;I.2)

The separation from God happened only in your dream. "Waking up" means to wake up from the dream of separation, to the reality of your Identity with Christ.

To remember is merely to restore to your mind what is already there. You do not make what you remember; you merely accept again what is already there, but was rejected. (R23 p183 II.3.1-2)

"Waking up" is remembering the truth of who we are. We have always been God's one Son, but we chose to forget. Forgiveness is a first step to
remembering our Identity with God by seeing Christ in our brother.

And if your reality is God's, when you attack you are not remembering Him. This is not because He is gone, but because you are actively choosing not to remember Him. (R24 p184 II.5.5-6)

By attacking our brother, we are choosing to forget who we truly are and who our brother is — the One Son. Attacking our brother is a reflection of our original attack on God, and an attempt to maintain our separate existence. To wake up from the nightmare of separation we must become aware of the choices and activities of our mind that keep us identified with the body and ego, and asleep to the truth.

Choosing the ego as our guide is the cause of our loss of peace. The theme of observing our thoughts and feelings in the mind, and our relationships in the world is an important theme in the Course and we turn to it here.

If you realized the complete havoc this makes of your peace of mind you could not make such an insane decision. You make it only because you still believe it can get you something you want. It follows, then, that you want something other than peace of mind, but you have not considered what it must be. Yet the logical outcome of your decision is perfectly clear, if you will only look at it. By deciding against your reality, you have made yourself vigilant against God and His Kingdom. And it is this vigilance that makes you afraid to remember Him. (R25 p184 II.6)

Turning to the Holy Spirit or Jesus rather than the ego facilitates our waking up from the painful dream of separation. With the help of the Holy Spirit you look on your brothers through the eyes of forgiveness, innocence and love. With the help of the ego you look on your brothers through the eyes of sin, guilt and fear. The guide you turn to is your decision.

Look calmly at the logical conclusion of the ego's thought system and judge whether its offering is really what you want, for this is what it offers you. To obtain this you are willing to attack the Divinity of your brothers, and thus lose sight of yours. And you are willing to keep it hidden, to protect an idol you think will save you from the dangers for which it stands, but which do not exist. (R26 p185 III.5)

To make an educated decision we must be fully aware of our options and the consequences of our choice.

What you have made is so unworthy of you that you could hardly want it, if you were willing to see it as it is. You will see nothing at all. And your vision will automatically look beyond it, to what is in you and all around you. Reality cannot break through the obstructions you interpose, but it will envelop you completely when you let them go. (R27 p188 IV.5.7-10)

Remember that it does not matter where in the Sonship He is accepted. He is always accepted for all, and when your mind receives Him the remembrance of Him awakens throughout the Sonship. Heal your brothers simply by accepting God for them. Your minds are not separate, and God has only one channel for healing because He has but one Son. God's remaining Communication Link with all His children joins them together, and them to Him. To be aware of this is to heal them because it is the awareness that no one is separate, and so no one is sick. (R28 p184 III.2.2-7)

Forgiveness of one is forgiveness of all. We are one Son in truth, and we are one ego in the illusion. We share our true Identity with God, and we share our false identity with the ego. We have one shared interest: to wake up to the truth of our oneness with God. We suffer from the same illusion: the lie of our separation from God. My only function in the world is to accept the Atonement for myself, which means to forgive and accept the love of God for myself and as myself.

If God has but one Son, there is but one God. You share reality with Him, because reality is not divided. (R29 p186 III.10.1-2)

Your relationships are healed in your mind only, not in the relationship of bodies. Relationships are healed in the realization that there is no relationship. There is one Son who is not separate from himself, and therefore cannot be in relationship with himself.
There is no separation in you. You are not divided from yourself. This is the Atonement; the realization of oneness.

The Sonship cannot be perceived as partly sick, because to perceive it that way is not to perceive it at all. If the Sonship is One, it is One in all respects. Oneness cannot be divided. (R30 p187 IV.3.1-3)

Yet every Son of God has the power to deny illusions anywhere in the Kingdom, merely by denying them completely in himself. I can heal you because I know you. I know your value for you, and it is this value that makes you whole. A whole mind is not idolatrous, and does not know of conflicting laws. I will heal you merely because I have only one message, and it is true. Your faith in it will make you whole when you have faith in me. (R31 p186 III.7.3-8)

The way to facilitate healing in others is to be healed yourself. You are healed by accepting the Atonement for yourself. The Atonement is the realization that separation from God's eternal love never happened. The first step toward accepting the Atonement for yourself is forgiveness of your brothers, because your brothers are your projections of yourself.

The miracle is the act of a Son of God who has laid aside all false gods, and calls on his brothers to do likewise. It is an act of faith, because it is the recognition that his brother can do it. It is a call to the Holy Spirit in his mind, a call that is strengthened by joining. Because the miracle worker has heard God's Voice, he strengthens It in a sick brother by weakening his belief in sickness, which he does not share. The power of one mind can shine into another, because all the lamps of God were lit by the same spark. It is everywhere and it is eternal.

In many only the spark remains, for the Great Rays are obscured. Yet God has kept the spark alive so that the Rays can never be completely forgotten. If you but see the little spark you will learn of the greater light, for the Rays are there unseen. Perceiving the spark will heal, but knowing the light will create. Yet in the returning the little light must be acknowledged first, for the separation was a descent from magnitude to littleness. But the spark is still as pure as the Great Light, because it is the remaining call of creation. Put all your faith in it, and God Himself will answer you. (R32 p188-189 IV.7-8)

The miracle is the shift in perception from belief in the illusion of our separation from God to the vision and Knowledge of the truth of our oneness with God. The term "Great Rays" refers to the light of Christ that is the truth in all of us. The Atonement principle is the "spark" in our mind that is the memory of our true Identity with the Great Rays of Christ in Heaven.

End Chapter Ten
CHAPTER ELEVEN  
GOD OR THE EGO

Main Themes: In this chapter we address the "authority problem" and the belief that we are in conflict with God. On the Heaven-Knowledge Chart, conflict and the authority problem are represented by the terms battleground, victimization, one or the other, and kill or be killed. The fundamental questions of all philosophy and psychology are "Who am I?" and "From where do I come?" In this chapter we address the question, "Who is the author of my reality: God or myself?"

We also look at the original separation from God in which we believe we usurped His place on the throne of creation establishing ourselves as the creator of ourselves. As separate egos we are not God-created, but self-created. As the ego develops its thought system, its purpose is to have us be so terrified of being in the mind that we choose to leave the mind, make up a body with which we identify, leaving us mindless and ensuring we will not change our mind and choose to follow the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. The belief we have really sinned by separating from God, and He is seeking revenge, generates the fear and provides the motivation for leaving the mind and making a body and world onto which we can project our sin and guilt, and in which we can hide. The belief in separation from God, the ultimate authority, is reflected in the world as the authority problem: our problem with authority figures in which we feel victimized; and our problem as authority figures in which we are the victimizers. The conflict which was born with the mistaken belief in our original separation from God is played out on the battleground we call our lives.

* Either God or the ego is insane. If you will examine the evidence on both sides fairly, you will realize this must be true. Neither God nor the ego proposes a partial thought system. Each is internally consistent, but they are diametrically opposed in all respects so that partial allegiance is impossible. Remember, too, that their results are as different as their foundations, and their fundamentally irreconcilable natures cannot be reconciled by vacillations between them. Nothing alive is Fatherless, for life is creation. Therefore, your decision is always an answer to the question, "Who is my father?" And you will be faithful to the father you choose.

Yet what would you say to someone who believed this question really involves conflict? If you made the ego, how can the ego have made you? The authority problem is still the only source of conflict, because the ego was made out of the wish of God's Son to father Him. The ego, then, is nothing more than a delusional system in which you made your own father. Make no mistake about this. It sounds insane when it is stated with perfect honesty, but the ego never looks on what it does with perfect honesty. Yet that is its insane premise, which is carefully hidden in the dark cornerstone of its thought system. And either the ego, which you made, is your father, or its whole thought system will not stand.

(Reference 1 p193 in.1-2)

God and the ego are mutually exclusive. God is the Truth, and the Truth is absolute. The ego is illusory, and there is no illusion in Truth. God is our Father, our Source. God is one and we are one with Him. We are not a body living in a world; we are spirit. The ego made the body and the world. If we were a body living in the world, the ego would be our father. In truth, we are the Son of God, father of the ego. God is our Father; not the ego. The Son of God did not create himself because he is not a body living in a world.

If you believe you are absent from God, you will believe that He is absent from you. Infinity is meaningless without you, and you are meaningless without God. There is no end to God and His Son, for we are the universe. God is not incomplete, and He is not childless.

(R2 p195 I.5.3-6)

God did not leave us; we believe we left God. We decide to come back to God; God does not come back to us because he never left. When we believe God abandoned us, we project it onto others: our parents, family, friends and intimate others, making ourselves lonely victims of abandonment. In reality the separation and abandonment never happened — this is the Atonement principle, the resolution to the authority problem.

Whenever what the Holy Spirit tells you appears to be coercive, it is only because you have not
recognized your will. The projection of the ego makes it appear as if God's Will is outside yourself, and therefore not yours. In this interpretation it seems possible for God's Will and yours to conflict. God, then, may seem to demand of you what you do not want to give, and thus deprive you of what you want. Would God, Who wants only your will, be capable of this? (R3 p196 I.8.9;I.9.1-4)

When we believed we separated from God we established the situation in which our will was opposite from God's. God's Will is that we are one with Him. Our will is that we be on our own and remain on our own. God's will is that we come back to Him — that is the conflict, the authority problem.

You cannot be happy unless you do what you will truly, and you cannot change this because it is immutable. It is immutable by God's Will and yours, for otherwise His Will would not be extended. You are afraid to know God's Will, because you believe it is not yours. This belief is your whole sickness and your whole fear. Every symptom of sickness and fear arises here, because this is the belief that makes you want not to know. Believing this you hide in darkness, denying that the light is in you. (R4 p196 I.10)

The belief in our original separation from God is the root of all conflict in the world we made. All conflict among family, friends and lovers; or among nations, and political and religious groups is rooted in the belief in our separation from God — the original conflict, the original authority problem. The realization that the separation never happened is the resolution of all conflict and problems with authority in our world, because the Atonement resolves the original conflict with God.

The darkness in which we hide has two shields: the first shield is the darkness of sin, guilt and fear in our mind; and the second shield is the body and world onto which we project our sin and guilt hoping to avoid punishment by maintaining our face of innocence in the eyes of God.

When we look at the ego, then, we are not considering dynamics but delusions. You can surely regard a delusional system without fear, for it cannot have any effects if its source is not real. Fear becomes more obviously inappropriate if you recognize the ego's goal, which is so clearly senseless that any effort on its behalf is necessarily expended on nothing. The ego's goal is quite explicitly ego autonomy. From the beginning, then, its purpose is to be separate, sufficient unto itself and independent of any power except its own. This is why it is the symbol of separation.

Our entire world is the projection of a neurotic, psychotic and paranoid schizophrenic thought system called the ego. The purpose of the world is to provide a dumping ground for the ego's delusions of sin, guilt and fear. To ensure its survival, the ego needs us to stay focused on the world and out of our mind, because if we go back to our mind we will become aware of the ego's insanity and choose the Holy Spirit instead. By observing the "dynamics" of the ego we learn of its sickness; and with the help of the Holy Spirit we can learn to choose again. God and the ego are mutually exclusive. We choose to identify with the ego and its delusions of conflict, sin and guilt; or we identify with the Holy Spirit and God's wholeness, innocence and love.

Every idea has a purpose, and its purpose is always the natural outcome of what it is. Everything that stems from the ego is the natural outcome of its central belief, and the way to undo its results is merely to recognize that their source is not natural, being out of accord with your true nature. I said before that to will contrary to God is wishful thinking and not real willing. His Will is One because the extension of His Will cannot be unlike itself. The real conflict you experience, then, is between the ego's idle wishes and the Will of God, which you share. Can this be a real conflict?

The ego's purpose is to maintain its special separate existence. The ego is illusory. God's Will is that He is one. God is the only reality. The conflict between the ego and God is the conflict between illusion and reality, which is no conflict at all. The separation never happened, and there is no real authority problem.

Yours is the independence of creation, not of autonomy. Your whole creative function lies in your complete dependence on God, Whose function He shares with you. By His willingness to share it, He became as dependent on you as you
are on Him. Do not ascribe the ego's arrogance to Him Who wills not to be independent of you. He has included you in His Autonomy. Can you believe that autonomy is meaningful apart from Him? The belief in ego autonomy is costing you the knowledge of your dependence on God, in which your freedom lies. The ego sees all dependency as threatening, and has twisted even your longing for God into a means of establishing itself. But do not be deceived by its interpretation of your conflict. (R5 p203-204 V.4-6)

In the Knowledge of Heaven there is no separation of God and Christ, or of Creator and Creation. God is one with His Son in truth. Separation is impossible because God is one, and there is only God. The Son's freedom and autonomy is in the realization of his oneness with his Father. There is no other freedom. From the ego's perspective, being one with God is bondage, tyranny and slavery. So the ego fights with all its might against God, the original tyrant, to maintain its separation. Even the ego's longing for God is twisted into a strategy to maintain its specialness, autonomy and separation from Him; this is the "spiritual" ego.

Your recognition that whatever seems to separate you from God is only fear, regardless of the form it takes and quite apart from how the ego wants you to experience it, is therefore the basic ego threat. Its dream of autonomy is shaken to its foundation by this awareness. For though you may countenance a false idea of independence, you will not accept the cost of fear if you recognize it. (R6 p204 V.10.1-3)

What separates us from God is merely fear, not reality. Fear is part of the ego's strategy to keep us from getting back to the power of our mind to choose against it, and for the Holy Spirit. It is important to be fully aware of the dynamics of the ego in order to let it go.

God is as dependent on you as you are on Him, because His Autonomy encompasses yours, and is therefore incomplete without it. You can only establish your autonomy by identifying with Him, and fulfilling your function as it exists in truth. The ego believes that to accomplish its goal is happiness. But it is given you to know that God's function is yours, and happiness cannot be found apart from Your joint Will. (R7 p205 V.12.1-4)

God is not dependent on us or incomplete without us. This is another example of how the Course uses anthropomorphic symbology to facilitate our understanding. We can relate to and understand the incompleteness a parent feels when separate from its child — the Father from His Son. True freedom and autonomy is in the realization that the Father and Son are one. The ego's idea of freedom and autonomy is in the belief that the Father and Son are separate. Incompleteness is only imagined in the mind of the separated Son.

Now we will look at the Holy Spirit's Answer to the ego's authority problem.

To be alone is to be separated from infinity, but how can this be if infinity has no end? No one can be beyond the limitless, because what has no limits must be everywhere. There are no beginnings and no endings in God, Whose universe is Himself. Can you exclude yourself from the universe, or from God Who is the universe? I and my Father are one with you, for you are part of Us. Do you really believe that part of God can be missing or lost to Him? If you were not part of God, His Will would not be unified. Is this conceivable? Can part of His Mind contain nothing? If your place in His Mind cannot be filled by anyone except you, and your filling it was your creation, without you there would be an empty place in God's Mind. Extension cannot be blocked, and it has no voids. It continues forever, however much it is denied. Your denial of its reality may arrest it in time, but not in eternity. That is why your creations have not ceased to be extended, and why so much is waiting for your return. (R8 p194 I.2-3)

In terms of our identity, the infinite and the finite are mutually exclusive. You identify yourself with one or the other. Either you are infinite or you are finite; eternal or temporal. This is another example of the first principle of miracles which is that there is no order of difficulties among them. The "universe" in this passage is the universe of Spirit, not the physical universe.

To benefit fully from the teachings in this Course, it is imperative that you take its abstract concepts and principles and apply them to concrete situations in your daily experience — relationships with family, friends, enemies and intimate others.
The universe of love does not stop because you do not see it, nor have your closed eyes lost the ability to see. Look upon the glory of His creation, and you will learn what God has kept for you. (R9 p195 I.5.10-11)

In the passage above, the first sentence is a statement of the Atonement. The second is a reminder to look at our brothers through the eyes of forgiveness.

The closer you come to the foundation of the ego's thought system, the darker and more obscure becomes the way. (R10 p193 in.3.5)

The closer we get to realizing the original error, our belief in separation from God, the more fear we may experience as the ego shrieks in terror, petrified of its looming demise.

O my child, if you knew what God wills for you, your joy would be complete! And what He wills has happened, for it was always true. When the light comes and you have said, "God's Will is mine," you will see such beauty that you will know it is not of you. Out of your joy you will create beauty in His Name, for your joy could no more be contained than His. The bleak little world will vanish into nothingness, and your heart will be so filled with joy that it will leap into Heaven, and into the Presence of God. I cannot tell you what this will be like, for your heart is not ready. Yet I can tell you, and remind you often, that what God wills for Himself He wills for you, and what He wills for you is yours. (R11 p199 III.3)

The "bleak little world" is your world. You are the hero of your bleak little world, and if it vanishes, you vanish with it — and this is your fear. There is no love, no peace, and no happiness in the world we made, because we made the world out of a projection of our sin, guilt and fear. To know true love, true peace and true happiness we must leave the bleak little world we made and go back to our Source.

Walk in light and do not see the dark companions, for they are not fit companions for the Son of God, who was created of light and in light. The Great Light always surrounds you and shines out from you. How can you see the dark companions in a light such as this? If you see them, it is only because you are denying the light. But deny them instead, for the light is here and the way is clear. (R12 p199 III.4.6-10)

The dark companions of specialness are sin, guilt, fear and hate. When brought to the light, the dark companions disappear into the nothingness from which they came.

The children of light cannot abide in darkness, for darkness is not in them. Do not be deceived by the dark comforters, and never let them enter the mind of God's Son, for they have no place in His temple. When you are tempted to deny Him remember that there are no other gods to place before Him, and accept His Will for you in peace. For you cannot accept it otherwise. (R13 p200 III.6)

To the ego, which is the child of darkness, the dark companions of sin, guilt, fear and hate are comforters because the ego cannot exist without them. To the Son of God, who is the child of light, there is no darkness at all. The peace of God cannot be found in the darkness of special relationships, separation, conflict, rejection or judgment; but only in the light of oneness, peace, acceptance and forgiveness.

In the next passages, Jesus clarifies the meaning and purpose of this Course, and addresses our resistance to learning what it teaches.

This course is perfectly clear. If you do not see it clearly, it is because you are interpreting against it, and therefore do not believe it. And since belief determines perception, you do not perceive what it means and therefore do not accept it. (R14 p207 VI.3.1-3)

Learning this Course means the end of the ego. Any resistance to learning the Course is an attempt by the ego to maintain its existence.

This is a very simple course. Perhaps you do not feel you need a course which, in the end, teaches that only reality is true. But do you believe it? (R15 p211 VIII.1)

The underlying principle of the whole Course is summed up in the statements, "There is no order of difficulty in miracles, and there is no hierarchy of illusions. Only reality is true." This is simple, yet radical. The challenge is in applying these simple
and radical principles to your own daily experience so you reap the full benefit of the Course. The Workbook for Students facilitates the application of the teachings learned in the Text.

You may complain that this course is not sufficiently specific for you to understand and use. Yet perhaps you have not done what it specifically advocates. This is not a course in the play of ideas, but in their practical application. Nothing could be more specific than to be told that if you ask you will receive. The Holy Spirit will answer every specific problem as long as you believe that problems are specific. His answer is both many and one, as long as you believe that the one is many. You may be afraid of His specificity, for fear of what you think it will demand of you. Yet only by asking will you learn that nothing of God demands anything of you. God gives; He does not take. When you refuse to ask, it is because you believe that asking is taking rather than sharing.

This is not a Course in philosophical speculation. The Course is given to facilitate a shift in identity through the use of philosophy and its practical application in our daily lives. There is one problem and one solution. The problem is our belief in separation from God and our identification with the ego. The one solution is the realization that the separation from God never happened and we are one with Him. The only help we need is with the correction of our mistaken choice in identity. To ask the Holy Spirit for help with specific problems we perceive in the world only maintains the ego and sustains the only real problem with which we need help — our identity with the ego and body.

The Holy Spirit will give you only what is yours, and will take nothing in return. For what is yours is everything, and you share it with God. That is its reality. Would the Holy Spirit, Who wills only to restore, be capable of misinterpreting the question you must ask to learn His answer? You have heard the answer, but you have misunderstood the question. You believe that to ask for guidance of the Holy Spirit is to ask for deprivation. (R16 p212 VIII.5-6)

We are to ask the Holy Spirit for help in undoing the thought system that gave rise to our individual existence as bodies in the world, thereby giving rise to all our problems. The Holy Spirit’s Answer is the Atonement: the separation never happened. We are to bring all our manifold problems to the Holy Spirit’s one Answer. The problem is not my disease, my broken relationships or my dwindling bank account; my problem is my belief that I managed to do the impossible and separated from God. The underlying principles of this Course are simple and direct, but we must apply the principles to ourselves in our daily lives to benefit from it.

In order to learn, it is important first to realize how little we know, and to be open to question everything we believe we know. Humility is the birth of wisdom.

The Bible tells you to become as little children. Little children recognize that they do not understand what they perceive, and so they ask what it means. Do not make the mistake of believing that you understand what you perceive, for its meaning is lost to you. (R17 p211 VIII.2.1-3)

There has been much confusion about what perception means, because the word is used both for awareness and for the interpretation of awareness. Yet you cannot be aware without interpretation, for what you perceive is your interpretation. (R18 p207 VI.2.5-6)

Perception is interpretation. Meaning, value and purpose of the body and world are determined in the mind of the perceiver. When we are identified with the wrong mind of the ego, we perceive the world through the eyes of delusion. When we identify with the right mind of the Holy Spirit, we have true perception of the world through the vision of the Holy Spirit.

Yet the Holy Spirit has saved its meaning for you, and if you will let Him interpret it, He will restore to you what you have thrown away. Yet while you think you know its meaning, you will see no need to ask it of Him. You do not know the meaning of anything you perceive. Not one thought you hold is wholly true. The recognition of this is your firm beginning. You are not misguided; you have accepted no guide at all. Instruction in perception is your great need, for you understand nothing. Recognize this but do not accept it, for understanding is your inheritance. Perceptions
are learned, and you are not without a Teacher. Yet your willingness to learn of Him depends on your willingness to question everything you learned of yourself, for you who learned amiss should not be your own teacher.

This Course facilitates a radical shift in the way we perceive our world and the whole universe. But this shift cannot occur unless we want it to occur, and we want it to occur when we realize there is something terribly wrong with the way we are living our lives, and say, "There must be a better way." Jesus and the Holy Spirit are our guides who lead us to the better way.

No one can withhold truth except from himself. Yet God will not refuse you the Answer He gave. Ask, then, for what is yours, but which you did not make, and do not defend yourself against truth. You made the problem God has answered. Ask yourself, therefore, but one simple question: Do I want the problem or do I want the answer? Decide for the answer and you will have it, for you will see it as it is, and it is yours already. (R19 p211 VIII.2.4-5;VIII.3-4)

There is one problem: separation. There is one Answer: the Atonement.

Children perceive frightening ghosts and monsters and dragons, and they are terrified. Yet if they ask someone they trust for the meaning of what they perceive, and are willing to let their own interpretations go in favor of reality, their fear goes with them. When a child is helped to translate his "ghost" into a curtain, his "monster" into a shadow, and his "dragon" into a dream he is no longer afraid, and laughs happily at his own fear. (R20 p214 VIII.13)

The ego keeps us asleep in our nightmare with ghosts, monsters and dragons. The Holy Spirit helps wake us up from the ego's nightmare. All problems are imaginary — "internal" or "external." By looking at our problems with the light of the Holy Spirit, we are able to wake up.

The closer you come to the foundation of the ego's thought system, the darker and more obscure becomes the way. Yet even the little spark in your mind is enough to lighten it. Bring this light fearlessly with you, and bravely hold it up to the foundation of the ego's thought system. Be willing to judge it with perfect honesty. Open the dark cornerstone of terror on which it rests, and bring it out into the light. There you will see that it rested on meaninglessness, and that everything of which you have been afraid was based on nothing. My brother, you are part of God and part of me. When you have at last looked at the ego's foundation without shrinking you will also have looked upon ours. I come to you from our Father to offer you everything again. Do not refuse it in order to keep a dark cornerstone hidden, for its protection will not save you. I give you the lamp and I will go with you. You will not take this journey alone. I will lead you to your true Father, Who hath need of you, as I have. Will you not answer the call of love with joy? (R21 p193 in.3.5-10; in.4)

The little spark is the memory of God's love in our mind and is symbolized by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. To be free of the illusions and darkness of the ego we must look at them with the light of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. The ego is an illusion, but we have put the power of our belief in it, and identified with it making it real to us — indeed it has become "us." Our belief in the ego is its foundation. By withdrawing our belief in the ego, its foundation crumbles.

This next passage addresses the importance of looking at the dynamics of the ego in our daily lives. The ego can only exist in darkness. By bringing it to the light of our awareness with the help of the Holy Spirit, the ego is dissolved.

No one can escape from illusions unless he looks at them, for not looking is the way they are protected. There is no need to shrink from illusions, for they cannot be dangerous. We are ready to look more closely at the ego's thought system because together we have the lamp that will dispel it, and since you realize you do not want it, you must be ready. Let us be very calm in doing this, for we are merely looking honestly for truth. The "dynamics" of the ego will be our lesson for a while, for we must look first at this to see beyond it, since you have made it real. We will undo this error quietly together, and then look beyond it to truth. What is healing but the removal of all that stands in the way of knowledge? And how else can one dispel illusions
except by looking at them directly, without protecting them? Be not afraid, therefore, for what you will be looking at is the source of fear, and you are beginning to learn that fear is not real. (R22 p202 V.1;V.2.1-3)

This Course helps us to look at the darkness of our illusions so we can go beyond them to the light of our truth. You may wonder; if the ego is not real, why does the Course focus so much on undoing it? The ego is unreal, but you believe it is real as witnessed by the conflict, pain and suffering you experience in your daily life. When you are absolutely free of all conflict, pain and suffering, you can truly say, "The ego is an illusion." Until then, our goal is to wake up from the nightmare of ego identification, to the truth of our Identity with Christ. This Course facilitates our awakening. To cite metaphysical truths while denying your suffering is a ploy of the ego.

Do not be afraid, then, to look upon fear, for it cannot be seen. Clarity undoes confusion by definition, and to look upon darkness through light must dispel it. (R23 p203 V.2.8-9)

Jesus and the Holy Spirit are the light of truth that helps us dispel the darkness of our illusions.

God's Will is that His Son be One, and united with Him in His Oneness. (R24 p196 I.11.8)

The Sonship is one. Truth is one. Reality is one. We look at the ego with the Holy Spirit to be aware of the ego and its "dynamics," and to accept the ego for what it is: a mistaken belief in separation. The Holy Spirit does not analyze; it looks lovingly and accepts. Acceptance and forgiveness are the healing dynamics of the Holy Spirit.

The ego analyzes; the Holy Spirit accepts. The appreciation of wholeness comes only through acceptance, for to analyze means to break down or to separate out. The attempt to understand totality by breaking it down is clearly the characteristically contradictory approach of the ego to everything. The ego believes that power, understanding and truth lie in separation, and to establish this belief it must attack. Unaware that the belief cannot be established, and obsessed with the conviction that separation is salvation, the ego attacks everything it perceives by breaking it into small, disconnected parts, without meaningful relationships and therefore without meaning. The ego will always substitute chaos for meaning, for if separation is salvation, harmony is threat. (R25 p205 V.13)

You cannot enter God's Presence with the dark companions beside you, but you also cannot enter alone. All your brothers must enter with you, for until you have accepted them you cannot enter. For you cannot understand wholeness unless you are whole, and no part of the Son can be excluded if he would know the Wholeness of his Father. (R26 p200 III.7.8-10)

The ego's dark companions are separation, sin, guilt, fear, conflict and hatred. Forgiveness and acceptance of our brothers allows us to enter the presence of God's light with our brothers. If we are to enter the wholeness and love of God's presence, absolutely no one can be excluded. To exclude anyone is to exclude yourself. What you see outside in your brother is what you believe about yourself but have denied and repressed. The next series of passages highlight the importance of realizing the Sonship is one. We are saved together or not at all.

Your peace lies in its limitlessness. Limit the peace you share, and your Self must be unknown to you. Every altar to God is part of you, because the light He created is one with Him. Would you cut off a brother from the light that is yours? You would not do so if you realized that you can darken only your own mind. As you bring him back, so will you return. That is the law of God, for the protection of the Wholeness of His Son.

Only you can deprive yourself of anything. Do not oppose this realization, for it is truly the beginning of the dawn of light. Remember also that the denial of this simple fact takes many forms, and these you must learn to recognize and to oppose steadfastly, without exception. This is a crucial step in the reawakening. The beginning phases of this reversal are often quite painful, for as blame is withdrawn from without, there is a strong tendency to harbor it within. It is difficult at first to realize that this is exactly the same thing, for there is no distinction between within and without.
If your brothers are part of you and you blame them for your deprivation, you are blaming yourself. And you cannot blame yourself without blaming them. That is why blame must be undone, not seen elsewhere. Lay it to yourself and you cannot know yourself, for only the ego blames at all. Self-blame is therefore ego identification, and as much an ego defense as blaming others. You cannot enter God’s Presence if you attack His Son. When His Son lifts his voice in praise of his Creator, he will hear the Voice for his Father. Yet the Creator cannot be praised without His Son, for Their glory is shared and They are glorified together.

Christ is at God's altar, waiting to welcome His Son. But come wholly without condemnation, for otherwise you will believe that the door is barred and you cannot enter. The door is not barred, and it is impossible that you cannot enter the place where God would have you be. But love yourself with the Love of Christ, for so does your Father love you. You can refuse to enter, but you cannot bar the door that Christ holds open. Come unto me who hold it open for you, for while I live it cannot be shut, and I live forever. God is my life and yours, and nothing is denied by God to His Son. (R27 p201 IV.3-6)

Would you remember the Father? Accept His Son and you will remember Him. (R28 p206 V.17.1-2)

Every brother you meet becomes a witness for Christ or for the ego, depending on what you perceive in him. Everyone convinces you of what you want to perceive, and of the reality of the kingdom you have chosen for your vigilance. Everything you perceive is a witness to the thought system you want to be true. Every brother has the power to release you, if you choose to be free. You cannot accept false witness of him unless you have evoked false witnesses against him. If he speaks not of Christ to you, you spoke not of Christ to him. You hear but your own voice, and if Christ speaks through you, you will hear Him. (R29 p206-207 V.18)

The dream of death is the belief in the separation from God. In the Course, resurrection is the awakening from the dream of death to the reality of our Identity as Christ — God’s one Son.

Resurrection, in the Course, is not the resurrection of the body of Jesus after the crucifixion.

I am your resurrection and your life. You live in me because you live in God. And everyone lives in you, as you live in everyone. Can you, then, perceive unworthiness in a brother and not perceive it in yourself? And can you perceive it in yourself and not perceive it in God? (R30 p208 VI.4.1-5)

You will not find peace until you have removed the nails from the hands of God's Son, and taken the last thorn from his forehead. The Love of God surrounds His Son whom the god of crucifixion condemns. Teach not that I died in vain. Teach rather that I did not die by demonstrating that I live in you. For the undoing of the crucifixion of God's Son is the work of the redemption, in which everyone has a part of equal value. God does not judge His guiltless Son. Having given Himself to him, how could it be otherwise? You have nailed yourself to a cross, and placed a crown of thorns upon your own head. Yet you cannot crucify God's Son, for the Will of God cannot die. His Son has been redeemed from his own crucifixion, and you cannot assign to death whom God has given eternal life. (R31 p208-209 VI.7;VI.8.1-3)

Removing the nails and thorns refers to the story of the crucifixion, and is used here as a symbol for the judgment and condemnation we express toward our brothers. The god of crucifixion is the ego. We demonstrate that Christ lives in us by choosing Jesus or the Holy Spirit as our teacher rather than the ego, and by choosing forgiveness and acceptance toward our brothers rather than judgment and condemnation. Our function in the world is forgiveness and the acceptance of the Atonement for ourselves — and nothing else.

God's Son is saved. Bring only this awareness to the Sonship, and you will have a part in the redemption as valuable as mine. For your part must be like mine if you learn it of me. If you believe that yours is limited, you are limiting mine. There is no order of difficulty in miracles because all of God's Sons are of equal value, and their equality is their oneness. The whole power of God is in every part of Him, and nothing contradictory to His Will is either great or small. What does not exist has no size and no measure.
To God all things are possible. And to Christ it is given to be like the Father. (R32 p209 VI.10)

All our problems are the same because they are all equally nothing. There is no hierarchy in the Sonship. Jesus is not different from us. His mind is no more powerful than ours; he simply chose to identify with the Mind of Christ, and we can make the same choice. When we do, we awaken from the dream, accept the resurrection, and we are in what the Course calls the real world. The "real world" is a state of mind and is the reflection of the reality of Heaven in the world, but is not reality itself. When we realize that the world is a dream, and we know ourselves beyond the dream, we are in the real world.

The world as you perceive it cannot have been created by the Father, for the world is not as you see it. God created only the eternal, and everything you see is perishable. Therefore, there must be another world that you do not see. The Bible speaks of a new Heaven and a new earth, yet this cannot be literally true, for the eternal are not re-created. To perceive anew is merely to perceive again, implying that before, or in the interval between, you were not perceiving at all. What, then, is the world that awaits your perception when you see it?

Every loving thought that the Son of God ever had is eternal. The loving thoughts his mind perceives in this world are the world's only reality. They are still perceptions, because he still believes that he is separate. Yet they are eternal because they are loving. And being loving they are like the Father, and therefore cannot die. The real world can actually be perceived. All that is necessary is a willingness to perceive nothing else. For if you perceive both good and evil, you are accepting both the false and the true and making no distinction between them. (R33 p210 VII.1-2)

Would you not exchange your fears for truth, if the exchange is yours for the asking? For if God is not deceived in you, you can be deceived only in yourself. Yet you can learn the truth about yourself from the Holy Spirit, Who will teach you that, as part of God, deceit in you is impossible. When you perceive yourself without deceit, you will accept the real world in place of the false one you have made. And then your Father will lean down to you and take the last step for you, by raising you unto Himself. (R34 p214 VIII.15)

End Chapter Eleven
CHAPTER TWELVE
THE HOLY SPIRIT'S CURRICULUM

Main Theme: The principle focus of this chapter is the Holy Spirit. We see the contrast between the Holy Spirit's judgment and the ego's judgment.

Introduction: In Chapter Five we saw the first shift in the beauty of the language relative to the first four chapters. In this chapter and going forward we see another shift in the beauty of the language and the depth of the content.

In the Course, the Holy Spirit is referred to as the Answer and the correction for the ego's mistaken thought system. This chapter delves deeper into the ego's strategy and the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego. To maintain its individual existence, the ego's strategy is to keep us focused in the body and world, first by having us believe that the separation from God and the concomitant experience of sin, guilt and fear are real, and that God will punish us. To avoid God's punishment the ego makes a world and projects its sin, guilt and fear onto the world so the ego can maintain its face of innocence in the eyes of God and the world. The ego's fear is that it will be annihilated if we get back to our mind, realize our mistake in choosing to believe the ego, and choose for the Holy Spirit instead. Therefore the ego's strategy is to keep us identified with the body and distracted by the world, and out of the mind.

The light in them [those who are sick (separate from God)] shines as brightly regardless of the density of the fog that obscures it. If you give no power to the fog to obscure the light, it has none. For it has power only if the Son of God gives power to it. He must himself withdraw that power, remembering that all power is of God. (Reference 1 p218 II.2)

The fog is the ego's thought system based on the belief in sin, guilt and fear. The ego is equated with sickness. The ego has no power apart from the power we, as the Son of God, give to it. When we withdraw our belief in the ego, it dissolves.

Salvation is for the mind, and it is attained through peace. This is the only thing that can be saved and the only way to save it. (R2 p221 III.5.1-2)

The mind of the Son, your mind, is saved from identification with the ego.

The ego is certain that love is dangerous, and this is always its central teaching. It never puts it this way; on the contrary, everyone who believes that the ego is salvation seems to be intensely engaged in the search for love. Yet the ego, though encouraging the search for love very actively, makes one proviso; do not find it. Its dictates, then, can be summed up simply as: "Seek and do not find." This is the one promise the ego holds out to you, and the one promise it will keep. For the ego pursues its goal with fanatic insistence, and its judgment, though severely impaired, is completely consistent.

The ego is afraid the Son will withdraw his allegiance to the ego leading to its dissolution. The ego does not know of the love of God, but is aware of it as a threat to the ego's existence. When the Son remembers the true unconditional love of God, the ego comes to an end. To ensure the Son does not turn to God, the ego tells the Son that God is a wrathful, jealous, vengeful Father Who will punish the Son if he returns Home.

The search the ego undertakes is therefore bound to be defeated. And since it also teaches that it is your identification, its guidance leads you to a journey which must end in perceived self-defeat. For the ego cannot love, and in its frantic search for love it is seeking what it is afraid to find. The search is inevitable because the ego is part of your mind, and because of its source the ego is not wholly split off, or it could not be believed at all. For it is your mind that believes in it and gives existence to it. Yet it is also your mind that has the power to deny the ego's existence, and you will surely do so when you realize exactly what the journey is on which the ego sets you.

The ego is happy when we search for love where it cannot be found — in other people, the body and the world. The ego's idea of love is the glorification of its specialness. True unconditional love is the love of God in which there are no conditions or specialness. God's love is the end of the ego's special separateness.
Notes on Chapter Twelve – The Holy Spirit's Curriculum

It is surely obvious that no one wants to find what would utterly defeat him. Being unable to love, the ego would be totally inadequate in love's presence, for it could not respond at all. Then, you would have to abandon the ego's guidance, for it would be quite apparent that it had not taught you the response you need. The ego will therefore distort love, and teach you that love really calls forth the responses the ego can teach. Follow its teaching, then, and you will search for love, but will not recognize it.

(R3 p223-224 IV.1-3)

To maintain the face of innocence the ego makes a world onto which it can "get rid" of its sense of sin, guilt and fear: this process is called projection. Your world is made of the projection of your sin and guilt. You made your world of specialness and separation as an attack on the wholeness of God.

To identify with the ego is to attack yourself and make yourself poor. That is why everyone who identifies with the ego feels deprived. What he experiences then is depression or anger, because what he did was to exchange Self-love for self-hate, making him afraid of himself. He does not realize this. Even if he is fully aware of anxiety he does not perceive its source as his own ego identification, and he always tries to handle it by making some sort of insane "arrangement" with the world. He always perceives this world as outside himself, for this is crucial to his adjustment. He does not realize that he makes this world, for there is no world outside of him.

(R4 p221-222 III.6)

Making a world and projecting our sin, guilt and fear onto it allows us to maintain the face of innocence, and avoid the wrath of God's punishment. Projecting our sin and guilt onto the world is an ego device that distracts us from the source of our problem which is in our mind. When we go back to our mind and realize our mistake of choosing to identify with the ego rather than the Holy Spirit, the ego is doomed. Because we have identified with the ego, we feel the end of the ego is the end of us.

Everything you perceive as the outside world is merely your attempt to maintain your ego identification, for everyone believes that identification is salvation. Yet consider what has happened, for thoughts do have consequences to the thinker. You have become at odds with the world as you perceive it, because you think it is antagonistic to you. This is a necessary consequence of what you have done. You have projected outward what is antagonistic to what is inward, and therefore you would have to perceive it this way. That is why you must realize that your hatred is in your mind and not outside it before you can get rid of it; and why you must get rid of it before you can perceive the world as it really is.

(R5 p222 III.7.5-10)

The ego's world is the projection of separation, conflict, hate, and fear in the wrong mind of the Son. The real world is the end of the ego's world and is a reflection of the wholeness, peace and love of God in the right mind of the Son. Projection makes perception.

You see what you expect, and you expect what you invite. Your perception is the result of your invitation, coming to you as you sent for it. Whose manifestations would you see? Of whose presence would you be convinced? For you will believe in what you manifest, and as you look out so will you see in. Two ways of looking at the world are in your mind, and your perception will reflect the guidance you have chosen.

(R6 p230 VII.5)

Choosing the guidance of the ego, you look out onto a world of separation, conflict and fear. Choosing the guidance of the Holy Spirit you look out onto a world of oneness, peace and love. When you look out you see the world you made within. Within and without are the same.

I said before that what you project or extend is up to you, but you must do one or the other, for that is a law of mind, and you must look in before you look out. As you look in, you choose the guide for seeing. And then you look out and behold his witnesses. This is why you find what you seek. What you want in yourself you will make manifest, and you will accept it from the world because you put it there by wanting it.

(R7p231 VII.7.1-5)

You project the ego's sin, guilt and fear; or you extend God's love reflected through the Holy Spirit as forgiveness, innocence and love. There is no independent, objective world. You choose your identity within and project the world without. You
make the world you want based on who you believe you are. Are you the son of the ego, or the Son of God? Look at the world you made and you will know who you believe you are. If you are not happy with your world, you can go within and choose again.

The power of decision is your one remaining freedom as a prisoner of this world. (R8 p231 VII.9.1)

We are prisoners of the world we made, and we are the jail keepers holding the key. The key is in our mind, not in the world.

Remember, then, that whenever you look without and react unfavorably to what you see, you have judged yourself unworthy and have condemned yourself to death. (R9 p232 VII.13.1)

When you reject, judge or condemn anyone in the world, you have first rejected, judged and condemned yourself. When you see evil doers in the world, you have first seen yourself as an evil doer. By projecting the "evil" onto another you hope to maintain the face of innocence, avoid your punishment, and have the "evil" ones punished instead of you.

The ego is not a traitor to God, to Whom treachery is impossible. But it is a traitor to you who believe that you have been treacherous to your Father. That is why the undoing of guilt is an essential part of the Holy Spirit's teaching. For as long as you feel guilty you are listening to the voice of the ego, which tells you that you have been treacherous to God and therefore deserve death. You will think that death comes from God and not from the ego because, by confusing yourself with the ego, you believe that you want death. And from what you want God does not save you. (R10 p233 VII.14)

The "you" in the passage above refers to you as the Son of God, the decision maker (as it does in most of the Text). It is you as the Son of God who chooses to believe in and identify with the ego. As the Son of God it is the power of your belief that maintains the ego's existence. The ego has no power or existence without your belief — and that is the ego's terror.

You have but to ask for this memory, and you will remember. Yet the memory of God cannot shine in a mind that has obliterated it and wants to keep it so. For the memory of God can dawn only in a mind that chooses to remember, and that has relinquished the insane desire to control reality. (R11 p234 VIII.5.1-3)

The memory is of God's love in our right mind.

Do you really believe that you can kill the Son of God? The Father has hidden His Son safely within Himself, and kept him far away from your destructive thoughts, but you know neither the Father nor the Son because of them. (R12 p233 VIII.1.1-2)

The "you" referenced in the passage above is the Son identified with the ego. You as the Son do not know yourself or your Father because you have identified yourself with the ego. Even when you are identified with the ego, you remain alive as the Son. The Father and the Son are eternal and cannot be affected by the destructive thoughts of the ego because God is indestructible, and the Father and Son are one.

Do not let your hatred stand in the way of love, for nothing can withstand the Love of Christ for His Father, or His Father's Love for Him. (R13 p219 II.6.5)

The fear and hatred at the core of the ego's thought system have no power over God's love.

You who have tried to banish love have not succeeded, but you who choose to banish fear must succeed. The Lord is with you, but you know it not. Yet your Redeemer liveth, and abideth in you in the peace out of which He was created. Would you not exchange this awareness for the awareness of fear? (R14 p220 II.9.1-4)

Jesus is appealing to us to choose love instead of fear, but we must first realize we have chosen fear so we can choose again.

When you made visible what is not true, what is true became invisible to you. Yet it cannot be invisible in itself, for the Holy Spirit sees it with perfect clarity. It is invisible to you because you are looking at something else. Yet it is no more up to you to decide what is visible and what is
Notes on Chapter Twelve – The Holy Spirit's Curriculum

invisible, than it is up to you to decide what reality is. (R15 p234 VIII.3.1-4)

In the passage above the ego's thought system is "what is not true." The Holy Spirit is "what is true." Within the dream we determine our experience by what we believe is real, but our belief in illusion does not affect God's reality.

Son of God, be not content with nothing! What is not real cannot be seen and has no value. God could not offer His Son what has no value, nor could His Son receive it. You were redeemed the instant you thought you had deserted Him. Everything you made has never been, and is invisible because the Holy Spirit does not see it. (R16 p234 VIII.6.1-5)

Our identity with the ego and its body and world is nothing, because it is not real in the eyes of God. We were redeemed the instant we believed we separated from God, because we did not actually separate from God. The separation never happened — this is the Atonement principle. The Holy Spirit does not see our sin, hate, pettiness or guilt because the Holy Spirit knows the truth of who we are. By identifying with the Holy Spirit we look with His vision and see the real world.

If they knew the truth about themselves they could not be sick. The task of the miracle worker thus becomes to deny the denial of truth. (R17 p218 II.1.4-5)

Our task is not to find truth, but to deny the denial of truth. The denial of truth is in our belief in separation and our identification with the thought system of specialness. When we deny the denial of truth, truth remains as it is — eternal.

Remember what was said about the frightening perceptions of little children, which terrify them because they do not understand them. If they ask for enlightenment and accept it, their fears vanish. But if they hide their nightmares they will keep them. It is easy to help an uncertain child, for he recognizes that he does not understand what his perceptions mean. Yet you believe that you do understand yours. Little child, you are hiding your head under the cover of the heavy blankets you have laid upon yourself. You are hiding your nightmares in the darkness of your own false certainty, and refusing to open your eyes and look at them.

Realizing our ignorance is the first step to wisdom.

Let us not save nightmares, for they are not fitting offerings for Christ, and so they are not fit gifts for you. Take off the covers and look at what you are afraid of. Only the anticipation will frighten you, for the reality of nothingness cannot be frightening. Let us not delay this, for your dream of hatred will not leave you without help, and Help is here. Learn to be quiet in the midst of turmoil, for quietness is the end of strife and this is the journey to peace. Look straight at every image that rises to delay you, for the goal is inevitable because it is eternal. The goal of love is but your right, and it belongs to you despite your dreams. (R18 p218-219 II.4-5)

We must look at our fear to realize we were afraid of nothing.

When we have overcome fear — not by hiding it, not by minimizing it, and not by denying its full import in any way — this is what you will really see. You cannot lay aside the obstacles to real vision without looking upon them, for to lay aside means to judge against. If you will look, the Holy Spirit will judge, and He will judge truly. Yet He cannot shine away what you keep hidden, for you have not offered it to Him and He cannot take it from you.

We are therefore embarking on an organized, well-structured and carefully planned program aimed at learning how to offer to the Holy Spirit everything you do not want. He knows what to do with it. You do not understand how to use what He knows. Whatever is given Him that is not of God is gone. Yet you must look at it yourself in perfect willingness, for otherwise His knowledge remains useless to you. Surely He will not fail to help you, since help is His only purpose. Do you not have greater reason for fearing the world as you perceive it, than for looking at the cause of fear and letting it go forever? (R19 p220 II.9.5-8;II.10)

This Course is an organized, structured plan that helps us look at the ego thought system and undo the blocks to our experience of God's perfect love.
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

Now we will look at the Holy Spirit's judgment.

Do you realize that the ego must set you on a journey which cannot but lead to a sense of futility and depression? To seek and not to find is hardly joyous. Is this the promise you would keep? The Holy Spirit offers you another promise, and one that will lead to joy. For His promise is always, "Seek and you will find," and under His guidance you cannot be defeated. His is the journey to accomplishment, and the goal He sets before you He will give you. For He will never deceive God's Son whom He loves with the Love of the Father. (R20 p224 IV.4)

You have been told not to make error real, and the way to do this is very simple. If you want to believe in error, you would have to make it real because it is not true. But truth is real in its own right, and to believe in truth you do not have to do anything. Understand that you do not respond to anything directly, but to your interpretation of it. Your interpretation thus becomes the justification for the response. That is why analyzing the motives of others is hazardous to you. If you decide that someone is really trying to attack you or desert you or enslave you, you will respond as if he had actually done so, having made his error real to you. To interpret error is to give it power, and having done this you will overlook truth. (R21 p215 I.1)

There is but one interpretation of motivation that makes any sense. And because it is the Holy Spirit's judgment it requires no effort at all on your part. Every loving thought is true. Everything else is an appeal for healing and help, regardless of the form it takes. Can anyone be justified in responding with anger to a brother's plea for help? No response can be appropriate except the willingness to give it to him, for this and only this is what he is asking for. Offer him anything else, and you are assuming the right to attack his reality by interpreting it as you see fit. Perhaps the danger of this to your own mind is not yet fully apparent. If you believe that an appeal for help is something else you will react to something else. Your response will therefore be inappropriate to reality as it is, but not to your perception of it.

All speech, behavior and action in the world are either expressions of love or calls for love; this is the Holy Spirit's judgment. When you turn to Him instead of the ego, it is your judgment; and the beginning of the end of the world of pain you made, and the beginning of your perception of the real world. The real world is a reflection of the wholeness and love of God.

There is nothing to prevent you from recognizing all calls for help as exactly what they are except your own imagined need to attack. It is only this that makes you willing to engage in endless "battles" with reality, in which you deny the reality of the need for healing by making it unreal. You would not do this except for your unwillingness to accept reality as it is, and which you therefore withhold from yourself. (R22 p215-216 I.3-4)

If you are unwilling to perceive an appeal for help as what it is, it is because you are unwilling to give help and to receive it. To fail to recognize a call for help is to refuse help. Would you maintain that you do not need it? Yet this is what you are maintaining when you refuse to recognize a brother's appeal, for only by answering his appeal can you be helped. (R23 p216 I.5.3-6)

Your mistake is your belief that the problems of evil, selfishness, ignorance and sickness are in others and not in yourself; and that the world needs healing, not you. By answering all evil in the world with an expression of love, you receive healing because you have given it. By projecting evil onto others, you keep it for yourself. We are healed together or not at all.

And all your sense of strain comes from your attempts not to do just this. How simple, then, is God's plan for salvation. There is but one response to reality, for reality evokes no conflict at all. There is but one Teacher of reality, Who understands what it is. He does not change His Mind about reality because reality does not change. (R24 p216 I.6.3-7)

Love is the one and only judgment and response of the Holy Spirit. By choosing the Holy Spirit as our guide, love becomes our one and only response to all our brothers in the world we made.
We have already learned that fear and attack are inevitably associated. If only attack produces fear, and if you see attack as the call for help that it is, the unreality of fear must dawn on you. For fear is a call for love, in unconscious recognition of what has been denied.

The ego makes up the unholy trinity of sin, guilt and fear as a defense against our choosing the love of God. By making sin, guilt and fear real the ego motivates us to make a body with which we can identify, and a world onto which we can project our sin, guilt and fear; thereby maintaining our face of innocence and avoiding punishment from the ego's wrathful god. We see sin, guilt, fear, conflict and attack in the world because we projected them there to maintain our innocence in the eyes of the ego's god.

Fear is a symptom of your own deep sense of loss. If when you perceive it in others you learn to supply the loss, the basic cause of fear is removed. Thereby you teach yourself that fear does not exist in you. The means for removing it is in yourself, and you have demonstrated this by giving it. Fear and love are the only emotions of which you are capable. One is false, for it was made out of denial; and denial depends on the belief in what is denied for its own existence. By interpreting fear correctly as a positive affirmation of the underlying belief it masks, you are undermining its perceived usefulness by rendering it useless. Defenses that do not work at all are automatically discarded. If you raise what fear conceals to clear-cut unequivocal predominance, fear becomes meaningless. You have denied its power to conceal love, which was its only purpose. The veil that you have drawn across the face of love has disappeared.

We have two emotions; love and fear. Fear is the emotion of the ego. Love is the emotion of the Holy Spirit. Fear is the denial of love; therefore love must exist before it can be denied. Fear only has meaning in its role as a defense to keep love hidden. The only purpose of fear is to hide love. By seeing everything in the world as an expression of love or a call for love, we now see only love; rendering fear useless.

In your daily life, whenever you experience fear, anger, hostility, or feel you have been attacked — now you know these are all defenses against love. Knowing that everything in the world is an expression of love or a call for love, fear no longer serves any purpose. Fear, conflict and war are defenses against love, and nothing else. Defenses against love are calls for love; the only response to a call for love is love.

Your survival as a separate ego is dependent on fear, conflict and war; without them you dissolve. This is why you fear love, oneness and peace; and why you love fear, conflict and war, and refuse to let them go.

To perceive the healing of your brother as the healing of yourself is thus the way to remember God. For you forgot your brothers with Him, and God's Answer to your forgetting is but the way to remember. Perceive in sickness but another call for love, and offer your brother what he believes he cannot offer himself. Whatever the sickness, there is but one remedy. You will be made whole as you make whole, for to perceive in sickness the appeal for health is to recognize in hatred the call for love. And to give a brother what he really wants is to offer it unto yourself, for your Father wills you to know your brother as yourself. Answer his call for love, and yours is answered. Healing is the Love of Christ for His Father and for Himself. (R26 p218 II.2.9-10;II.3)

We are one Son in our right mind, and we are one ego in our wrong mind. There is no separation in Heaven or on earth.

The passages below address the importance of being clear about what we truly want from our brothers and the world, and they from us.

Suppose a brother insists on having you do something you think you do not want to do. His very insistence should tell you that he believes salvation lies in it. If you insist on refusing and experience a quick response of opposition, you are believing that your salvation lies in not doing it. You, then, are making the same mistake he is, and are making his error real to both of you. Insistence means investment, and what you invest in is always related to your notion of salvation. The question is always twofold; first, what is to be saved? And second, how can it be saved?
Whenever you become angry with a brother, for whatever reason, you are believing that the ego is to be saved, and to be saved by attack. If he attacks, you are agreeing with this belief; and if you attack, you are reinforcing it. Remember that those who attack are poor. Their poverty asks for gifts, not for further impoverishment. You who could help them are surely acting destructively if you accept their poverty as yours. If you had not invested as they had, it would never occur to you to overlook their need.

Recognize what does not matter, and if your brothers ask you for something "outrageous," do it because it does not matter. Refuse, and your opposition establishes that it does matter to you. It is only you, therefore, who have made the request outrageous, and every request of a brother is for you. Why would you insist in denying him? For to do so is to deny yourself and impoverish both. He is asking for salvation, as you are. Poverty is of the ego, and never of God. No "outrageous" requests can be made of one who recognizes what is valuable and wants to accept nothing else. (R27 p220-221 III.2-4)

Ultimately we are all seeking for love, peace, and salvation from the world of hate and war we made. With the help of the Holy Spirit we see all outrageous requests as calls for love. We may or may not answer our brothers' requests with action in the world; but we respond only with love. Giving only love, we receive only love, as giving and receiving are the same.

The mind is the cause; the world is the effect. Your mind's perception is the cause of your experience in the world, the world is the effect. This Course teaches us how to shift our view of the world from the ego's distorted perception to the vision of the Holy Spirit's true perception. By changing our mind which is the cause, our world of experience, the effect, naturally changes.

The next few passages address the need of choosing the Holy Spirit as our teacher, and turning away completely from the teaching of the ego. This course requires a complete and radical change in the way we perceive ourselves and the world. We will not learn this Course if we try to have two teachers whose teachings are absolutely contradictory and mutually exclusive. The teaching of the ego and the teaching of the Holy Spirit are irreconcilable. To learn the teaching of the Holy Spirit requires you to unlearn the teaching of the ego.

You have learning handicaps in a very literal sense. There are areas in your learning skills that are so impaired that you can progress only under constant, clear-cut direction, provided by a Teacher Who can transcend your limited resources. He becomes your Resource because of yourself you cannot learn. The learning situation in which you placed yourself is impossible, and in this situation you clearly require a special Teacher and a special curriculum. Poor learners are not good choices as teachers, either for themselves or for anyone else. You would hardly turn to them to establish the curriculum by which they can escape from their limitations. If they understood what is beyond them, they would not be handicapped.

The ego is the thought of separation, guilt, hate and fear. The ego can only exist in the absence of love. To find true love we must turn away from the ego, and turn to the Teacher Who is an expression of true love; the Holy Spirit.

You do not know the meaning of love, and that is your handicap. Do not attempt to teach yourself what you do not understand, and do not try to set up curriculum goals where yours have clearly failed. Your learning goal has been not to learn, and this cannot lead to successful learning. You cannot transfer what you have not learned, and the impairment of the ability to generalize is a
crucial learning failure. Would you ask those who have failed to learn what learning aids are for? They do not know. If they could interpret the aids correctly, they would have learned from them.

Our learning aids are all our relationships — special love and hate. We learn from our relationships with others because "others" are reflections of projections of who we believe we are.

I have said that the ego's rule is, "Seek and do not find." Translated into curricular terms this means, "Try to learn but do not succeed." The result of this curriculum goal is obvious. Every legitimate teaching aid, every real instruction, and every sensible guide to learning will be misinterpreted, since they are all for facilitating the learning this strange curriculum is against. If you are trying to learn how not to learn, and the aim of your teaching is to defeat itself, what can you expect but confusion? Such a curriculum does not make sense. This attempt at "learning" has so weakened your mind that you cannot love, for the curriculum you have chosen is against love, and amounts to a course in how to attack yourself. A supplementary goal in this curriculum is learning how not to overcome the split that makes its primary aim believable. And you will not overcome the split in this curriculum, for all your learning will be on its behalf.

You who have tried to learn what you do not want should take heart, for although the curriculum you set yourself is depressing indeed, it is merely ridiculous if you look at it. Is it possible that the way to achieve a goal is not to attain it? Resign now as your own teacher. This resignation will not lead to depression. It is merely the result of an honest appraisal of what you have taught yourself, and of the learning outcomes that have resulted. Under the proper learning conditions, which you can neither provide nor understand, you will become an excellent learner and an excellent teacher. But it is not so yet, and will not be so until the whole learning situation as you have set it up is reversed.

Your learning potential, properly understood, is limitless because it will lead you to God. You can teach the way to Him and learn it, if you follow the Teacher Who knows the way to Him and understands His curriculum for learning it. The curriculum is totally unambiguous, because the goal is not divided and the means and the end are in complete accord. You need offer only undivided attention. Everything else will be given you. For you really want to learn aright, and nothing can oppose the decision of God's Son. His learning is as unlimited as he is. (R30 p227 V.8-9)

Miracles demonstrate that learning has occurred under the right guidance, for learning is invisible and what has been learned can be recognized only by its results. Its generalization is demonstrated as you use it in more and more situations. You will recognize that you have learned there is no order of difficulty in miracles when you apply them to all situations. There is no situation to which miracles do not apply, and by applying them to all situations you will gain the real world. (R32 p229 VII.1.1-4)

The result of learning this Course is peace. When the result of learning is fully generalized to include all situations, we have realized the perfect peace of the real world. The real world is the borderland between the illusory world we made and the Truth of Heaven. The real world is where true perception meets the
Knowledge of God. The real world is the reflection of heaven in the world. To be in the real world is to be in the world, but not of it. The real world is the state of mind of perfect peace, love and wholeness.

I said before that God so loved the world that He gave it to His only begotten Son. God does love the real world, and those who perceive its reality cannot see the world of death. For death is not of the real world, in which everything reflects the eternal. God gave you the real world in exchange for the one you made out of your split mind, and which is the symbol of death. For if you could really separate yourself from the Mind of God you would die. (R33 p222 III.8)

The acceptance of the Atonement is the realization of the real world.

The real world was given you by God in loving exchange for the world you made and the world you see. Only take it from the hand of Christ and look upon it. Its reality will make everything else invisible, for beholding it is total perception. And as you look upon it you will remember that it was always so. Nothingness will become invisible, for you will at last have seen truly. Redeemed perception is easily translated into knowledge, for only perception is capable of error and perception has never been. Being corrected it gives place to knowledge, which is forever the only reality. The Atonement is but the way back to what was never lost. Your Father could not cease to love His Son. (R34 p235 VIII.8)

End Chapter Twelve
CHAPTER THIRTEEN
THE GUILTLESS WORLD

Main Theme: Guilt and the ego's strategy to defend against our choosing the love of God.

Introduction: Guilt is the ego's principal weapon against our choosing God. We begin our review of this chapter by revisiting the principle of the Atonement. The Atonement, accepting our Identity with the love of God, is what the ego's use of guilt is defending against.

You dwell not here, but in eternity. You travel but in dreams, while safe at home.
(Reference I p257 VII.17.6-7)

The world of separation we made is an illusion. We remain as God created us, and where God created us as part of Him in Heaven.

The separation has not interrupted it. Creation cannot be interrupted. The separation is merely a faulty formulation of reality, with no effect at all.
(R2 p258 VIII.3.3-5)

The Holy Spirit's response to the "tiny mad idea" of separation is that it never happened, and had no effect on the reality of the Son.

Whatever your reactions to the Holy Spirit's Voice may be, whatever voice you choose to listen to, whatever strange thoughts may occur to you, God's Will is done. You will find the peace in which He has established you, because He does not change His Mind. He is invariable as the peace in which you dwell, and of which the Holy Spirit reminds you. (R3 p267 XI.5.4-6)

The raucous shrieking of the ego has no effect on God and His Will. His Will is that we are eternally one with Him.

The Communication Link that God Himself placed within you, joining your mind with His, cannot be broken. You may believe you want it broken, and this belief does interfere with the deep peace in which the sweet and constant communication God would share with you is known. Yet His channels of reaching out cannot be wholly closed and separated from Him.
(R4 p268 XI.8.1-3)

The Communication Link between the Father and the Son is the Holy Spirit; the three are eternally one. We can choose to listen to the ego rather than the Holy Spirit, but the Holy Spirit remains with us eternally linking us to God.

Salvation is as sure as God. His certainty suffices. Learn that even the darkest nightmare that disturbs the mind of God's sleeping Son holds no power over him. He will learn the lesson of awaking, God watches over him and light surrounds him. Can God's Son lose himself in dreams, when God has placed within him the glad Call to waken and be glad? He cannot separate himself from what is in him. His sleep will not withstand the Call to wake. The mission of redemption will be fulfilled as surely as the creation will remain unchanged throughout eternity. You do not have to know that Heaven is yours to make it so. It is so. Yet to know it, the Will of God must be accepted as your will.
(R5 p268 XI.9.3-7; XI.10)

The love and peace of the Holy Spirit and the Atonement are always with us, but to experience God's love and peace we must accept them. When we choose to identify with the ego we experience the ego's fear and conflict.

And now we turn to the main theme of the chapter: the ego's strategy of guilt, and the truth of the Son's guiltlessness.

Peace and guilt are antithetical, and the Father can be remembered only in peace. Love and guilt cannot coexist, and to accept one is to deny the other. Guilt hides Christ from your sight, for it is the denial of the blamelessness of God's Son. In the strange world that you have made the Son of God has sinned. How could you see him, then? By making him invisible, the world of retribution rose in the black cloud of guilt that you accepted, and you hold it dear. For the blamelessness of Christ is the proof that the ego never was, and can never be. Without guilt the ego has no life, and God's Son is without guilt. (R6 p237 I.1.3-5; I.2)

Peace and guilt are part of mutually exclusive thought systems. Peace is of the Holy Spirit; guilt is
of the ego. When we are afraid of the peace and love of God, we choose guilt instead. The ego dissolves in the presence of peace and love; the ego can only exist in conflict, fear and guilt. When we believe we are the ego, we are terrified of God's peace and love because it means we are dissolved. The ego's strategy is to ensure we believe sin, guilt and fear are real.

Forgetfulness and sleep and even death become the ego's best advice for dealing with the perceived and harsh intrusion of guilt on peace. Yet no one sees himself in conflict and ravaged by a cruel war unless he believes that both opponents in the war are real. Believing this he must escape, for such a war would surely end his peace of mind, and so destroy him. Yet if he could but realize the war is between real and unreal powers, he could look upon himself and see his freedom. No one finds himself ravaged and torn in endless battles if he himself perceives them as wholly without meaning. (R7 p266 XI.1)

Forgetfulness, sleep and death refer to repression and denial. We make sin and guilt real, and then we repress and deny them. The ego believes it is in a war against God, battling for its own separate existence. So the ego makes a body and world into which it can escape the wrath of God, and onto which it projects its sin and guilt, allowing it to maintain the face of innocence. By rising above the battleground as the observer, we are able to see the war is an illusion; the separation from God never happened; sin and guilt are unreal; and our Identity and unity with God are unchanged.

The ultimate purpose of projection is always to get rid of guilt. Yet, characteristically, the ego attempts to get rid of guilt from its viewpoint only, for much as the ego wants to retain guilt you find it intolerable, since guilt stands in the way of your remembering God. Whose pull is so strong that you cannot resist it. On this issue, then, the deepest split of all occurs, for if you are to retain guilt, as the ego insists, you cannot be you. Only by persuading you that it is you could the ego possibly induce you to project guilt, and thereby keep it in your mind. Yet consider how strange a solution the ego's arrangement is. You project guilt to get rid of it, but you are actually merely concealing it. You do experience the guilt, but you have no idea why. (R8 p239-240 II.1-2.1-3)

The original source of guilt is in our belief that we are separate from God. To be free of guilt we must go to the original source and question the reality of our separation from God. The Atonement is the realization that the separation never happened. Jesus and the Holy Spirit are our guides Who help facilitate the Atonement. The ego is our guide that helps us repress and deny our guilt by projecting it onto the world and blaming others.

The darkest of your hidden cornerstones holds your belief in guilt from your awareness. For in that dark and secret place is the realization that you have betrayed God's Son by condemning him to death. You do not even suspect this murderous but insane idea lies hidden there, for the ego's destructive urge is so intense that nothing short of the crucifixion of God's Son can ultimately satisfy it. It does not know who the Son of God is because it is blind. Yet let it perceive guiltlessness anywhere, and it will try to destroy it because it is afraid. (R9 p240 II.3)

To the ego, guiltlessness is sinful, and must be destroyed. The purpose of the crucifixion is the destruction of innocence, because innocence means the death of the ego. The ego cannot survive without sin, guilt and fear. To maintain its own existence, the ego is willing to murder its innocent brother. A brother who realizes his innocence through his Identity with God is a blasphemer to the ego, because innocence is a sin against the ego's god of sin and guilt.

Christianity, as we know it, is dependent on the belief that sin and guilt are real. As the citizen of a nation, if you do not believe in war you are branded a traitor and are subject to prosecution. As a member of the ego's brotherhood if you do not believe in sin and guilt you are branded a blasphemer and are subject to crucifixion. Separation, sin, guilt, conflict and fear form the foundation of the ego's thought system, without them the ego cannot stand.

I have said that the crucifixion is the symbol of the ego. When it was confronted with the real guiltlessness of God's Son it did attempt to kill him, and the reason it gave was that guiltlessness is blasphemous to God. To the ego, the ego is God, and guiltlessness must be interpreted as the final guilt that fully justifies murder. You do not yet understand that any fear you may experience in
connection with this course stems ultimately from this interpretation, but if you will consider your reactions to it you will become increasingly convinced that this is so.

This Course reveals that you are guiltless — that is why you resist and fear learning the Course. Without guilt, your independent existence dissolves.

This course has explicitly stated that its goal for you is happiness and peace. Yet you are afraid of it. You have been told again and again that it will set you free, yet you sometimes react as if it is trying to imprison you. You often dismiss it more readily than you dismiss the ego's thought system. To some extent, then, you must believe that by not learning the course you are protecting yourself. And you do not realize that it is only your guiltlessness that can protect you.

The Atonement has always been interpreted as the release from guilt, and this is correct if it is understood. Yet even when I interpret it for you, you may reject it and do not accept it for yourself. You have perhaps recognized the futility of the ego and its offerings, but though you do not want them, you may not yet look upon the alternative with gladness. In the extreme, you are afraid of redemption and you believe it will kill you. Make no mistake about the depth of this fear. For you believe that, in the presence of truth, you might turn on yourself and destroy yourself.

(R10 p240-241 II.6-8)

Traditionally, atonement is granted through sacrifice and suffering in payment for our sins. Atonement in the Course is the realization that separation from God never happened, therefore sin and guilt are not real. Furthermore, sacrifice and suffering are not only unnecessary, but counterproductive to true redemption because they reinforce the belief in original sin.

You may wonder why it is so crucial that you look upon your hatred and realize its full extent. You may also think that it would be easy enough for the Holy Spirit to show it to you, and to dispel it without the need for you to raise it to awareness yourself. Yet there is one more obstacle you have interposed between yourself and the Atonement. We have said that no one will countenance fear if he recognizes it. Yet in your disordered state of mind you are not afraid of fear. You do not like it, but it is not your desire to attack that really frightens you. You are not seriously disturbed by your hostility. You keep it hidden because you are more afraid of what it covers. You could look even upon the ego's darkest cornerstone without fear if you did not believe that, without the ego, you would find within yourself something you fear even more. You are not really afraid of crucifixion. Your real terror is of redemption.

Being crucified witnesses to the reality of our independent existence because we are being punished for it. This is why we do not fear crucifixion, we revel in it. Redemption is the realization that our independent existence is illusory; therefore we are terrified of it.

Under the ego's dark foundation is the memory of God, and it is of this that you are really afraid. For this memory would instantly restore you to your proper place, and it is this place that you have sought to leave. Your fear of attack is nothing compared to your fear of love. You would be willing to look even upon your savage wish to kill God's Son, if you did not believe that it saves you from love. For this wish caused the separation, and you have protected it because you do not want the separation healed. You realize that, by removing the dark cloud that obscures it, your love for your Father would impel you to answer His Call and leap into Heaven. You believe that attack is salvation because it would prevent you from this. For still deeper than the ego's foundation, and much stronger than it will ever be, is your intense and burning love of God, and His for you. This is what you really want to hide.

The intense and burning love for God is in our mind. The guilt that covers God's love is in our mind. Therefore the ego must keep us out of our mind, focused on the body and the world for fear we would realize that our guilt is not real, and we would choose the love of God instead of the ego.

In honesty, is it not harder for you to say "I love" than "I hate"? You associate love with weakness and hatred with strength, and your own real power seems to you as your real weakness. For you could not control your joyous response to the call of love if you heard it, and the whole world
you thought you made would vanish. The Holy Spirit, then, seems to be attacking your fortress, for you would shut out God, and He does not will to be excluded.

We do not want a God Who only loves, because without guilt, fear and conflict we do not exist. Our whole world is built on sin, guilt, fear and conflict. In the presence of a God of perfect love, you, as you believe yourself to be, are destroyed. To survive you need a fearful god of wrath and vengeance, not a God of love.

You have built your whole insane belief system because you think you would be helpless in God's Presence, and you would save yourself from His Love because you think it would crush you into nothingness. You are afraid it would sweep you away from yourself and make you little, because you believe that magnitude lies in defiance, and that attack is grandeur. You think you have made a world God would destroy; and by loving Him, which you do, you would throw this world away, which you would. Therefore, you have used the world to cover your love, and the deeper you go into the blackness of the ego's foundation, the closer you come to the Love that is hidden there. And it is this that frightens you.

We love fear, conflict, war and suffering because our independent existence depends on and thrives in them. We fear and hate unconditional love, because without fear and hate our special separate existence is undone.

You can accept insanity because you made it, but you cannot accept love because you did not. You would rather be a slave of the crucifixion than a Son of God in redemption. Your individual death seems more valuable than your living oneness, for what is given you is not so dear as what you made. You are more afraid of God than of the ego, and love cannot enter where it is not welcome. But hatred can, for it enters of its own volition and cares not for yours. (R11 p242-243 III.1-5)

Guilt and hatred are our gods, and we worship at their altars every day.

If you did not feel guilty you could not attack, for condemnation is the root of attack. It is the judgment of one mind by another as unworthy of love and deserving of punishment. But herein lies the split. For the mind that judges perceives itself as separate from the mind being judged, believing that by punishing another, it will escape punishment. All this is but the delusional attempt of the mind to deny itself, and escape the penalty of denial. It is not an attempt to relinquish denial, but to hold on to it. For it is guilt that has obscured the Father to you, and it is guilt that has driven you insane.

I first attack God, my true Self, and then make a world of people onto whom I project my guilt so they will be punished, not me. The world is the place of darkness because it was born of the original thought of darkness — I am separate from God.

The acceptance of guilt into the mind of God's Son was the beginning of the separation, as the acceptance of the Atonement is its end. The world you see is the delusional system of those made mad by guilt. Look carefully at this world, and you will realize that this is so. For this world is the symbol of punishment, and all the laws that seem to govern it are the laws of death. Children are born into it through pain and in pain. Their growth is attended by suffering, and they learn of sorrow and separation and death. Their minds seem to be trapped in their brain, and its powers to decline if their bodies are hurt. They seem to love, yet they desert and are deserted. They appear to lose what they love, perhaps the most insane belief of all. And their bodies wither and gasp and are laid in the ground, and are no more. Not one of them but has thought that God is cruel. If this were the real world, God would be cruel. (R12 p236 in.1-3.1)

If you choose the ego, you choose guilt; when you choose the Holy Spirit, you choose love.

You are accustomed to the notion that the mind can see the source of pain where it is not. The doubtful service of such displacement is to hide the real source of guilt, and keep from your awareness the full perception that it is insane. Displacement always is maintained by the illusion that the source of guilt, from which attention is diverted, must be true; and must be fearful, or you would not have displaced the guilt onto what you believed to be less fearful. You are therefore willing to look upon all kinds of "sources,"
provided they are not the deeper source to which they bear no real relationship at all.

As individuals and societies we are very good at finding the source of our suffering, sickness and conflict outside of us where they are not — the Course refers to this as magic. But at a deeper level we know the source of our suffering and conflict is within our mind, but we are afraid to look for fear of punishment, and ultimately our own dissolution.

One of the key themes in the Course is the ego's strategy of using special relationships, love and hate, to maintain its special separate existence. This theme is touched upon in these early chapters and thoroughly developed later in the Text.

Insane ideas have no real relationships, for that is why they are insane. No real relationship can rest on guilt, or even hold one spot of it to mar its purity. For all relationships that guilt has touched are used but to avoid the person and the guilt. What strange relationships you have made for this strange purpose! And you forgot that real relationships are holy, and cannot be used by you at all. They are used only by the Holy Spirit, and it is that which makes them pure. If you displace your guilt upon them, the Holy Spirit cannot use them. (R13 p262-263 X.1-2.1-7)

The purpose of our relationships, special love and special hate, is to provide us with someone onto whom we can "get rid" of our sin, guilt and fear, and maintain our face of innocence.

In any union with a brother in which you seek to lay your guilt upon him, or share it with him or perceive his own, you will feel guilty. Nor will you find satisfaction and peace with him, because your union with him is not real. You will see guilt in that relationship because you put it there. It is inevitable that those who suffer guilt will attempt to displace it, because they do believe in it. Yet though they suffer, they will not look within and let it go. They cannot know they love, and cannot understand what loving is. Their main concern is to perceive the source of guilt outside themselves, beyond their own control. (R14 p263 X.3)

To avoid the wrath of the ego's god we need to make a world of sinners and evil doers so they will pay the price for our sin and guilt, and we can maintain the face of innocence. This is a psychological axiom: when you feel guilty, you will project it.

The other emotion which is fear has many forms, for the content of individual illusions differs greatly. Yet they have one thing in common; they are all insane. They are made of sights that are not seen, and sounds that are not heard. They make up a private world that cannot be shared. For they are meaningful only to their maker, and so they have no meaning at all. In this world their maker moves alone, for only he perceives them. (R15 p247 V.1.4-9)

We make up our own sick little world of good and evil, and spend our lives separate and alone at war in our private delusions. Such is the world you made.

Projection makes perception, and you cannot see beyond it. Again and again have you attacked your brother, because you saw in him a shadow figure in your private world. And thus it is you must attack yourself first, for what you attack is not in others. Its only reality is in your own mind, and by attacking others you are literally attacking what is not there. (R16 p248 V.3.5-8)

As you look with open eyes upon your world, it must occur to you that you have withdrawn into insanity. You see what is not there, and you hear what makes no sound. Your manifestations of emotions are the opposite of what the emotions are. You communicate with no one, and you are as isolated from reality as if you were alone in all the universe. In your madness you overlook reality completely, and you see only your own split mind everywhere you look. God calls you and you do not hear, for you are preoccupied with your own voice. And the vision of Christ is not in your sight, for you look upon yourself alone. (R17 p248-249 V.6)

We must rise above the insanity of the illusory battleground we made, and look at it with the vision of the Holy Spirit's true perception to wake up from our nightmare born of separation, sin, guilt and fear; and remember the truth of our Identity with the God of love.

And now we will look at the Holy Spirit's Answer to the ego's story of separation, guilt, hate and war.
The Father is not cruel, and His Son cannot hurt himself. (R18 p237 I.4.2)

The separation from God never happened. The world of sin, guilt and conflict was all a projection of mind.

When you have accepted the Atonement for yourself, you will realize there is no guilt in God's Son. And only as you look upon him as guiltless can you understand his oneness. (R19p238 I.6.1-2)

Realizing your own innocence, you realize the innocence of all your brothers. We are all guilty or we are all innocent; God's Son is one.

In the ego's teaching, then, there is no escape from guilt. For attack makes guilt real, and if it is real there is no way to overcome it. The Holy Spirit dispels it simply through the calm recognition that it has never been. (R20 p239 I.11.2-4)

One of the key strategies in the Holy Spirit's plan of atonement is observing the "dynamics" of the ego in our daily lives. The way to undo guilt is through looking at it. The deepest, darkest cornerstone of the ego's foundation is made of sin, guilt and fear: the ego believes it has sinned against God by leaving Him, is guilty of betrayal, and is afraid of His revenge. Our sin and guilt must be dug up and looked at so we can be free of it.

They [the guiltless] have approached the darkest and deepest cornerstone in the ego's foundation, and while the ego can withstand your raising all else to question, it guards this one secret with its life, for its existence depends on keeping this secret. So it is this secret that we must look upon, for the ego cannot protect you against truth, and in its presence the ego is dispelled.

The entire world of hate, fear, anger, conflict, and war is a projection of your deep, dark secret of guilt over the sin you believe you committed against God.

In the calm light of truth, let us recognize that you believe you have crucified God's Son. You have not admitted to this "terrible" secret because you would still wish to crucify him if you could find him. Yet the wish has hidden him from you because it is very fearful, and so you are afraid to find him. You have handled this wish to kill yourself by not knowing who you are, and identifying with something else. You have projected guilt blindly and indiscriminately, but you have not uncovered its source. For the ego does want to kill you, and if you identify with it you must believe its goal is yours. (R21 p240 II.4.4-5;II.5)

The "you" the ego wants to kill is the Son of God as the decision maker which is the power of your mind to choose against the ego and for the Holy Spirit. The one remaining freedom we have as a prisoner of the world we made is our freedom to choose, but we cannot choose until we realize we have a mind that can choose. The ego's strategy is to keep us mindless by identifying with the body and world so we will not remember we have the power to choose, and in fact made up the whole story of separation and made up the entire world.

You must look upon your illusions and not keep them hidden, because they do not rest on their own foundation. In concealment they appear to do so, and thus they seem to be self-sustained. This is the fundamental illusion on which the others rest. For beneath them, and concealed as long as they are hidden, is the loving mind that thought it made them in anger. And the pain in this mind is so apparent, when it is uncovered, that its need of healing cannot be denied. Not all the tricks and games you offer it can heal it, for here is the real crucifixion of God's Son.

Our illusions of separation, sin and guilt rest on the foundation of the Son's power of belief — which is your power, you are the Son of God. When your belief is withdrawn, the illusions fall and dissolve. The Holy Spirit's way of healing our sin and guilt is by looking at them and realizing they are nothing. The ego's way of "healing" our sin and guilt is by projecting them onto others and blaming them for our pain.

And yet he is not crucified. Here is both his pain and his healing, for the Holy Spirit's vision is merciful and His remedy is quick. Do not hide suffering from His sight, but bring it gladly to Him. Lay before His eternal sanity all your hurt, and let Him heal you. Do not leave any spot of pain hidden from His light, and search your mind carefully for any thoughts you may fear to uncover. For He will heal every little thought you
have kept to hurt you and cleanse it of its littleness, restoring it to the magnitude of God. (R22 p243 III.6-7)

To be free we must bring the darkness of all our suffering, sin and guilt to the light of God's love; and refuse to project the cause of our suffering onto our brothers.

Guilt makes you blind, for while you see one spot of guilt within you, you will not see the light. And by projecting it the world seems dark, and shrouded in your guilt. You throw a dark veil over it, and cannot see it because you cannot look within. You are afraid of what you would see there, but it is not there. The thing you fear is gone. If you would look within you would see only the Atonement, shining in quiet and in peace upon the altar to your Father.

Do not be afraid to look within. The ego tells you all is black with guilt within you, and bids you not to look. Instead, it bids you look upon your brothers, and see the guilt in them. Yet this you cannot do without remaining blind. For those who see their brothers in the dark, and guilty in the dark in which they shroud them, are too afraid to look upon the light within. (R23 p262 IX.7-8)

You must admit the ego's strategy is absolutely brilliant, and how well it works! Just look around you!

Look, then, upon the light He placed within you, and learn that what you feared was there has been replaced with love. (R24 p262 IX.8.13)

Now we will address the importance of the acceptance and forgiveness of all our brothers to our journey back Home.

You will find this place of truth as you see it in your brothers, for though they may deceive themselves, like you they long for the grandeur that is in them. And perceiving it you will welcome it, and it will be yours. For grandeur is the right of God's Son, and no illusions can satisfy him or save him from what he is. Only his love is real, and he will be content only with his reality. Save him from his illusions that you may accept the magnitude of your Father in peace and joy. But exempt no one from your love, or you will be hiding a dark place in your mind where the Holy Spirit is not welcome. And thus you will exempt yourself from His healing power, for by not offering total love you will not be healed completely. Healing must be as complete as fear, for love cannot enter where there is one spot of fear to mar its welcome. (R25 p244 III.8.4-7;III.9)

Everything you see out in the world, you have projected from within; there is no separate, objective world. The good and evil you see in your brothers are your own projections. When you reject and condemn your brothers, you are rejecting and condemning yourself. When you accept and forgive your brothers, you are accepting and forgiving yourself. If you believe you are guilty, you will find guilt in your brothers. When you know you are God's love, you will see God's love in your brothers. You are what you see. You see what you are. There is no separation.

You cannot enter into real relationships with any of God's Sons unless you love them all and equally. Love is not special. If you single out part of the Sonship for your love, you are imposing guilt on all your relationships and making them unreal. You can love only as God loves. Seek not to love unlike Him, for there is no love apart from His. Until you recognize that this is true, you will have no idea what love is like. No one who condemns a brother can see himself as guiltless and in the peace of God. (R26 p265 X.11.1-7)

True love is absolute, unconditional and all inclusive. Only God's love is true. The ego's "love" is relative, conditional and exclusive. The ego's love is not love at all; it is but hate hidden behind the mask of specialness. When it is betrayed, its mask is withdrawn and its true face of hate and murder is revealed.

To the ego, time is a function of sin, guilt and fear. Sin is of our separation in the past. Guilt is our experience in the present. And fear is of the future punishment for our sin. The miracle heals as it transcends time in the holy instant.

Yet by doing so [believing in sin, guilt and fear] you are aligning past and future, and not allowing the miracle, which could intervene between them, to free you to be born again. The miracle enables you to see your brother without his past, and so
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perceive him as born again. His errors are all past, and by perceiving him without them you are releasing him. And since his past is yours, you share in this release. Let no dark cloud out of your past obscure him from you, for truth lies only in the present, and you will find it if you seek it there. You have looked for it where it is not, and therefore have not found it. Learn, then, to seek it where it is, and it will dawn on eyes that see. Your past was made in anger, and if you use it to attack the present, you will not see the freedom that the present holds. (R27 p251 VI.4.8;VI.5)

Our first "birth" is when we believed in our separation from God as an independent ego-self. We are "born again" when we realize our true Self in the holy instant with no past or future, but only in the timeless present. The holy instant is the timeless present in which our true Self is realized as we choose the Holy Spirit rather than the ego.

Determine, then, to be not as you were. Use no relationship to hold you to the past, but with each one each day be born again. A minute, even less, will be enough to free you from the past, and give your mind in peace over to the Atonement. When everyone is welcome to you as you would have yourself be welcome to your Father, you will see no guilt in you. For you will have accepted the Atonement, which shone within you all the while you dreamed of guilt, and would not look within and see it. (R28 p263-264 X.5)

Each time we stop for a moment and choose the Holy Spirit, time stops and we are born again — this is the holy instant.

You will first dream of peace, and then awaken to it. Your first exchange of what you made for what you want is the exchange of nightmares for the happy dreams of love. In these lie your true perceptions, for the Holy Spirit corrects the world of dreams, where all perception is. Knowledge needs no correction. Yet the dreams of love lead unto knowledge. In them you see nothing fearful, and because of this they are the welcome that you offer knowledge. Love waits on welcome, not on time, and the real world is but your welcome of what always was. Therefore the call of joy is in it, and your glad response is your awakening to what you have not lost. (R29 p255-256 VII.9)

Happy dreams are the corrections for the nightmares of sin, guilt and fear. Happy dreams are expressions of the holy instant in the real world when we choose innocence, forgiveness and love instead of the ego's nightmare of guilt, blame and hate. As we choose the guidance of the Holy Spirit in the holy instant, the light of the real world begins to reveal itself.

There is a light that this world cannot give. Yet you can give it, as it was given you. And as you give it, it shines forth to call you from the world and follow it. For this light will attract you as nothing in this world can do. And you will lay aside the world and find another. This other world is bright with love which you have given it. And here will everything remind you of your Father and His holy Son. Light is unlimited, and spreads across this world in quiet joy. All those you brought with you will shine on you, and you will shine on them in gratitude because they brought you here. Your light will join with theirs in power so compelling, that it will draw the others out of darkness as you look on them. (R30 p253 VI.11)

Sit quietly and look upon the world you see, and tell yourself: "The real world is not like this. It has no buildings and there are no streets where people walk alone and separate. There are no stores where people buy an endless list of things they do not need. It is not lit with artificial light, and night comes not upon it. There is no day that brightens and grows dim. There is no loss. Nothing is there but shines, and shines forever."

We are in the state of mind called the real world when we realize the truth of who we are is beyond the dream of separation, beyond the illusory world of duality, beyond time and space at the doorway to Heaven. The real world is the reflection of Heaven in which all is one. The real world is the end of the journey; before God takes us back Home.

The world you see must be denied, for sight of it is costing you a different kind of vision. You cannot see both worlds, for each of them involves a different kind of seeing, and depends on what you cherish. The sight of one is possible because you have denied the other. Both are not true, yet either one will seem as real to you as the amount to which you hold it dear. And yet their power is
not the same, because their real attraction to you is unequal. (R31 p254 VII.1-2)

The real world and the illusory world of separation are mutually exclusive. Love and fear are irreconcilable.

Yet the real world has the power to touch you even here, because you love it. And what you call with love will come to you. Love always answers, being unable to deny a call for help, or not to hear the cries of pain that rise to it from every part of this strange world you made but do not want. All that you need to give this world away in glad exchange for what you did not make is willingness to learn the one you made is false. (R32 p254 VII.4)

This final passage is a beautiful summary of the chapter.

Little child, this is not so [the idea that you will destroy yourself when you look within]. Your "guilty secret" is nothing, and if you will but bring it to the light, the light will dispel it. And then no dark cloud will remain between you and the remembrance of your Father, for you will remember His guiltless Son, who did not die because he is immortal. And you will see that you were redeemed with him, and have never been separated from him. In this understanding lies your remembering, for it is the recognition of love without fear. There will be great joy in Heaven on your homecoming, and the joy will be yours. For the redeemed son of man is the guiltless Son of God, and to recognize him is your redemption. (R33 p241 II.9)

End Chapter Thirteen
CHAPTER FOURTEEN
TEACHING FOR TRUTH

Main Themes: In this chapter there are three major themes: 1 - Teaching and learning. 2 - Looking at the ego with the Holy Spirit; bringing the darkness to the light. 3 - Forgiveness.

You will notice the beauty of the language shines even brighter, and the depth of the message is even more profound as we take our journey through the Text. You may notice what you are learning in the Course sinks deeper into your mind and influences your daily experience more and more.

Bringing the darkness of the ego's sin, guilt and fear to the light of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, innocence and love is a correction for the ego's attempt to keep the darkness from the light. The darkness represents the separation. The light represents the Atonement. The Atonement is the realization that you are not separate from God's perfect love. And we start by looking at the Atonement principle.

Seek not to appraise the worth of God's Son whom He created holy, for to do so is to evaluate his Father and judge against Him. And you will feel guilty for this imagined crime, which no one in this world or Heaven could possibly commit. The Holy Spirit teaches only that the "sin" of self-replacement on the throne of God is not a source of guilt. What cannot happen can have no effects to fear. Be quiet in your faith in Him Who loves you, and would lead you out of insanity. Madness may be your choice, but not your reality. Never forget the Love of God, Who has remembered you. For it is quite impossible that He could ever let His Son drop from the loving Mind wherein he was created, and where his abode was fixed in perfect peace forever. (Reference I p277 III.15)

The Holy Spirit's answer to the "tiny mad idea" that God's Son could separate from Him is that the separation never happened.

God has not left His altar, though His worshippers placed other gods upon it. The temple still is holy, for the Presence that dwells within it is Holiness. (R2 p291 IX.3.8-9)

The worshippers are God's Sons, and the other gods they have placed upon God's altar are the ego, the body and its special relationships.

To God, unknowing is impossible. It is therefore not a point of view at all, but merely a belief in something that does not exist. It is only this belief that the unknowing have, and by it they are wrong about themselves. (R3 p287 VII.3.5-7)

"Unknowing" refers to the ego's thought system based on the perception of duality and separation, not Knowledge. True Knowledge is of Heaven's oneness. The Sons of God have the power to believe they are separate from God, but belief in separation does not make it true. When the Son withdraws his belief in the ego, the ego dissolves and only God remains. God is unaffected by the Son's belief, but the Son loses awareness of the love of his Father when he chooses to believe he is separate from Him. The ego's strategy is to keep the Son out of his mind, identified with the body and world so he will not withdraw his belief in the ego.

Dissociation is a distorted process of thinking whereby two systems of belief which cannot coexist are both maintained. If they are brought together, their joint acceptance becomes impossible. But if one is kept in darkness from the other, their separation seems to keep them both alive and equal in their reality. Their joining thus becomes the source of fear, for if they meet, acceptance must be withdrawn from one of them. You cannot have them both, for each denies the other. Apart, this fact is lost from sight, for each in a separate place can be endowed with firm belief. Bring them together, and the fact of their complete incompatibility is instantly apparent. One will go, because the other is seen in the same place. (R4 p287-288 VII.4.3-10)
The ego’s strategy to sustain its special separate existence is to keep the darkness from the light (this is dissociation), for light dispels darkness. The entire purpose of the body and world is to keep the Son in darkness, and out of the light. The ego's darkness is sin, guilt and fear. In a practical way in your daily life you can relate to the terms sin, guilt and fear like this: sin is selfishness — the desire for your own special separate existence; guilt arises in you because deep down you know you are motivated only by selfish interests; fear arises in you because you are afraid your true selfish motives will be discovered and you will be punished.

The guiltless and the guilty are totally incapable of understanding one another. Each perceives the other as like himself, making both unable to communicate, because each sees the other unlike the way he [the other] sees himself. God can communicate only to the Holy Spirit in your mind, because only He shares the knowledge of what you are with God. And only the Holy Spirit can answer God for you, for only He knows what God is. Everything else that you have placed within your mind cannot exist, for what is not in communication with the Mind of God has never been. Communication with God is life. Nothing without it is at all. (R5 p281 IV.10)

Guilt is dissolved by innocence. The ego is dissolved by the Holy Spirit — they cannot coexist in a healed mind. Sickness can only exist in the split, dissociated mind. The purpose of forgiveness and the Atonement is to heal the split mind by bringing the darkness to the light — this is the miracle.

The "life" of the ego is really death; and the body and world are expressions of death. Life is of God, and God is not in the body or world you made. God is Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the memory of Life in the split mind of the Son. The moment you believed you have your own life separate from God is the moment you died. True Self Knowledge is in the moment you remember you are eternal life. Eternal life was never born and can never die. The ego was never truly born, and therefore cannot die, but can be dissolved as you see it is an illusion of life.

Seeing is always outward. Were your thoughts wholly of you [the ego], the thought system you made would be forever dark. The thoughts the mind of God's Son projects or extends have all the power that he gives to them. The thoughts he shares with God are beyond his belief, but those he made are his beliefs. And it is these, and not the truth, that he has chosen to defend and love. They will not be taken from him. But they can be given up by him, for the Source of their undoing is in him. (R6 p271 I.3.1-7)

What you see "out" in the world, you have projected from within. There is no separate, objective world apart from the world you project and believe. Your belief of being a separate ego, identified with a body in a world will not be taken from you. Nor will the reality of your Identity with God be forced upon you. As the Son of God it is your choice. The choice for the ego or the Holy Spirit is made within your mind, not in the body or the world.

Now we turn to the important theme of teaching and learning. Following the ego leads us to pain and suffering. The Holy Spirit is the teacher Who leads us out of the world, back to the mind, and on to the truth of spirit.

Yes, you are blessed indeed. Yet in this world you do not know it. But you have the means for learning it and seeing it quite clearly. The Holy Spirit uses logic as easily and as well as does the ego, except that His conclusions are not insane. They take a direction exactly opposite, pointing as clearly to Heaven as the ego points to darkness and to death. We have followed much of the ego's logic, and have seen its logical conclusions. And having seen them, we have realized that they cannot be seen except in illusions, for there alone their seeming clearness seems to be clearly seen. Let us now turn away from them, and follow the simple logic by which the Holy Spirit teaches the simple conclusions that speak for truth, and only truth. If you are blessed and do not know it, you need to learn it must be so. The knowledge is not taught, but its conditions must be acquired for it is they that have been thrown away. (R7 p270 in.1;I.1.1-2)

As the Son of God Who knows His Identity with Christ, we are truly blessed. Having forgotten our true Identity, we need to remember it by unlearning our false identity with the ego. The conditions for learning are first the realization of our ignorance, then the willingness to consider a new way and a new teacher.
Indirect proof of truth is needed in a world made of denial and without direction. You will perceive the need for this if you realize that to deny is the decision not to know. The logic of the world must therefore lead to nothing, for its goal is nothing. (R8 p270 I.2.1-3)

Indirect proof of truth is needed initially because direct statements of truth like "the body and world are illusions" are too radical and fearful to accept for one who is completely identified as a body in a world. Direct statements of truth made to the deluded mind are rejected or attacked.

This is an insane world, and do not underestimate the extent of its insanity. There is no area of your perception that it has not touched, and your dream is sacred to you. That is why God placed the Holy Spirit in you, where you placed the dream. (R9 p271 I.2.6-8)

The Holy Spirit serves as a gentle and loving guide out of the insane dream world you made and still hold sacred.

There is nothing in the world to teach him that the logic of the world is totally insane and leads to nothing. Yet in him who made this insane logic there is One Who knows it leads to nothing, for He knows everything. Any direction that would lead you where the Holy Spirit leads you not, goes nowhere. Anything you deny that He knows to be true you have denied yourself, and He must therefore teach you not to deny it. Undoing is indirect, as doing is. (R10 p271 I.3.8-9;1.4.1-3)

The memory of the truth of who we are as spirit is in our mind eternally, but we have denied it by identifying with the body. The Holy Spirit reminds us of the truth of our identity as spirit by leading us back to the point in the mind where we can choose to remember. The memory of who we are is in the mind, not in the body or world. Healing is of the mind only, not of the body or world. Any teaching or teacher that shifts our attention to the body or world leads us deeper into illusion and sickness. The ego's teaching is focused on the body and world; the Holy Spirit's teaching is focused on God.

The Holy Spirit, therefore, must begin His teaching by showing you what you can never learn. His message is not indirect, but He must introduce the simple truth into a thought system which has become so twisted and so complex you cannot see that it means nothing. He merely looks at its foundation and dismisses it. But you who cannot undo what you have made, nor escape the heavy burden of its dullness that lies upon your mind, cannot see through it. It deceives you, because you chose to deceive yourself. Those who choose to be deceived will merely attack direct approaches, because they seem to encroach upon deception and strike at it. (R11 p271 I.5)

The phrase "What we can never learn" refers to the separation. We cannot learn it because it never happened. The Holy Spirit's message is direct: the separation from God never happened. The complexity of the ego's thought system is reflected in our relationships in the world — special love and special hate. The body and world are nothing to the Holy Spirit, but to the ego, the body and world are everything. To deny the reality of the body and world evokes attack by the ego. This Course uses both direct and indirect approaches to truth.

The realization that "I do not know" is the first sign of wisdom.

Yet the essential thing is learning that you do not know. Knowledge is power, and all power is of God. You who have tried to keep power for yourself have "lost" it. You still have the power, but you have interposed so much between it and your awareness of it that you cannot use it. Everything you have taught yourself has made your power more and more obscure to you. You know not what it is, nor where. You have made a semblance of power and a show of strength so pitiful that it must fail you. For power is not a seeming strength, and truth is beyond semblance of any kind. Yet all that stands between you and the power of God in you is but your learning of the false, and of your attempts to undo the true.

Be willing, then, for all of it to be undone, and be glad that you are not bound to it forever. For you have taught yourself how to imprison the Son of God, a lesson so unthinkable that only the insane, in deepest sleep, could even dream of it. Can God learn how not to be God? And can His Son, given all power by Him, learn to be powerless? What have you taught yourself that you can possibly prefer to keep, in place of what you have and
what you *are*? Atonement teaches you how to escape forever from everything that you have taught yourself in the past, by showing you only what you are *now*. (R12 p296 XI.1-3.1)

Your past is what you have taught yourself. *Let it all go.* Do not attempt to understand any event or anything or anyone in its "light," for the darkness in which you try to see can only obscure. Put no confidence at all in darkness to illuminate your understanding, for if you do you contradict the light, and thereby think you see the darkness. Yet darkness cannot be seen, for it is nothing more than a condition in which seeing becomes impossible. You who have not yet brought all of the darkness you have taught yourself into the light in you, can hardly judge the truth and value of this course. (R13 p297 XI.3.6-10; XI.4.1)

You have one test, as sure as God, by which to recognize if what you learned is true. If you are wholly free of fear of any kind, and if all those who meet or even think of you share in your perfect peace, then you can be sure that you have learned God's lesson, and not your own. Unless all this is true, there are dark lessons in your mind that hurt and hinder you, and everyone around you. (R14 p297 XI.5.1-3)

Do not be concerned about how you can learn a lesson so completely different from everything that you have taught yourself. How would you know? Your part is very simple. You need only recognize that everything you learned you do not want. Ask to be taught, and do not use your experiences to confirm what you have learned. (R15 p297 XI.6.1-5)

When you believe you are a separate ego with a body living in a world, everything you try to learn will be distorted through the delusions of ego. The first step toward wisdom is the realization of your own ignorance. And the next step is to turn to the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit and take Him as your teacher. To the ego you say, "You're fired!"

Those who remember always that they know nothing, and who have become willing to learn everything, will learn it. But whenever they trust themselves, they will not learn. They have destroyed their motivation for learning by thinking they already know. Think not you understand anything until you pass the test of perfect peace, for peace and understanding go together and never can be found alone. Each brings the other with it, for it is the law of God they be not separate. They are cause and effect, each to the other, so where one is absent the other cannot be.

Proof that you have learned and understood this Course is in your experience of perfect peace.

Only those who recognize they cannot know unless the effects of understanding are with them, can really learn at all. For this it must be peace they want, and nothing else. Whenever you think you know, peace will depart from you, because you have abandoned the Teacher of peace. Whenever you fully realize that you know not, peace will return, for you will have invited Him to do so by abandoning the ego on behalf of Him. Call not upon the ego for anything; it is only this that you need do. The Holy Spirit will, of Himself, fill every mind that so makes room for Him. If you want peace you must abandon the teacher of attack. The Teacher of peace will never abandon you. (R16 p299 XI.12-14.1-2)

We become happy learners when we have realized our own ignorance, and become disillusioned of our identity with the ego and are open to a new Teacher.

The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. You who are steadfastly devoted to misery must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy. The Holy Spirit cannot teach without this contrast, for you believe that misery is happiness. This has so confused you that you have undertaken to learn to do what you can never do, believing that unless you learn it you will not be happy. You do not realize that the foundation on which this most peculiar learning goal depends means absolutely nothing. Yet it may still make sense to you. Have faith in nothing and you will find the "treasure" that you seek. Yet you will add another burden to your already burdened mind. You will believe that nothing is of value, and will value it. A little piece of glass, a speck of dust, a body or a war are one to you. For if you value one thing made of nothing, you have believed that nothing can be precious, and that you *can* learn how to make the untrue true.
Everything in the world you made is equally illusory. A hang nail, a cold, or cancer; a mild annoyance, a conflict, or the Third World War; there is no hierarchy of illusions. The love of God is true; all else is false. There is no order of difficulty in miracles.

The Holy Spirit, seeing where you are but knowing you are elsewhere, begins His lesson in simplicity with the fundamental teaching that truth is true. This is the hardest lesson you will ever learn, and in the end the only one. Simplicity is very difficult for twisted minds. Consider all the distortions you have made of nothing; all the strange forms and feelings and actions and reactions that you have woven out of it. Nothing is so alien to you as the simple truth, and nothing are you less inclined to listen to. The contrast between what is true and what is not is perfectly apparent, yet you do not see it. The simple and the obvious are not apparent to those who would make palaces and royal robes of nothing, believing they are kings with golden crowns because of them. All this the Holy Spirit sees, and teaches, simply, that all this is not true.

Learn to be a happy learner. You will never learn how to make nothing everything. Yet see that this has been your goal, and recognize how foolish it has been. Be glad it is undone, for when you look at it in simple honesty, it is undone. I said before, "Be not content with nothing," for you have believed that nothing could content you. It is not so. If you would be a happy learner, you must give everything you have learned to the Holy Spirit, to be unlearned for you. And then begin to learn the joyous lessons that come quickly on the firm foundation that truth is true. For what is built there is true, and built on truth. The universe of learning will open up before you in all its gracious simplicity. With truth before you, you will not look back.

For truth is true. What else could ever be, or ever was? This simple lesson holds the key to the dark door that you believe is locked forever. You made this door of nothing, and behind it is nothing. The key is only the light that shines away the shapes and forms and fears of nothing.

The key that unlocks the "dark door" is the Atonement that shines the light on the darkness of our belief in separation, dispelling the sin, guilt and fear that were based on the illusion of separation from God. The ego teaches separation. The Holy Spirit teaches Atonement.

And now we address the important theme of choosing teachers. Our experience of peace rests on the power of our mind to choose.

Each day, each hour and minute, even each second, you are deciding between the crucifixion and the resurrection; between the ego and the Holy Spirit. The ego is the choice for guilt; the Holy Spirit the choice for guiltlessness. The power of decision is all that is yours. What you can decide between is fixed, because there are no alternatives except truth and illusion. And there is no overlap between them, because they are opposites which cannot be reconciled and cannot both be true. You are guilty or guiltless, bound or free, unhappy or happy.

Opposites cannot be reconciled. Only truth is true. When you are clear on your Identity as Christ you are absolutely guiltless, absolutely free, and absolutely happy. These statements reflect the non-dual thought system at the foundation of the Course's philosophy.

Before you make any decisions for yourself, remember that you have decided against your function in Heaven, and then consider carefully whether you want to make decisions here. Your function here is only to decide against deciding what you want, in recognition that you do not know. How, then, can you decide what you should do? Leave all decisions to the One Who speaks for God, and for your function as He knows it. So will He teach you to remove the awful burden you have laid upon yourself by loving not the Son of God, and trying to teach him guilt instead of love. Give up this frantic and insane attempt that cheats you of the joy of living with your God and Father, and of waking gladly to His Love and Holiness that join together as the truth in you, making you one with Him. When you have learned how to decide with God, all decisions become as easy and as right as breathing. There is no effort, and you will be led as gently as if you were being carried down a quiet path in summer.
Only your own volition seems to make deciding hard. (R21 p280 IV.5-6.1-3)

The power of decision, which you made in place of the power of creation, He would teach you how to use on your behalf. You who made it to crucify yourself must learn of Him how to apply it to the holy cause of restoration. (R22 p286 VI.5.6-7)

We decided to believe in our separate existence as an ego in a body, apparently crucifying our true Self. By choosing to identify with the Holy Spirit we learn how to restore ourselves to our true Identity as Christ.

In the next few passages we will address the importance of observing the activities of the ego in our daily lives, and bringing the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit. Watching the ego is one of the most powerful ways to benefit from this Course. Ignorance dissolves as we bring it to the light of awareness.

The journey that we undertake together is the exchange of dark for light, of ignorance for understanding. Nothing you understand is fearful. It is only in darkness and in ignorance that you perceive the frightening, and shrink away from it to further darkness. And yet it is only the hidden that can terrify, not for what it is, but for its hiddenness. (R23 p285 VI.1.1-4)

Attack will always yield to love if it is brought to love, not hidden from it. There is no darkness that the light of love will not dispel, unless it is concealed from love's beneficence. What is kept apart from love cannot share its healing power, because it has been separated off and kept in darkness. The sentinels of darkness watch over it carefully, and you who made these guardians of illusion out of nothing are now afraid of them.

The guardians of illusion, the sentinels of darkness, are all the defenses the ego uses to maintain its special separate existence: the belief in sin, guilt and fear; denial, projection, dissociation; and special love and hate relationships.

Would you continue to give imagined power to these strange ideas of safety? They are neither safe nor unsafe. They do not protect; neither do they attack. They do nothing at all, being nothing at all. As guardians of darkness and of ignorance look to them only for fear, for what they keep obscure is fearful. But let them go, and what was fearful will be so no longer. Without protection of obscurity only the light of love remains, for only this has meaning and can live in light. Everything else must disappear.

Power does not lie in the defense system of the ego; the power is in our belief given to the defenses, and the belief in the reality of what they defend — the ego. By withdrawing our belief in the ego and its defense system, it dissolves. Our only problem is the belief that we have a problem.

Death yields to life simply because destruction is not true. The light of guiltlessness shines guilt away because, when they are brought together, the truth of one must make the falsity of its opposite perfectly clear. Keep not guilt and guiltlessness apart, for your belief that you can have them both is meaningless. (R24 p285 VI.2.2-5; VI.3-4.1-3)

Denying the sin and guilt in our mind, and projecting them onto our brothers, we keep the darkness away from the light, and allow sickness to fester within us. By bringing the sin and guilt to the light, we are healed along with our brothers.

You speak two languages [guilt and guiltlessness] at once, and this must lead to unintelligibility. Yet if one means nothing and the other everything, only that one is possible for purposes of communication. The other but interferes with it. The Holy Spirit's function is entirely communication. He therefore must remove whatever [guilt] interferes with communication in order to restore it. Therefore, keep no source of interference from His sight, for He will not attack your sentinels. But bring them to Him and let His gentleness teach you that, in the light, they are not fearful, and cannot serve to guard the dark doors behind which nothing at all is carefully concealed. We must open all doors and let the light come streaming through. There are no hidden chambers in God's temple. Its gates are open wide to greet His Son. No one can fail to come where God has called him, if he close not the door himself upon his Father's welcome.
What do you want? Light or darkness, knowledge or ignorance are yours, but not both. Opposites must be brought together, not kept apart. For their separation is only in your mind, and they are reconciled by union, as you are. In union, everything that is not real must disappear, for truth is union. As darkness disappears in light, so ignorance fades away when knowledge dawns. Perception is the medium by which ignorance is brought to knowledge. Yet the perception must be without deceit, for otherwise it becomes the messenger of ignorance rather than a helper in the search for truth.

True perception is the vision of the Holy Spirit. To perceive truly we must look through the eyes of the Holy Spirit Who sees everyone equally in the light of God's all inclusive love. As we bring the darkness to the light, all is seen as either an expression of love or a call for love through the eyes of Christ.

The search for truth is but the honest searching out of everything that interferes with truth. Truth is. It can neither be lost nor sought nor found. It is there, wherever you are, being within you. Yet it can be recognized or unrecognized, real or false to you. If you hide it, it becomes unreal to you because you hid it and surrounded it with fear. Under each cornerstone of fear on which you have erected your insane system of belief, the truth lies hidden. Yet you cannot know this, for by hiding truth in fear, you see no reason to believe that the more you look at fear the less you see it, and the clearer what it conceals becomes.

Our emphasis has been on bringing what is undesirable to the desirable; what you do not want to what you do. (R26 p287 VII.4.1)

The Holy Spirit asks of you but this; bring to Him every secret you have locked away from Him. Open every door to Him, and bid Him enter the darkness and lighten it away. At your request He enters gladly. He brings the light to darkness if you make the darkness open to Him. But what you hide He cannot look upon. He sees for you, and unless you look with Him He cannot see. The vision of Christ is not for Him alone, but for Him with you. Bring, therefore, all your dark and secret thoughts to Him, and look upon them with Him. He holds the light, and you the darkness.

They cannot coexist when both of You together look on them. His judgment must prevail, and He will give it to you as you join your perception to His. (R27 p288 VII.6)

The Atonement does not make holy. You were created holy. It merely brings unholliness to holiness; or what you made to what you are. Bringing illusion to truth, or the ego to God, is the Holy Spirit's only function. Keep not your making from your Father, for hiding it has cost you knowledge of Him and of yourself. (R28 p291 IX.1.1-5)

Bringing the ego to God is but to bring error to truth, where it stands corrected because it is the opposite of what it meets. It is undone because the contradiction can no longer stand. How long can contradiction stand when its impossible nature is clearly revealed? What disappears in light is not attacked. It merely vanishes because it is not true. Different realities are meaningless, for reality must be one. It cannot change with time or mood or chance. Its changelessness is what makes it real. This cannot be undone. Undoing is for unreality. And this reality will do for you. Merely by being what it is, does truth release you from everything that it is not. The Atonement is so gentle you need but whisper to it, and all its power will rush to your assistance and support. You are not frail with God beside you. Yet without Him you are nothing. (R29 p291 IX.2-3.1-4)

When we bring our illusions to the Holy Spirit, we realize that everything we believed about ourselves and the world is false, and that in truth we are all Sons of God — this is the miracle. The miracle establishes that we have dreamed a dream, and what we dreamed is not true. When we look through the eyes of the miracle or Christ we realize there is only one problem: we chose to identify with the ego and its sin, guilt and fear; rather than the Holy Spirit and its forgiveness, innocence and love.

Seeing with Him will show you that all meaning, including yours, comes not from double vision, but from the gentle fusing of everything into one meaning, one emotion and one purpose. God has one purpose which He shares with you. The single vision which the Holy Spirit offers you will bring this oneness to your mind with clarity and
brightness so intense you could not wish, for all
the world, not to accept what God would have you
have. (R30 p289 VII.7.5-7)

The one meaning, one emotion and one purpose for
our lives is love. Our one function in the world is to
accept the Atonement for ourselves, which is to
accept the love of God for ourselves.

You on earth have no conception of limitlessness,
for the world you seem to live in is a world of
limits. In this world, it is not true that anything
without order of difficulty can occur. The miracle,
therefore, has a unique function, and is motivated
by a unique Teacher Who brings the laws of
another world to this one. The miracle is the one
thing you can do that transcends order, being
based not on differences but on equality.
(R31 p293 X.2.4-7)

The "laws of another world" are the Atonement and
the miracle. There is no order of difficulty in
miracles because there is no hierarchy of illusions.
There is one illusion, separation; and one solution,
the Atonement.

The miracle offers exactly the same response to
every call for help. It does not judge the call. It
merely recognizes what it is, and answers
accordingly. It does not consider which call is
louder or greater or more important. You may
wonder how you who are still bound to judgment
can be asked to do that which requires no
judgment of your own. The answer is very simple.
The power of God, and not of you, engenders
miracles. The miracle itself is but the witness that
you have the power of God in you. That is the
reason why the miracle gives equal blessing to all
who share in it, and that is also why everyone
shares in it. The power of God is limitless. And
being always maximal, it offers everything to
every call from anyone. There is no order of
difficulty here. A call for help is given help. The
only judgment involved is the Holy Spirit's one
division into two categories; one of love, and the
other the call for love. You cannot safely make
this division, for you are much too confused either
to recognize love, or to believe that everything else
is nothing but a call for love.
(R32 p294 X.6.3-15;X.7.1-2)

Looking through the eyes of the ego we see division
everywhere. We can see wholeness only through the
eyes of the Holy Spirit. We all share the same true
Identity as Christ, and we share the same illusory
identity as the ego.

Every interpretation you would lay upon a
brother is senseless. Let the Holy Spirit show him
to you, and teach you both his love and his call for
love. Neither his mind nor yours holds more than
these two orders of thought. The miracle is the
recognition that this is true. Where there is love,
your brother must give it to you because of what
it is. But where there is a call for love, you must
give it because of what you are.
(R33 p295-296 X.11.4-6;X.12.1-3)

Where there is no love, put it, and there you will find
it. The expressions of fear, anger, and hate are calls
for love. Everything is either an expression of love or
a call for love. Therefore your response is always the
same: love.

It is important to understand the difference between
form and content.

You are too bound to form, and not to content.
What you consider content is not content at all. It
is merely form, and nothing else. For you do not
respond to what a brother really offers you, but
only to the particular perception of his offering by
which the ego judges it.

Underlying all attack is fear. Attack is the form; fear
is the content. When we look on our brothers'
behavior through the eyes of the ego's perception, we
see our distorted projections in form. When we look
upon our brothers with the vision of the Holy Spirit
we see our brothers' behavior as either an expression
of love or a call for love. To the Holy Spirit, attack is
a projection of guilt and fear, and is a call for love.

The ego is incapable of understanding content,
and is totally unconcerned with it. To the ego, if
the form is acceptable the content must be.
Otherwise it will attack the form. If you believe
you understand something of the "dynamics" of
the ego, let me assure you that you understand
nothing of it. For of yourself you could not
understand it. The study of the ego is not the
study of the mind. In fact, the ego enjoys studying
itself, and thoroughly approves the undertakings
of students who would "analyze" it, thus approving its importance. Yet they but study form with meaningless content. For their teacher is senseless, though careful to conceal this fact behind impressive sounding words, but which lack any consistent sense when they are put together. (R34 p294 X.7.3-6;X.8)

The study of the ego is not the study of the mind because the ego is the deluded form of the wrong mind. To study the mind is to be aware of the decision making part of the mind whose choice determines the content of the mind: the Holy Spirit's love or the ego's hate. Analyzing the ego is to study the form with "meaningless content" because the content of the ego is hate arising from the belief in separation from God, which never happened and is therefore meaningless.

Everyone has a special part to play in the Atonement, but the message given to each one is always the same; God's Son is guiltless. Each one teaches the message differently, and learns it differently. (R35 p282 V.2.1-2)

There is no hierarchy in our functions in the world. We each have one function in the world: to accept the Atonement for ourselves. No one is more spiritual than anyone else. Whether you are a preacher or a truck driver, your function is to accept the Atonement for yourself, which means to accept the love of God for yourself and as yourself. Acceptance of the Atonement is facilitated with the help of the Holy Spirit through forgiveness of yourself and others.

Teachers of innocence, each in his own way, have joined together, taking their part in the unified curriculum of the Atonement. There is no unity of learning goals apart from this. There is no conflict in this curriculum, which has one aim however it is taught. Each effort made on its behalf is offered for the single purpose of release from guilt, to the eternal glory of God and His creation. (R36 p283 V.6.1-4)

Our role in the world is to be the reflection of the choice for love instead of hate; innocence instead of guilt; shared interests instead of separate interests; atonement instead of separation; light instead of darkness. The forms may differ, but the content is always love.

And now we turn to the theme of forgiveness.

Like you, the Holy Spirit did not make truth. Like God, He knows it to be true. He brings the light of truth into the darkness, and lets it shine on you. And as it shines your brothers see it, and realizing that this light is not what you have made, they see in you more than you see. They will be happy learners of the lesson this light brings to them, because it teaches them release from nothing and from all the works of nothing. The heavy chains that seem to bind them to despair they do not see as nothing, until you bring the light to them. And then they see the chains have disappeared, and so they must have been nothing. And you will see it with them. (R37 p273 II.4.1-8)

The miracle teaches you that you have chosen guiltlessness, freedom and joy. It is not a cause, but an effect. It is the natural result of choosing right, attesting to your happiness that comes from choosing to be free of guilt. Everyone you offer healing to returns it. Everyone you attack keeps it and cherishes it by holding it against you. Whether he does this or does it not will make no difference; you will think he does. It is impossible to offer what you do not want without this penalty. (R38 p275 III.5.1-7)

The miracle is an effect of our having chosen for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. Our choice is the cause, the miracle is the effect.

The joy of learning that darkness has no power over the Son of God is the happy lesson the Holy Spirit teaches, and would have you teach with Him. It is His joy to teach it, as it will be yours. The way to teach this simple lesson is merely this: Guiltlessness is invulnerability. Therefore, make your invulnerability manifest to everyone. Teach him that, whatever he may try to do to you, your perfect freedom from the belief that you can be harmed shows him that he is guiltless. He can do nothing that can hurt you, and by refusing to allow him to think he can, you teach him that the Atonement, which you have accepted for yourself, is also his. There is nothing to forgive. No one can hurt the Son of God. His guilt is wholly without cause, and being without cause, cannot exist. (R39 p275-276 III.6.6-7;III.7)
Notes on Chapter Fourteen – Teaching for Truth

The previous passage presents the essence of true forgiveness, and is worth reading again. Because you cannot harm me, your sin against me had no effect. What has no effect is not a cause. What is not a cause does not exist. There is nothing to forgive, because there is no sin. This is the essence of true forgiveness. Perfect love sees only perfect love — this is the vision of Christ. This is the Atonement. This is the miracle. This is the truth.

Yet truth is offered first to be received, even as God gave it first to His Son. The first in time means nothing, but the First in eternity is God the Father, Who is both First and One. Beyond the First there is no other, for there is no order, no second or third, and nothing but the First. You who belong to the First Cause, created by Him like unto Himself and part of Him, are more than merely guiltless. The state of guiltlessness is only the condition in which what is not there has been removed from the disordered mind that thought it was. This state, and only this, must you attain, with God beside you.

(R40 p279 IV.1.6-8; IV.2.1-3)

The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are One. There is no separation. You are one with the Father through the Holy Spirit.

When you have let all that obscured the truth in your most holy mind be undone for you, and therefore stand in grace before your Father, He will give Himself to you as He has always done.

(R41 p279 IV.3.1)

Ask not to be forgiven, for this has already been accomplished. Ask, rather, to learn how to forgive, and to restore what always was to your unforgiving mind. Atonement becomes real and visible to those who use it. On earth this is your only function, and you must learn that it is all you want to learn. You will feel guilty till you learn this. For in the end, whatever form it takes, your guilt arises from your failure to fulfill your function in God's Mind with all of yours. Can you escape this guilt by failing to fulfill your function here? (R42 p279 IV.3.4-10)

We learn how to forgive by asking the Holy Spirit to help us bring all of our darkness to His light where it is forgiven and dissolved.

Fail not in your function of loving in a loveless place made out of darkness and deceit, for thus are darkness and deceit undone.

(R43 p280 IV.4.10)

The "loveless place" is the world we made from our projection of sin, guilt and fear.

Creation is the natural extension of perfect purity. Your only calling here is to devote yourself, with active willingness, to the denial of guilt in all its forms. To accuse is not to understand.

(R44 p282 V.3.4-6)

Our function here is to actively deny the appearance of separation and accept the Atonement. Love is a natural extension of God through us when we are not obstructing His love with our guilt. The extension of love is God's function not ours.

The inheritance of the Kingdom is the right of God's Son, given him in his creation. Do not try to steal it from him, or you will ask for guilt and will experience it. Protect his purity from every thought that would steal it away and keep it from his sight. Bring innocence to light, in answer to the call of the Atonement. Never allow purity to remain hidden, but shine away the heavy veils of guilt within which the Son of God has hidden himself from his own sight. We are all joined in the Atonement here, and nothing else can unite us in this world. So will the world of separation slip away, and full communication be restored between the Father and the Son.

(R45 p282 -283 V.4-5.1-2)

Our shared function, which unites us all in the world we made, is to accept the Atonement for ourselves, which is to awaken from our nightmare of separation.

In this world you can become a spotless mirror, in which the Holiness of your Creator shines forth from you to all around you. You can reflect Heaven here. Yet no reflections of the images of other gods must dim the mirror that would hold God's reflection in it. Earth can reflect Heaven or hell; God or the ego. You need but leave the mirror clean and clear of all the images of hidden darkness you have drawn upon it. God will shine upon it of Himself. Only the clear reflection of Himself can be perceived upon it.

(R46 p292 IX.5)
Our one and only function is to reflect the love of Heaven by accepting the Atonement for ourselves. We keep the mirror of our mind clean by being free of sin and guilt. We free ourselves of sin and guilt by bringing them to the love of the Holy Spirit for the cleansing power of forgiveness.

Clean but the mirror, and the message that shines forth from what the mirror holds out for everyone to see, no one can fail to understand. (R47 p292 IX.6.5)

Could you but realize for a single instant the power of healing that the reflection of God, shining in you, can bring to all the world, you could not wait to make the mirror of your mind clean to receive the image of the holiness that heals the world. (R48 p292 IX.7.1)

The response of holiness to any form of error is always the same. There is no contradiction in what holiness calls forth. Its one response is healing, without regard for what is brought to it. Those who have learned to offer only healing, because of the reflection of holiness in them, are ready at last for Heaven. There, holiness is not a reflection, but rather the actual condition of what was but reflected to them here. God is no image, and His creations, as part of Him, hold Him in them in truth. They do not merely reflect truth, for they are truth. (R49 p292 IX.8)

Love, Holiness and Truth are not of the world, but they are reflected here through the innocent mind, and realized in the holy instant.

In the holy meeting place are joined the Father and His creations, and the creations of His Son with Them together. There is one link that joins Them all together, holding Them in the oneness out of which creation happens. The link with which the Father joins Himself to those He gives the power to create can never be dissolved. Heaven itself is union with all of creation, and with its one Creator. (R50 p290 VIII.4.9-10; VIII.5.1-2)

God's Son will always be indivisible. As we are held as one in God, so do we learn as one in Him. God's Teacher is as like to His Creator as is His Son, and through His Teacher does God proclaim His Oneness and His Son's. Listen in silence, and do not raise your voice against Him. For He teaches the miracle of oneness, and before His lesson division disappears. Teach like Him here, and you will remember that you have always created like your Father. The miracle of creation has never ceased, having the holy stamp of immortality upon it. This is the Will of God for all creation, and all creation joins in willing this. (R51 p299 XI.11)

We teach what we learn, and we learn what we teach. By learning the truth of the Atonement for ourselves, we teach it by being a reflection of God's perfect love in the world.

End Chapter Fourteen
CHAPTER FIFTEEN
THE HOLY INSTANT

Main Themes: This chapter addresses two major themes in the Course: Special relationships and the holy instant.

Introduction: To understand the dynamics of the ego, it is important to understand what the ego is reacting against — the Atonement. The special relationship is the culmination of the ego's strategy to keep us distracted in the body and world, out of our mind where we could choose the Atonement instead of the ego. Once again we start by looking at the Atonement principle which states that the separation from God's unconditional love never happened.

• When God gave Himself to you in your creation, He established you as host to Him forever. He has not left you, and you have not left Him. All your attempts to deny His magnitude, and make His Son hostage to the ego, cannot make little whom God has joined with Him. (Reference 1 p307 III.5.4-6)

The magnitude of our Identity as Christ is not lost even as we choose to identify with the littleness of the ego.

Think but an instant on this: God gave the Sonship to you, to ensure your perfect creation. This was His gift, for as He withheld Himself not from you, He withheld not His creation. Nothing that ever was created but is yours. Your relationships are with the universe. And this universe, being of God, is far beyond the petty sum of all the separate bodies you perceive. For all its parts are joined in God through Christ, where they become like to their Father. Christ knows of no separation from His Father, Who is His one relationship, in which He gives as His Father gives to Him. (R2 p321 VIII.4)

In the passage above, the "universe" is the universe of Spirit or Christ, not the physical universe. Our one true relationship is with God in Spirit as Christ, His one Son. Our special love and hate relationships are of the ego and are projections of sin, guilt and fear.

For God created the only relationship that has meaning, and that is His relationship with you. (R3 p322 VIII.6.6)

Our special love and hate relationships are not true relationships, but projections of the ego. Our only true relationship is with God, as Christ in Spirit. Our relationship with God is eternal, changeless and one.

Now we will address the ego's strategy to maintain its special separate existence, and deny the oneness of spirit by making a world of special relationships that never satisfy us, and keep us ignorant of our one true relationship with God.

It is impossible to recognize perfect communication [the oneness of God's love and Christ] while breaking communication holds value to you. Ask yourself honestly, "Would I want to have perfect communication, and am I wholly willing to let everything that interferes with it go forever?" If the answer is no, then the Holy Spirit's readiness to give it to you is not enough to make it yours, for you are not ready to share it with Him. And it cannot come into a mind that has decided to oppose it. For the holy instant is given and received with equal willingness, being the acceptance of the single Will that governs all thought. (R4 p311 IV.8.2-6)

Our belief in separation from the love of God is what "breaks communication" with Him, and is what we must be willing to let go. Our special love and hate relationships with other people in the world serve to maintain the broken communication with the one source of true love in Heaven.

If you would but let the Holy Spirit tell you of the Love of God for you, and the need your creations have to be with you forever, you would experience the attraction of the eternal. No one can hear Him speak of this and long remain willing to linger here. For it is your will to be in Heaven, where you are complete and quiet, in such sure and loving relationships that any limit is impossible. (R5 p323 IX.5.1-3)

Seeking for love in other people is a futile and fruitless endeavor. We made other people as a projection of our sin and guilt. There is no love in them. Love is found only in our relationship with God. The ego loves when we seek for love in other people because we are following the ego's edict to
"seek but do not find!" When we find the love of God in our mind, the ego is no more.

But this you must remember; the attraction of guilt opposes the attraction of God. His attraction for you remains unlimited, but because your power, being His, is as great as His, you can turn away from love. What you invest in guilt you withdraw from God. And your sight grows weak and dim and limited, for you have attempted to separate the Father from the Son, and limit Their communication. (R6 p323 IX.6.2-5)

As Sons of God we have the power to choose to identify with the ego and its guilt, or the Holy Spirit and its love. But our true Identity remains unaffected. Love is eternal. Believing we have separated from God by identifying with the ego and its guilt, we fear God's punishment and are afraid of Him.

How fearful, then, has God become to you, and how great a sacrifice do you believe His Love demands! For total love would demand total sacrifice. And so the ego seems to demand less of you than God, and of the two is judged as the lesser of two evils, one to be feared a little, perhaps, but the other to be destroyed. For you see love as destructive, and your only question is who is to be destroyed, you or another? You seek to answer this question in your special relationships, in which you seem to be both destroyer and destroyed in part, but able to be neither completely. And this you think saves you from God, Whose total Love would completely destroy you. (R7 p326 X.7)

To the ego, love is vicious because when love is betrayed it strikes back demanding justice for the evil perpetrated against it. Total love of God is the total sacrifice of the ego's special love and is perceived by the ego as death; and this is the prototype of our relationships in the world. Rather than face death by accepting the unconditional love of God, the ego seeks special love from other people in the world the ego made.

For if God would demand total sacrifice of you, it seems safer to project Him outward and away from you, and not be host to Him. To Him you ascribed the ego's treachery, inviting it to take His place to protect you from Him. (R8 p326 X.8.4-5)

First we project our rejection and betrayal of God onto Him, and accuse Him of rejecting and betraying us. Then we make a world of people and accuse them of the same. This is the world we have made of special love and special hate, of kill or be killed, of victims and victimizers; the battleground of good and evil, love and hate.

You who believe that sacrifice is love must learn that sacrifice is separation from love. For sacrifice brings guilt as surely as love brings peace. Guilt is the condition of sacrifice, as peace is the condition for the awareness of your relationship with God. Through guilt you exclude your Father and your brothers from yourself. (R9 p327-328 XI.4.1-4)

The ego's love is based on guilt and sacrifice. When I get what I want from you, that is love. When you get what you want from me, that is love. When our "needs" dovetail that is the ego's version of the marriage made in heaven. The ego's way of demonstrating love is through sacrifice. We hope that through sacrifice we will atone for our sin and guilt over our selfish desire for special love. To the ego, love is always exclusive. To the Holy Spirit, love is always inclusive.

Guilt says I have sinned against God, pushed Him away, and crucified Christ Who is now fragmented into billions of pieces (people), and I need those people to serve as depositories for my guilt. I project my guilt onto them, sacrificing their innocence so I can have my innocence.

And who can try to resolve the "conflict" of Heaven and hell in him by casting Heaven out and giving it the attributes of hell, without experiencing himself as incomplete and lonely? As long as you perceive the body as your reality, so long will you perceive yourself as lonely and deprived. And so long will you also perceive yourself as a victim of sacrifice, justified in sacrificing others. (R10 p328 XI.4.8;XI.5.1-2)

When we choose to believe we are bodies separate from the eternal love of God, we find ourselves incomplete and alone in a lonely world. So we seek to fill our emptiness with love from other people. When love is not given to us from others, we feel we are deprived victims, now justified in depriving and victimizing them.
Deprivation breeds attack, being the belief that attack is justified. And as long as you would retain the deprivation, attack becomes salvation and sacrifice becomes love. So is it that, in all your seeking for love, you seek for sacrifice and find it. Yet you find not love. It is impossible to deny what love is and still recognize it. The meaning of love lies in what you have cast outside yourself, and it has no meaning apart from you. It is what you prefer to keep that has no meaning, while all that you would keep away holds all the meaning of the universe, and holds the universe together in its meaning. Unless the universe were joined in you it would be apart from God, and to be without Him is to be without meaning.

(R11 p328 XI.5.6-7;XI.6)

Love is only of God. Love is not in other people or the world. Love is Spirit. Love is in the Mind. Love is perfect oneness. We made the world so true love would be hidden, because to find true love means the end of the special love of the ego, which is not love but guilt, fear and hate.

Our magnitude is in our Identity with Christ and our oneness with God. Our littleness is in our identity with the ego and separation from God. It is our littleness that we worship and defend. Now we will begin to take a closer look at our special relationships.

Be not content with littleness. But be sure you understand what littleness is, and why you could never be content with it. Littleness is the offering you give yourself. You offer this in place of magnitude, and you accept it. Everything in this world is little because it is a world made out of littleness, in the strange belief that littleness can content you. When you strive for anything in this world in the belief that it will bring you peace, you are belittling yourself and blinding yourself to glory. (R12 p306 III.1.1-6)

The entire world you made is made of your littleness. True magnitude, beauty and brilliance are not of the world, but are reflections of God's magnitude, beauty and brilliance in a clear mind. We seek love in the world because we have clouded our mind and forgotten the true source of love which is in our Identity with Christ.

When we identify with our littleness, we need allies to make us feel strong; we need religions, armies, and weapons to defend our littleness. Special love is conditional and limited to only a few. True love is unconditional and all inclusive. Special relationships (love and hate) are the weapons we use to defend our littleness against the magnitude of the truth of who we are as Christ.

We have said that to limit love to part of the Sonship is to bring guilt into your relationships, and thus make them unreal. If you seek to separate out certain aspects of the totality and look to them to meet your imagined needs, you are attempting to use separation to save you. How, then, could guilt not enter? For separation is the source of guilt, and to appeal to it for salvation is to believe you are alone. To be alone is to be guilty. For to experience yourself as alone is to deny the Oneness of the Father and His Son, and thus to attack reality.

You cannot love parts of reality and understand what love means. If you would love unlike to God, Who knows no special love, how can you understand it? To believe that special relationships, with special love, can offer you salvation is the belief that separation is salvation. For it is the complete equality of the Atonement in which salvation lies. How can you decide that special aspects of the Sonship can give you more than others? The past has taught you this. Yet the holy instant teaches you it is not so.

(R13 p312 V.2.2-7;V.3)

Any relationship you would substitute for another has not been offered to the Holy Spirit for His use. There is no substitute for love. If you would attempt to substitute one aspect of love for another, you have placed less value on one and more on the other. You have not only separated them, but you have also judged against both. Yet you had judged against yourself first, or you would never have imagined that you needed your brothers as they were not. Unless you had seen yourself as without love, you could not have judged them so like you in lack. (R14 p313 V.6)

True love is all inclusive. If we value one member of the Sonship more than another we have attempted to divide love which cannot be divided, as it is one. The all inclusive nature of love is known and extended in
the mind (which is content); not through the body
and the world (which is form). We cannot share love
equally with all bodies in the world of time, space
and form; but we can do so in the mind as we realize
we are all one in the Mind of Christ. By offering all
our special relationships to the Holy Spirit, He uses
them to teach us of the love of God — which is our
true Identity.

If you seek for satisfaction in gratifying your
needs as you perceive them, you must believe that
strength comes from another, and what you gain
he loses. Someone must always lose if you perceive
yourself as weak. (R15 p315 VI.3.3-4)

Beyond the poor attraction of the special love
relationship, and always obscured by it, is the
powerful attraction of the Father for His Son.
There is no other love that can satisfy you,
because there is no other love. This is the only
love that is fully given and fully returned. Being
complete, it asks nothing. Being wholly pure,
everyone joined in it has everything. This is not
the basis for any relationship in which the ego
enters. For every relationship on which the ego
embarks is special. (R16 p317 VII.1)

All relationships of the ego are purely selfish. There
is no love in relationships of the ego. There is no
love between two people in the world. Love is of
God only. Relationships between egos are born, live
and die in guilt, fear and hate. There is no "I" or
"you" in love. "I love you" is a lie. "I am afraid of
you" is the truth.

We said before that the ego attempts to maintain
and increase guilt, but in such a way that you do
not recognize what it would do to you. For it is the
ego's fundamental doctrine that what you do to
others you have escaped. The ego wishes no one
well. Yet its survival depends on your belief that
you are exempt from its evil intentions. It
counsels, therefore, that if you are host to it, it will
enable you to direct its anger outward, thus
protecting you. And thus it embarks on an
endless, unrewarding chain of special
relationships, forged out of anger and dedicated
to but one insane belief; that the more anger you
invest outside yourself, the safer you become.
(R17 p317 VII.4)

Until we are aware of the true source of perfect love
which is God in Heaven, we will continue to seek for
special love in this hell we made and call the world.
Love that is freely given and shared is unknowable in
the world you made.

In one way or another, every relationship the ego
makes is based on the idea that by sacrificing
itself, it becomes bigger. The "sacrifice," which it
regards as purification, is actually the root of its
bitter resentment. For it would prefer to attack
directly, and avoid delaying what it really wants.
Yet the ego acknowledges "reality" as it sees it,
and recognizes that no one could interpret direct
attack as love. Yet to make guilty is direct attack,
although it does not seem to be. For the guilty
expect attack, and having asked for it they are
attracted to it.

In such insane relationships, the attraction of
what you do not want seems to be much stronger
than the attraction of what you do want. For each
one thinks that he has sacrificed something to the
other, and hates him for it. Yet this is what he
thinks he wants. He is not in love with the other at
all. He merely believes he is in love with sacrifice.
And for this sacrifice, which he demands of
himself, he demands that the other accept the
guilt and sacrifice himself as well.
(R18 p318 VII.6-7.1-6)

Suffering and sacrifice are the gifts with which
the ego would "bless" all unions. And those who
are united at its altar accept suffering and
sacrifice as the price of union. In their angry
alliances, born of the fear of loneliness and yet
dedicated to the continuance of loneliness, each
seeks relief from guilt by increasing it in the
other. For each believes that this decreases guilt
in him. The other seems always to be attacking
and wounding him, perhaps in little ways,
perhaps "unconsciously," yet never without
demand of sacrifice. The fury of those joined at
the ego's altar far exceeds your awareness of it.
For what the ego really wants you do not realize.

The ego really wants to murder, but represses, denies
and projects its murderous intent onto others in the
world it made. This is why we revel in seeking and
finding guilty, evil doers in the world and bringing
them to "justice." By denying our own selfishness
and guilt, and projecting them onto the "selfish evil-
doers” in the world, we are able to maintain our special separate existence and present ourselves to the world with the face of innocence and purity. But what we project from darkness, remains hidden in darkness and our suffering continues.

Whenever you are angry, you can be sure that you have formed a special relationship which the ego has "blessed," for anger is its blessing. Anger takes many forms, but it cannot long deceive those who will learn that love brings no guilt at all, and what brings guilt cannot be love and must be anger. All anger is nothing more than an attempt to make someone feel guilty, and this attempt is the only basis the ego accepts for special relationships. (R19 p319 VII.9; VII.10.1-3)

The ego makes time by projecting sin, guilt and fear onto the world. Sin becomes the past, guilt becomes the present, and fear becomes the future. The original sin, the belief in separation from God, is the birth of the ego's linear time. As guilt is tied to sin and fear, the ego ensures we remain prisoners in an eternal state of separation and hell.

And all the waste that time seems to bring with it is due but to your identification with the ego, which uses time to support its belief in destruction. The ego, like the Holy Spirit, uses time to convince you of the inevitability of the goal and end of teaching. To the ego the goal is death, which is its end. But to the Holy Spirit the goal is life, which has no end. (R20 p301 I.2.3-9)

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 them escape. 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 of hell can believe that punishment will end in peace. (R21 p302 I.6)

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, demanding vengeance forever. (R22 p302 1.7.6-7)

By tying guilt to sin and fear, the ego projects itself eternally in linear time, ensuring its existence even after death — in Heaven for the innocent (the sheep); and in hell for the guilty (the goats). Once we identify with the ego, the only way out is to change our mind and choose the Holy Spirit in the holy instant instead.

Littleness and glory are the choices open to your striving and your vigilance. You will always choose one at the expense of the other. Yet what you do not realize, each time you choose, is that your choice is your evaluation of yourself. Choose littleness and you will not have peace, for you will have judged yourself unworthy of it. And whatever you offer as a substitute is much too poor a gift to satisfy you. It is essential that you accept the fact, and accept it gladly, that there is no form of littleness that can ever content you. You are free to try as many as you wish, but all you will be doing is to delay your homecoming. For you will be content only in magnitude, which is your home. (R23 p306 III.1.7;III.2)

You who have sought and found littleness, remember this: Every decision you make stems from what you think you are, and represents the value that you put upon yourself. Believe the little can content you, and by limiting yourself you will not be satisfied. For your function is not little, and it is only by finding your function and fulfilling it that you can escape from littleness. (R24 p307 III.3.3-5)

Our function in the world is to accept the Atonement for ourselves through forgiveness, which reminds us of our function in Heaven which is to create through the extension of love. By looking with the Holy Spirit at the dynamics of the ego we become aware of its insanity, and realize we can choose for the sanity of the Holy Spirit instead.

You must choose between total freedom and total bondage, for there are no alternatives but these.
You have tried many compromises in the attempt to avoid recognizing the one decision you must make. And yet it is the recognition of the decision, just as it is, that makes the decision so easy. Salvation is simple, being of God, and therefore very easy to understand. Do not try to project it from you and see it outside yourself. In you are both the question and the answer; the demand for sacrifice and the peace of God. (R25 p326 X.9.3-8)

The "you" who chooses is the decision making part of your mind. By watching the ego in your daily life, without judgment, you come to realize there must be a better way, and you do have a choice as to whom you identify with. In your daily life observe how often you choose to identify with the selfishness, guilt, anger and conflict of the ego, and how much you suffer because of it.

Again we will highlight the importance of being aware of and watching the ego in action in our daily experience.

The necessary condition for the holy instant does not require that you have no thoughts that are not pure. But it does require that you have none that you would keep. Innocence is not of your making. It is given you the instant you would have it. Atonement would not be if there were no need for it. You will not be able to accept perfect communication as long as you would hide it from yourself. For what you would hide is hidden from you. In your practice, then, try only to be vigilant against deception, and seek not to protect the thoughts you would keep to yourself. Let the Holy Spirit's purity shine them away, and bring all your awareness to the readiness for purity He offers you. Thus will He make you ready to acknowledge that you are host to God, and hostage to no one and to nothing. (R26 p311 IV.9)

Without judging yourself, be honest and aware of all of your selfishness, anger, hostility, hate, guilt and fear; and give it to the Holy Spirit so His light will shine it away. You cannot hide any thought or feeling from the light of truth, or you will remain a prisoner in your own darkness.

The sick attraction of guilt must be recognized for what it is. For having been made real to you, it is essential to look at it clearly, and by withdrawing your investment in it, to learn to let it go. No one would choose to let go what he believes has value. Yet the attraction of guilt has value to you only because you have not looked at what it is, and have judged it completely in the dark. As we bring it to light, your only question will be why it was you ever wanted it. You have nothing to lose by looking open-eyed, for ugliness such as this belongs not in your holy mind. This host of God can have no real investment here. (R27 p317 VII.3)

We think guilt is wonderful, as long as we can see it in others, not ourselves. We are not asked to overcome guilt, change it or modify it; we are asked to be fully aware of guilt by looking at it with the Holy Spirit so we will realize the insanity of the dynamics of the ego, and be willing to let it go. Your entire world is projected as part of the ego's strategy to avoid looking at your guilt. When you look at your guilt it dissolves, when you avoid it, it becomes the hell you call your life.

It is this chain [of unrewarding special relationships] that binds the Son of God to guilt, and it is this chain the Holy Spirit would remove from his holy mind. For the chain of savagery belongs not around the chosen host of God, who cannot make himself host to the ego. In the name of his release, and in the Name of Him Who would release him, let us look more closely at the relationships the ego contrives, and let the Holy Spirit judge them truly. For it is certain that if you will look at them, you will offer them gladly to Him. What He can make of them you do not know, but you will become willing to find out, if you are willing first to perceive what you have made of them. (R28 p318 VII.5)

Our task is but to continue, as fast as possible, the necessary process of looking straight at all the interference and seeing it exactly as it is. For it is impossible to recognize as wholly without gratification what you think you want. (R29 p322 IX.2.1-2)

To be free of the suffering, fear, anxiety, hostility and savagery of the life we have made for ourselves, we must look at what we have made over and over again until we realize what a tragedy and disaster our lives have become. We must bring all of our darkness to the light so it can be shined away. The purpose of this Course is to help us bring our
darkness to the light of God's love. If we refuse to bring all of our darkness to the light, we will continue to suffer.

**Do not try longer to keep apart your thoughts and the Thought that has been given you. When they are brought together and perceived where they are, the choice between them is nothing more than a gentle awakening, and as simple as opening your eyes to daylight when you have no more need of sleep.** (R30 p327 XI.1.5-6)

*Our experience of linear time, which was made by the ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear, is undone in the holy instant. As we bring the darkness of our guilt to the light of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, linear time comes to an end as the eternal love of Christ is reflected in the holy instant.*

**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, un tarnished 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 immortality and joy are now.**

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 was born again you will go forth in time without fear, and with no sense of change with time. (R31 p302-303 I.8-9)

In the Text the term "holy instant" is used sometimes as the final instant before God takes us into Heaven; and other times it is referred to as one of a series of holy instants that lead up to the final holy instant. In the holy instant there is no ego, no body, no guilt, no separation — there is only the reflection of Heaven's love and nothing else. The first birth of the ego was in the moment we chose to believe we were separate from God. We are "born again" when we choose to identify with the Holy Spirit in the holy instant.

**If you are tempted to be dispirited by thinking 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 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.** (R32 p303 I.11)

Who would you be without your guilt and fear, your anger, viciousness, victimhood, sacrifice and specialness? No one! That is your fear.

**How long is an instant? It is as short for your brother 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.** (R33 p304 I.13.1-4)

**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.** (R34 p304 I.14)

**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.** (R35 p304 I.15.10-11)

Our role is to be aware of the darkness within us and bring it to the light. The light shines through the Holy Spirit and through us of its own. The extension of light and love is not our doing; it is of the Father. The results of the miracle of healing, forgiveness, and the Atonement are of God; not us.

**How long can it take to be where God would have you? For you are where you have forever been
and will forever be. All that you have, you have forever. The blessed instant reaches out to encompass time, as God extends Himself to encompass you. You who have spent days, hours and even years in chaining your brothers to your ego in an attempt to support it and uphold its weakness, do not perceive the Source of strength. In this holy instant you will unchain all your brothers, and refuse to support either their weakness or your own. You do not realize how much you have misused your brothers by seeing them as sources of ego support. As a result, they witness to the ego in your perception, and seem to provide reasons for not letting it go.

(R36 p305 II.3-4.1-2)

The next several passages address the importance of practicing the holy instant, as it facilitates our release from the ego's identification with linear time.

The holy instant has not yet happened to you. Yet it will, and you will recognize it with perfect certainty. No gift of God is recognized in any other way. You can practice the mechanics of the holy instant, and will learn much from doing so.

(R37 p305-306 II.5.1-4)

Start now to practice your little part in separating out the holy instant. You will receive very specific instructions as you go along. To learn to separate out this single second, and to experience it as timeless, is to begin to experience yourself as not separate. Fear not that you will not be given help in this. God's Teacher and His lesson will support your strength. It is only your weakness that will depart from you in this practice, for it is the practice of the power of God in you. Use it but for one instant, and you will never deny it again. Who can deny the Presence of what the universe bows to, in appreciation and gladness? Before the recognition of the universe that witnesses to It, your doubts must disappear.

(R38 p306 II.6)

This course is not beyond immediate learning, unless you believe that what God wills takes time.

(R39 p309 IV.1.1)

The reason this course is simple is that truth is simple. Complexity is of the ego, and is nothing more than the ego's attempt to obscure the obvious.

(R40 p310 IV.6.1-2)

And this means only that you would rather delay the recognition that His Will is so. The holy instant is this instant and every instant. The one you want it to be it is. The one you would not have it be is lost to you. You must decide when it is. Delay it not. For beyond the past and future, where you will not find it, it stands in shimmering readiness for your acceptance. Yet you cannot bring it into glad awareness while you do not want it, for it holds the whole release from littleness.

(R41 p309 IV.1.2-9)

The holy instant is the Holy Spirit's most useful learning device for teaching you love's meaning. For its purpose is to suspend judgment entirely. Judgment always rests on the past, for past experience is the basis on which you judge. Judgment becomes impossible without the past, for without it you do not understand anything. You would make no attempt to judge, because it would be quite apparent to you that you do not understand what anything means. You are afraid of this because you believe that without the ego, all would be chaos. Yet I assure you that without the ego, all would be love.

(R42 p312 V.1)

Now we turn our attention to the holy relationship. The holy relationship is the special relationship as viewed through the holy instant. The holy relationship is not between two people or two bodies, but is the state of mind of one who, in the holy instant, sees the separation, sin, guilt and fear of the special relationship as healed by the Holy Spirit.

In His function as Interpreter of what you made, the Holy Spirit uses special relationships, which you have chosen to support the ego, as learning experiences that point to truth. Under His teaching, every relationship becomes a lesson in love. The Holy Spirit knows no one is special. Yet He also perceives that you have made special relationships, which He would purify and not let you destroy. However unholy the reason you made them may be, He can translate them into holiness by removing as much fear as you will let Him. You can place any relationship under His care and be sure that it will not result in pain, if you offer Him your willingness to have it serve no need but His. All the guilt in it arises from your use of it. All the love from His. Do not, then, be afraid to let go your imagined needs, which would
destroy the relationship. Your only need is His. (R43 p312-313 V.4.5-6; V.5)

The term "holy relationship" refers to the content (which is love) of the relationship in the mind, not the form of the relationship (which is of the body and world).

Everyone on earth has formed special relationships, and although this is not so in Heaven, the Holy Spirit knows how to bring a touch of Heaven to them here. In the holy instant no one is special, for your personal needs intrude on no one to make your brothers seem different. Without the values from the past, you would see them all the same and like yourself. Nor would you see any separation between yourself and them. In the holy instant, you see in each relationship what it will be when you perceive only the present.

God knows you now. He remembers nothing, having always known you exactly as He knows you now. The holy instant reflects His knowing by bringing all perception out of the past, thus removing the frame of reference you have built by which to judge your brothers. Once this is gone, the Holy Spirit substitutes His frame of reference for it. His frame of reference is simply God. The Holy Spirit's timelessness lies only here. For in the holy instant, free of the past, you see that love is in you, and you have no need to look without and snatch love guiltily from where you thought it was. (R44 p313-314 V.8-9)

In the holy instant nothing happens that has not always been. Only the veil that has been drawn across reality is lifted. Nothing has changed. Yet the awareness of changelessness comes swiftly as the veil of time is pushed aside. (R45 p315-316 VI.1.6.1-4)

In the holy instant God is remembered, and the language of communication with all your brothers is remembered with Him. For communication is remembered together, as is truth. There is no exclusion in the holy instant because the past is gone, and with it goes the whole basis for exclusion. Without its source exclusion vanishes. And this permits your Source, and that of all your brothers, to replace it in your awareness. (R46 p316 VI.8)

When the body ceases to attract you, and when you place no value on it as a means of getting anything, then there will be no interference in communication and your thoughts will be as free as God's. As you let the Holy Spirit teach you how to use the body only for purposes of communication, and renounce its use for separation and attack which the ego sees in it, you will learn you have no need of a body at all. In the holy instant there are no bodies, and you experience only the attraction of God. Accepting it as undivided you join Him wholly, in an instant, for you would place no limits on your union with Him. The reality of this relationship becomes the only truth that you could ever want. All truth is here. (R47 p324 IX.7)

Jesus and the Holy Spirit serve as our teachers who help us bring our darkness to the light of Their love. In the holy instant we realize our magnitude in our oneness with Them and all our brothers.

I stand within the holy instant, as clear as you would have me. And the extent to which you learn to accept me is the measure of the time in which the holy instant will be yours. I call to you to make the holy instant yours at once, for the release from littleness in the mind of the host of God depends on willingness, and not on time. (R48 p310 IV.5)

Holy child of God, when will you learn that only holiness can content you and give you peace? Remember that you learn not for yourself alone, no more than I did. It is because I learned for you that you can learn of me. I would but teach you what is yours, so that together we can replace the shabby littleness that binds the host of God to guilt and weakness with the glad awareness of the glory that is in him. My birth in you is your awakening to grandeur. Welcome me not into a manger, but into the altar to holiness, where holiness abides in perfect peace. My Kingdom is not of this world because it is in you. And you are of your Father. Let us join in honoring you, who must remain forever beyond littleness. Decide with me, who has decided to abide with you. (R49 p308 III.9-10.1)

We are free to choose to be with the grandeur of Christ or the grandiosity of the ego.
Let no despair darken the joy of Christmas, for the time of Christ is meaningless apart from joy. Let us join in celebrating peace by demanding no sacrifice of anyone, for so you offer me the love I offer you. What can be more joyous than to perceive we are deprived of nothing? Such is the message of the time of Christ, which I give you that you may give it and return it to the Father, Who gave it to me. For in the time of Christ communication is restored, and He joins us in the celebration of His Son's creation. (R50 p329 XI.8)

This is the time in which a new year will soon be born from the time of Christ. I have perfect faith in you to do all that you would accomplish. Nothing will be lacking, and you will make complete and not destroy. Say, then, to your brother:

*I give you to the Holy Spirit as part of myself. I know that you will be released, unless I want to use you to imprison myself. In the name of my freedom I choose your release, because I recognize that we will be released together.*

So will the year begin in joy and freedom. There is much to do, and we have been long delayed. Accept the holy instant as this year is born, and take your place, so long left unfulfilled, in the Great Awakening. Make this year different by making it all the same. And let all your relationships be made holy for you. This is our will. Amen. (R51 p329 XI.10)

End Chapter Fifteen
CHAPTER SIXTEEN
THE FORGIVENESS OF ILLUSIONS

Main Themes: 1 - Special relationships: love and hate. 2 - The bridge to the real world and on to Heaven.

Introduction: The term "bridge" is used to represent the bridge that takes us from the world of separation to the "real world" which is the state of mind of unity and love at the gates of Heaven. "Bridge" is also used to represent the bridge between the ego's world of illusions and Heaven. The Holy Spirit uses forgiveness as the bridge that takes us from the world of separation to Heaven.

Bridges go both ways. The ego uses the bridge to take us from Heaven to the ego's wrong mind of sin, guilt and fear, and then out to the world of bodies. Special relationships serve as dumping grounds for the guilt in our mind. The ego attempts to maintain the face of innocence by projecting its guilt onto other people with whom we are in relationship — special love and special hate. Once the ego takes us across the bridge from Heaven to the wrong mind and out to the world and body, it uses denial and repression to make us forget we ever were in Heaven, represented by the veil of forgetfulness in the Chart.

We will start by looking at the Atonement principle. Truth is absolute. The truth of who we are is Christ, God's one Son. The Creator and His Creation are one.

For nothing real has ever left the mind of its creator. And what is not real was never there. You are not two selves in conflict. What is beyond God? If you who hold Him and whom He holds are the universe, all else must be outside, where nothing is. (Reference 1 p336 III.5.10-11;III.6.1-3)

His Voice has spoken clearly, and yet you have so little faith in what you heard, because you have preferred to place still greater faith in the disaster you have made. Today, let us resolve together to accept the joyful tidings that disaster is not real and that reality is not disaster. Reality is safe and sure, and wholly kind to everyone and everything. (R2 p334 II.8.4-6)

God's Voice is the Holy Spirit, our eternal link to the Father. It is our choice to listen to Him or the ego.

What you accept into your mind does not really change it. Illusions are but beliefs in what is not there. And the seeming conflict between truth and illusion can only be resolved by separating yourself from the illusion and not from truth. (R3 p335-336 III.4.8-10)

The ego fears that if we accept the truth of the Atonement the ego will be dissolved.

It is true, just as you fear, that to acknowledge Him is to deny all that you think you know. But what you think you know was never true. What gain is there to you in clinging to it, and denying the evidence for truth? For you have come too near to truth to renounce it now, and you will yield to its compelling attraction. You can delay this now, but only a little while. The Host of God has called to you, and you have heard. Never again will you be wholly willing not to listen. (R4 p333 II.6.6-12)

The Host of God is the Holy Spirit in our right mind. The ego attempts to veil the Holy Spirit's call to us by keeping us distracted in the body, and the world of special love and hate relationships.

Every fantasy, be it of love or hate, deprives you of knowledge for fantasies are the veil behind which truth is hidden. To lift the veil that seems so dark and heavy, it is only needful to value truth beyond all fantasy, and to be entirely unwilling to settle for illusion in place of truth. (R5 p339 IV.10.3-4)

Our special relationships form the veil of fantasies behind which the truth of our holy relationship with God is hidden.

Separation is only the decision not to know yourself. This whole thought system is a carefully contrived learning experience, designed to lead away from truth and into fantasy. Yet for every learning that would hurt you, God offers you correction and complete escape from all its consequences. (R6 p344 V.15.3-5)
The ego's bridge from Heaven to illusion is the thought system built of the belief in separation, sin and guilt. God's correction to the ego's fantasies is the Holy Spirit Who offers us escape from the ego's illusions.

And now we will look at the ego's strategy in making special relationships.

The real purpose of the special relationship, in strict accordance with the ego's goals, is to destroy reality and substitute illusion. For the ego is itself an illusion, and only illusions can be the witnesses to its "reality." (R7 p343 V.9.4-5)

The ego uses relationships with others to prove its own reality, and to substitute for the true love of God. But the others with whom the ego is in relationship are projections of the ego mind and are themselves illusory.

Yet without your alliance in your own destruction, the ego could not hold you to the past. In the special relationship you are allowing your destruction to be. That this is insane is obvious. But what is less obvious is that the present is useless to you while you pursue the ego's goal as its ally. (R8 p348 VII.3.6-9)

The decision making part of our mind has the power to choose to ally itself with the ego or the Holy Spirit. The ego fears that we will choose against it so it keeps us distracted in the world of special relationships.

In the special relationship it does not seem to be an acting out of vengeance that you seek. And even when the hatred and the savagery break briefly through, the illusion of love is not profoundly shaken. Yet the one thing the ego never allows to reach awareness is that the special relationship is the acting out of vengeance on yourself. Yet what else could it be? In seeking the special relationship, you look not for glory in yourself. You have denied that it is there, and the relationship becomes your substitute for it. And vengeance becomes your substitute for Atonement, and the escape from vengeance becomes your loss. (R9 p348-349 VII.5)

The Holy Spirit's Atonement says the separation from God never happened which makes sin and guilt unreal. The ego's version of atonement says separation from God is real and God requires atonement through punishment, suffering and sacrifice.

You chose against the wholeness and love of God by declaring your own separate existence. You rejected your true magnitude and power by denying your Identity with Him. Believing you have split off from God has left you feeling selfish, sinful, guilty, incomplete and lonely. So you make a world, fill it with people onto whom you project your sin and guilt, and from whom you hope to find love and wholeness. Failing to find love and wholeness from people in the world you made, you feel deprived, and attack them seeking revenge. This is the illusory world of special love and hate relationships you made real to sustain your special separate existence.

You seek but for your own completion, and it is they [your true creations – the extension of the love of Christ] who render you complete. The special love relationship is but a shabby substitute for what makes you whole in truth, not in illusion. (R10 p339 IV.8.3-4)

The ego makes guilt real in our mind, and then projects it out onto other people believing that it can free itself of guilt by denying it in itself and giving it to others.

The special love relationship is an attempt to limit the destructive effects of hate by finding a haven in the storm of guilt. It makes no attempt to rise above the storm, into the sunlight. On the contrary, it emphasizes the guilt outside the haven by attempting to build barricades against it, and keep within them. The special love relationship is not perceived as a value in itself, but as a place of safety from which hatred is split off and kept apart. The special love partner is acceptable only as long as he serves this purpose. (R11 p337-338 IV.3.1-5)

In our special love relationships, the special love partner serves to reflect back to us our face of purity and innocence, and enables us to keep our face of guilt and hate buried under the illusion of love; until we are betrayed!

It is sure that those who select certain ones as partners in any aspect of living, and use them for...
any purpose which they would not share with others, are trying to live with guilt rather than die of it. This is the choice they see. And love, to them, is only an escape from death. (R12 p338 IV.4.5-7)

In the passage above, sharing refers to content, not form. Sharing content is the extension of love and forgiveness in the mind. Form is of the body and world. Sharing does not mean sharing your body or time with everyone in the world; that is the ego's idea of sharing, not the Holy Spirit's. Our purpose in the world is Atonement through forgiveness, and we are to share it equally with everyone — with no special exceptions.

Special love and special hate relationships are in essence the same. Special hate relationships provide us with someone or some group onto whom we can project our sin, guilt and hate. The special love relationship is a variation of the special hate relationship. It is especially obstructive to our salvation and is a strong ego defense because it appears to be love but actually is hate in disguise. In special love you have something that I lack. I have a need that only you can fill, and when you fulfill my needs I will love you. Special love is based on sacrifice — I sacrifice myself to you, and you to me — which breeds resentment, anger, hostility and hate. Special love is special hate in disguise. There is no love in special love. True love is of God.

In looking at the special relationship, it is necessary first to realize that it involves a great amount of pain. Anxiety, despair, guilt and attack all enter into it, broken into by periods in which they seem to be gone. All these must be understood for what they are. Whatever form they take, they are always an attack on the self to make the other guilty. I have spoken of this before, but there are some aspects of what is really being attempted that have not been touched upon. Very simply, the attempt to make guilty is always directed against God. For the ego would have you see Him, and Him alone, as guilty, leaving the Sonship open to attack and unprotected from it. The special love relationship is the ego's chief weapon for keeping you from Heaven. It does not appear to be a weapon, but if you consider how you value it and why, you will realize what it must be. The special love relationship is the ego's most boasted gift, and one which has the most appeal to those unwilling to relinquish guilt. The "dynamics" of the ego are clearest here... (R13 p341 V.1-3.1-2)

In my mind I separated from God and then blame Him for abandoning me so I can avoid the feeling of guilt and maintain the face of innocence. Look what God has done to me! In the world, I blame you for abandoning me and depriving me of love so you will feel guilty, and I can continue to maintain the face of innocence. Look what you have done to me! Our relationships in the world are a reflection of what we believe is our relationship with God. The ego loves guilt because without it the ego dissolves. Guilt is the witness that separation from God is real. If the separation from God is real, the ego is real.

This [guilt] is the "natural" condition of the separation, and those who learn that it is not natural at all seem to be the unnatural ones. For this world is the opposite of Heaven, being made to be its opposite, and everything here takes a direction exactly opposite of what is true. In Heaven, where the meaning of love is known, love is the same as union. Here, where the illusion of love is accepted in love's place, love is perceived as separation and exclusion. It is in the special relationship, born of the hidden wish for special love from God, that the ego's hatred triumphs. For the special relationship is the renunciation of the Love of God, and the attempt to secure for the self the specialness that He denied. It is essential to the preservation of the ego that you believe this specialness is not hell, but Heaven. For the ego would never have you see that separation could only be loss, being the one condition in which Heaven could not be. (R14 p341 V.3.5-8;V.4)

Hearing the words, "I love you, only you, and no one else!" is heaven to the ego. In truth it is hell.

The special relationship is a strange and unnatural ego device for joining hell and Heaven, and making them indistinguishable. And the attempt to find the imagined "best" of both worlds has merely led to fantasies of both, and to the inability to perceive either as it is. The special relationship is the triumph of this confusion. It is a kind of union from which union is excluded, and the basis for the attempt at union rests on exclusion. What better example could there be of the ego's maxim, "Seek but do not find"?
Love is only in the wholeness of our Identity with God. There is absolutely no love between people in the world. The ego disparages and rejects this notion because it means the death of the ego and its specialness.

Most curious of all is the concept of the self which the ego fosters in the special relationship. This "self" seeks the relationship to make itself complete. Yet when it finds the special relationship in which it thinks it can accomplish this it gives itself away, and tries to "trade" itself for the self of another. This is not union, for there is no increase and no extension. Each partner tries to sacrifice the self he does not want for one he thinks he would prefer. And he feels guilty for the "sin" of taking, and of giving nothing of value in return. How much value can one place upon a self that he would give away to get a "better" one? The "better" self the ego seeks is always one that is more special. And whoever seems to possess a special self is "loved" for what can be taken from him. Where both partners see this special self in each other, the ego sees "a union made in Heaven." (R15 p342 V.6-8.1-3)

If you perceived the special relationship as a triumph over God, would you want it? Let us not think of its fearful nature, nor of the guilt it must entail, nor of the sadness and the lonelines. For these are only attributes of the whole religion of separation, and of the total context in which it is thought to occur. The central theme in its litany to sacrifice is that God must die so you can live. And it is this theme that is acted out in the special relationship. Through the death of your self you think you can attack another self, and snatch it from the other to replace the self that you despise. (R16 p343 V.10.1-6)

Through the death (separation) of our true Self as Christ, Who is our eternal life, love and wholeness, we think we can gain love and wholeness in relationship with someone else.

You think it safer to endow the little self you made with power you wrested from truth, triumphing over it and leaving it helpless. See how exactly is this ritual enacted in the special relationship. An altar is erected in between two separate people, on which each seeks to kill his self, and on his body raise another self to take its power from his death. Over and over and over this ritual is enacted. And it is never completed, nor ever will be completed. The ritual of completion cannot complete, for life arises not from death, nor Heaven from hell.

Whenever any form of special relationship tempts you to seek for love in ritual, remember love is content, and not form of any kind. The special relationship is a ritual of form, aimed at raising the form to take the place of God at the expense of content. There is no meaning in the form, and there will never be. The special relationship must be recognized for what it is; a senseless ritual in which strength is extracted from the death of God, and invested in His killer as the sign that form has triumphed over content, and love has lost its meaning. Would you want this to be possible, even apart from its evident impossibility? If it were possible, you would have made yourself helpless. God is not angry. He merely could not let this happen. You cannot change His Mind. No rituals that you have set up in which the dance of death delights you can bring death to the eternal. Nor can your chosen substitute for the Wholeness of God have any influence at all upon it.

See in the special relationship nothing more than a meaningless attempt to raise other gods before Him, and by worshipping them to obscure their tininess and His greatness. In the name of your completion you do not want this. For every idol that you raise to place before Him stands before you, in place of what you are. (R17 p343-344 V.11.3-8;V.12-13)

Now we will address the "past" as it is used in the ego thought system. The ego's projection of sin, guilt and fear makes linear time. Sin is the separation from God in the past. We feel guilt over our separation in the present. And we fear God's retribution in the future.

It is impossible to let the past go without relinquishing the special relationship. For the special relationship is an attempt to re-enact the past and change it. Imagined slights, remembered pain, past disappointments, perceived injustices and deprivations all enter into the special relationship, which becomes a way in which you seek to restore your wounded self-esteem. What
basis would you have for choosing a special partner without the past? Every such choice is made because of something "evil" in the past to which you cling, and for which must someone else atone. (R18 p347-348 VII.1)

Our special relationships are a reflection of the belief in the "evil" of our original sin against God, and serve to reinforce the "reality" that we have actually separated from Him.

Do not underestimate the intensity of the ego's drive for vengeance on the past. It is completely savage and completely insane. (R19 p348 VII.3.1-2)

The past is gone; seek not to preserve it in the special relationship that binds you to it, and would teach you salvation is past and so you must return to the past to find salvation. There is no fantasy that does not contain the dream of retribution for the past. Would you act out the dream, or let it go? (R20 p348 VII.4)

Now we will look at how we are to let go of the illusions of sin, guilt and specialness, and wake up from the nightmare of ego. Special relationships are smokescreens which are used by the ego to conceal the decision making part of our mind and stop us from choosing the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. With the help of the Holy Spirit we must look through the smoke and bring the ego's darkness to the light of God's love.

Be not afraid to look upon the special hate relationship, for freedom lies in looking at it. It would be impossible not to know the meaning of love, except for this. For the special love relationship, in which the meaning of love is hidden, is undertaken solely to offset the hate, but not to let it go. Your salvation will rise clearly before your open eyes as you look on this. You cannot limit hate. The special love relationship will not offset it, but will merely drive it underground and out of sight. It is essential to bring it into sight, and to make no attempt to hide it. For it is the attempt to balance hate with love that makes love meaningless to you. The extent of the split that lies in this you do not realize. And until you do, the split will remain unrecognized, and therefore unhealed. (R21 p337 IV.1)

Our special love relationships veil our special hate relationships. We love our friends and hate our rivals. We love our allies and hate our enemies. Where there is good, there is evil. Where there is special love, there is special hate. Our special love relationships are an attempt to maintain the face of innocence while we murder our enemies. We realize our true motives in our special relationships by observing our thoughts and feelings and bringing them to the light of awareness where they can be healed, and true love can blossom.

Your task is not to seek for love, but merely to seek and find all of the barriers within yourself that you have built against it. It is not necessary to seek for what is true, but it is necessary to seek for what is false. (R22 p338 IV.6.1-2)

It is essential that we look very closely at exactly what it is you think you can do to solve the dilemma which seems very real to you, but which does not exist. (R23 p339 IV.7.5)

We made the world to dump our guilt over a sin that was never committed. And we live in fear of the world we made as a place to hide from the wrath of God Who only loves us.

Salvation lies in the simple fact that illusions are not fearful because they are not true. They but seem to be fearful to the extent to which you fail to recognize them for what they are; and you will fail to do this to the extent to which you want them to be true. (R24 p344 V.14.1-2)

We need our illusions to be true, because we are illusions. Illusions dissolve when you look closely.

Yet the closer you look at the special relationship, the more apparent it becomes that it must foster guilt and therefore must imprison. (R25 p345 VI.3.4)

Now we will look at true empathy, true forgiveness and the holy instant. The holy instant is the instant, out of time, when we choose the love of the Holy Spirit rather than the fear of the ego.

To empathize does not mean to join in suffering, for that is what you must refuse to understand. That is the ego's interpretation of empathy, and is
always used to form a special relationship in which the suffering is shared. (R26 p330 I.1.1-2)

He [the Holy Spirit] does not join in pain, understanding that healing pain is not accomplished by delusional attempts to enter into it, and lighten it by sharing the delusion. The clearest proof that empathy as the ego uses it is destructive lies in the fact that it is applied only to certain types of problems and in certain people. These it selects out, and joins with. And it never joins except to strengthen itself. Having identified with what it thinks it understands, the ego sees itself and would increase itself by sharing what is like itself. Make no mistake about this maneuver; the ego always empathizes to weaken, and to weaken is always to attack. You do not know what empathizing means. Yet of this you may be sure; if you will merely sit quietly by and let the Holy Spirit relate through you, you will empathize with strength, and will gain in strength and not in weakness. (R27 p330 I.1.7;I.2)

We choose to communicate and heal with the strength of Christ or the weakness of ego.

The meaning of love is lost in any relationship that looks to weakness, and hopes to find love there. The power of love, which is its meaning, lies in the strength of God that hovers over it and blesses it silently by enveloping it in healing wings. Let this be, and do not try to substitute your "miracle" for this. I have said that if a brother asks a foolish thing of you to do it. But be certain that this does not mean to do a foolish thing that would hurt either him or you, for what would hurt one will hurt the other. (R28 p331 I.6.1-5)

The ego's "miracle" is to try to fix the problem on the level of form, in the body and world. The Holy Spirit's miracle is of the mind, not the body and world.

You have done miracles, but it is quite apparent that you have not done them alone. You have succeeded whenever you have reached another mind and joined with it. When two minds join as one and share one idea equally, the first link in the awareness of the Sonship as One has been made. (R29 p333 II.4.1-3)

Two minds that share the same purpose of forgiveness are joined as one. The shared interest of forgiveness is the first step on the bridge back to the Atonement.

See in the call of hate, and in every fantasy that rises to delay you, but the call for help that rises ceaselessly from you to your Creator. (R30 p340 IV.11.6)

Hate is a symptom of fear, and fear is a call for love. All communication and behavior is either an expression of love or a call for love — this is the vision of the Holy Spirit, and ours in the holy instant.

And may the holy instant speed you on the way, as it will surely do if you but let it come to you. The Holy Spirit asks only this little help of you: Whenever your thoughts wander to a special relationship which still attracts you, enter with Him into a holy instant, and there let Him release you. He needs only your willingness to share His perspective to give it to you completely. And your willingness need not be complete because His is perfect. (R31 p347 VI.11.7;VI.12.1-3)

The ego believes it is made complete in its special love relationship when its needs are met by its partner in love; and is made innocent in its special hate relationship as it projects its guilt onto its partner in hate. So the ego maintains its separate existence and believes it is made complete and innocent in its special relationships — but pays a heavy price.

Against the ego's insane notion of salvation the Holy Spirit gently lays the holy instant. We said before that the Holy Spirit must teach through comparisons, and uses opposites to point to truth. The holy instant is the opposite of the ego's fixed belief in salvation through vengeance for the past. In the holy instant it is understood that the past is gone, and with its passing the drive for vengeance has been uprooted and has disappeared. The stillness and the peace of now enfold you in perfect gentleness. Everything is gone except the truth. For a time you may attempt to bring illusions into the holy instant, to hinder your full awareness of the complete difference, in all respects, between your experience of truth and illusion. Yet you will not attempt this long. In the holy instant the power of the Holy Spirit will
Notes on Chapter Sixteen – The Forgiveness of Illusions

prevail, because you joined Him. The illusions you bring with you will weaken the experience of Him for a while, and will prevent you from keeping the experience in your mind. (R32 p349 VII.6-7.1-4)

In the holy instant there is no separation, no sin, guilt or fear; there is no body, no world and no time — there is only God's peace, love and wholeness.

There is nothing you can hold against reality. All that must be forgiven are the illusions you have held against your brothers. Their reality has no past, and only illusions can be forgiven. God holds nothing against anyone, for He is incapable of illusions of any kind. Release your brothers from the slavery of their illusions by forgiving them for the illusions you perceive in them. Thus will you learn that you have been forgiven, for it is you who offered them illusions. In the holy instant this is done for you in time, to bring you the true condition of Heaven. (R33 p349-350 VII.9)

Forgiveness is the bridge that leads us from our perception of the world of separate bodies, to the true perception of the real world. The next several passages expand upon the real world, the bridge that leads to it, and our experience of crossing over.

You see the world you value. On this side of the bridge you see the world of separate bodies, seeking to join each other in separate unions and to become one by losing. When two individuals seek to become one, they are trying to decrease their magnitude. Each would deny his power, for the separate union excludes the universe. Far more is left outside than would be taken in, for God is left without and nothing taken in.

We first give away our true self as Christ, and then give away our ego-self in the sacrifice of special relationship, and we call that "love." The value of special relationships is in the opportunity they give us to realize the egregious error we have made in choosing the insanity of the ego thought system over the sanity, love and wholeness of the Holy Spirit.

Across the bridge it is so different! For a time the body is still seen, but not exclusively, as it is seen here. The little spark that holds the Great Rays within it is also visible, and this spark cannot be limited long to littleness. Once you have crossed the bridge, the value of the body is so diminished in your sight that you will see no need at all to magnify it. For you will realize that the only value the body has is to enable you to bring your brothers to the bridge with you, and to be released together there.

The little spark is the memory of the love of Christ in our right mind. The Great Rays refers to the light of Christ which is our true Identity in Heaven.

The bridge itself is nothing more than a transition in the perspective of reality. On this side, everything you see is grossly distorted and completely out of perspective. What is little and insignificant is magnified, and what is strong and powerful cut down to littleness. In the transition there is a period of confusion, in which a sense of actual disorientation may occur. But fear it not, for it means only that you have been willing to let go your hold on the distorted frame of reference that seemed to hold your world together. This frame of reference is built around the special relationship. Without this illusion there could be no meaning you would still seek here.

To the ego, the purpose of special relationships is to gratify the needs of the body, and maintain the ego's special separate existence. As we cross the bridge from body consciousness to spirit consciousness, we are fulfilled in our identity with spirit, and see little value in special relationships based in the body and world. In the transition we may temporarily experience some disorientation.

Fear not that you will be abruptly lifted up and hurled into reality. Time is kind, and if you use it on behalf of reality, it will keep gentle pace with you in your transition. The urgency is only in dislodging your mind from its fixed position here. This will not leave you homeless and without a frame of reference. The period of disorientation, which precedes the actual transition, is far shorter than the time it took to fix your mind so firmly on illusions.

Delay will hurt you now more than before, only because you realize it is delay, and that escape from pain is really possible. Find hope and comfort, rather than despair, in this: You could not long find even the illusion of love in any special relationship here. For you are no longer
wholly insane, and you would soon recognize the guilt of self-betrayal for what it is.
(R35 p346 VI.6-8)

What guilt has wrought is ugly, fearful and very dangerous. See no illusion of truth and beauty there. And be you thankful that there is a place where truth and beauty wait for you. Go on to meet them gladly, and learn how much awaits you for the simple willingness to give up nothing because it is nothing. The new perspective you will gain from crossing over will be the understanding of where Heaven is. From this side, it seems to be outside and across the bridge. Yet as you cross to join it, it will join with you and become one with you. And you will think, in glad astonishment, that for all this you gave up nothing!
(R36 p347 VI.10.4-7;VI.11.1-4)

"Crossing over" is not the death of the body, but refers to crossing the bridge in the mind from the illusory world of separation, to the real world of wholeness with spirit. From the ego's perspective we lose everything by gaining the real world. In the real world we realize we gave up nothing to remember we are everything.

Sooner or later must everyone bridge the gap he imagines exists between his selves. Each one builds this bridge, which carries him across the gap as soon as he is willing to expend some little effort on behalf of bridging it. His little efforts are powerfully supplemented by the strength of Heaven, and by the united will of all who make Heaven what it is, being joined within it. And so the one who would cross over is literally transported there. Your bridge is builded stronger than you think, and your foot is planted firmly on it. Have no fear that the attraction of those who stand on the other side and wait for you will not draw you safely across. For you will come where you would be, and where your Self awaits you. (R37 p336-337 III.8.2-5;III.9)

Be not unwilling now; you are too near, and you will cross the bridge in perfect safety, translated quietly from war to peace. For the illusion of love will never satisfy, but its reality, which awaits you on the other side, will give you everything.
(R38 p337 IV.2.5-6)

Heaven waits silently, and your creations are holding out their hands to help you cross and welcome them. For it is they you seek.
(R39 p339 IV.8.1-2)

Your true creations are love. It is love we seek and love that calls us Home.

Acceptance of your creations is the acceptance of the Oneness of creation, without which you could never be complete. No specialness can offer you what God has given, and what you are joined with Him in giving. Across the bridge is your completion, for you will be wholly in God, willing for nothing special, but only to be wholly like to Him, completing Him by your completion. Fear not to cross to the abode of peace and perfect holiness. Only there is the completion of God and of His Son established forever.
(R40 p339 IV.8.6-7;IV.9.1-3)

The bridge that leads to union in yourself must lead to knowledge, for it was built with God beside you, and will lead you straight to Him where your completion rests, wholly compatible with His. Every illusion you accept into your mind by judging it to be attainable removes your own sense of completion, and thus denies the Wholeness of your Father. (R41 p339 IV.10.1-2)

When we believe we can attain love, peace, wholeness and joy in the world of bodies, we deny our true love, peace, wholeness and joy in our Identity with Christ; and we experience emptiness.

Your Father can no more forget the truth in you than you can fail to remember it. The Holy Spirit is the Bridge to Him, made from your willingness to unite with Him and created by His joy in union with you. The journey that seemed endless is almost complete, for what is endless is very near. You have almost recognized it. Turn with me firmly away from all illusions now, and let nothing stand in the way of truth. We will take the last useless journey away from truth together, and then together we go straight to God, in joyous answer to His Call for His completion.
(R42 p340 IV.12)

On this side of the bridge to timelessness you understand nothing. But as you step lightly across it, upheld by timelessness, you are directed
straight to the Heart of God. At its center, and only there, you are safe forever, because you are complete forever. There is no veil the Love of God in us together cannot lift. The way to truth is open. Follow it with me. (R43 p340 IV.13.6-11)

The decision whether or not to listen to this course and follow it is but the choice between truth and illusion. For here is truth, separated from illusion and not confused with it at all. How simple does this choice become when it is perceived as only what it is. For only fantasies make confusion in choosing possible, and they are totally unreal. This year is thus the time to make the easiest decision that ever confronted you, and also the only one. You will cross the bridge into reality simply because you will recognize that God is on the other side, and nothing at all is here. It is impossible not to make the natural decision as this is realized. (R44 p344 V.16-17)

The closing passages are an excellent summary of the chapter.

Seek and find His message in the holy instant, where all illusions are forgiven. From there the miracle extends to bless everyone and to resolve all problems, be they perceived as great or small, possible or impossible. There is nothing that will not give place to Him and to His Majesty. To join in close relationship with Him is to accept relationships as real, and through their reality to give over all illusions for the reality of your relationship with God. Praise be to your relationship with Him and to no other. The truth lies there and nowhere else. You choose this or nothing.

The passage below is the Course's version of the Lord's Prayer.

Forgive us our illusions, Father, and help us to accept our true relationship with You, in which there are no illusions, and where none can ever enter. Our holiness is Yours. What can there be in us that needs forgiveness when Yours is perfect? The sleep of forgetfulness is only the unwillingness to remember Your forgiveness and Your Love. Let us not wander into temptation, for the temptation of the Son of God is not Your Will. And let us receive only what You have given, and accept but this into the minds which You created and which You love. Amen. (R45 p350 VII.11-12)

End Chapter Sixteen
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN
FORGIVENESS AND THE HOLY RELATIONSHIP

Main Themes: The holy relationship, forgiveness, and the power of the mind to establish meaning and purpose.

Introduction: Before the beginning, we are all one in God, as God. Until the "tiny mad idea" of separation from God arose in the mind. The Holy Spirit's answer to the tiny mad idea is that the separation never happened. The ego's answer is that the separation from God did happen, it is a sin, we are guilty of sin, and we better hide to avoid the wrath of God. The ego then makes a body and world onto which it can project itself, along with its sin and guilt into its special relationships in the world. The Holy Spirit responds by offering the holy relationship. The ego tries to turn the holy relationship into a special relationship by attempting to bring the love of God into the world. The Holy Spirit reiterates the holy relationship until we finally accept the holy relationship through forgiveness and the Atonement, which leads us on to the real world and back to Heaven with God where we were before the beginning.

The ego's motive is to defend against the Atonement to maintain its special separate existence. The passages below succinctly explain the ego's purpose for special relationships.

• Every special relationship you have made is a substitute for God's Will, and glorifies yours instead of His because of the illusion that they are different. You have made very real relationships even in this world. Yet you do not recognize them because you have raised their substitutes to such predominance that, when truth calls to you, as it does constantly, you answer with a substitute. Every special relationship you have made has, as its fundamental purpose, the aim of occupying your mind so completely that you will not hear the call of truth.

In a sense, the special relationship was the ego's answer to the creation of the Holy Spirit, Who was God's Answer to the separation. For although the ego did not understand what had been created, it was aware of threat. The whole defense system the ego evolved to protect the separation from the Holy Spirit was in response to the gift with which God blessed it, and by His blessing enabled it to be healed. This blessing holds within itself the truth about everything. And the truth is that the Holy Spirit is in close relationship with you, because in Him is your relationship with God restored to you. The relationship with Him has never been broken, because the Holy Spirit has not been separate from anyone since the separation. And through Him have all your holy relationships been carefully preserved, to serve God's purpose for you.

Our special relationships were born in the same instant our belief in the original separation from God was born; the Holy Spirit was also with us from that very first instant.

The ego is always alert to threat, and the part of your mind into which the ego was accepted is very anxious to preserve its reason, as it sees it. It does not realize that it is totally insane. And you must realize just what this means if you would be restored to sanity. The insane protect their thought systems, but they do so insanely. And all their defenses are as insane as what they are supposed to protect. The separation has nothing in it, no part, no "reason," and no attribute that is not insane. And its "protection" is part of it, as insane as the whole. The special relationship, which is its chief defense, must therefore be insane. (Reference I p358 IV.2.7;IV.3-5)

Now we turn to the Atonement principle.

The betrayal of the Son of God lies only in illusions, and all his "sins" are but his own imagining. His reality is forever sinless. He need not be forgiven but awakened. In his dreams he has betrayed himself, his brothers and his God. Yet what is done in dreams has not been really done. It is impossible to convince the dreamer that this is so, for dreams are what they are because of their illusion of reality. Only in waking is the full release from them, for only then does it become perfectly apparent that they had no effect upon reality at all, and did not change it. Fantasies change reality. That is their purpose. They cannot do so in reality, but they can do so in the mind that would have reality be different.
By choosing the ego, our wish for independent existence has become true in our dream. Our dream of separation becomes our experience of reality because of the power of our mind. In the Course, faith refers to the mind's power to believe in the ego or the Holy Spirit. When we put our faith in the Holy Spirit, we put our faith in "everything." When we put our faith in the ego, we put our faith in "nothing," and faith in nothing is referred to as faithlessness.

It is, then, only your wish to change reality that is fearful, because by your wish you think you have accomplished what you wish. This strange position, in a sense, acknowledges your power. Yet by distorting it and devoting it to "evil," it also makes it unreal. You cannot be faithful to two masters who ask conflicting things of you. What you use in fantasy you deny to truth. Yet what you give to truth to use for you is safe from fantasy. (R2 p351 I.1-2)

The ego fears we will choose the truth of the Holy Spirit, which would mean the end of the ego.

But rise you not against it [Truth], for against your opposition it cannot come. (R3 p370 VIII.2.7)

The power set in you in whom the Holy Spirit's goal has been established is so far beyond your little conception of the infinite that you have no idea how great the strength that goes with you. And you can use this in perfect safety. Yet for all its might, so great it reaches past the stars and to the universe that lies beyond them, your little faithlessness can make it useless, if you would use the faithlessness instead. (R4 p369 VII.7)

When we put our faith in the ego by choosing against the Holy Spirit, we have rendered our true power and strength useless.

…the ego believes in "solving" conflict through fragmentation, and does not perceive the situation as a whole. Therefore, it seeks to split off segments of the situation and deal with them separately, for it has faith in separation and not in wholeness. Confronted with any aspect of the situation that seems to be difficult, the ego will attempt to take this aspect elsewhere, and resolve it there. And it will seem to be successful, except that this attempt conflicts with unity, and must obscure the goal of truth. And peace will not be experienced except in fantasy. Truth has not come because faith has been denied, being withheld from where it rightfully belonged. (R5 p367 VI.6.9-10; VI.7.1-4)

The "situation" is any relationship in which you find yourself in your daily life. Displacement is a psychological term that refers to displacing the true cause of a problem onto a different cause to avoid facing the true cause. It is similar to projection and dissociation. Displacement, projection and dissociation are what we do with our sin, guilt and fear, which are all caused by our belief in the original separation from God. Our one problem is our choice to believe in the separation from God and identify with the ego. The one solution is to realize the separation never happened and identify with the Holy Spirit.

In the passage below, "substitutes" refers to our special relationships which are a substitute for God's love.

The substitutes for aspects of the situation are the witnesses to your lack of faith. They demonstrate that you did not believe the situation and the problem were in the same place. The problem was the lack of faith, and it is this you demonstrate when you remove it from its source and place it elsewhere. As a result, you do not see the problem. Had you not lacked faith that it could be solved, the problem would be gone. And the situation would have been meaningful to you, because the interference in the way of understanding would have been removed. To remove the problem elsewhere is to keep it, for you remove yourself from it and make it unsolvable.

There is no problem in any situation that faith will not solve. There is no shift in any aspect of the problem but will make solution impossible. For if you shift part of the problem elsewhere the meaning of the problem must be lost, and the solution to the problem is inherent in its meaning. Is it not possible that all your problems have been solved, but you have removed yourself from the solution? Yet faith must be where something has been done, and where you see it done. (R6 p367-368 VII.1-2)
The thought of bodies is the sign of faithlessness, for bodies cannot solve anything. It is their intrusion on the relationship, an error in your thoughts about the situation, which then becomes the justification for your lack of faith. You will make this error, but be not at all concerned with that. The error does not matter. Faithlessness brought to faith will never interfere with truth. But faithlessness used against truth will always destroy faith. If you lack faith, ask that it be restored where it was lost, and seek not to have it made up to you elsewhere, as if you had been unjustly deprived of it. (R7 p368 VII.3.5-11)

When we put faith in the ego, the body and the world, salvation cannot be found. The miracle shifts our faith from the ego to the Holy Spirit. Faith is restored where it was lost; at the decision making part of your mind. Special relationships serve to displace the real cause of suffering, the decision in our mind, onto other people and the world.

In the passage below, the "shadow figures" are our belief in sin and guilt over the separation from God. The shadow figures are the witnesses you bring with you to demonstrate he [you as the Son of God] did what he did not. Because you bring them, you will hear them. And you who keep them by your own selection do not understand how they came into your mind, and what their purpose is. They represent the evil that you think was done to you. You bring them with you only that you may return evil for evil, hoping that their witness will enable you to think guiltily of another and not harm yourself. (R8 p354 III.1.6-10)

The shadow figures always speak for vengeance, and all relationships into which they enter are totally insane. Without exception, these relationships have as their purpose the exclusion of the truth about the other, and of yourself. (R9 p355 III.2.2-3)

Vengeance is what we secretly believe we deserve from God for sinning against Him by leaving Him. But rather than face our sin and guilt, we blame God for leaving us, and project our sin and guilt onto Him and other people in the world; while secretly we seek vengeance of other people and fear their vengeance against us. The ego's modus operandi is denial, dissociation, projection and displacement. The truth about ourselves and the other is that we are all part of the one Christ.

...all such relationships become attempts at union through the body, for only bodies can be seen as means for vengeance. That bodies are central to all unholy relationships is evident. Your own experience has taught you this. (R10 p355 III.2.6-8)

Thus, the attempt at union becomes a way of excluding even the one with whom the union was sought. For it was formed to get him out of it [union], and join with fantasies in uninterrupted "bliss." (R11 p355 III.4.7-8)

The split mind is represented by two pictures. One is of the ego's thought system which is symbolized by death. The frame around the ego's picture is the special relationship. The purpose of the frame is to distract us from the picture. The other picture is the Holy Spirit's thought system which is the holy instant symbolized by Light. We will look at these two pictures and their frames later in this chapter.

You have but little difficulty now in realizing that the thought system the special relationship protects is but a system of delusions. You recognize, at least in general terms, that the ego is insane. Yet the special relationship still seems to you somehow to be "different." (R12 p359 IV.6.1-3)

Even as we are waking up to the delusion and insanity of believing we are a separate ego in a body, we still cling tenaciously to our special love and hate relationships, believing that we are exceptions somehow, and our relationships are grounded in true love, and those we hate are truly evil.

It is essential to realize that all defenses do what they would defend. The underlying basis for their effectiveness is that they offer what they defend. What they defend is placed in them for safe-keeping, and as they operate they bring it to you. Every defense operates by giving gifts, and the gift is always a miniature of the thought system the defense protects, set in a golden frame. The frame is very elaborate, all set with jewels, and deeply carved and polished. Its purpose is to be of value in itself, and to divert your attention from what it encloses. But the frame without the
Notes on Chapter Seventeen – Forgiveness and the Holy Relationship

picture you cannot have. Defenses operate to make you think you can. (R13 p359 IV.7)

The special relationship is a defense against guilt. The fact that we believe we have something that needs to be defended means there is something that we are afraid of. There would be no defense without a problem we believe we need to defend against. The fact that we are invested in a special relationship reveals that we have a problem of guilt in our mind that we are trying to avoid. If we let go of the special relationship our defense will be gone and we will be directly faced with our guilt.

In the field of psychology, psychologists are taught not to take away a patient's defenses or they may become psychotic. Within the thought system of the ego there is an element of truth in that. Ultimately when all defenses are seen as illusory we become sane, but within the ego thought system, when special relationships are taken away, we become insane with guilt. However, using special relationships as a defense against guilt reinforces the fear that the defenses are supposed to protect you from. The fact that we feel we need special relationships to protect us from guilt says that the guilt is real and needs to be defended against.

The special relationship has the most imposing and deceptive frame of all the defenses the ego uses. Its thought system is offered here, surrounded by a frame so heavy and so elaborate that the picture is almost obliterated by its imposing structure. Into the frame are woven all sorts of fanciful and fragmented illusions of love, set with dreams of sacrifice and self-aggrandizement, and interlaced with gilded threads of self-destruction. The glitter of blood shines like rubies, and the tears are faceted like diamonds and gleam in the dim light in which the offering is made.

Look at the picture [death – guilt in the mind] Do not let the frame [special relationships – of the body] distract you. This gift is given you for your damnation, and if you take it you will believe that you are damned. You cannot have the frame without the picture. What you value is the frame, for there you see no conflict. Yet the frame is only the wrapping for the gift of conflict. The frame is not the gift. Be not deceived by the most superficial aspects of this thought system, for these aspects enclose the whole, complete in every aspect. Death lies in this glittering gift. Let not your gaze dwell on the hypnotic gleaming of the frame. Look at the picture, and realize that death is offered you. (R13A p359-360 IV.8-9)

Look, look, look at your special relationships, watch the dynamics of ego, and be aware so you can choose another way!

Let it [your choice for the ego] enter and look upon it calmly, but do not use it. Faithlessness [identification with the ego] is the servant of illusion, and wholly faithful to its master. Use it, and it will carry you straight to illusions. Be tempted not by what it offers you. It interferes, not with the goal, but with the value of the goal to you. Accept not the illusion of peace it offers, but look upon its offering and recognize it is illusion. (R14 p368 VII.5.4-9)

The great Transformer of perception will undertake with you the careful searching of the mind that made this world, and uncover to you the seeming reasons for your making it. (R15 p353 II.5.2)

To go beyond the world, it is crucial to understand the purpose the world serves. There are two goals in the world — the goal of truth and the goal of illusion. When we decide that truth is our goal, everything we do in our daily lives is seen as a means to attaining our goal of realizing truth.

In any situation in which you are uncertain, the first thing to consider, very simply, is "What do I want to come of this? What is it for?" The clarification of the goal belongs at the beginning, for it is this which will determine the outcome. (R16 p366 VI.2.1-3)

The purpose we set at the beginning determines what we accomplish in the end. The meaning and value we see in our daily experience is determined by the purpose we set for our lives.

Without a clear-cut, positive goal, set at the outset, the situation just seems to happen, and makes no sense until it has already happened. Then you look back at it, and try to piece together what it must have meant. And you will be wrong. Not only is your judgment in the past, but you
have no idea what should happen. No goal was set with which to bring the means in line. And now the only judgment left to make is whether or not the ego likes it; is it acceptable, or does it call for vengeance? The absence of a criterion for outcome, set in advance, makes understanding doubtful and evaluation impossible.

The value of deciding in advance what you want to happen is simply that you will perceive the situation as a means to make it happen. You will therefore make every effort to overlook what interferes with the accomplishment of your objective, and concentrate on everything that helps you meet it. It is quite noticeable that this approach has brought you closer to the Holy Spirit's sorting out of truth and falsity. The true becomes what can be used to meet the goal. The false becomes the useless from this point of view. The situation now has meaning, but only because the goal has made it meaningful. (R17 p366 VI.3-4)

What is true is everything that teaches me to forgive, accept, unite and love. What is false is everything that teaches me to blame, reject, separate and fear. Any act that breeds exclusiveness — special love or special hate — keeps me asleep in my nightmare. Any act that engenders inclusiveness helps me awaken from my nightmare, to the peace of the real world and ultimately to the truth of my Identity with Christ. The purpose of the dream world we made is to awaken from it!

Here again you see the opposite of the ego's way of looking, for the ego believes the situation brings the experience. The Holy Spirit knows that the situation is as the goal determines it, and is experienced according to the goal. (R18 p367 VI.5.8-9)

The ego sees itself as a victim of the world of circumstances beyond its control. The Holy Spirit knows that circumstances and experiences are determined by the power of the mind to choose its goals. When the goal is to identify with the ego and maintain its world of illusions; that is the result. When the goal is to identify with the Holy Spirit and wake up from the illusions of the ego; that is the result. All power is in the mind of the Son.

And now we will look at the holy relationship whose purpose is forgiveness rather than guilt. As we turn our attention inside to our mind we realize that our special relationships are not between my body and another body, but are really between me and my ego. I, as the decision maker, have chosen to identify with the ego, and make the ego my ally.

To forgive is merely to remember only the loving thoughts you gave in the past, and those that were given you. All the rest must be forgotten. Forgiveness is a selective remembering, based not on your [the ego's] selection. For the shadow figures you would make immortal are "enemies" of reality. Be willing to forgive the Son of God for what he did not do. (R19 p354 III.1.1-5)

When I am angry at you I am accusing you of taking away my peace. This means someone outside of my mind has the power to take peace away from me. The truth is that the decision making part of my mind is the only power in the universe that can choose against the peace of God. So I forgive you because you have not taken away the peace of God from me, I decided against peace myself. On a deeper level I forgive you because you do not exist except as a figure I put in my dream so I have someone onto whom I can dump my anger and guilt. It is not the evil or sin in you that needs to be forgiven, but the evil or sin I have made real in myself that is forgiven.

How can the Holy Spirit bring His interpretation of the body as a means of communication into relationships whose only purpose is separation from reality? What forgiveness enables Him to do so. If all but loving thoughts have been forgotten, what remains is eternal. And the transformed past is made like the present. No longer does the past conflict with now. This continuity extends the present by increasing its reality and its value in your perception of it. In these loving thoughts is the spark of beauty hidden in the ugliness of the unholy relationship where hatred is remembered; yet there to come alive as the relationship is given to Him Who gives it life and beauty. That is why Atonement centers on the past, which is the source of separation, and where it must be undone. For separation must be corrected where it was made.
In the holy instant, the separation from God is undone, the past is forgiven, and the love of God is extended in the eternal present. The only true beauty is in choosing the Holy Spirit's love. The only ugliness is in choosing the ego's hate.

The ego seeks to "resolve" its problems, not at their source, but where they were not made. And thus it seeks to guarantee there will be no solution. The Holy Spirit wants only to make His resolutions complete and perfect, and so He seeks and finds the source of problems where it is, and there undoes it. And with each step in His undoing is the separation more and more undone, and union brought closer. He is not at all confused by any "reasons" for separation. All He perceives in separation is that it must be undone. Let Him uncover the hidden spark of beauty in your relationships, and show it to you. (R20 p355-356 III.5-6.1-7)

The source of the problem is in the mind and not the world. To ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with the body or the world will not resolve your problem because your problem is in your mind. By asking for help with your body and the world you are trying to form another special relationship, which once again serves to avoid the real problem of separation and guilt in your mind.

God's Son is One. Whom God has joined as one, the ego cannot put asunder. [Reference to Mathew's Gospel] The spark of holiness must be safe, however hidden it may be, in every relationship. For the Creator of the one relationship has left no part of it without Himself. This is the only part of the relationship the Holy Spirit sees, because He knows that only this is true. You have made the relationship unreal, and therefore unholy, by seeing it where it is not and as it is not. Give the past to Him Who can change your mind about it for you. But first, be sure you fully realize what you have made the past to represent, and why. (R21 p356 III.7)

Forgiveness is not between two people. Forgiveness is in your mind only. Forgiveness facilitates the Atonement which is the realization that the separation from God never happened. Forgiveness is of the mistaken choice you made in your mind to believe in the separation, identify with the ego, and reject your true Identity with the wholeness of Christ.

Forgiveness has absolutely nothing to do with people or their actions in the world. No one can betray me except my self by denying the truth of who I am. Therefore no one in the world needs to be forgiven.

Yet think on this, and learn the cause of faithlessness: You think you hold against your brother what he has done to you. But what you really blame him for is what you did to him. It is not his past but yours you hold against him. (R22 p369 VII.8.1-3)

What you did against your brother was to see him as an ego. You see him as a selfish ego because you believe you are a selfish ego, and you want to blame him for your selfishness. Whatever you are guilty and shameful of in your self, you project onto others. What you see in the world as evil, you believe is the evil in you. The value of others and the world is that they serve as a mirror for your hidden guilt, shame and fear. Seeing it in others gives you the opportunity to forgive it in yourself as you forgive it in others. You know when all guilt and shame are completely removed from your unconscious mind when you look out and see a bright, clean, beautiful and innocent world. For your world is yourself. There is no separation. This is why it takes only one person to save the whole world — you.

Your faith will call the others to share your purpose, as the same purpose called forth the faith in you. And you will see the means you once employed to lead you to illusions transformed to means for truth. Truth calls for faith, and faith makes room for truth. When the Holy Spirit changed the purpose of your relationship by exchanging yours for His, the goal He placed there was extended to every situation in which you enter, or will ever enter. (R23 p369-370 VII.9.2-5)

Once we choose the Holy Spirit's goal of Atonement through forgiveness, every situation in our lives becomes a vehicle for helping us accomplish our purpose of realizing the truth of who we are.

You are no longer wholly insane, and no longer alone. For loneliness in God must be a dream. You whose relationship shares the Holy Spirit's goal are set apart from loneliness because the truth has come. Its call for faith is strong. Use not
your faithlessness against it, for it calls you to salvation and to peace. (R24 p370 VII.10.2-6)

The Holy Spirit's picture is the holy instant symbolized by Light, framed in the holy relationship. When we focus on the picture it becomes the real world, then the picture and frame disappear, and what is left is God.

The holy instant is a miniature of Heaven, sent you from Heaven. It is a picture, too, set in a frame. Yet if you accept this gift you will not see the frame at all, because the gift can only be accepted through your willingness to focus all your attention on the picture. The holy instant is a miniature of eternity. It is a picture of timelessness, set in a frame of time. If you focus on the picture, you will realize that it was only the frame that made you think it was a picture. Without the frame, the picture is seen as what it represents. For as the whole thought system of the ego lies in its gifts, so the whole of Heaven lies in this instant, borrowed from eternity and set in time for you.

Through forgiveness we realize the common goal we share in purpose with our brothers, which becomes a reflection of our oneness in Christ. The one purpose of our relationships with others in the world is to get us back to the only real relationship — our relationship with God in Spirit — which is the purpose of the holy relationship. The purpose of our special relationships is to keep us identified with the ego, the body and the world.

Two gifts are offered you. Each is complete, and cannot be partially accepted. Each is a picture of all that you can have, seen very differently. You cannot compare their value by comparing a picture to a frame. It must be the pictures only that you compare, or the comparison is wholly without meaning. Remember that it is the picture that is the gift. And only on this basis are you really free to choose. Look at the pictures. Both of them. One is a tiny picture, hard to see at all beneath the heavy shadows of its enormous and disproportionate enclosure. The other is lightly framed and hung in light, lovely to look upon for what it is. (R25 p360 IV.11-12)

The "two pictures" metaphor is inspired by Shakespeare's Hamlet. Throughout the Course, Jesus is presenting two thought systems, the ego's and the Holy Spirit's, and is asking us to look closely at them so we can make an enlightened decision.

You who have tried so hard, and are still trying, to fit the better picture into the wrong frame and so combine what cannot be combined, accept this and be glad: These pictures are each framed perfectly for what they represent. One is framed to be out of focus and not seen. The other is framed for perfect clarity. The picture of darkness and of death grows less convincing as you search it out amid its wrappings. As each senseless stone that seems to shine from the frame in darkness is exposed to light, it becomes dull and lifeless, and ceases to distract you from the picture. And finally you look upon the picture itself, seeing at last that, unprotected by the frame, it has no meaning.

The other picture is lightly framed, for time cannot contain eternity. There is no distraction here. The picture of Heaven and eternity grows more convincing as you look at it. And now, by real comparison, a transformation of both pictures can at last occur. And each is given its rightful place when both are seen in relation to each other. The dark picture, brought to light, is not perceived as fearful, but the fact that it is just a picture is brought home at last. And what you see there you will recognize as what it is; a picture of what you thought was real, and nothing more. For beyond this picture you will see nothing. (R25A p360-361 IV.13-14)

The ego's picture of death and guilt framed in special relationships, and the Holy Spirit's picture of the holy instant and Light framed in the holy relationship are mutually exclusive and cannot be combined. The Light of the holy instant shines away the darkness of the ego. It is common for people, however, to try to bring the Light into the ego's darkness while maintaining the ego's existence. This happens when we try to make the holy relationship a special, exclusive relationship. We will address this dynamic later in the chapter.

The holy relationship is referred to as if it is with a person or an entity. The holy relationship is a process that happens over time as we go back and forth from the special relationship to the holy relationship, until our fear abates enough that we can stay in the holy
relationship or holy instant. The holy relationship is the process of looking at the ego and choosing the Holy Spirit instead. The holy relationship is not a relationship you have with someone in a body in the world. The holy relationship happens at the decision making part of your mind in the process of looking at the ego with the Holy Spirit, and choosing for Christ instead of the ego.

The holy relationship, a major step toward the perception of the real world, is learned. It is the old, unholy relationship, transformed and seen anew. The holy relationship is a phenomenal teaching accomplishment. In all its aspects, as it begins, develops and becomes accomplished, it represents the reversal of the unholy relationship. Be comforted in this; the only difficult phase is the beginning. For here, the goal of the relationship is abruptly shifted to the exact opposite of what it was. This is the first result of offering the relationship to the Holy Spirit, to use for His purposes. This invitation is accepted immediately, and the Holy Spirit wastes no time in introducing the practical results of asking Him to enter. At once His goal replaces yours. This is accomplished very rapidly, but it makes the relationship seem disturbed, disjunctive and even quite distressing. (R26 p362 V.2-3.1-3)

As we begin to question the value of our special relationships, and see the tremendous pain and suffering they are causing us, we may feel a sense of disillusionment, distress and pending loss. This feeling is temporary.

Many relationships have been broken off at this point, and the pursuit of the old goal re-established in another relationship. For once the unholy relationship has accepted the goal of holiness, it can never again be what it was. The temptation of the ego becomes extremely intense with this shift in goals. For the relationship has not as yet been changed sufficiently to make its former goal completely without attraction, and its structure is "threatened" by the recognition of its inappropriateness for meeting its new purpose. The conflict between the goal and the structure of the relationship is so apparent that they cannot coexist. (R27 p362 V.3.8-9;V.4.1-3)

When we ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with our body or situations in our world, we are attempting to bring Their Light into our darkness for our personal benefit while maintaining our darkness. Attempting to use Jesus for our personal gain is trying to turn the holy relationship into an unholy, special relationship. Jesus and the Holy Spirit serve as our guides who lead us out of the world of illusion to the real world of spirit. When we ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help with our body and our world, we are doing exactly what the ego wants us to do by staying identified with the body and distracted by the world. This is what most religions do with their religious leaders, and is what the Christian Church has done with Jesus.

This is the time for faith. You let this goal be set for you. That was an act of faith. Do not abandon faith, now that the rewards of faith are being introduced. If you believed the Holy Spirit was there to accept the relationship, why would you now not still believe that He is there to purify what He has taken under His guidance? (R28 p363 V.6.1-5)

Your special relationships are the classroom in which the Holy Spirit teaches you of the holy relationship. Special relationships are not to be discarded, but are transformed as we turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance.

For your relationship has not been disrupted. It has been saved. You are very new in the ways of salvation, and think you have lost your way. Your way is lost, but think not this is loss. In your newness, remember that you and your brother have started again, together. And take his hand, to walk together along a road far more familiar than you now believe. (R29 p364 V.8.5-6;V.9.1-4)

As we shift back and forth from the special relationship to the holy relationship we may feel a sense of disruption and fluctuation in our relationships. One day we may feel love and forgiveness toward others, the next day we may feel resentment and anger. Our purpose is to continue to turn to the Holy Spirit for guidance to learn the lessons offered to us through relationships in our daily lives.

As you begin to recognize and accept the gifts you have so freely given to your brother, you will also accept the effects of the holy instant and use them to correct all your mistakes and free you from
their results. And learning this, you will have also learned how to release all the Sonship, and offer it in gladness and thanksgiving to Him Who gave you your release, and Who would extend it through you. (R30 p365 V.15)

Forgiveness is all inclusive. To exclude even one person from love and forgiveness is an attempt to turn the holy relationship into a special relationship. You must see the entire Sonship in Light or you will remain in your own darkness.

The strain of refusing faith to truth is enormous, and far greater than you realize. But to answer truth with faith entails no strain at all. To you who have acknowledged the Call of your Redeemer, the strain of not responding to His Call seems to be greater than before. This is not so. Before, the strain was there, but you attributed it to something else, believing that the "something else" produced it. This was never true. For what the "something else" produced was sorrow and depression, sickness and pain, darkness and dim imaginings of terror, cold fantasies of fear and fiery dreams of hell. And it was nothing but the intolerable strain of refusing to give faith to truth, and see its evident reality. (R31 p371 VIII.3.7-8;VIII.4)

The ego will resist forgiveness, love and complete acceptance, because unconditional love, forgiveness, and all inclusive acceptance mean the end of the ego's specialness. Resistance is to be expected as part of the learning process.

The passages below are from the section of the Text entitled "The Forgiven World" which is a particularly beautiful and powerful section. The forgiven world is a synonym for the real world.

Can you imagine how beautiful those you forgive will look to you? In no fantasy have you ever seen anything so lovely. Nothing you see here, sleeping or waking, comes near to such loveliness. And nothing will you value like unto this, nor hold so dear. Nothing that you remember that made your heart sing with joy has ever brought you even a little part of the happiness this sight will bring you. For you will see the Son of God. You will behold the beauty the Holy Spirit loves to look upon, and which He thanks the Father for. He was created to see this for you, until you learned to see it for yourself. And all His teaching leads to seeing it and giving thanks with Him.

This loveliness is not a fantasy. It is the real world, bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun. Nothing is hidden here, for everything has been forgiven and there are no fantasies to hide the truth. The bridge between that world and this is so little and so easy to cross, that you could not believe it is the meeting place of worlds so different. Yet this little bridge is the strongest thing that touches on this world at all. (R32 p352 II.1-2.1-5)

The stars will disappear in light, and the sun that opened up the world to beauty will vanish. Perception will be meaningless when it has been perfected, for everything that has been used for learning will have no function. Nothing will ever change; no shifts nor shadings, no differences, no variations that made perception possible will still occur. The perception of the real world will be so short that you will barely have time to thank God for it. For God will take the last step swiftly, when you have reached the real world and have been made ready for Him. The real world is attained simply by the complete forgiveness of the old, the world you see without forgiveness. (R33 p353 II.4-5.1)

All this beauty will rise to bless your sight as you look upon the world with forgiving eyes. For forgiveness literally transforms vision, and lets you see the real world reaching quietly and gently across chaos, removing all illusions that had twisted your perception and fixed it on the past. The smallest leaf becomes a thing of wonder, and a blade of grass a sign of God's perfection.

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From the forgiven world the Son of God is lifted easily into his home. And there he knows that he has always rested there in peace. Even salvation will become a dream, and vanish from his mind. For salvation is the end of dreams, and with the closing of the dream will have no meaning. Who, awake in Heaven, could dream that there could ever be need of salvation? (R34 p354 II.6-7)

The passage below is a description of the Light filled picture of the holy instant that disappears into the Great Light Who is God. While its beauty is
unparalleled, we are terrified of the Great Light as it means the end of our special separate existence.

The picture of light, in clear-cut and unmistakable contrast, is transformed into what lies beyond the picture. As you look on this, you realize that it is not a picture, but a reality. This is no figured representation of a thought system, but the Thought itself. What it represents is there. The frame fades gently and God rises to your remembrance, offering you the whole of creation in exchange for your little picture, wholly without value and entirely deprived of meaning.

As God ascends into His rightful place and you to yours, you will experience again the meaning of relationship and know it to be true. Let us ascend in peace together to the Father, by giving Him ascendance in our minds. We will gain everything by giving Him the power and the glory, and keeping no illusions of where they are. They are in us, through His ascendance. What He has given is His. It shines in every part of Him, as in the whole. The whole reality of your relationship with Him lies in our relationship to one another. The holy instant shines alike on all relationships, for in it they are one. For here is only healing, already complete and perfect. For here is God, and where He is only the perfect and complete can be.

(R35 p361 IV.15-16)

End Chapter Seventeen
CHAPTER EIGHTEEN
THE PASSING OF THE DREAM

Main Theme: This chapter addresses the purpose of the body and world from the ego's point of view, and how the Holy Spirit uses the body and world to undo the thought system of the ego, and to facilitate our awakening from the ego's nightmare of separation.

As you read this chapter of the Text you will notice the beauty of the language, and the richness and depth of the teaching become more and more apparent.

Introduction: "The body was not made by love, yet love does not condemn it, and can use it lovingly." The body was made by the ego; not God. God does not condemn the body and world, but uses the body as a means to help awaken us from the dream.

We start again by looking at the Atonement.

There is nothing outside you. That is what you must ultimately learn, for it is the realization that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you. For God created only this, and He did not depart from it nor leave it separate from Himself. The Kingdom of Heaven is the dwelling place of the Son of God, who left not his Father and dwells not apart from Him. Heaven is not a place nor a condition. It is merely an awareness of perfect Oneness, and the knowledge that there is nothing else; nothing outside this Oneness, and nothing else within. What could God give but knowledge of Himself? What else is there to give? The belief that you could give and get something else, something outside yourself, has cost you the awareness of Heaven and of your Identity. (Reference 1 p384 VI.1.1-2.1-3)

For your wish to make destructive what cannot destroy can have no real effect at all. What God created is only what He would have it be, being His Will. You cannot make His Will destructive. You can make fantasies in which your will conflicts with His, but that is all. (R2p385VI.5.4-7)

There is no barrier between God and His Son, nor can His Son be separated from Himself except in illusions. This is not his reality, though he believes it is. Yet this could only be if God were wrong. God would have had to create differently, and to have separated Himself from His Son to make this possible. He would have had to create different things, and to establish different orders of reality, only some of which were love. Yet love must be forever like itself, changeless forever, and forever without alternative. And so it is. You cannot put a barrier around yourself, because God placed none between Himself and you. (R3 p386 VI.9.3-10)

When the Son accepts the Atonement, realizing the separation from God never happened, the ego dissolves. So the ego devises a plan to maintain its separate existence by convincing the Son that the separation from God is real, it is a sin that evokes guilt, and the Son should fear the revenge of God. To "get rid" of the sin, guilt and fear from the Son's mind, the ego makes a body and a world onto which it projects its sin, guilt and fear. The body and world serve as a distraction, keeping the Son focused on the body and world, and out of his mind where he would realize his error of believing the ego, and he could choose again; this time for the Holy Spirit and the Atonement thereby dissolving the ego.

And you have done a stranger thing than you yet realize. You have displaced your guilt to your body from your mind. Yet a body cannot be guilty, for it can do nothing of itself. You who think you hate your body deceive yourself. You hate your mind, for guilt has entered into it, and it would remain separate from your brother's, which it cannot do. Minds are joined; bodies are not. Only by assigning to the mind the properties of the body does separation seem to be possible. And it is mind that seems to be fragmented and private and alone. Its guilt, which keeps it separate, is projected to the body, which suffers and dies because it is attacked to hold the separation in the mind, and let it not know its Identity. (R4 p385 VI.2.4-8;VI.3.1-4)

It is insane to use the body as the scapegoat for guilt, directing its attack and blaming it for what you wished it to do. (R5 p385 VI.6.1)

You have identified with this thing you hate, the instrument of vengeance and the perceived source of your guilt. You have done this to a thing that
has no meaning, proclaiming it to be the dwelling place of God's Son, and turning it against him. (R6 p386 VI.6.7-8)

The body and world serve as a veil of forgetfulness of who we truly are — Christ in Spirit. The ego tells us that in the world we are safe from sin, guilt, fear and the wrath of God, because we have other people to blame, and as they are the sinners, we are innocent. But the ego does not tell us the world of bodies is a fabrication of the ego and has no separate existence apart from our own mind. When we question the reality of the world, we begin our journey back to the sanity in our right mind where we will remember the truth of our Identity with God through the Holy Spirit.

From the world of bodies, made by insanity, insane messages seem to be returned to the mind that made it. And these messages bear witness to this world, pronouncing it as true. For you sent forth these messengers to bring this back to you. Everything these messages relay to you is quite external. There are no messages that speak of what lies underneath, for it is not the body that could speak of this. Its eyes perceive it not; its senses remain quite unaware of it; its tongue cannot relay its messages. (R7 p394 IX.3.1-6)

The ego needs us to believe that we are powerless victims of a separate world outside of our control. If we realize the power of our mind as the Son of God, we will choose against the ego and it will dissolve.

To improve clarity in the two passages below, the pronoun "it" is replaced with its corresponding [noun].

The circle of fear lies just below the level the body sees, and seems to be the whole foundation on which the world is based. Here are all the illusions, all the twisted thoughts, all the insane attacks, the fury, the vengeance and betrayal that were made to keep the guilt in place, so that the world could rise from [guilt] and keep [guilt] hidden. [Guilt's] shadow rises to the surface, enough to hold its most external manifestations in [the] darkness [of the ego's world], and to bring despair and loneliness to [the ego's world] and keep it joyless. Yet [guilt's] intensity is veiled by its heavy coverings, and kept apart from what was made [the ego's body] to keep [guilt] hidden.

The body cannot see [guilt], for the body arose from [guilt] for [guilt's] protection, which depends on keeping [guilt] not seen. The body's eyes will never look on [guilt]. Yet they will see what [guilt] dictates.

In the Heaven-Knowledge Chart the "circle of fear" refers to the wrong mind of the ego which is based on the belief in separation, sin and guilt, and the fear of God's wrath for separating from Him. Sin, guilt and fear are fabrications of the ego to maintain its separate existence. Without sin, guilt and fear the ego is dead. To keep the Son as its ally, the ego makes the world of bodies onto which it projects the sin, guilt and fear out of the Son's mind and tells him he is innocent; it is the world that is sinful and guilty, not me. The world was made to keep sin and guilt real, but to keep it out of the Son's mind, thereby maintaining the ego's separate existence and its face of innocence in the eyes of the ego's god.

The body will remain guilt's messenger, and will act as [guilt] directs as long as you believe that guilt is real. For the reality of guilt is the illusion that seems to make [guilt] heavy and opaque, impenetrable, and a real foundation for the ego's thought system. [Guilt's] thinness and transparency are not apparent until you see the light behind it. And then you see it as a fragile veil before the light. (R8 p394 IX.4-5)

When we consciously bring the darkness of guilt to the light of forgiveness, and see it through the Holy Spirit's vision of love, we begin to wake up to the truth of our Identity with the innocence of Christ.

Now we will look more closely at the ego's use of the body as a distraction and defense against the Atonement.

You still have too much faith in the body as a source of strength. What plans do you make that do not involve its comfort or protection or enjoyment in some way? This makes the body an end and not a means in your interpretation, and this always means you still find sin attractive. No one accepts Atonement for himself who still accepts sin as his goal. You have thus not met your one responsibility. Atonement is not welcomed by those who prefer pain and destruction. (R9 p388 VII.1)
When we identify with the body we are identified with the illusion of separation and specialness. To wake up from the dream of separation, the identity with the body must be seen as illusory. Our true identity with spirit, and our identity with the body are mutually exclusive.

It is only the awareness of the body that makes love seem limited. For the body is a limit on love. The belief in limited love was its origin, and it was made to limit the unlimited. Think not that this is merely allegorical, for it was made to limit you. Can you who see yourself within a body know yourself as an idea [the Thought of God – Love – Christ]? Everything you recognize you identify with externals, something outside itself. You cannot even think of God without a body, or in some form you think you recognize.

True love is in our identity with spirit. There is no love in the body or the world. The body and world are made specifically to block love. This is why we experience so much pain and suffering in our search for love in the world of bodies: love is not there! The Holy Spirit guides us to the true source of love by gently turning us away from the ego, body and world, and to the eternal love of Christ — our true Identity with God.

The body cannot know. And while you limit your awareness to its tiny senses, you will not see the grandeur that surrounds you. God cannot come into a body, nor can you join Him there. Limits on love will always seem to shut Him out, and keep you apart from Him. The body is a tiny fence around a little part of a glorious and complete idea. It draws a circle, infinitely small, around a very little segment of Heaven, splintered from the whole, proclaiming that within it is your kingdom, where God can enter not. Within this kingdom the ego rules, and cruelly. And to defend this little speck of dust it bids you fight against the universe. (R10 p390 VIII.1-3.1-2)

The body is the "embodiment" of the original thought of separation from God. The Atonement is the thought that the separation from God never happened. The Atonement undoes the separation from God, undoes the body, and undoes the ego; this is the ego's terror, and why it fights like hell against the Atonement and everything in the universe that threatens its special separate existence.

Such is the strange position in which those in a world inhabited by bodies seem to be. Each body seems to house a separate mind, a disconnected thought, living alone and in no way joined to the Thought by which it was created. Each tiny fragment seems to be self-contained, needing another for some things, but by no means totally dependent on its one Creator for everything; needing the whole to give it any meaning, for by itself it does mean nothing. Nor has it any life apart and by itself. (R11 p391 VII.5)

The divided ego-self, the body and world with which we identify, is unknown to God, as God knows only our perfect, undivided wholeness as Christ. When we choose to be separate from the unconditional love of God in spirit, we seek for substitutions in the form of special love in the world of separation we made.

To substitute is to choose between, renouncing one aspect of the Sonship in favor of the other. For this special purpose, one is judged more valuable and the other is replaced by him. The relationship in which the substitution occurred is thus fragmented, and its purpose split accordingly. To fragment is to exclude, and substitution is the strongest defense the ego has for separation. (R12 p372 I.1.3-6)

The one emotion in which substitution is impossible is love. Fear involves substitution by definition, for it is love's replacement. Fear is both a fragmented and fragmenting emotion. It seems to take many forms, and each one seems to require a different form of acting out for satisfaction. While this appears to introduce quite variable behavior, a far more serious effect lies in the fragmented perception from which the behavior stems. No one is seen complete. The body is emphasized, with special emphasis on certain parts, and used as the standard for comparison of acceptance or rejection for acting out a special form of fear.

Once we believe the ego's mythology of separation, sin and guilt, God is not the God of love, but becomes the god of fear.

You who believe that God is fear made but one substitution. It has taken many forms, because it was the substitution of illusion for truth; of fragmentation for wholeness. It has become so
splintered and subdivided and divided again, over and over, that it is now almost impossible to perceive it once was one, and still is what it was. That one error, which brought truth to illusion, infinity to time, and life to death, was all you ever made. Your whole world rests upon it. Everything you see reflects it, and every special relationship that you have ever made is part of it.

The passage above is profound and worth reading again. Once we believe in the original separation from God, the whole universe is projected and seen as separate fragments unrelated to the whole. The entire universe arises out of the one original thought of separation from God. This is why there is no order of difficulty in miracles, and no hierarchy of illusions; by healing the one original illusory thought of separation, the whole universe is healed — in your mind.

You may be surprised to hear how very different is reality from what you see. You do not realize the magnitude of that one error. It was so vast and so completely incredible that from it a world of total unreality had to emerge. What else could come of it? Its fragmented aspects are fearful enough, as you begin to look at them. But nothing you have seen begins to show you the enormity of the original error, which seemed to cast you out of Heaven, to shatter knowledge into meaningless bits of disunited perceptions, and to force you to make further substitutions. That was the first projection of error outward. The world arose to hide it, and became the screen on which it was projected and drawn between you and the truth. (R13 p372-373 I.3-6.1-2)

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The original error of separation is in the mind, and is projected out making the world, and making the world appear to be divided and in need of healing. But the healing can only take place at the source of separation and sickness, which is in the mind. The body and world cannot be healed and united because they are not sick or divided. Seeking for love and healing in the world or for the world is to seek endlessly in darkness for nothing. The world does not exist apart from the mind that made it. The mind must be healed, not the body or world.

Call it not sin but madness, for such it was and so it still remains. Invest it not with guilt, for guilt implies it was accomplished in reality. And above all, be not afraid of it. (R14 p373 I.6.7-9)

The resolution of sin and guilt is in the realization that they are not real because separation from God never happened. Guilt says sin is real and must be punished which evokes fear — it is all illusory.

Our pathetic substitutions for God's unconditional love are our special love and hate relationships.

Your little, senseless substitutions, touched with insanity and swirling lightly off on a mad course like feathers dancing insanely in the wind, have no substance. They fuse and merge and separate, in shifting and totally meaningless patterns that need not be judged at all. To judge them individually is pointless. Their tiny differences in form are no real differences at all. None of them matters. That they have in common and nothing else. Yet what else is necessary to make them all the same? (R15 p373 I.7.6-12)

Now we will look at the world through the symbolism of the dream, and show that our sleeping dreams and our waking dreams are the same.

Dreams are perceptual temper tantrums, in which you literally scream, "I want it thus!" And thus it seems to be. (R16 p376 II.4)

In our dreams we want to prove the separation is real, and we want someone else to be punished for it.

Dreams show you that you have the power to make a world as you would have it be, and that because you want it you see it. And while you see it you do not doubt that it is real. Yet here is a world, clearly within your mind, that seems to be outside. You do not respond to it as though you made it, nor do you realize that the emotions the dream produces must come from you. It is the figures in the dream and what they do that seem to make the dream. You do not realize that you are making them act out for you, for if you did the guilt would not be theirs, and the illusion of satisfaction would be gone. In dreams these features are not obscure. You seem to waken, and the dream is gone. Yet what you fail to recognize is that what caused the dream has not gone with it. (R17 p376 II.5.1-9)
The cause of the dream is guilt, and the purpose of the dream is to provide someone onto whom you can project your guilt to maintain your innocence in the eyes of your god of fear.

Your wish to make another world that is not real remains with you. And what you seem to waken to is but another form of this same world you see in dreams. All your time is spent in dreaming. Your sleeping and your waking dreams have different forms, and that is all. Their content is the same. They are your protest against reality, and your fixed and insane idea that you can change it. In your waking dreams, the special relationship has a special place. It is the means by which you try to make your sleeping dreams come true. From this, you do not waken. The special relationship is your determination to keep your hold on unreality, and to prevent yourself from waking. And while you see more value in sleeping than in waking, you will not let go of it. (R17A p376 II.5.10-20)

Your original sleeping dream is that you have separated from God; and in your waking dreams the people in your special relationships serve as dumping grounds for your sin and guilt, so you can sustain your dream of separation from God and have your innocence too.

Now we will shift to the Holy Spirit's use of the body and world as a way out of the nightmare we made.

It [the mind] can project its guilt, but it will not lose it through projection. And though it clearly can misperceive the function of the body, it cannot change its function from what the Holy Spirit establishes it to be. The body was not made by love. Yet love does not condemn it and can use it lovingly, respecting what the Son of God has made and using it to save him from illusions. Would you not have the instruments of separation reinterpreted as means for salvation, and used for purposes of love? Would you not welcome and support the shift from fantasies of vengeance to release from them? Your perception of the body can clearly be sick, but project not this upon the body. (R18 p385 VI.4.5-8; VI.5.1-3)

The Holy Spirit does not punish the body, as the ego claimed, but respects the power of our mind and what it made, and uses the body for a loving purpose to help wake us from our nightmare.

There is no violence at all in this escape. The body is not attacked, but simply properly perceived. It does not limit you, merely because you would not have it so. (R19 p387 VI.13.1-3)

The sudden expansion of awareness that takes place with your desire for it is the irresistible appeal the holy instant holds. It calls to you to be yourself, within its safe embrace. There are the laws of limit lifted for you, to welcome you to openness of mind and freedom. Come to this place of refuge, where you can be yourself in peace. Not through destruction, not through a breaking out, but merely by a quiet melting in. For peace will join you there, simply because you have been willing to let go the limits you have placed upon love, and joined it where it is and where it led you, in answer to its gentle call to be at peace. (R20 p388 VI.14.2-7)

By choosing the holy instant the imaginary shackles of the body are dissolved, and the peace we had been seeking through the body and world is found in our timeless identity with the love of the Holy Spirit.

There is one thing that you have never done; you have not utterly forgotten the body. It has perhaps faded at times from your sight, but it has not yet completely disappeared. You are not asked to let this happen for more than an instant, yet it is in this instant that the miracle of Atonement happens. Afterwards you will see the body again, but never quite the same. And every instant that you spend without awareness of it gives you a different view of it when you return.

The body is the effect of the original thought of separation. Through accepting the Atonement, the original thought of separation is undone, and with it the experience of the separate body. In the holy instant there is no thought of the body, and therefore no separation; there is only the wholeness of our true self as spirit. The body does not physically disappear, but your identity has shifted from the body to spirit.

At no single instant does the body exist at all. It is always remembered or anticipated, but never experienced just now. Only its past and future...
make it seem real. Time controls it entirely, for sin is never wholly in the present. In any single instant the attraction of guilt would be experienced as pain and nothing else, and would be avoided. It has no attraction now. Its whole attraction is imaginary, and therefore must be thought of in the past or in the future.

(R21 p388-389 VII.2-3)

The holy instant is a shift in identity from the body to spirit, and happens in the mind; not in the body or the world.

To do anything involves the body. And if you recognize you need do nothing, you have withdrawn the body’s value from your mind. Here is the quick and open door through which you slip past centuries of effort, and escape from time. This is the way in which sin loses all attraction right now. For here is time denied, and past and future gone. Who needs do nothing has no need for time. To do nothing is to rest, and make a place within you where the activity of the body ceases to demand attention. Into this place the Holy Spirit comes, and there abides. He will remain when you forget, and the body's activities return to occupy your conscious mind.

Sin, guilt and fear form the ego's projection of linear time: Sin is the past, guilt is the present, and fear is the future. In the holy instant linear time collapses along with sin, guilt and fear. In their place is the eternal present — the love of God.

Yet there will always be this place of rest to which you can return. And you will be more aware of this quiet center of the storm than all its raging activity. This quiet center, in which you do nothing, will remain with you, giving you rest in the midst of every busy doing on which you are sent. For from this center will you be directed how to use the body sinlessly. It is this center, from which the body is absent, that will keep it so in your awareness of it. (R22 p390 VII.7-8)

The Holy Spirit uses the body as a communication device in the world for reflecting the love of God through forgiveness and the Atonement.

* Now we take a look at our special relationships and our attempt to use them as a substitute for God's love.

Let them all go, dancing in the wind, dipping and turning till they disappear from sight, far, far outside of you. And turn you to the stately calm within, where in holy stillness dwells the living God you never left, and Who never left you. The Holy Spirit takes you gently by the hand, and retraces with you your mad journey outside yourself, leading you gently back to the truth and safety within. He brings all your insane projections and the wild substitutions that you have placed outside you to the truth. Thus He reverses the course of insanity and restores you to reason.

Through the holy instant, the Holy Spirit leads us out of the illusory body and world, back within to our right mind where we choose the holy relationship rather than the special relationship.

In your relationship with your brother, where He [the Holy Spirit] has taken charge of everything at your request, He has set the course inward to the truth you share. In the mad world outside you nothing can be shared but only substituted, and sharing and substituting have nothing in common in reality. Within yourself you love your brother with a perfect love. Here is holy ground, in which no substitution can enter, and where only the truth in your brother can abide. Here you are joined in God, as much together as you are with Him. The original error has not entered here, nor ever will. (R23 p373-374 I.8-9.1-6)

In the Atonement everyone is included in God's love without exception. Love is all inclusive, not "special."

He loves you both, equally and as one. And as He loves you, so you are. You are not joined together in illusions, but in the Thought so holy and so perfect that illusions cannot remain to darken the holy place in which you stand together.

(R24 p374 I.10.5-7)

Heaven is restored to all the Sonship through your relationship, for in it lies the Sonship, whole and beautiful, safe in your love. Heaven has entered quietly, for all illusions have been gently brought unto the truth in you, and love has shined upon you, blessing your relationship with truth.

(R25 p374 I.11.1-2)
To forgive one is to forgive all. To exclude one is to exclude all. Love is unconditional and all inclusive. We become aware of God's unconditional love as the Holy Spirit helps us let go of our "special" love, which is not love, but guilt and fear.

Whom God has called should hear no substitutes. Their call is but an echo of the original error that shattered Heaven. And what became of peace in those who heard? Return with me to Heaven, walking together with your brother out of this world and through another, to the loveliness and joy the other holds within it. (R26 p375 I.12.1-4)

You have been called, together with your brother, to the most holy function this world contains. It is the only one that has no limits, and reaches out to every broken fragment of the Sonship with healing and uniting comfort. This is offered you, in your holy relationship. Accept it here, and you will give as you have accepted. The peace of God is given you with the glowing purpose in which you join with your brother. The holy light that brought you and him together must extend, as you accepted it. (R27 p375 I.13)

Our function in the world of special relationships is to be a reflection of the forgiveness and the Atonement of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, ever practical in His wisdom, accepts your dreams and uses them as means for waking. You would have used them to remain asleep. I said before that the first change, before dreams disappear, is that your dreams of fear are changed to happy dreams. That is what the Holy Spirit does in the special relationship. He does not destroy it, nor snatch it away from you. But He does use it differently, as a help to make His purpose real to you. The special relationship will remain, not as a source of pain and guilt, but as a source of joy and freedom. It will not be for you alone, for therein lay its misery. As its unholliness kept it a thing apart, its holiness will become an offering to everyone. Your special relationship will be a means for undoing guilt in everyone blessed through your holy relationship. It will be a happy dream, and one which you will share with all who come within your sight. (R28 p377 II.6-7.1-2)

And He will waken everyone through you who offered your relationship to Him. If you but recognized His gratitude! Or mine through His! For we are joined as in one purpose, being of one mind with Him. Let not the dream take hold to close your eyes. It is not strange that dreams can make a world that is unreal. It is the wish to make it that is incredible. Your relationship with your brother has now become one in which the wish has been removed, because its purpose has been changed from one of dreams to one of truth. (R29 p377 II.7.7-9;II.8)

By turning to the Holy Spirit, our perception of the purpose of the world changes. The purpose of our world becomes Atonement through forgiveness; rather than serving as a dumping ground for guilt.

Now we turn to another beautiful and powerful section in the Text called "The Little Garden." The ego's idea of the perfect garden is one of specialness and exclusion. The Holy Spirit's perfect garden is of inclusiveness and acceptance of all.

The Thought of God surrounds your little kingdom, waiting at the barrier you built to come inside and shine upon the barren ground. See how life springs up everywhere! The desert becomes a garden, green and deep and quiet, offering rest to those who lost their way and wander in the dust. Give them a place of refuge, prepared by love for them where once a desert was. And everyone you welcome will bring love with him from Heaven for you. They enter one by one into this holy place, but they will not depart as they had come, alone. The love they brought with them will stay with them, as it will stay with you. And under its beneficence your little garden will expand, and reach out to everyone who thirsts for living water, but has grown too weary to go on alone. (R30 p392 VIII.9)

No part of love calls on the whole in vain. No Son of God remains outside His Fatherhood. (R31 p393 VIII.11.7-8)

The ego is on a journey from insanity, through the world, and on to sanity.

You have reached the end of an ancient journey, not realizing yet that it is over. You are still worn and tired, and the desert's dust still seems to
cloud your eyes and keep you sightless. Yet He Whom you welcomed has come to you, and would welcome you. He has waited long to give you this. Receive it now of Him, for He would have you know Him. Only a little wall of dust still stands between you and your brother. Blow on it lightly and with happy laughter, and it will fall away. And walk into the garden love has prepared for both of you. (R32 p393 VIII.13)

The little wall of dust that stands between us and our brothers is sin, guilt and fear.

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Jesus and the Holy Spirit are always with us as we journey on. We can let go of the ego's hand knowing we have Jesus by our side.

You who hold your brother's hand also hold mine, for when you joined each other you were not alone. Do you believe that I would leave you in the darkness that you agreed to leave with me? (R33 p379 III.4)

Jesus cannot help "fix" our special relationships because the purpose of the special relationship is to exclude him and the Holy Spirit. But if we ask him, he will help us turn to the holy relationship with the Holy Spirit instead.

I hold your hand as surely as you agreed to take your brother's. You will not separate, for I stand with you and walk with you in your advance to truth. And where we go we carry God with us. In your relationship you have joined with me in bringing Heaven to the Son of God, who hid in darkness. You have been willing to bring the darkness to light, and this willingness has given strength to everyone who would remain in darkness. Those who would see will see. And they will join with me in carrying their light into the darkness, when the darkness in them is offered to the light, and is removed forever. My need for you, joined with me in the holy light of your relationship, is your need for salvation. Would I not give you what you gave to me? For when you joined your brother, you answered me. (R34 p379 III.5.5-7;III.6)

The purpose we share with our brothers is of forgiveness and Atonement. When we join hands with our brothers in forgiveness, our relationship becomes holy and Jesus walks with us.

Now we will look at our journey Home as a process that happens over time. The truth does not take time, but our fear slows our realization and acceptance of the truth.

As the light comes nearer you will rush to darkness, shrinking from the truth, sometimes retreating to the lesser forms of fear, and sometimes to stark terror. But you will advance, because your goal is the advance from fear to truth. The goal you accepted is the goal of knowledge, for which you signified your willingness. Fear seems to live in darkness, and when you are afraid you have stepped back. Let us then join quickly in an instant of light, and it will be enough to remind you that your goal is light. (R35 p378 III.2)

Yet God can bring you there [to the Light], if you are willing to follow the Holy Spirit through seeming terror, trusting Him not to abandon you and leave you there. For it is not His purpose to frighten you, but only yours. You are severely tempted to abandon Him at the outside ring of fear, but He would lead you safely through and far beyond. (R36 p394 IX.3.7-9)

The passage above alerts us to the fact that we will likely experience fear and resistance as the darkness of sin and guilt in our mind is brought into the light of awareness. As we continue looking at the darkness of sin and guilt with the Holy Spirit, the darkness fades into the nothingness from which it rose.

This heavy-seeming barrier [guilt], this artificial floor that looks like rock, is like a bank of low dark clouds that seem to be a solid wall before the sun. Its impenetrable appearance is wholly an illusion. It gives way softly to the mountain tops that rise above it, and has no power at all to hold back anyone willing to climb above it and see the sun. It is not strong enough to stop a button's fall, nor hold a feather. Nothing can rest upon it, for it is but an illusion of a foundation. Try but to touch it and it disappears; attempt to grasp it and your hands hold nothing.

Yet in this cloud bank it is easy to see a whole world rising. A solid mountain range, a lake, a city, all rise in your imagination, and from the clouds the messengers of your perception return
to you, assuring you that it is there. Figures stand out and move about, actions seem real, and forms appear and shift from loveliness to the grotesque. And back and forth they go, as long as you would play the game of children's make-believe. Yet however long you play it, and regardless of how much imagination you bring to it, you do not confuse it with the world below, nor seek to make it real.

So should it be with the dark clouds of guilt, no more impenetrable and no more substantial. You will not bruise yourself against them in traveling through. Let your Guide teach you their unsubstantial nature as He leads you past them, for beneath them is a world of light whereon they cast no shadows. Their shadows lie upon the world beyond them, still further from the light. Yet from them to the light their shadows cannot fall. (R37 p395 IX.6-8)

The holy instant is the result of your determination to be holy. It is the answer. The desire and the willingness to let it come precede its coming. You prepare your mind for it only to the extent of recognizing that you want it above all else. It is not necessary that you do more; indeed, it is necessary that you realize that you cannot do more. Do not attempt to give the Holy Spirit what He does not ask, or you will add the ego to Him and confuse the two. He asks but little. It is He Who adds the greatness and the might. He joins with you to make the holy instant far greater than you can understand. It is your realization that you need do so little that enables Him to give so much.

We are to be aware of the dynamics of ego, and let them be. We are not to try to control, change or manipulate the ego, but we are to look at it with the Holy Spirit Who forgives all, heals all, and does all. The Holy Spirit does everything; you do nothing, but give everything to Him.

Trust not your good intentions. They are not enough. But trust implicitly your willingness, whatever else may enter. Concentrate only on this, and be not disturbed that shadows surround it. That is why you came. If you could come without them you would not need the holy instant. (R38 p380 IV.1;IV.2.1-6)

You find it difficult to accept the idea that you need give so little, to receive so much. And it is very hard for you to realize it is not personally insulting that your contribution and the Holy Spirit's are so extremely disproportionate. You are still convinced that your understanding is a powerful contribution to the truth, and makes it what it is. Yet we have emphasized that you need understand nothing. Salvation is easy just because it asks nothing you cannot give right now.

Forget not that it has been your decision to make everything that is natural and easy for you impossible. If you believe the holy instant is difficult for you, it is because you have become the arbiter of what is possible, and remain unwilling to give place to One Who knows. The whole belief in orders of difficulty in miracles is centered on this. Everything God wills is not only possible, but has already happened. And that is why the past has gone. It never happened in reality. Only in your mind, which thought it did, is its undoing needful. (R39 p382 IV.7.3-7;IV.8)

Now we will look at the gentle shift from the ego's nightmare, to the happy dream, and on to our awakening to the real world.

Prepare you now for the undoing of what never was. If you already understood the difference between truth and illusion, the Atonement would have no meaning. The holy instant, the holy relationship, the Holy Spirit's teaching, and all the means by which salvation is accomplished, would have no purpose. For they are all but aspects of the plan to change your dreams of fear to happy dreams, from which you waken easily to knowledge. Put yourself not in charge of this, for you cannot distinguish between advance and retreat. Some of your greatest advances you have judged as failures, and some of your deepest retreats you have evaluated as success. (R40 p382-383 V.1)

Through your holy relationship, reborn and blessed in every holy instant you do not arrange, thousands will rise to Heaven with you. Can you plan for this? Or could you prepare yourself for such a function? Yet it is possible, because God wills it. Nor will He change His Mind about it. The means and purpose both belong to Him. You have accepted one; the other will be provided. A
purpose such as this, without the means, is inconceivable. He will provide the means to anyone who shares His purpose. (R41 p383 V.3)

We choose the purpose — we want to leave the ego's hell of specialness, individuality, pain and suffering. The means is provided in the Holy Spirit's ability to transform our special relationships into the holy relationship.

It is no dream to love your brother as yourself. Nor is your holy relationship a dream. All that remains of dreams within it is that it is still a special relationship. Yet it is very useful to the Holy Spirit, Who has a special function here. It will become the happy dream through which He can spread joy to thousands on thousands who believe that love is fear, not happiness. Let Him fulfill the function that He gave to your relationship by accepting it for you, and nothing will be wanting that would make of it what He would have it be. When you feel the holiness of your relationship is threatened by anything, stop instantly and offer the Holy Spirit your willingness, in spite of fear, to let Him exchange this instant for the holy one that you would rather have. He will never fail in this. (R42 p383-384 V.5-6.1-2)

The Holy Spirit is with us eternally. When we are experiencing conflict we are to ask the Holy Spirit to help us see through the light of His eyes. Through the vision of the Holy Spirit all is forgiven; the Atonement is accepted and we move on to the real world.

This world of light, this circle of brightness is the real world, where guilt meets with forgiveness. Here the world outside is seen anew, without the shadow of guilt upon it. Here are you forgiven, for here you have forgiven everyone. Here is the new perception, where everything is bright and shining with innocence, washed in the waters of forgiveness, and cleansed of every evil thought you laid upon it. (R43 p395 IX.9.1-4)

Yet even forgiveness is not the end. Forgiveness does make lovely, but it does not create. It is the source of healing, but it is the messenger of love and not its Source. Here you are led, that God Himself can take the final step unhindered, for here does nothing interfere with love, letting it be itself. A step beyond this holy place of forgiveness, a step still further inward but the one you cannot take, transports you to something completely different. Here is the Source of light; nothing perceived, forgiven nor transformed. But merely known.

This course will lead to knowledge, but knowledge itself is still beyond the scope of our curriculum. Nor is there any need for us to try to speak of what must forever lie beyond words. We need remember only that whoever attains the real world, beyond which learning cannot go, will go beyond it, but in a different way. Where learning ends there God begins, for learning ends before Him Who is complete where He begins, and where there is no end. It is not for us to dwell on what cannot be attained. There is too much to learn. The readiness for knowledge still must be attained. Love is not learned. Its meaning lies within itself. And learning ends when you have recognized all it is not. That is the interference; that is what needs to be undone. (R44 p395-396 IX.10-12.1-4)

And when the memory of God has come to you in the holy place of forgiveness you will remember nothing else, and memory will be as useless as learning, for your only purpose will be creating. Yet this you cannot know until every perception has been cleansed and purified, and finally removed forever. Forgiveness removes only the untrue, lifting the shadows from the world and carrying it, safe and sure within its gentleness, to the bright world of new and clean perception. There is your purpose now. And it is there that peace awaits you. (R45 p396 IX.14)

And finally we reach the end of the journey which never began.

Not one light in Heaven but goes with you. Not one Ray that shines forever in the Mind of God but shines on you. Heaven is joined with you in your advance to Heaven. When such great lights have joined with you to give the little spark of your desire the power of God Himself, can you remain in darkness? You and your brother are coming home together, after a long and meaningless journey that you undertook apart, and that led nowhere. You have found your brother, and you will light each other's way. And
from this light will the Great Rays extend back into darkness and forward unto God, to shine away the past and so make room for His eternal Presence, in which everything is radiant in the light. (R46 p380 III.8)

End Chapter Eighteen
CHAPTER NINETEEN
THE ATTAINMENT OF PEACE

Main Themes: Overcoming the four obstacles to peace. And sin versus error.

Introduction: This chapter addresses the ego's strategy and purpose for making the body. The first three obstacles to peace address how the ego uses the body as a distraction to keep us out of our mind, away from the Holy Spirit, and focused in the world. The fourth obstacle to peace is the fear of God's punishment for our sin, and also the fear of God's unconditional love.

First Obstacle to Peace: The desire to get rid of it. The attraction of guilt.
Second Obstacle to Peace: The belief that the body is valuable for what it offers. The attraction of pain.
Third Obstacle to Peace: The attraction of death. The incorruptible body.
Fourth Obstacle to Peace: The fear of God. The lifting of the veil.

Also, we will look at the holy relationship and see how the Holy Spirit uses the body as an instrument of healing rather than attack.

Here is a brief summary of the Obstacles to Peace we will cover later in the chapter:

Every obstacle that peace must flow across is surmounted in just the same way; the fear that raised it yields to the love beyond, and so the fear is gone. And so it is with this. [Obstacle 1:] The desire to get rid of peace and drive the Holy Spirit from you fades in the presence of the quiet recognition that you love Him. [Obstacle 2:] The exaltation of the body is given up in favor of the spirit, which you love as you could never love the body. [Obstacle 3:] And the appeal of death is lost forever as love's attraction stirs and calls to you. [Obstacle 4: Overcoming the fear of God's Love:] From beyond each of the obstacles to love, Love Itself has called. And each has been surmounted by the power of the attraction of what lies beyond. Your wanting fear seemed to be holding them in place. Yet when you heard the Voice of Love beyond them, you answered and they disappeared. (p420-421 IV.D.5)

We begin with a statement of the Atonement principle. There is one Will in the universe and that is God's Will of love and perfect oneness. All else is a projection of the ego mind, which is no power at all.

God's Will is One, not many. It has no opposition, for there is none beside it. (Ref. 1 p408 IV.A.3.5-6)

In the passage below we address the concepts of sin versus error in the eyes of the Holy Spirit.

The Son of God can be mistaken; he can deceive himself; he can even turn the power of his mind against himself. But he cannot sin. There is nothing he can do that would really change his reality in any way, nor make him really guilty. That is what sin would do, for such is its purpose. Yet for all the wild insanity inherent in the whole idea of sin, it is impossible. For the wages of sin is death [Reference to St. Paul's statement], and how can the immortal die? [Reference to the Bhagavad-Gita] (R2 p402 II.3)

The ego's strategy is to convince us that the separation from God really happened, sin is real which leads to guilt and the fear of punishment. To avoid punishment the ego makes a body and world onto which it projects its sin and guilt. In truth the separation from God never happened, sin is not real, our guilt was based on a false premise, and God has no interest in punishment. If we get back to our mind, and look at our sin, guilt and fear with the Holy Spirit, we will realize our mistake in believing the ego's story, and we will choose for the Holy Spirit instead. Therefore, to maintain its special separate existence the ego uses the body and world to keep us out of our mind and distracted by the world of bodies.

Sin calls for punishment as error for correction, and the belief that punishment is correction is clearly insane. Sin is not an error, for sin entails an arrogance which the idea of error lacks. To sin would be to violate reality, and to succeed. Sin is the proclamation that attack is real and guilt is justified. It assumes the Son of God is guilty, and has thus succeeded in losing his innocence and making himself what God created not. Thus is
creation seen as not eternal, and the Will of God open to opposition and defeat. Sin is the grand illusion underlying all the ego's grandiosity. For by it God Himself is changed, and rendered incomplete. (R3 p402 II.1.6:II.2)

Sin is the insane belief that we are separate from God and greater than Him. We cannot separate ourselves from God, nor can we be greater than Him. Therefore there is no sin, only an error in our identity, which can be corrected through Self Knowledge.

A major tenet in the ego's insane religion is that sin is not error but truth, and it is innocence that would deceive. Purity is seen as arrogance, and the acceptance of the self as sinful is perceived as holiness. And it is this doctrine that replaces the reality of the Son of God as his Father created him, and willed that he be forever. Is this humility? Or is it, rather, an attempt to wrest creation away from truth, and keep it separate?

Sin is the belief in separation and is the foundation of the ego's religion. Without sin the ego's Bible has no meaning, value or purpose. Without sin the ego dissolves into the nothingness that it is.

Any attempt to reinterpret sin as error is always indefensible to the ego. The idea of sin is wholly sacrosanct to its thought system, and quite unapproachable except with reverence and awe. It is the most "holy" concept in the ego's system; lovely and powerful, wholly true, and necessarily protected with every defense at its disposal. For here lies its "best" defense, which all the others serve. Here is its armor, its protection, and the fundamental purpose of the special relationship in its interpretation. (R4 p402-403 II.45)

Sin is a required belief to maintain our special separate existence. This is why we love conflict, war, pain and suffering — without sin, guilt, fear, conflict, war, pain and suffering we do not exist!

There is no stone in all the ego's embattled citadel that is more heavily defended than the idea that sin is real; the natural expression of what the Son of God has made himself to be, and what he is. To the ego, this is no mistake. For this is its reality; this is the "truth" from which escape will always be impossible. This is his past, his present and his future. For he has somehow managed to corrupt his Father, and change His Mind completely. Mourn, then, the death of God, Whom sin has killed! And this would be the ego's wish, which in its madness it believes it has accomplished. (R5 p403 II.7)

By fearing punishment by God for our "sin," we have made God as insane as we are. Would God punish His Son for a sin he cannot commit? Only the ego's insane god would do so. The ego's god is a god of wrath and vengeance — and the ego loves him so! For without a god of wrath, the ego melts into nothingness.

The attraction of guilt is found in sin, not error. (R6 p404 III.1.1)

Guilt demands punishment which means that separation and the ego are real. This is the ego's attraction to guilt. An error can be corrected, which is the ego's fear. If the Son realizes his error in believing in sin (separation) the ego is dead on the spot. The ego lives only because of the Son's power to believe in sin.

For the ego brings sin to fear, demanding punishment. Yet punishment is but another form of guilt's protection, for what is deserving punishment must have been really done. Punishment is always the great preserver of sin, treating it with respect and honoring its enormity. What must be punished, must be true. And what is true must be eternal, and will be repeated endlessly. For what you think is real you want, and will not let it go. (R7 p404 III.2.2-7)

Guilt and sin go together. Sometimes the Course emphasizes sin, other times guilt, but they are virtually the same as they coexist. Sin and guilt are felt as a sense of selfishness in your daily life. With selfishness comes the fear of loss and punishment. To avoid punishment the ego projects its selfishness onto others in the world so it can maintain its face of innocence and have others be punished.

But sin is the belief that your perception is unchangeable, and that the mind must accept as true what it is told through it. If it does not obey, the mind is judged insane. The only power that could change perception is thus kept impotent, held to the body by the fear of changed perception.
The purpose of the ego's strategy is to keep us distracted by the body and world so we will not get back to our mind, realize our error, and choose for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. Once we have projected our sin and guilt (selfishness) out of our mind and onto the world of bodies, we cannot correct our error at its source which is in our mind. Therefore we begin the correction of our error by forgiving others, not for their sin, but for the sin we have projected onto them.

And now we turn to the first obstacle to peace — the desire to get rid of it. We do not want peace because without conflict and separation we have no special separate existence. Conflict proves we are real and separate.

And yet, this little remnant of attack you cherish still against your brother is the first obstacle the peace in you encounters in its going forth. This little wall of hatred would still oppose the Will of God, and keep it limited. (R9 p408 IV.A.2.10-11)

The little wall of hatred is the sin and guilt (selfishness) we project onto our brothers. The projection of sin and guilt is referred to as an attack. Believing we are separate from and in conflict with God and our brothers, we feel justified in defending ourselves and attacking them back. This is the first obstacle to peace we must overcome: the desire to get rid of peace.

The messengers of fear are harshly ordered to seek out guilt, and cherish every scrap of evil and of sin that they can find, losing none of them on pain of death, and laying them respectfully before their lord and master. (R10 p410 IV.A.11.2)

The "messengers of fear" is an anthropomorphic symbol that refers to the process of projecting our sin, guilt and fear onto the world of bodies. "Our lord and master" refers to sin, guilt, fear or the ego throughout the Text. We actively seek and love to find fault with people in the world; we love to condemn and judge because by finding guilt in others we believe we can maintain our innocence.

Fears messengers are trained through terror, and they tremble when their master calls on them to serve him. For fear is merciless even to its friends. Its messengers steal guiltily away in hungry search of guilt, for they are kept cold and starving and made very vicious by their master, who allows them to feast only upon what they return to him. No little shred of guilt escapes their hungry eyes. And in their savage search for sin they pounce on any living thing they see, and carry it screaming to their master, to be devoured.

Send not these savage messengers into the world, to feast upon it and to prey upon reality. For they will bring you word of bones and skin and flesh. They have been taught to seek for the corruptible, and to return with gorges filled with things decayed and rotted. To them such things are beautiful, because they seem to allay their savage pangs of hunger. For they are frantic with the pain of fear, and would avert the punishment of him who sends them forth by offering him what they hold dear. (R11 p410 IV.A.12.3-7;IV.A.13)

The passages above are disturbing because they represent all of us as separate egos. However, the reality of who we are is Christ Who does not attack and cannot be preyed upon. To realize the truth of who we are we must be willing to bring the obstacles of darkness to the light of the Holy Spirit Who reminds us of the light of Christ in all of us. The ego made the body and world so it could project its sin, guilt and fear out of the mind, and maintain its face of innocence. Once we find sin and guilt in others we feel justified in attacking them.

Next we look at the second obstacle to peace: the belief that the body is valuable, and the attraction of pain.

The ego's messages are always sent away from you, in the belief that for your message of attack and guilt will someone other than yourself suffer. And even if you suffer, yet someone else will suffer more. The great deceiver [the ego] recognizes that this is not so, but as the "enemy" of peace, it urges you to send out all your messages of hate and free yourself. And to convince you this is possible, it bids the body search for pain in attack upon another, calling it pleasure and offering it to you as freedom from attack.
We love to be treated unfairly, attacked and mistreated because it proves we are innocent victims, and that sin and guilt are outside of us in our victimizers. Pain means I am real. Identifying with the body provides the ego a "home." Pain and pleasure of the body seem to witness to the reality of the ego's special separate existence. This is the attraction of the body and pain that we must overcome to realize the truth of our eternal Identity with Christ in Spirit.

Hear not its madness, and believe not the impossible is true. Forget not that the ego has dedicated the body to the goal of sin, and places in it all its faith that this can be accomplished. Its sad disciples chant the body's praise continually, in solemn celebration of the ego's rule. Not one but must believe that yielding to the attraction of guilt is the escape from pain. Not one but must regard the body as himself, without which he would die, and yet within which is his death equally inevitable. (R12 p415-416 IV.B.15-16)

I am attracted to finding guilt in you because that is how I believe I can avoid guilt and pain in myself.

The third obstacle to peace, the attraction of death, and the fourth obstacle to peace, the fear of God, are closely related.

This is the darkest veil, upheld by the belief in death and protected by its attraction. The dedication to death and to its sovereignty is but the solemn vow, the promise made in secret to the ego never to lift this veil, not to approach it, nor even to suspect that it is there. This is the secret bargain made with the ego to keep what lies beyond the veil forever blotted out and unremembered. Here is your promise never to allow union to call you out of separation; the great amnesia in which the memory of God seems quite forgotten; the cleavage of your Self from you; the fear of God, the final step in your dissociation.

See how the belief in death would seem to "save" you. For if this were gone, what could you fear but life? It is the attraction of death that makes life seem to be ugly, cruel and tyrannical. You are no more afraid of death than of the ego. These are your chosen friends. For in your secret alliance with them you have agreed never to let the fear of God be lifted, so you could look upon the face of Christ and join Him in His Father. (R13 p420 IV.D.3-4)

By bringing the obstacles to peace to the light of awareness we are able to make a conscious choice for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. The ego makes the body as a distraction so the Son of God will not choose the Holy Spirit.

The body cannot heal, because it cannot make itself sick. It needs no healing. Its health or sickness depends entirely on how the mind perceives it, and the purpose that the mind would use it for. It is obvious that a segment of the mind can see itself as separated from the Universal Purpose. When this occurs the body becomes its weapon, used against this Purpose, to demonstrate the "fact" that separation has occurred. The body thus becomes the instrument of illusion, acting accordingly; seeing what is not there, hearing what truth has never said and behaving insanely, being imprisoned by insanity. (R14 p398 I.3)

The Universal Purpose is the Atonement. The body has no purpose apart from the purpose the mind assigns to it. The Holy Spirit in our right mind uses the body as a communication device to extend forgiveness and the Atonement. The ego uses the body as a weapon to prove and maintain the ego's special separate existence. We, the Son of God as the decision maker, determine the purpose the body is to serve by choosing the ego or the Holy Spirit as our guide and teacher.

The body no more dies than it can feel. It does nothing. Of itself it is neither corruptible nor incorruptible. It is nothing. It is the result of a tiny, mad idea of corruption that can be corrected. (R15 p418 IV.C.5.2-6)

The "tiny mad idea" is the idea that the separation from God is real. This "tiny mad idea" of separation is embodied by the body in the world. The body is the tiny mad idea in the mind of the Son.

This [tiny mad idea] will not harm the body, but it will keep the delusional thought system in the mind. Here, then, is healing needed. And it is here that healing is. For God gave healing not apart from sickness, nor established remedy where
sickness cannot be. They are together, and when they are seen together, all attempts to keep both truth and illusion in the mind, where both must be, are recognized as dedication to illusion; and given up when brought to truth, and seen as totally irreconcilable with truth, in any respect or in any way. (R16 p399 I.6.3-7)

Sickness and healing are in the mind, not the body. Dissociation is the attempt to split off two irreconcilable thought systems in the mind by ignoring or dissociating one of them. This is referred to as the split mind in the Chart, and is represented by the Holy Spirit in the right mind, and the ego in the wrong mind. Dissociation, the split mind, is healed by bringing the darkness of the ego to the light of the Holy Spirit.

The result of an idea is never separate from its source. The idea of separation produced the body and remains connected to it, making it sick because of the mind's identification with it. You think you are protecting the body by hiding this connection, for this concealment seems to keep your identification safe from the "attack" of truth. (R17 p400 I.7.6-8)

Ideas leave not their source. Sickness is the decision for guilt in the mind. The ego's goal is to maintain its separate existence. By having us identify our self with the body, it maintains itself, and keeps us from questioning our true identity in the mind. By believing sickness is of the body, not the mind, the ego keeps us focused on the body and maintains its separate existence — until we choose again.

The body does appear to be the symbol of sin while you believe that it can get you what you want. While you believe that it can give you pleasure, you will also believe that it can bring you pain. To think you could be satisfied and happy with so little is to hurt yourself, and to limit the happiness that you would have calls upon pain to fill your meager store and make your life complete. (R18 p412 IV.A.17.10-12)

Seeking physical pleasure or avoiding pain will not bring the peace of God to you. Pleasure, pain and the body are irrelevant to Self Knowledge. Self Knowledge is of the mind.

What has the body really given you that justifies your strange belief that in it lies salvation? Do you not see that this is the belief in death? Here is the focus of the perception of Atonement as murder. Here is the source of the idea that love is fear. (R19 p412 IV.B.2.6-9)

The original belief in the thought of separation from God was our "death." Identifying with the ego and the body is the expression of the original thought of separation, and is the "murder" of our true Self as Christ. The ego confuses life and death, birth and murder; the insane idea that Atonement is attained through sacrifice, suffering and death.

Is it a sacrifice to be removed from what can suffer? The Holy Spirit does not demand you sacrifice the hope of the body's pleasure; it has no hope of pleasure. But neither can it bring you fear of pain. Pain is the only "sacrifice" the Holy Spirit asks, and this He would remove. (R20 p412 IV.B.3.4-7)

This Course is not asking us to give up or sacrifice the body or the world. With the help of the Holy Spirit we are asked to question our identity with the ego, the body and world because identifying with the ego is the cause of our pain.

And you want your Father, not a little mound of clay, to be your home. (R21 p413 IV.B.4.8)

We have chosen the body, a little mound of clay, to be our home. Until we choose again.

The body can bring you neither peace nor turmoil; neither joy nor pain. It is a means, and not an end. It has no purpose of itself, but only what is given to it. The body will seem to be whatever is the means for reaching the goal that you assign to it. Only the mind can set a purpose, and only the mind can see the means for its accomplishment, and justify its use. Peace and guilt are both conditions of the mind, to be attained. And these conditions are the home of the emotion that calls them forth, and therefore is compatible with them.

Peace is the home of love. Guilt is the home of fear. As we study the teachings in this Course over time, we will notice a change in the way we perceive ourselves and the world. We will notice we are
experiencing peace, love and forgiveness more and more; and experiencing conflict, fear and guilt less and less.

But think you which it is that is compatible with you. Here is your choice, and it is free. But all that lies in it will come with it, and what you think you are can never be apart from it. The body is the great seeming betrayer of faith. In it lies disillusionment and the seeds of faithlessness, but only if you ask of it what it cannot give. Can your mistake be reasonable grounds for depression and disillusionment, and for retaliative attack on what you think has failed you?

(R22 p414-415 IV.B.10.4-10;IV.B.11.1-6)

Faith in the ego is faithlessness because it is faith in nothing. Faith in the Holy Spirit is faithfulness because it is faith in God Who is All.

It is impossible to seek for pleasure through the body and not find pain. It is essential that this relationship be understood, for it is one the ego sees as proof of sin. It is not really punitive at all. It is but the inevitable result of equating yourself with the body, which is the invitation to pain.

(R23 p415 IV.B.12.1-4)

The decision to identify with the body instead of God is the source of pain.

Is not this inevitable? Under fear's orders the body will pursue guilt, serving its master whose attraction to guilt maintains the whole illusion of its existence. This, then, is the attraction of pain. Ruled by this perception the body becomes the servant of pain, seeking it dutifully and obeying the idea that pain is pleasure. It is this idea that underlies all of the ego's heavy investment in the body. And it is this insane relationship that it keeps hidden, and yet feeds upon. To you it teaches that the body's pleasure is happiness. Yet to itself it whispers, "It is death."

Why should the body be anything to you? Certainly what it is made of is not precious. And just as certainly it has no feeling. It transmits to you the feelings that you want. Like any communication medium the body receives and sends the messages that it is given. It has no feeling for them. All of the feeling with which they are invested is given by the sender and the receiver. The ego and the Holy Spirit both recognize this, and both also recognize that here the sender and receiver are the same. The Holy Spirit tells you this with joy. The ego hides it, for it would keep you unaware of it. Who would send messages of hatred and attack if he but understood he sends them to himself? Who would accuse, make guilty and condemn himself?

(R24 p415 IV.B.13-14)

Being aware of the obstacles to peace serves to unveil the dark, hidden motives of the ego, and bring them to the light where they can be healed and released.

The next passages address the third obstacle to peace which is the attraction of death. To the ego, death of the body is the ultimate proof that separation from God was real.

No one can die unless he chooses death. What seems to be the fear of death is really its attraction. Guilt, too, is feared and fearful. Yet it could have no hold at all except on those who are attracted to it and seek it out. And so it is with death. Made by the ego, its dark shadow falls across all living things, because the ego is the "enemy" of life. And yet a shadow cannot kill. What is a shadow to the living? They but walk past and it is gone. But what of those whose dedication is not to live; the black-draped "sinners," the ego's mournful chorus, plodding so heavily away from life, dragging their chains and marching in the slow procession that honors their grim master, lord of death?

(R25 p416 IV.C.1.4-9;IV.C.2.1-4)

We know that an idea leaves not its source. And death is the result of the thought we call the ego, as surely as life is the result of the Thought of God. (R26 p417 IV.C.2.14-15)

The ego lives through the "murder" of Christ; the original error.

Those who fear death see not how often and how loudly they call to it, and bid it come to save them from communication. For death is seen as safety, the great dark savior from the light of truth, the answer to the Answer, the silencer of the Voice that speaks for God. Yet the retreat to death is
not the end of conflict. Only God's Answer is its end. (R27 p418 IV.C.7.1-4)

The purpose of death (the whole thought system of the ego) is to silence the Voice for God. The "retreat to death" is the choice to identify with the ego rather than the Holy Spirit — God's Answer.

Under the dusty edge of its distorted world the ego would lay the Son of God, slain by its orders, proof in his decay that God Himself is powerless before the ego's might, unable to protect the life that He created against the ego's savage wish to kill. My brother, child of our Father, this is a dream of death. There is no funeral, no dark altars, no grim commandments nor twisted rituals of condemnation to which the body leads you. Ask not release of it [the body]. But free it from the merciless and unrelenting orders you laid upon it, and forgive it [the body] what you [the Son of God as the decision maker] ordered it to do. In its exaltation you commanded it to die, for only death could conquer life. And what but insanity could look upon the defeat of God, and think it real? (R28 p418 IV.C.8)

The separate existence of the body and world with all the pain, suffering, conflict and death, proves that God is dead, and the ego lives! That is why we are attracted to guilt, pain, and death; and why we fear God's eternal life and unconditional love.

When anything seems to you to be a source of fear, when any situation strikes you with terror and makes your body tremble and the cold sweat of fear comes over it, remember it is always for one reason; the ego has perceived it as a symbol of fear, a sign of sin and death. Remember, then, that neither sign nor symbol should be confused with source, for they must stand for something other than themselves. Their meaning cannot lie in them, but must be sought in what they represent. And they may thus mean everything or nothing, according to the truth or falsity of the idea which they reflect. (R29 p419 IV.C.11)

Our fear of anything in the world is a projection of the original sin, guilt and fear in our mind that arises from the belief in our separation from God's love and wholeness. The world we experience is a reflection of our own mind. The world is your mind. Ideas leave not their source. Your world leaves not your mind.

By looking at the ego through the eyes of Jesus or the Holy Spirit we are able to realize there must be a better way to live our lives. This little willingness leads us to consider choosing the Holy Spirit as our teacher, and letting go of the misery of the ego. After we have faced the first three obstacles to peace that involve our identity with the body, next we look at the fourth obstacle to peace which is our fear of God in our mind. The reason we made the body and world was to avoid facing the fear of God in our mind. The ego tells us that if we look within our mind, God will destroy us.

And now you [the Son of God as the decision maker] stand in terror before what you swore never to look upon. Your eyes look down, remembering your promise to your "friends." The "loveliness" of sin, the delicate appeal of guilt, the "holy" waxen image of death, and the fear of vengeance of the ego you swore in blood not to desert, all rise and bid you not to raise your eyes. For you realize that if you look on this and let the veil be lifted, they will be gone forever. All of your "friends," your "protectors" and your "home" will vanish. Nothing that you remember now will you remember.

It seems to you the world will utterly abandon you if you but raise your eyes. Yet all that will occur is you will leave the world forever. This is the re-establishment of your will. Look upon it, open-eyed, and you will nevermore believe that you are at the mercy of things beyond you, forces you cannot control, and thoughts that come to you against your will. It is your will to look on this. No mad desire, no trivial impulse to forget again, no stab of fear nor the cold sweat of seeming death can stand against your will. For what attracts you from beyond the veil is also deep within you, unseparated from it and completely one. (R30 p421 IV.D.6-7)

By raising his eyes and looking squarely upon his sin and guilt based on the ego's lies, the Son has the opportunity to take back the power he gave away by choosing again. You are the Son of God. And the Father and Son are one.
The fourth obstacle to be surmounted hangs like a heavy veil before the face of Christ. Yet as His face rises beyond it, shining with joy because He is in His Father's Love, peace will lightly brush the veil aside and run to meet Him, and to join with Him at last. For this dark veil, which seems to make the face of Christ Himself like to a leper's, and the bright Rays of His Father's Love that light His face with glory appear as streams of blood, fades in the blazing light beyond it when the fear of death is gone. (R31 p420 IV.D.2)

The passage below summarizes the four obstacles to peace and how they are surmounted.

Every obstacle that peace must flow across is surmounted in just the same way; the fear that raised it yields to the love beyond, and so the fear is gone. And so it is with this.

[Obstacle 1:] The desire to get rid of peace and drive the Holy Spirit from you fades in the presence of the quiet recognition that you love Him.

[Obstacle 2:] The exaltation of the body is given up in favor of the spirit, which you love as you could never love the body.

[Obstacle 3:] And the appeal of death is lost forever as love's attraction stirs and calls to you.

[Obstacle 4: Overcoming the fear of God's Love:] From beyond each of the obstacles to love, Love Itself has called. And each has been surmounted by the power of the attraction of what lies beyond.

Your wanting fear seemed to be holding them in place. Yet when you heard the Voice of Love beyond them, you answered and they disappeared. (R32 p420-421 IV.D.5)

The obstacles to peace, which are in our mind, are reflected in our special relationships in the world. By looking at our special relationships with Jesus or the Holy Spirit, they are transformed into the holy relationship, which is with Christ through the Holy Spirit in our mind.

Look upon your Redeemer, and behold what He would show you in your brother, and let not sin arise again to blind your eyes. For sin would keep you separate from him, but your Redeemer would have you look upon your brother as yourself. Your relationship is now a temple of healing; a place where all the weary ones can come and rest. Here is the rest that waits for all, after the journey. And it is brought nearer to all by your relationship. (R33 p406 III.11)

Our Redeemer is the Holy Spirit. We are to look upon all our brothers as sinless through the eyes of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness.

You have no purpose apart from your brother, nor apart from the one you asked the Holy Spirit to share with you. The little wall will fall away so quietly beneath the wings of peace. For peace will send its messengers from you to all the world, and barriers will fall away before their coming as easily as those that you interpose will be surmounted.

The purpose we share with all of our brothers is that of awakening from the dream of separation. We do this by accepting the Atonement for ourselves and through forgiveness of our brothers with the help of the Holy Spirit. Our special relationships are transformed into the holy relationship in the miracle of the holy instant as we choose to see with the bright vision of Christ rather than through the dark clouds of the ego.

To overcome the world is no more difficult than to surmount your little wall. For in the miracle of your holy relationship, without this barrier, is every miracle contained. There is no order of difficulty in miracles, for they are all the same. Each is a gentle winning over from the appeal of guilt to the appeal of love. How can this fail to be accomplished, wherever it is undertaken? Guilt can raise no real barriers against it. And all that seems to stand between you and your brother must fall away because of the appeal you answered. From you who answered, He Who answered you would call. His home is in your holy relationship. Do not attempt to stand between Him and His holy purpose, for it is yours. But let Him quietly extend the miracle of your relationship to everyone contained in it as it was given. (R34 p408-409 IV.A.4.10-12;IV.A.5)

The holy relationship is in your mind, not between two people or two bodies. In the holy relationship,
Notes on Chapter Nineteen – The Attainment of Peace

fear's messengers, the hungry dogs of fear, are called off; and love's messengers are sent out in their place. The hungry dogs of fear were sent out to find sin and guilt in your brothers. Love's messengers are sent out to find love, peace and innocence in your brothers.

The Holy Spirit has given you love's messengers to send instead of those you trained through fear. They are as eager to return to you what they hold dear as are the others. If you send them forth, they will see only the blameless and the beautiful, the gentle and the kind. They will be as careful to let no little act of charity, no tiny expression of forgiveness, no little breath of love escape their notice. And they will return with all the happy things they found, to share them lovingly with you. Be not afraid of them. They offer you salvation. Theirs are the messages of safety, for they see the world as kind.

Instead of choosing the ugliness of the ego's hatred, we choose the beauty of the Holy Spirit's love. And because projection makes perception, we find in our brothers what we projected onto them.

If you send forth only the messengers the Holy Spirit gives you, wanting no messages but theirs, you will see fear no more. The world will be transformed before your sight, cleansed of all guilt and softly brushed with beauty. The world contains no fear that you laid not upon it. And none you cannot ask love's messengers to remove from it, and see it still. The Holy Spirit has given you His messengers to send to your brother and return to you with what love sees. They have been given to replace the hungry dogs of fear you sent instead. And they go forth to signify the end of fear. (R35 p411 IV.A.14-15)

The fear of death is a mask over our attraction to death. The ego wants us to believe in death, because it proves we have our own life separate from God.

The fear of death will go as its appeal is yielded to love's real attraction. The end of sin, which nestles quietly in the safety of your relationship, protected by your union with your brother, and ready to grow into a mighty force for God is very near. The infancy of salvation is carefully guarded by love, preserved from every thought that would attack it, and quietly made ready to fulfill the mighty task for which it was given you.

Your newborn purpose is nursed by angels, cherished by the Holy Spirit and protected by God Himself. It needs not your protection; it [salvation] is yours. For it is deathless, and within it lies the end of death.

What danger can assail the wholly innocent? What can attack the guiltless? What fear can enter and disturb the peace of sinlessness? What has been given you, even in its infancy, is in full communication with God and you. In its tiny hands it holds, in perfect safety, every miracle you will perform, held out to you. The miracle of life is ageless, born in time but nourished in eternity. Behold this infant, to whom you gave a resting place by your forgiveness of your brother, and see in it the Will of God. Here is the babe of Bethlehem reborn. And everyone who gives him shelter will follow him, not to the cross, but to the resurrection and the life. (R36 p418 IV.C.9-10)

Death is the belief in our separation from God. The resurrection is the awakening from the belief in death.

Forgiveness is the means by which we are able to undo the projection of guilt, and go back inside our mind to resolve the true source of guilt which is our decision to believe in the sin of separation from God.

Forget not that you came this far together, you and your brother. And it was surely not the ego that led you here. No obstacle to peace can be surmounted through its help. It does not open up its secrets, and bid you look on them and go beyond them. It would not have you see its weakness, and learn it has no power to keep you from the truth. The Guide Who brought you here remains with you, and when you raise your eyes you will be ready to look on terror with no fear at all. But first, lift up your eyes and look on your brother in innocence born of complete forgiveness of his illusions, and through the eyes of faith that sees them not.

No one can look upon the fear of God untouched, unless he has accepted the Atonement and learned illusions are not real. No one can stand before this obstacle alone, for he could not have reached this far unless his brother walked beside him. And no one would dare to look on it without complete forgiveness of his brother in his heart. Stand you
here a while and tremble not. You will be ready. Let us join together in a holy instant, here in this place where the purpose, given in a holy instant, has led you. (R37 p421-422 IV.D.8;IV.D.9.1-6)

Our one and only purpose is to forgive all as a means for reaching the end of the journey which is the awakening to the real world. Now we look upon all of our relationships as an opportunity to look within. Looking at our special relationships, love and hate, serves as an opportunity to see the sin and guilt we have projected onto them from within ourselves.

The first three obstacles to peace refer to the body as a hiding place for our sin and guilt. To overcome the fourth obstacle, the fear of God, we must go within our mind to the source of fear which is our belief in the original separation. Forgiveness helps us realize the sin is not in our brothers or in the world, but is in our mind. We must face this final obstacle, the fear of God, within our own mind before we can move on to the real world.

Here, with the journey's end before you, you see its purpose. And it is here you choose whether to look upon it or wander on, only to return and make the choice again. (R38 p422 IV.D.10.7-8)

Before complete forgiveness you still stand unforgiving. You are afraid of God because you fear your brother. Those you do not forgive you fear. And no one reaches love with fear beside him.

This brother who stands beside you still seems to be a stranger. You do not know him, and your interpretation of him is very fearful. And you attack him still, to keep what seems to be yourself unharmed. Yet in his hands is your salvation. You see his madness [insanity], which you hate because you share it. And all the pity and forgiveness that would heal it gives way to fear. Brother, you need forgiveness of your brother, for you will share in madness or in Heaven together. And you and he will raise your eyes in faith together, or not at all.

We are healed together or not at all. All are forgiven or no one is forgiven. There are absolutely no exceptions to God's unconditional love. His love is all inclusive. The Holy Spirit's forgiveness is offered to all. The Sonship is one. You cannot realize the truth of your Identity with Christ if you withhold forgiveness from even one of your brothers. We go to Heaven together or not at all.

Beside you is one who offers you the chalice of Atonement, for the Holy Spirit is in him. Would you hold his sins against him, or accept his gift to you? Is this giver of salvation your friend or enemy? Choose which he is, remembering that you will receive of him according to your choice. He has in him the power to forgive your sin, as you for him. Neither can give it to himself alone. And yet your savior stands beside each one. Let him be what he is, and seek not to make of love an enemy.

Behold your Friend, the Christ Who stands beside you. How holy and how beautiful He is! You thought He sinned because you cast the veil of sin upon Him to hide His loveliness. Yet still He holds forgiveness out to you, to share His Holiness. This "enemy," this "stranger" still offers you salvation as His Friend. The "enemies" of Christ, the worshippers of sin, know not Whom they attack.

This is your brother, crucified by sin and waiting for release from pain. Would you not offer him forgiveness, when only he can offer it to you? (R39 p422 IV.D.11.4-7;IV.D.12-15.1-2)

We are to turn to the Holy Spirit to help us forgive everyone against whom we have ever held a grievance — past, present or future; dead or alive. Not one stain of sin can be held against a brother if we are to reach the real world. Our relationships are the perfect mirror for us to look back into our mind to find any remnants of sin and guilt that need to be released through forgiveness.

Here is the holy place of resurrection, to which we come again; to which we will return until redemption is accomplished and received. Think who your brother is, before you would condemn him. And offer thanks to God that he is holy, and has been given the gift of holiness for you. Join him in gladness, and remove all trace of guilt from his disturbed and tortured mind. Help him to lift the heavy burden of sin you laid upon him and he accepted as his own, and toss it lightly and with happy laughter away from him. Press it not like thorns against his brow, nor nail him to it, unredeemed and hopeless.
Crucifixion is a symbol for the ego's thought system of sin, guilt and fear. As we project our sin and guilt onto our brothers we crucify them hoping to maintain our own innocence.

Give faith to your brother, for faith and hope and mercy are yours to give. Into the hands that give, the gift is given. Look on your brother, and see in him the gift of God you would receive. It is almost Easter, the time of resurrection. Let us give redemption to each other and share in it, that we may rise as one in resurrection, not separate in death. (R40 p423 IV.D.16-17.1-5)

Resurrection is the awakening from the dream of separation, death and separate interests.

Offer your brother freedom and complete release from sin, here in the garden of seeming agony and death. So will we prepare together the way unto the resurrection of God's Son, and let him rise again to glad remembrance of his Father, Who knows no sin, no death, but only life eternal. Together we will disappear into the Presence beyond the veil, not to be lost but found; not to be seen but known. And knowing, nothing in the plan God has established for salvation will be left undone. This is the journey's purpose, without which is the journey meaningless. (R41 p424 IV.D.18.4-5;IV.D.19)

The purpose of our life, the purpose of our relationships, and our only goal is salvation from the hell of egoic existence; through forgiveness and Atonement, we realize the real world where God lifts us back into Heaven.

Here is the only purpose that gives this world, and the long journey through this world, whatever meaning lies in them. Beyond this, they are meaningless. You and your brother stand together, still without conviction they have a purpose. Yet it is given you to see this purpose in your holy Friend, and recognize it as your own. (R42 p424 IV.D.21.4-7)

Our choice of goals in the world is either to maintain our special separate egoic existence, or to realize the truth of our Identity with Christ in Spirit.

The next few passages address Jesus and how the Church has interpreted his message, and the correction for the Church's misinterpretations.

Love, too, would set a feast before you, on a table covered with a spotless cloth, set in a quiet garden where no sound but singing and a softly joyous whispering is ever heard. This is a feast that honors your holy relationship, and at which everyone is welcomed as an honored guest. And in a holy instant grace is said by everyone together, as they join in gentleness before the table of communion. And I will join you there, as long ago I promised and promise still. For in your new relationship am I made welcome. And where I am made welcome, there I am.

I am made welcome in the state of grace, which means you have at last forgiven me. For I became the symbol of your sin, and so I had to die instead of you. To the ego sin means death, and so atonement is achieved through murder. Salvation is looked upon as a way by which the Son of God was killed instead of you. Yet would I offer you my body, you whom I love, knowing its littleness? Or would I teach that bodies cannot keep us apart? Mine was of no greater value than yours; no better means for communication of salvation, but not its Source. No one can die for anyone, and death does not atone for sin. But you can live to show it is not real. (R43 p411-412 IV.A.16-17.1-9)

There is no obstacle that you can place before our union, for in your holy relationship I am there already. We will surmount all obstacles together, for we stand within the gates and not outside. How easily the gates are opened from within, to let peace through to bless the tired world! (R44 p413 IV.B.5.3-5)

Let me be to you the symbol of the end of guilt, and look upon your brother as you would look on me. Forgive me all the sins you think the Son of God committed. And in the light of your forgiveness he will remember who he is, and forget what never was. I ask for your forgiveness, for if you are guilty, so must I be. But if I surmounted guilt and overcame the world, you were with me. Would you see in me the symbol of guilt or of the end of guilt, remembering that what I signify to you, you see within yourself? (R45 p413 IV.B.6)
Forgive me your illusions, and release me from punishment for what I have not done. So will you learn the freedom that I taught by teaching freedom to your brother, and so releasing me. I am within your holy relationship, yet you would imprison me behind the obstacles you raise to freedom, and bar my way to you. Yet it is not possible to keep away One Who is there already.

And in Him it is possible that our communion, where we are joined already, will be the focus of the new perception that will bring light to all the world, contained in you. (R46 p414 IV.B.8)

End Chapter Nineteen
CHAPTER TWENTY
THE VISION OF HOLINESS

Main Theme: The holy relationship, the right minded vision of the Holy Spirit.

Introduction: This chapter addresses the importance of purpose: the ego's purpose of the body and world, and the Holy Spirit's purpose of the body and world. There is also an increased emphasis on the power of the mind to choose.

We will begin by looking at the notion of sin as an adjustment (a change) from oneness to separation. The first adjustment is the thought of separation in the mind; the second adjustment is the experience of separation in the body.

• The belief in sin is an adjustment. And an adjustment is a change; a shift in perception, or a belief that what was so before has been made different. Every adjustment is therefore a distortion, and calls upon defenses to uphold it against reality. Knowledge requires no adjustments and, in fact, is lost if any shift or change is undertaken. For this reduces it at once to mere perception; a way of looking in which certainty is lost and doubt has entered. To this impaired condition are adjustments necessary, because it is not true. Who need adjust to truth, which calls on only what he is, to understand? (Reference 1 p429 III.1)

No adjustments or defenses are required in the Knowledge of the truth of who we are as Christ in Spirit, but adjustments are required to experience ourselves as something we are not — a separate ego in a body. The adjustments that the ego makes are its defenses against the Atonement. First, that separation from God is a sin that is real, evoking guilt, and ultimately will be punished by an angry God. The next adjustment is the making of the body, the world, and our special relationships onto which the ego projects its sin and guilt to "get rid" of its sin and to maintain its innocence in the eyes of God.

Seek not to make the Son of God adjust to his [the ego's] insanity. There is a stranger in him, who wandered carelessly into the home of truth and who will wander off. He came without a purpose, but he will not remain before the shining light the Holy Spirit offered, and you accepted. For there the stranger is made homeless and you [the Son of God as the decision maker] are welcome. Ask not this transient stranger, "What am I?" He is the only thing in all the universe that does not know. Yet it is he you ask, and it is to his answer that you would adjust. This one wild thought, fierce in its arrogance, and yet so tiny and so meaningless it slips unnoticed through the universe of truth, becomes your guide. To it you turn to ask the meaning of the universe. And of the one blind thing in all the seeing universe of truth you ask, "How shall I look upon the Son of God?"

The "stranger" in the Son of God's mind is the ego, who fears the Son will choose the light of the Holy Spirit as his guide which will lead to the ego's demise. The darkness of the ego is dispelled in the light of the Holy Spirit. The one wild thought is the "tiny mad idea" that we actually separated from God and are on our own as a separate ego in a body; and it is to this tiny mad idea, the ego, that we (the Son of God) turn to for guidance, until we realize our mistake and choose again. The ego looks upon the Son of God as a guilty sinner.

Does one ask judgment of what is totally bereft of judgment? And if you have, would you believe the answer, and adjust to it as if it were the truth? The world you look on is the answer that it gave you, and you have given it power to adjust the world to make its answer true. (R2 p430 III.7-8.1-3)

The Son of God as the decision maker has given the ego all the power it has. When the Son withdraws his belief in the ego, the ego is left powerless, lifeless and it dissolves instantly. The ego uses all the power the Son has given it to maintain its existence by keeping the Son identified with the body, distracted by the world and special relationships, and out of his mind where he could exercise his power to choose against the ego.

Nothing can hurt you unless you give it the power to do so. Yet you give power as the laws of this world interpret giving; as you give you lose. It is not up to you to give power at all. Power is of God, given by Him and reawakened by the Holy Spirit, Who knows that as you give you gain. He
gives no power to sin, and therefore it has none; nor to its results as this world sees them – sickness and death and misery and pain. These things have not occurred because the Holy Spirit sees them not, and gives no power to their seeming source. Thus would He keep you free of them. Being without illusion of what you are, the Holy Spirit merely gives everything to God, Who has already given and received all that is true. The untrue He has neither received nor given. (R3 p432 IV.1)

The Son of God in his true Identity with Christ is invulnerable. When he decides to identify with a separate ego in a body, he makes himself appear vulnerable and experiences himself as he believes he is. All power in the world is given by the Son. The Son has the power to believe that the world is all powerful, and that he is a powerless victim of an all powerful world. And this is the world you made.

You make the world and then adjust to it, and it to you. Nor is there any difference between yourself and it in your perception, which made them both. A simple question yet remains, and needs an answer. Do you like what you have made? – a world of murder and attack, through which you thread your timid way through constant dangers, alone and frightened, hoping at most that death will wait a little longer before it overtakes you and you disappear. You made this up. It is a picture of what you think you are; of how you see yourself. A murderer is frightened, and those who kill fear death. All these are but the fearful thoughts of those who would adjust themselves to a world made fearful by their adjustments. And they look out in sorrow from what is sad within, and see the sadness there.

We believe we are the original murderer as we believe we killed God and crucified His Son. Our guilt over that gets projected out and becomes the fear of punishment. The original sadness is of our separation from the love and joy of God in our Identity with Him. The ego adjusts to the sin, guilt and sadness of murder by making a world and projecting it onto others in our special relationships.

Have you not wondered what the world is really like; how it would look through happy eyes? The world you see is but a judgment on yourself. It is not there at all. Yet judgment lays a sentence on it, justifies it and makes it real. Such is the world you see; a judgment on yourself, and made by you. This sickly picture of yourself is carefully preserved by the ego, whose image it is and which it loves, and placed outside you in the world. And to this world must you adjust as long as you believe this picture is outside, and has you at its mercy. This world is merciless, and were it outside you, you should indeed be fearful. Yet it was you who made it merciless, and now if mercilessness seems to look back at you, it can be corrected. (R4 p429 III.3.6-7;III.4-5)

The sickly picture we made of our self is referred to in the Course as a parody and a travesty of the truth of who we really are. The truth is we have the power in our mind to choose how we perceive ourselves and the world. Either we choose to perceive ourselves as victims of a merciless world, or we choose to perceive the truth of who we are as the Son of God, the decision maker and dreamer of the world.

What if you recognized this world is an hallucination? What if you really understood you made it up? What if you realized that those who seem to walk about in it, to sin and die, attack and murder and destroy themselves, are wholly unreal? Could you have faith in what you see, if you accepted this? And would you see it? Hallucinations disappear when they are recognized for what they are. This is the healing and the remedy. Believe them not and they are gone. And all you need to do is recognize that you did this. Once you accept this simple fact and take unto yourself the power you gave them, you are released from them. One thing is sure; hallucinations serve a purpose, and when that purpose is no longer held they disappear. Therefore, the question never is whether you want them, but always, do you want the purpose that they serve? This world seems to hold out many purposes, each different and with different values. Yet they are all the same. Again there is no order; only a seeming hierarchy of values.

Hallucination is a psychiatric term that refers to the experience of seeing, hearing or otherwise sensing something that is not there in the "objective" world of consentual reality. People who are deemed schizophrenic or psychotic have hallucinations and experience their hallucinations as real. The Course expands the narrow definition of the term.
"hallucination," saying that we all hallucinate because we are literally experiencing a world that has no independent existence, no real being. The entire world, the entire universe, is a projection of a thought in our mind. Once the original thought of separation is believed in the mind and gets projected out making the world, we experience ourselves and the world as if they are an objective reality apart from our mind — our separate bodies and the entire world are our hallucinations. We are literally seeing, hearing and sensing something that is not out there, which is the essential symptom of psychosis and schizophrenia.

Only two purposes are possible. And one is sin, the other holiness. Nothing is in between, and which you choose determines what you see. For what you see is merely how you elect to meet your goal. Hallucinations serve to meet the goal of madness. They are the means by which the outside world, projected from within, adjusts to sin and seems to witness to its reality. It still is true that nothing is without. Yet upon nothing are all projections made. For it is the projection that gives the "nothing" all the meaning that it holds. What has no meaning cannot be perceived. And meaning always looks within to find itself, and then looks out. All meaning that you give the world outside must thus reflect the sight you saw within; or better, if you saw at all or merely judged against.

(R5 p443-444 VIII.7.5-7; VIII.8-10.1-3)

The body is the embodiment of the ego's thought system of separation, sin, guilt and death.

The body is the ego's idol; the belief in sin made flesh and then projected outward. This produces what seems to be a wall of flesh around the mind, keeping it prisoner in a tiny spot of space and time, beholden unto death, and given but an instant in which to sigh and grieve and die in honor of its master. And this unholy instant seems to be life; an instant of despair, a tiny island of dry sand, bereft of water and set uncertainly upon oblivion. Here does the Son of God stop briefly by, to offer his devotion to death's idols and then pass on. And here he is more dead than living.

(R6 p438 VI.11.1-5)

Why do you think the body is a better home, a safer shelter for God's Son? Why would you rather look on it than on the truth? How can the engine of destruction [the body] be preferred, and chosen to replace the holy home the Holy Spirit offers, where He will dwell with you? The body is the sign of weakness, vulnerability and loss of power. Can such a savior help you? Would you turn in your distress and need for help unto the helpless? Is the pitifully little the perfect choice to call upon for strength? Judgment will seem to make your savior [your brother] weak. Yet it is you who need his strength.

(R8 p442 VIII.4.6-8; VIII.5.1-6)
Strength is in the realization that our brother is a projection of our mind. We choose the body as our home so we can keep our separate identity from God, but blame others for it. Our power is in our mind, not the body. When we identify with the body we lose awareness of our true power in the mind. We use the body to attract other bodies, which keeps us distracted, powerless and out of our mind.

Look upon all the trinkets made to hang upon the body, or to cover it or for its use. See all the useless things made for its eyes to see. Think on the many offerings made for its pleasure, and remember all these were made to make seem lovely what you hate. Would you employ this hated thing to draw your brother to you, and to attract his body's eyes? Learn you but offer him a crown of thorns, not recognizing it for what it is, and trying to justify your own interpretation of its value by his acceptance. Yet still the gift proclaims his worthlessness to you, as his acceptance and delight acknowledges the lack of value he places on himself.

Gifts are not made through bodies, if they be truly given and received. For bodies can neither offer nor accept; hold out nor take. Only the mind can value, and only the mind decides on what it would receive and give. And every gift it offers depends on what it wants. It will adorn its chosen home most carefully, making it ready to receive the gifts it wants by offering them to those who come unto its chosen home, or those it would attract to it. And there they will exchange their gifts, offering and receiving what their minds judge to be worthy of them. (R9 p426 II.1-2)

The mind is the cause, the body is an effect. Our actions as bodies in the world are a reflection of the purpose we hold for them in the mind. The purpose we hold for the body in the mind is a reflection of who we choose to identify with: the Holy Spirit or the ego, which determines whether our relationships are holy or unholy. The temple of the Holy Spirit is in the mind, not the body.

The next passages allude to the Catholic view of the Eucharist, more specifically, the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament is the wafer that when blessed by the priest becomes the body of Jesus, and is placed in a chest or tabernacle near the altar and is worshipped as the body of Jesus.

Nothing can show the contrast better than the experience of both a holy and an unholy relationship. The first is based on love, and rests on it serene and undisturbed. The body does not intrude upon it. Any relationship in which the body enters is based not on love, but on idolatry. Love wishes to be known, completely understood and shared. It has no secrets; nothing that it would keep apart and hide. It walks in sunlight, open-eyed and calm, in smiling welcome and in sincerity so simple and so obvious it cannot be misunderstood.

But idols do not share. Idols accept, but never make return. They can be loved, but cannot love. They do not understand what they are offered, and any relationship in which they enter has lost its meaning. The love of them has made love meaningless. They live in secrecy, hating the sunlight and happy in the body's darkness, where they can hide and keep their secrets hidden along with them. And they have no relationships, for no one else is welcome there. They smile on no one, and those who smile on them they do not see.

Idols are the sin and guilt of special relationships which are projections of the ego's thought system.

Love has no darkened temples where mysteries are kept obscure and hidden from the sun. It does not seek for power, but for relationships. The body is the ego's chosen weapon for seeking power through relationships. And its relationships must be unholy, for what they are it does not even see. It wants them solely for the offerings on which its idols thrive. The rest it merely throws away, for all that it could offer is seen as valueless. Homeless, the ego seeks as many bodies as it can collect to place its idols in, and so establish them as temples to itself.

Relationships are not between two bodies. Relationships are in the mind, and are either a relationship with the ego which is not real, or the Holy Spirit which is real.

The Holy Spirit's temple is not a body, but a relationship. The body is an isolated speck of darkness; a hidden secret room, a tiny spot of senseless mystery, a meaningless enclosure carefully protected, yet hiding nothing. Here the unholy relationship escapes reality, and seeks for
crumbs to keep itself alive. Here it would drag its brothers, holding them here in its idolatry. Here it is "safe," for here love cannot enter. The Holy Spirit does not build His temples where love can never be. Would He Who sees the face of Christ choose as His home the only place in all the universe where it can not be seen?

The face of Christ is the symbol for the face of innocence and forgiveness.

You cannot make the body the Holy Spirit's temple, and it will never be the seat of love. It is the home of the idolater, and of love's condemnation. For here is love made fearful and hope abandoned. Even the idols that are worshipped here are shrouded in mystery, and kept apart from those who worship them. This is the temple dedicated to no relationships and no return. Here is the "mystery" of separation perceived in awe and held in reverence. What God would have not be is here kept "safe" from Him. But what you do not realize is what you fear [the love of Christ that we share] within your brother, and would not see in him, is what makes God seem fearful to you, and kept unknown.

Idolaters will always be afraid of love, for nothing so severely threatens them as love's approach. Let love draw near them and overlook the body, as it will surely do, and they retreat in fear, feeling the seeming firm foundation of their temple begin to shake and loosen. Brother, you tremble with them. Yet what you fear is but the herald of escape. This place of darkness is not your home. Your temple is not threatened. You are an idolater no longer. The Holy Spirit's purpose lies safe in your relationship, and not your body. You have escaped the body. Where you are the body cannot enter, for the Holy Spirit has set His temple there. (R10 p436 VI.2-7)

In the passage above, "you" refers to your true self, the Son of God, one with the Father in Spirit. The Holy Spirit has set His temple in the Son of God's mind, not the ego's body.

We look closer now at the importance of purpose in our lives. Our goal is to either awaken from the dream of separation with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit through forgiveness and the Atonement; or to stay asleep in our nightmare by holding onto the ego and staying identified with the body and its special relationships based on sin and guilt. Our goal determines the purpose we assign to our relationships and will make them holy or unholy accordingly.

We have said much about discrepancies of means and end, and how these must be brought in line before your holy relationship can bring you only joy. But we have also said the means to meet the Holy Spirit's goal will come from the same Source as does His purpose. Being so simple and direct, this course has nothing in it that is not consistent. The seeming inconsistencies, or parts you find more difficult than others, are merely indications of areas where means and end are still discrepant. And this produces great discomfort. This need not be. This course requires almost nothing of you. It is impossible to imagine one that asks so little, or could offer more.

The Course will seem difficult when we try to use it for mutually exclusive goals. If we try to use it to awaken from our nightmare of special separate existence, and at the same time hold on to our special separate existence, we will be conflicted. The darkness of the ego must dissolve in the light of the Holy Spirit. The means to awakening are forgiveness, the Atonement, and looking within with Jesus and the Holy Spirit to bring the darkness of the ego to the light of love.

The period of discomfort that follows the sudden change in a relationship from sin to holiness may now be almost over. To the extent you still experience it, you are refusing to leave the means to Him Who changed the purpose. You recognize you want the goal. Are you not also willing to accept the means? If you are not, let us admit that you are inconsistent. A purpose is attained by means, and if you want a purpose you must be willing to want the means as well. How can one be sincere and say, "I want this above all else, and yet I do not want to learn the means to get it?"

To obtain the goal the Holy Spirit indeed asks little. He asks no more to give the means as well. The means are second to the goal. And when you hesitate, it is because the purpose frightens you, and not the means. Remember this, for otherwise you will make the error of believing the means are difficult. Yet how can they be difficult if they are merely given you? They guarantee the goal, and
they are perfectly in line with it. Before we look at them a little closer, remember that if you think they are impossible, your wanting of the purpose has been shaken. For if a goal is possible to reach, the means to do so must be possible as well.

It is impossible to see your brother as sinless and yet to look upon him as a body. Is this not perfectly consistent with the goal of holiness? For holiness is merely the result of letting the effects of sin be lifted, so what was always true is recognized. To see a sinless body is impossible, for holiness is positive and the body is merely neutral. It is not sinful, but neither is it sinless. As nothing, which it is, the body cannot meaningfully be invested with attributes of Christ or of the ego. Either must be an error, for both would place the attributes where they cannot be. And both must be undone for purposes of truth.

(R11 p439-440 VII.1-4)

And now we turn to the holy relationship and the Holy Spirit's purpose for the body. The perception of the body and world serve as a reflection of what we believe we are in the mind.

This week begins with palms and ends with lilies, the white and holy sign the Son of God is innocent. Let no dark sign of crucifixion intervene between the journey and its purpose; between the acceptance of the truth and its expression. This week we celebrate life, not death. And we honor the perfect purity of the Son of God, and not his sins. Offer your brother the gift of lilies, not the crown of thorns; the gift of love and not the "gift" of fear. You stand beside your brother, thorns in one hand and lilies in the other, uncertain which to give. Join now with me and throw away the thorns, offering the lilies to replace them. This Easter I would have the gift of your forgiveness offered by you to me, and returned by me to you. We cannot be united in crucifixion and in death. Nor can the resurrection be complete till your forgiveness rests on Christ, along with mine.

(R12 p425 I.2)

Easter is not the celebration of the cost of sin [which is death], but of its end. If you see glimpses of the face of Christ behind the veil, looking between the snow-white petals of the lilies you have received and given as your gift, you will behold your brother's face and recognize it. I was a stranger and you took me in, not knowing who I was. [Reference to the parable in Mathew's Gospel] Yet for your gift of lilies you will know. In your forgiveness of this stranger, alien to you and yet your ancient Friend, lies his release and your redemption with him. The time of Easter is a time of joy, and not of mourning. Look on your risen Friend, and celebrate his holiness along with me. For Easter is the time of your salvation, along with mine. (R13 p425-426 I.4)

Through forgiveness, our special unholy relationships become the holy relationship. Jesus represents the egoless state in us, and as we walk with him he takes us through the darkness of the ego and on to the light of love on the other side.

I have great need for lilies, for the Son of God has not forgiven me. And can I offer him forgiveness when he offers thorns to me? For he who offers thorns to anyone is against me still, and who is whole without him? Be you his friend for me, that I may be forgiven and you may look upon the Son of God as whole. But look you first upon the altar in your chosen home, and see what you have laid upon it to offer me. If it be thorns whose points gleam sharply in a blood-red light, the body is your chosen home and it is separation that you offer me. And yet the thorns are gone. Look you still closer at them now, and you will see your altar is no longer what it was. You look still with the body's eyes, and they can see but thorns. Yet you have asked for and received another sight. Those who accept the Holy Spirit's purpose as their own share also His vision.

(R14 p426-427 II.4-5.1-3)

We offer the thorns of crucifixion to Jesus when we offer thorns to our brother. We offer the lilies of forgiveness to Jesus when we offer lilies to our brother.

He sees no thorns but only lilies, gleaming in the gentle glow of peace that shines on everything He looks upon and loves. This Easter, look with different eyes upon your brother. You have forgiven me. And yet I cannot use your gift of lilies while you see them not. Nor can you use what I have given unless you share it. The Holy Spirit's vision is no idle gift, no plaything to be tossed about a while and laid aside. Listen and hear this carefully, nor think it but a dream, a
careless thought to play with, or a toy you would pick up from time to time and then put by. For if you do, so will it be to you. You have the vision now to look past all illusions. It has been given you to see no thorns, no strangers and no obstacles to peace. The fear of God is nothing to you now. Who is afraid to look upon illusions, knowing his savior stands beside him?

Our savior is our brother because we projected our guilt onto him, burying it in our mind. By letting Jesus reinterpret the relationship for us we become aware that what we condemned in our brother is a projection of what we condemned in ourselves. And looking within we realize the attack on ourselves was in the decision our mind made to put our belief in the ego instead of the Holy Spirit, and now we can choose again.

The fear of God is the final obstacle to peace.

For you have asked for and been given the strength to look upon this final obstacle, and see no thorns nor nails to crucify the Son of God, and crown him king of death. Your chosen home is on the other side, beyond the veil. It has been carefully prepared for you, and it is ready to receive you now. You will not see it with the body's eyes. Yet all you need you have. Your home has called to you since time began, nor have you ever failed entirely to hear. You heard, but knew not how to look, nor where. And now you know. In you the knowledge lies, ready to be unveiled and freed from all the terror that kept it hidden. There is no fear in love. The song of Easter is the glad refrain the Son of God was never crucified. Let us lift up our eyes together, not in fear but faith. And there will be no fear in us, for in our vision will be no illusions; only a pathway to the open door of Heaven, the home we share in quietness and where we live in gentleness and peace, as one together.

The following passage is a reference to Plato's Allegory of the Cave, and to the crucifixion.

Prisoners bound with heavy chains for years, starved and emaciated, weak and exhausted, and with eyes so long cast down in darkness they remember not the light, do not leap up in joy the instant they are made free. It takes a while for them to understand what freedom is. You groped but feebly in the dust and found your brother's hand, uncertain whether to let it go or to take hold on life so long forgotten. Strengthen your hold and raise your eyes unto your strong companion, in whom the meaning of your freedom lies. He seemed to be crucified beside you. And yet his holiness remained untouched and perfect, and with him beside you, you shall this day enter with him to Paradise, and know the peace of God. (R19 p431 III.9)

For what is Heaven but union, direct and perfect, and without the veil of fear upon it?

You and your brother now will lead the other to the Father as surely as God created His Son holy, and kept him so. In your brother is the light of God's eternal promise of your immortality. See him as sinless, and there can be no fear in you.

My fear of you is due to the sin and guilt I have within me, projected onto you, and now I fear your retaliation. When I am free of the illusion of sin and guilt in me, I have no fear of you. We walk in fear of the world because we have projected our own self image of a murderer onto the world. All fear is a projection of our own murderous self image onto a neutral world.

The holy instant is of greater value now to you than its unholy seeming counterpart, and you
have learned you really want but one. This is no
time for sadness. Perhaps confusion, but hardly
discouragement. You have a real relationship, and
it has meaning. It is as like your real relationship
with God as equal things are like unto each other.
Idolatry is past and meaningless. Perhaps you
fear your brother a little yet; perhaps a shadow of
the fear of God remains with you. Yet what is that
to those who have been given one true
relationship beyond the body? Can they be long
held back from looking on the face of Christ? And
can they long withhold the memory of their
relationship with their Father from themselves,
and keep remembrance of His Love apart from
their awareness? (R22 p439 VI.12.2-11)

We see the face of Christ in our brother and
remember God. I learn to forgive and see the
innocence in you, withdrawing the guilt I put on you,
and doing that, I am withdrawing the guilt from
myself. Through forgiveness of the guilt in you, the
first veil is lifted. Through forgiveness of the guilt in
myself, the second veil is lifted. What remains is the
Atonement, and the memory of God dawns in my
mind. This is the "formula" of the Course.

Your insane laws were made to guarantee that
you would make mistakes, and give them power
over you by accepting their results as your just
due. What could this be but madness? And is it
this that you would see within your savior from
insanity? (R23 p432 IV.3.1-3)

The insane laws of the ego make sin and guilt real in
ourselves, project them onto our brothers, and return
to us in the form of fear of our brothers and the
world. When we give the lilies of forgiveness to our
brother we are forgiven with him. When we give
thorns of guilt to our brother we are crucified with
him.

Those who choose freedom will experience only its
results. Their power is of God, and they will give
it only to what God has given, to share with them.
Nothing but this can touch them, for they see only
this, sharing their power according to the Will of
God. (R24 p432 IV.4.1-3)

Through discernment we are to choose the Holy
Spirit as our teacher Who is symbolized in the
passage below by the eagle; rather than choosing the
ego which is symbolized by the sparrow. The eagle
lifts us out of our dream of separation; the sparrow
keeps us grounded in our egoic nightmare.

Ask not the sparrow how the eagle soars, for
those with little wings have not accepted for
themselves the power to share with you. The
sinless give as they received. See, then, the power
of sinlessness within your brother, and share with
him the power of the release from sin you offered
him. To each who walks this earth in seeming
solitude is a savior given, whose special function
here is to release him, and so to free himself. In
the world of separation each is appointed
separately, though they are all the same. Yet those
who know that they are all the same need not
salvation. And each one finds his savior when he
is ready to look upon the face of Christ, and see
Him sinless. (R25 p433 IV.4.7;IV.5)

Our special relationships, all those people in our
lives we love and hate, are used by the Holy Spirit to
lead us to salvation through forgiveness and the
Atonement — making them the holy relationship.
Special relationships are used by the ego to keep us
asleep in the nightmare of separation from the love
of God. The guide we choose determines the path we
take and the goal we reach.

For in your part lies all of it [the Atonement],
without which is no part complete, nor is the
whole completed without your part. The ark of
peace is entered two by two, yet the beginning of
another world goes with them. Each holy
relationship must enter here, to learn its special
function in the Holy Spirit's plan, now that it
shares His purpose. And as this purpose is
fulfilled, a new world rises in which sin can enter
not, and where the Son of God can enter without
fear and where he rests a while, to forget
imprisonment and to remember freedom. How
can he enter, to rest and to remember, without
you? Except you be there, he is not complete. And
it is his completion that he remembers there.

The holy relationship is in your mind only, not the
body. The holy relationship is not between two
people. Special relationships are perceived as being
between the separate bodies of separate people.

This is the purpose given you. Think not that your
forgiveness of your brother serves but you two
alone. For the whole new world rests in the hands
of every two who enter here to rest. And as they rest, the face of Christ shines on them and they remember the laws of God, forgetting all the rest and yearning only to have His laws perfectly fulfilled in them and all their brothers. Think you when this has been achieved that you will rest without them? You could no more leave one of them outside than I could leave you, and forget part of myself. (R26 p433 IV.6-10;IV.7)

Forgiveness and the Atonement embrace all people — past, present and future, with absolutely no exceptions. To exclude even one from forgiveness and the Atonement, you hold your self apart from the love of God in the hell of special relationship — until you choose again. Your one purpose in the world you made is to awaken from the dream of separation by accepting the Atonement for yourself through forgiveness of your brothers with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

In this world, God's Son comes closest to himself in a holy relationship. There he begins to find the certainty his Father has in him. And there he finds his function of restoring his Father's laws to what was held outside them, and finding what was lost. Only in time can anything be lost, and never lost forever. So do the parts of God's Son gradually join in time, and with each joining is the end of time brought nearer. Each miracle of joining is a mighty herald of eternity. No one who has a single purpose, unified and sure, can be afraid. No one who shares his purpose with him can not be one with him.

The miracle is the realization of oneness, the acceptance of the Atonement through forgiveness.

Each herald of eternity sings of the end of sin and fear. Each speaks in time of what is far beyond it. Two voices raised together call to the hearts of everyone, to let them beat as one. And in that single heartbeat is the unity of love proclaimed and given welcome. Peace to your holy relationship, which has the power to hold the unity of the Son of God together. You give to your brother for everyone, and in your gift is everyone made glad. (R27 p434 V.1-2.1-6)

What is in him [your forgiven brother] will shine so brightly in your grateful vision that you will merely love him and be glad. You will not think to judge him, for who would see the face of Christ and yet insist that judgment still has meaning? For this insistence is of those who do not see. Vision or judgment is your choice, but never both of these. Your brother's body is as little use to you as it is to him. When it is used only as the Holy Spirit teaches, it has no function. For minds need not the body to communicate. The sight that sees the body has no use which serves the purpose of a holy relationship. And while you look upon your brother thus, the means and end have not been brought in line. Why should it take so many holy instants to let this be accomplished, when one would do? There is but one. The little breath of eternity that runs through time like golden light is all the same; nothing before it, nothing afterwards. (R28 p435 V.4.4-7;V.5)

Vision is of the Holy Spirit and embraces all people as one. Judgment is of the ego and sees all people as separate.

The body cannot be looked upon except through judgment. To see the body is the sign that you lack vision, and have denied the means the Holy Spirit offers you to serve His purpose. How can a holy relationship achieve its purpose through the means of sin? Judgment you taught yourself; vision is learned from Him Who would undo your teaching. His vision cannot see the body because it cannot look on sin. And thus it leads you to reality. Your holy brother, sight of whom is your release, is no illusion. Attempt to see him not in darkness, for your imaginings about him will seem real there. You closed your eyes to shut him out. Such was your purpose, and while this purpose seems to have a meaning, the means for its attainment will be evaluated as worth the seeing, and so you will not see. Your question should not be, "How can I see my brother without the body?" Ask only, "Do I really wish to see him sinless?" (R29 p441 VII.8-9.1-2)

The statement, "Vision cannot see the body," does not mean the physical body is not perceived. It means the body is not seen as having separate existence nor as a projection of sin and guilt; the body is not the reality of God's Son as spirit.

Vision will come to you at first in glimpses, but they will be enough to show you what is given you who see your brother sinless. Truth is restored to
you through your desire, as it was lost to you through your desire for something else. Open the holy place that you closed off by valuing the "something else," and what was never lost will quietly return. It has been saved for you. Vision would not be necessary had judgment not been made. Desire now its whole undoing, and it is done for you. (R30 p441-442 VIII.1)

Your brother's sinlessness is given you in shining light, to look on with the Holy Spirit's vision and to rejoice in along with Him. For peace will come to all who ask for it with real desire and sincerity of purpose, shared with the Holy Spirit and at one with Him on what salvation is. Be willing, then, to see your brother sinless, that Christ may rise before your vision and give you joy. And place no value on your brother's body, which holds him to illusions of what he is. It is his desire to see his sinlessness, as it is yours. And bless the Son of God in your relationship, nor see in him what you have made of him. (R31 p442 VIII.3)

There is no problem, no event or situation, no perplexity that vision will not solve. All is redeemed when looked upon with vision. For this is not your sight, and brings with it the laws beloved of Him Whose sight it is. Everything looked upon with vision falls gently into place, according to the laws brought to it by His calm and certain sight. The end for everything He looks upon is always sure. For it will meet His purpose, seen in unadjusted form and suited perfectly to meet it. Destructiveness becomes benign, and sin is turned to blessing under His gentle gaze.

(R32 p442-443 VIII.5.7-9;VIII.6.1-4)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. All problems are equally illusory.

Judgment is but a toy, a whim, the senseless means to play the idle game of death in your imagination. But vision sets all things right, bringing them gently within the kindly sway of Heaven's laws. (R33 p443 VIII.7.1-2)

Change happens in the mind, not the world. Vision is of the mind, and change happens in our perception of the world.

Vision is the means by which the Holy Spirit translates your nightmares into happy dreams; your wild hallucinations that show you all the fearful outcomes of imagined sin into the calm and reassuring sights with which He would replace them. These gentle sights and sounds are looked on happily, and heard with joy. They are His substitutes for all the terrifying sights and screaming sounds the ego's purpose brought to your horrified awareness. They step away from sin, reminding you that it is not reality which frightens you, and that the errors which you made can be corrected.

As vision takes the place of judgment, our nightmares change to happy dreams, and we begin to experience the peace of the real world just before the gates of Heaven.

When you have looked on what seemed terrifying, and seen it change to sights of loveliness and peace; when you have looked on scenes of violence and death, and watched them change to quiet views of gardens under open skies, with clear, life-giving water running happily beside them in dancing brooks that never waste away; who need persuade you to accept the gift of vision? And after vision, who is there who could refuse what must come after? Think but an instant just on this; you can behold the holiness God gave His Son. And never need you think that there is something else for you to see.

(R34 p444 VIII.10.4-7;VIII.11)

End Chapter Twenty
CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE
REASON AND PERCEPTION

Main Theme: Reason and madness are contrasted. Reason is the term used for the right minded thinking of the Holy Spirit. Madness or perception are the terms used for the wrong minded thinking of the ego. The power of the mind to put its faith in the ego or the Holy Spirit is addressed again in this chapter.

Introduction: This chapter addresses the purpose of the body and world from the ego's perspective contrasted with the Holy Spirit's purpose.

• You are indeed afraid to look within and see the sin you think is there. This you would not be fearful to admit. Fear in association with sin the ego deems quite appropriate, and smiles approvingly. It has no fear to let you feel ashamed. It doubts not your belief and faith in sin. Its temples do not shake because of this. Your faith that sin is there but witnesses to your desire that it be there to see. This merely seems to be the source of fear.

The ego's fear is that we (the Son of God) will exercise the power of our mind to look within and choose against the ego and for the Holy Spirit. The ego's strategy is to keep us mindless. It first convinces us that the separation from God is real and if we remain in the mind God will destroy us. The ego then makes a body and a world onto which it projects its sin and guilt, and convinces the Son that the body is a safe place to maintain his separate existence and hide from God's wrath.

Our real fear is not of crucifixion but of redemption. The real fear is that if we choose to accept the Atonement for ourselves and the love of God through the Holy Spirit, the special separate ego-self will dissolve.

Remember that the ego is not alone. Its rule is tempered, and its unknown "enemy," Whom it cannot even see, it fears. Loudly the ego tells you not to look inward, for if you do your eyes will light on sin, and God will strike you blind. This you believe, and so you do not look. Yet this is not the ego's hidden fear, nor yours who serve it. Loudly indeed the ego claims it is; too loudly and too often. For underneath this constant shout and frantic proclamation, the ego is not certain it is so.

Beneath your fear to look within because of sin is yet another fear, and one which makes the ego tremble. What if you looked within and saw no sin? This "fearful" question is one the ego never asks. And you who ask it now are threatening the ego's whole defensive system too seriously for it to bother to pretend it is your friend.

(Reference 1 p454 IV.1.3-10; IV.2-3.1-3)

The ego's "enemies" are the Holy Spirit, God and the power of the Son to choose to identify with the Holy Spirit and reject the ego. The passage above is one of the most important in the whole Course as it clearly describes our core problem. Our core problem is our hidden belief in separation from God, the hidden guilt we feel for our selfish desire to have our own special separate existence, and our fear of looking at our guilt and selfishness for fear of being punished. It is helpful to think of sin, guilt and fear as the feeling of selfishness. Selfishness is reflected in our desire to be special, to get what we want, to have our own way, to be right, to be better than others, to have more than others, to take credit for good things, and blame others for the bad. Sin and guilt are terms the Course uses to symbolize our selfish desire for specialness, and we experience fear of retribution as a result of our selfish desire for specialness.

The ego can only survive if sin (separation from God) is real. The ego's deepest fear is that the Son will look within and realize the separation from God never happened which means the end of the ego.

Faith and perception and belief can be misplaced, and serve the great deceiver's [the ego] needs as well as truth. But reason has no place at all in madness, nor can it be adjusted to fit its end. Faith and belief are strong in madness, guiding perception toward what the mind has valued. But reason enters not at all in this. For the perception would fall away at once, if reason were applied. There is no reason in insanity, for it depends entirely on reason's absence. The ego never uses it, because it does not realize that it exists. The partially insane have access to it, and only they have need of it. Knowledge does not depend on it, and madness keeps it out. (R2 p458 V.8)
Faith, perception and belief refer to the power of our mind to choose, and to perceive what we put our faith and belief in as real.

This is the only thing that you need do for vision, happiness, release from pain and the complete escape from sin, all to be given you. Say only this, but mean it with no reservations, for here the power of salvation lies:

*I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience, and I decide upon the goal I would achieve. And everything that seems to happen to me I ask for, and receive as I have asked.*

We are responsible for how we interpret what we see. The "objective" world has no meaning, no value, and no purpose apart from those we assign to it. We see the world through the thought system of the ego — separation, sin, guilt, fear and conflict; or with the vision of the Holy Spirit — wholeness, forgiveness, innocence, love and peace.

Deceive yourself no longer that you are helpless in the face of what is done to you. Acknowledge but that you have been mistaken, and all effects of your mistakes will disappear. It is impossible the Son of God be merely driven by events outside of him. It is impossible that happenings that come to him were not his choice. His power of decision is the determiner of every situation in which he seems to find himself by chance or accident. (R3 p448 II.2-3.1-3)

A major purpose of the Course is to remind us of the power of our mind to choose, and to help us get back to our mind so we can choose to identify with the Holy Spirit rather than the ego and the body.

Yet for this [to learn what forgiveness is], the power of your wanting must first be recognized. You must accept its strength, and not its weakness. You must perceive that what is strong enough to make a world can let it go, and can accept correction if it is willing to see that it was wrong. The world you see is but the idle witness that you were right. This witness is insane. You trained it in its testimony, and as it gave it back to you, you listened and convinced yourself that what it saw was true. You did this to yourself. See only this, and you will also see how circular the reasoning on which your "seeing" rests. This was not given you. This was your gift to you and to your brother. (R4 p449 II.4.8-10;II.5.1-7)

All that the ego is, is an idea that it is possible that things could happen to the Son of God without his will; and thus without the Will of his Creator, Whose Will cannot be separate from his own. This is the Son of God's replacement for his will, a mad revolt against what must forever be. This is the statement that he has the power to make God powerless and so to take it for himself, and leave himself without what God has willed for him. This is the mad idea you have enshrined upon your altars, and which you worship. And anything that threatens this seems to attack your faith, for here is it invested. Think not that you are faithless, for your belief and trust in this is strong indeed. (R5 p449 II.6.4-9)

Our mind's power to choose what we will believe is the only power in the world. Indeed the mind makes the world. The ego's strategy is to have us believe that someone else (God or other bodies) have done to us what we secretly believe we have done to them. The world's dream is that other's are victimizing me; the secret dream is that I am the original victimizer.

We have already said that wishful thinking is how the ego deals with what it wants, to make it so. There is no better demonstration of the power of wanting, and therefore of faith, to make its goals seem real and possible. Faith in the unreal leads to adjustments of reality to make it fit the goal of madness. The goal of sin induces the perception of a fearful world to justify its purpose. What you desire, you will see. And if its reality is false, you will uphold it by not realizing all the adjustments you have introduced to make it so.

Projection makes perception. The ego's purpose of the world is to make the insanity of separation appear real.

When vision is denied, confusion of cause and effect becomes inevitable. The purpose now becomes to keep obscure the cause of the effect, and make effect appear to be a cause. This seeming independence of effect enables it to be regarded as standing by itself, and capable of serving as a cause of the events and feelings its maker thinks it causes. Earlier, we spoke of your desire to create your own creator, and be father
and not son to him. This is the same desire. The Son is the Effect, whose Cause he would deny. And so he seems to be the cause, producing real effects. (R6 p450 II.9-10.1-7)

It is as needful that you recognize you made the world you see, as that you recognize that you did not create yourself. They are the same mistake. (R7 p450 II.11.1-2)

The belief that we could be a separate creator and substitute for God is our first mistake. And making a world of separate bodies as a substitute for Heaven is our second mistake.

But let him only ask himself these questions, which he must decide, to have it done for him:

Do I desire a world I rule instead of one that rules me? Do I desire a world where I am powerful instead of helpless? Do I desire a world in which I have no enemies and cannot sin? And do I want to see what I denied because it is the truth? (R8 p463 VII.5.10-14)

In the world the ego made, we feel helpless; everyone is separate from me and is my potential enemy. The first three questions address the world we projected. The fourth question addresses what we denied in our mind — the Atonement principle. We denied our oneness with God which led to guilt and the projection of the world.

Forget not that the choice of sin or truth, helplessness or power, is the choice of whether to attack or heal. For healing comes of power, and attack of helplessness. Whom you attack you cannot want to heal. And whom you would have healed must be the one you chose to be protected from attack. And what is this decision but the choice whether to see him through the body's eyes, or let him be revealed to you through vision? How this decision leads to its effects is not your problem. But what you want to see must be your choice. This is a course in cause and not effect. (R9 p463 VII.7)

This Course facilitates a change in the mind (the cause), not in the body or world (the effect).

In content all the questions are the same. For each one asks if you are willing to exchange the world of sin for what the Holy Spirit sees, since it is this the world of sin denies. And therefore those who look on sin are seeing the denial of the real world. Yet the last question adds the wish for constancy in your desire to see the real world, so the desire becomes the only one you have. By answering the final question "yes," you add sincerity to the decisions you have already made to all the rest. For only then have you renounced the option to change your mind again. When it is this you do not want, the rest are wholly answered. (R10 p464 VII.11)

The fourth (final) question asks if we are willing to accept the Atonement in our mind (the cause) for ourselves. Answering yes to the Atonement resolves the previous questions that refer to the world (the effect). It is not enough to say that I do not want to be a victim of the world anymore, which the first three questions address. The final question takes us back to our mind which is the cause of the world. When we choose to accept the Atonement for ourselves through the forgiveness of sin and guilt, we no longer need to make a world of sin, guilt, conflict, fear and attack.

Projection makes perception. The world you see is what you gave it, nothing more than that. But though it is no more than that, it is not less. Therefore, to you it is important. It is the witness to your state of mind, the outside picture of an inward condition. As a man thinketh, so does he perceive. Therefore, seek not to change the world, but choose to change your mind about the world. Perception is a result and not a cause. And that is why order of difficulty in miracles is meaningless. Everything looked upon with vision is healed and holy. Nothing perceived without it means anything. And where there is no meaning, there is chaos. (R11 p445 in.1)

My only responsibility is to accept the Atonement for myself. Period. Not to change anyone or anything in the world in any way. My only function is to accept the love of God as my Self; this is the Atonement.

Perception selects, and makes the world you see. It literally picks it out as the mind directs. The laws of size and shape and brightness would hold, perhaps, if other things were equal. They are not equal. For what you look for you are far more
likely to discover than what you would prefer to overlook. The still, small Voice for God is not drowned out by all the ego's raucous screams and senseless ravings to those who want to hear It. Perception is a choice and not a fact. But on this choice depends far more than you may realize as yet. For on the voice you choose to hear, and on the sights you choose to see, depends entirely your whole belief in what you are. Perception is a witness but to this, and never to reality. (R12 p456 V.1.1-10)

The way I perceive the world tells me how I perceive myself. That is the value of the world; it serves as a mirror that reflects the identity my mind has chosen — the separation of the ego, or the wholeness of the Holy Spirit.

Listen to what the ego says, and see what it directs you see, and it is sure that you will see yourself as tiny, vulnerable and afraid. You will experience depression, a sense of worthlessness, and feelings of impermanence and unreality. You will believe that you are helpless prey to forces far beyond your own control, and far more powerful than you. And you will think the world you made directs your destiny. For this will be your faith. But never believe because it is your faith it makes reality. (R13 p456 V.2.3-8)

We are free to believe whatever we choose, but belief does not make it real except in our experience. We can believe we are separate egos imprisoned in a body and world, and we will experience it as so. But our wholeness with God is unaffected, merely outside of our experience, until we choose again.

If you accept this change [from the special relationship to the holy relationship], you have accepted the idea of making room for truth. The source of sin is gone. You may imagine that you still experience its effects, but it is not your purpose and you no longer want it. No one allows a purpose to be replaced while he desires it, for nothing is so cherished and protected as is a goal the mind accepts. This it will follow, grimly or happily, but always with faith and with the persistence that faith inevitably brings. The power of faith is never recognized if it is placed in sin. But it is always recognized if it is placed in love.

The source of sin is the belief in separation. When the mind sets its goal of special independent existence, it protects it and strives for it unceasingly. When we place the power of our faith in sin (separation) we have given away our power — we take the sin and guilt in our mind, project it out onto others and give them power over us.

Why is it strange to you that faith can move mountains? This is indeed a little feat for such a power. For faith can keep the Son of God in chains as long as he believes he is in chains. And when he is released from them it will be simply because he no longer believes in them, withdrawing faith that they can hold him, and placing it in his freedom instead. It is impossible to place equal faith in opposite directions. What faith you give to sin you take away from holiness. And what you offer holiness has been removed from sin. (R14 p451-452 III.2-3)

Faith refers to the power of our mind to believe in the ego or the Holy Spirit. What we put our faith in is what we believe, and what we believe is what we project onto the world. When we put our faith in the ego, we put our faith in nothing, which is faithlessness. True faith is in the Holy Spirit. The ego and the Holy Spirit are mutually exclusive thought systems. We can have faith in one or the other with no compromise. The miracle is when we shift our faith from the ego to the Holy Spirit. The purpose of A Course in Miracles is to facilitate this shift.

It is impossible that the Son of God lack faith, but he can choose where he would have it be. Faithlessness is not a lack of faith, but faith in nothing. Faith given to illusions does not lack power, for by it does the Son of God believe that he is powerless. Thus is he faithless to himself, but strong in faith in his illusions about himself. For faith, perception and belief you made, as means for losing certainty and finding sin. This mad direction was your choice, and by your faith in what you chose, you made what you desired. (R15 p452 III.5)

We made the body and the world because we desired to project our sin and guilt onto it, thereby reinforcing our special separate existence and maintaining our face of innocence in the eyes of God and the world we made.
Those who believe in sin must think the Holy Spirit asks for sacrifice, for this is how they think their purpose is accomplished. Brother, the Holy Spirit knows that sacrifice brings nothing. He makes no bargains. And if you seek to limit Him, you will hate Him because you are afraid. (R16 p453 III.9.1-4)

By making a world of bodies and projecting my sin and guilt onto you, you are sacrificed so I can maintain my innocence and my special separate existence.

Your faith in sacrifice has given it great power in your sight; except you do not realize you cannot see because of it. For sacrifice must be exacted of a body, and by another body. The mind could neither ask it nor receive it of itself. And no more could the body. The intention is in the mind, which tries to use the body to carry out the means for sin in which the mind believes. Thus is the joining of mind and body an inescapable belief of those who value sin. And so is sacrifice invariably a means for limitation, and thus for hate. (R17 p453 III.10)

The ego's purpose for special relationships (love and hate) is to fulfill its need to sacrifice. I am innocent because you are guilty.

The body was made to be a sacrifice to sin, and in the darkness so it still is seen. Yet in the light of vision it is looked upon quite differently. You can have faith in it to serve the Holy Spirit's goal, and give it power to serve as means to help the blind to see. But in their seeing they look past it, as do you. The faith and the belief you gave it belongs beyond. You gave perception and belief and faith from mind to body. Let them now be given back to what produced them, and can use them still to save itself from what it made. (R18 p454 III.12)

The mind and body cannot be integrated. The body does not exist apart from the mind's belief in separation. Reality and illusion are mutually exclusive and cannot be integrated. The Holy Spirit uses the body and special relationships as a teaching device to help us learn of our true power and identity which are in the mind, not in the body or world. The miracle is a shift in focus from the illusory identity with the body to the reality of our true identity with spirit.

All special relationships have sin as their goal. For they are bargains with reality, toward which the seeming union is adjusted. Forget not this; to bargain is to set a limit, and any brother with whom you have a limited relationship, you hate. You may attempt to keep the bargain in the name of "fairness," sometimes demanding payment of yourself, perhaps more often of the other. Thus in the "fairness" you attempt to ease the guilt that comes from the accepted purpose of the relationship. And that is why the Holy Spirit must change its purpose to make it useful to Him and harmless to you. (R19 p451 III.1)

Your special love relationships are not based in love at all. Those special ones you claim to love are special relationships based on sacrifice, fear, guilt and hate. There is no love in your special love relationships — to be free you must wake up to this fact. Love is in your Identity with God, and no where else. Face it. When you are willing to let Him, the Holy Spirit will change the purpose you have given to your special relationships, those you claim to love, to help you find the true source of love. The Holy Spirit does not interfere with your relationships, but helps you change the purpose they serve — to forgiveness, peace and love; from guilt, conflict, and hate.

The passages below paint a vivid picture of what we have done with our special relationships. All the Sons of God who live in the darkness of the ego are the "dark ones" who form a sorry army.

They are indeed a sorry army, each one as likely to attack his brother or turn upon himself as to remember that they thought they had a common cause. Frantic and loud and strong the dark ones seem to be. Yet they know not their "enemy," except they hate him. In hatred they have come together [formed temporary alliances], but have not joined each other. For had they done so hatred would be impossible. The army of the powerless must be disbanded in the presence of strength. Those who are strong are never treacherous, because they have no need to dream of power and to act out their dream. How would an army act in dreams? Any way at all. It could be seen attacking anyone with anything. Dreams have no reason in them. A flower turns into a poisoned spear, a child becomes a giant and a mouse roars like a lion. And love is turned to hate.
as easily. This is no army, but a madhouse. What seems to be a planned attack is bedlam.

The strong are those who are joined in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit's strength is all powerful and all inclusive. No one is excluded from the Holy Spirit's strength; the Holy Spirit is for all, and against no one. The Holy Spirit's strength is the power of God's unconditional love.

The army of the powerless is weak indeed. It has no weapons and it has no enemy. Yes, it can overrun the world and seek an enemy. But it can never find what is not there. Yes, it can dream it found an enemy, but this will shift even as it attacks, so that it runs at once to find another, and never comes to rest in victory. And as it runs it turns against itself, thinking it caught a glimpse of the great enemy who always eludes its murderous attack by turning into something else. How treacherous does this enemy appear, who changes so it is impossible even to recognize him.

The ego cannot survive without an enemy. It is born in the conflict of separation from God, and it dies when the conflict is over. The ego needs conflict, war and hate to maintain its separate existence and to sustain its face of innocence. When one special love relationship ends in conflict, fear and animosity, we immediately seek another to keep the war going. True love is the death of the ego. True love is the end of conflict, fear, hate and war. There is no true love between people. True love and separate people are mutually exclusive.

Yet hate must have a target. There can be no faith in sin without an enemy. Who that believes in sin would dare believe he has no enemy? Could he admit that no one made him powerless? Reason would surely bid him seek no longer what is not there to find. (R20 p462-463 VII.5.11-14)

The only true "positive" in the Course is God, Who cannot be taught. Forgiveness, healing, salvation, Atonement and the miracle have positive meaning only in their denial of their corresponding negative — sin, sickness, bondage, or separation. The separation is the denial of God. The Atonement is the denial of the denial of God. The purpose of the Course is to help us undo the denial of truth by undoing all that blocks or interferes with our realization of our Identity with Christ, the true Son of God.

Now we turn to the power of our mind to choose. Here are the four questions we addressed above:

Do I desire a world I rule instead of one that rules me? Do I desire a world where I am powerful instead of helpless? Do I desire a world in which I have no enemies and cannot sin? And do I want to see what I denied because it is the truth?

(R20A p463 VII.5.11-14)

Why do you think you are unsure the others [the first three questions] have been answered? Could it be necessary they be asked so often, if they had? Until the last decision has been made [question four for the Atonement], the answer is both "yes" and "no." For you have answered "yes" without perceiving that "yes" must mean "not no." No one decides against his happiness, but he may do so if he does not see he does it. And if he sees his happiness as ever changing, now this, now that, and now an elusive shadow attached to nothing, he does decide against it. (R21 p464 VII.12)

The power of the Son of God's desire remains the proof that he is wrong who sees himself as helpless. Desire what you want, and you will look on it and think it real. No thought but has the power to release or kill. And none can leave the thinker's mind, or leave him unaffected.

In the dream of the world the mind is all powerful. Our thoughts of fear, conflict and anger are somatized and felt in the body and projected onto the world. The mind is the only power in our dream world; but has no power in Heaven or Truth.

Are thoughts, then, dangerous? To bodies, yes! The thoughts that seem to kill are those that teach the thinker that he can be killed. And so he "dies" because of what he learned. He goes from life to
death, the final proof he valued the inconstant more than constancy. Surely he thought he wanted happiness. Yet he did not desire it because it was the truth, and therefore must be constant. (R22 p464-465 VII.13.5-8;VIII.1)

By believing we killed God in the beginning so we could live, we guarantee our "death" in the end.

Reason will tell you that you cannot ask for happiness inconstantly. For if what you desire you receive, and happiness is constant, then you need ask for it but once to have it always. And if you do not have it always, being what it is, you did not ask for it. For no one fails to ask for his desire of something he believes holds out some promise of the power of giving it. He may be wrong in what he asks, where, and of what. Yet he will ask because desire is a request, an asking for, and made by one whom God Himself will never fail to answer. (R23 p465 VIII.3.1-6)

We ask of the one whom we believe has the power to give us what we want. We ask the ego for our eternal happiness, or we ask the Holy Spirit; only one can give it because only one has it to give.

You who complete God's Will and are His happiness, whose will is powerful as His, a power that is not lost in your illusions, think carefully why you have not yet decided how you would answer the final question. Your answer to the others has made it possible to help you be already partly sane. And yet it is the final one that really asks if you are willing to be wholly sane.

What is the holy instant but God's appeal to you to recognize what He has given you? Here is the great appeal to reason; the awareness of what is always there to see, the happiness that could be always yours. Here is the constant peace you could experience forever. Here is what denial has denied revealed to you. For here the final question is already answered, and what you ask for given. Here is the future now, for time is powerless because of your desire for what will never change. For you have asked that nothing stand between the holiness of your relationship and your awareness of its holiness. (R24 p465-466 VIII.4-6)

The answer to the fourth question determines whether we are ready to go all the way with what this Course teaches. Most will stop after answering the first three questions in the affirmative. Most will try to bring the light of the teaching into their darkness. Most will try to hold on to their separate egoic existence and take control of the world. The fourth question is the complete undoing of the ego's thought system and the world as we knew it.

The next two passages suggest how we are to live in the world as a student of this Course. Our relationships and the world we see are to be used as a mirror which reflects back to us what we have projected onto them. When we see sin, guilt and fear in the world, we know we have sin, guilt and fear in us. And we are to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us go back into our mind and look at the source of our sin and guilt, and choose forgiveness and the Atonement instead. When I see everyone in the world as either expressing love or calling for love, then I know I have chosen to see with the vision of the Holy Spirit, and my special, unholy relationships have become holy.

Damnation is your judgment on yourself, and this you will project upon the world. See it as damned, and all you see is what you did to hurt the Son of God. If you behold disaster and catastrophe, you tried to crucify him. If you see holiness and hope, you joined the Will of God to set him free. There is no choice that lies between these two decisions. And you will see the witness to the choice you made, and learn from this to recognize which one you chose. The world you see but shows you how much joy you have allowed yourself to see in you, and to accept as yours. And, if this is its meaning, then the power to give it joy must lie within you. (R25 p445 in.2)

The Holy Spirit has a use for all the means [special relationships] for sin by which you sought to find it. But as He uses them they lead away from sin, because His purpose lies in the opposite direction. He sees the means you use, but not the purpose for which you made them. He would not take them [relationships] from you, for He sees their value as a means for what He wills for you. You made perception that you might choose among your brothers, and seek for sin with them. The Holy Spirit sees perception as a means to teach you that the vision of a holy relationship is all you want to see. Then will you give your faith
to holiness, desiring and believing in it because of your desire. (R26 p452 III.6)

We withdraw our faith in the ego when we realize what it is doing. The world did not make me miserable; I made myself miserable by identifying with the misery of the ego. Now I choose again.

The next several passages address the process of forgiveness and Atonement as the undoing of the ego.

The Holy Spirit can give you faith in holiness and vision to see it easily enough. But you have not left open and unoccupied the altar [the decision making part of your mind] where the gifts belong. Where they [holiness and vision] should be, you have set up your idols to something else [the ego]. This other "will," which seems to tell you what must happen, you give reality. And what would show you otherwise must therefore seem unreal. All that is asked of you is to make room for truth. You are not asked to make or do what lies beyond your understanding. All you are asked to do is let it in; only to stop your interference with what will happen of itself; simply to recognize again the presence of what you thought you gave away.

We do not choose vision, we choose against judgment. We do not accept the truth, but we choose against the lie of the ego. We do not choose for Love, but against hatred. Vision, truth and love are our natural state as the Son of God when we do not choose for judgment, ego or hatred.

Be willing, for an instant, to leave your altars free of what you placed upon them, and what is really there you cannot fail to see. The holy instant is not an instant of creation, but of recognition. For recognition comes of vision and suspended judgment. Then only it is possible to look within and see what must be there, plainly in sight, and wholly independent of inference and judgment. Undoing is not your task, but it is up to you to welcome it or not. Faith and desire go hand in hand, for everyone believes in what he wants. (R27 p449-450 II.7-8)

Your liberation still is only partial; still limited and incomplete, yet born within you. Not wholly mad, you have been willing to look on much of your insanity and recognize its madness. Your faith is moving inward, past insanity and on to reason. And what your reason tells you now the ego would not hear. The Holy Spirit's purpose was accepted by the part of your mind the ego knows not of. No more did you. And yet this part, with which you now identify, is not afraid to look upon itself. It knows no sin. How, otherwise, could it have been willing to see the Holy Spirit's purpose as its own?

By honestly looking at all of our anger, fear, hatred, selfishness and desire for specialness, we become aware of the ego's insanity, and with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit we are healed and become sane.

This part has seen your brother, and recognized him perfectly since time began. And it desired nothing but to join with him and to be free again, as once it was. It has been waiting for the birth of freedom; the acceptance of release to come to you. And now you recognize that it was not the ego that joined the Holy Spirit's purpose, and so there must be something else [the Son of God as the decision maker]. Think not that this is madness. For this your reason tells you, and it follows perfectly from what you have already learned. (R28 p455 IV.4-5)

As your identity shifts away from the ego to the Son of God as the decision maker or the observer, the ego becomes afraid of its imminent demise.

And now the ego is afraid. Yet what it hears in terror, the other part hears as the sweetest music; the song it longed to hear since first the ego came into your mind. The ego's weakness is its [the Holy Spirit's] strength. The song of freedom, which sings the praises of another world, brings to it hope of peace. For it remembers Heaven, and now it sees that Heaven [Heaven's reflection] has come to earth at last, from which the ego's rule has kept it out so long. Heaven has come because it found a home in your relationship on earth. And earth can hold no longer what has been given Heaven as its own.

Look gently on your brother, and remember the ego's weakness is revealed in both your sight. What it would keep apart has met and joined, and looks upon the ego unafraid. Little child, innocent of sin, follow in gladness the way to certainty. Be
not held back by fear's insane insistence that sureness lies in doubt. This has no meaning. What matters it to you how loudly it is proclaimed? The senseless is not made meaningful by repetition and by clamor. The quiet way is open. Follow it happily, and question not what must be so.

(R29 p455-456 IV.7-8)

There is another vision and another Voice in which your freedom lies, awaiting but your choice. And if you place your faith in Them, you will perceive another self in you. This other self sees miracles as natural. They are as simple and as natural to it as breathing to the body. They are the obvious response to calls for help, the only one it makes. Miracles seem unnatural to the ego because it does not understand how separate minds can influence each other. Nor could they do so. But minds cannot be separate. This other self is perfectly aware of this. And thus it recognizes that miracles do not affect another's mind, only its own. They always change your mind. There is no other.

"Seek not to change the world, but seek to change your mind about the world." Your mind is the world. There is no world apart from your mind, and no other mind apart from your mind. The world does not need to be saved; only your mind needs to be saved. Do not try to save the world you made in your mind.

You do not realize the whole extent to which the idea of separation has interfered with reason. Reason lies in the other self you have cut off from your awareness. And nothing you have allowed to stay in your awareness is capable of reason. How can the segment of the mind devoid of reason understand what reason is, or grasp the information it would give? All sorts of questions may arise in it, but if the basic question stems from reason, it will not ask it. Like all that stems from reason, the basic question is obvious, simple and remains unasked. But think not reason could not answer it. (R30 p456-457 V.3-4)

The last unanswered question is addressed later in the chapter.

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Our relationships and our world are to be used as a classroom to reflect back to us what we believe in our mind and have projected out onto others and the world. As we become aware of the sin and guilt in our mind it can be forgiven and healed.

God's plan is simple; never circular and never self-defeating. He has no Thoughts except the Self-extending, and in this your will must be included. Thus, there must be a part of you that knows His Will and shares it. It is not meaningful to ask if what must be is so. But it is meaningful to ask why you are unaware of what is so, for this must have an answer if the plan of God for your salvation is complete. And it must be complete, because its Source knows not of incompletion. Where would the answer be but in the Source? And where are you but there, where this same answer is? (R31 p457 V.6-7.1-2)

We have buried and are unaware of our identity with spirit because to be aware of it means the end of the special separate ego-self identified with the body living in a world.

If you choose sin instead of healing, you would condemn the Son of God to what can never be corrected. You tell him, by your choice, that he is damned; separate from you and from his Father forever, without a hope of safe return. You teach him this, and you will learn of him exactly what you taught. For you can teach him only that he is as you would have him, and what you choose he be is but your choice for you. Yet think not this is fearful. That you are joined to him is but a fact, not an interpretation. How can a fact be fearful unless it disagrees with what you hold more dear than truth? Reason will tell you that this fact is your release. (R32 p460 VI.6)

When we realize that the apparent separation from God was merely a mistaken choice in our mind, we can choose again to correct it. When we believe separation from God is a sin, we maintain the separation and fear God's punishment. We project onto our brothers and the world what we believe about ourselves. When we forgive our brothers for what they did not do, we are forgiven for what we did not do.

That you and your brother are joined is your salvation; the gift of Heaven, not the gift of fear. Does Heaven seem to be a burden to you? In madness, yes. And yet what madness sees must be dispelled by reason. Reason assures you Heaven is
what you want, and all you want. Listen to Him who speaks with reason, and brings your reason into line with His. Be willing to let reason be the means by which He would direct you how to leave insanity behind. Hide not behind insanity in order to escape from reason. What madness would conceal, the Holy Spirit still holds out for everyone to look upon with gladness.

(R33 p460-461 VI.8)

We attempt to hide from the reason of the Holy Spirit by hiding behind the insanity of our special relationships. We even try to bring Jesus and the Holy Spirit into our madness by forming a special relationship with Them, and trying to use Them to improve our insane dream world.

The power you have over the Son of God is not a threat to his reality. It but attests to it. Where could his freedom lie but in himself, if he be free already? And who could bind him but himself, if he deny his freedom? God is not mocked; no more His Son can be imprisoned save by his own desire. And it is by his own desire that he is freed. Such is his strength, and not his weakness. He is at his own mercy. And where he chooses to be merciful, there is he free. But where he chooses to condemn instead, there is he held a prisoner, waiting in chains his pardon on himself to set him free.

(R34 p461 VI.11)

The decision making part of the Son's mind is where the Son's power is. He decides to identify with the ego, imprisoning himself, or he chooses to identify with the Holy Spirit, liberating himself.

The passages below are a beautiful meditation with which we close this chapter. There is an eternal song playing in our mind, and though faint, is easily recalled as we listen closely to its soft melody.

Listen, and try to think if you remember what we will speak of now. Listen – perhaps you catch a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten; dim, perhaps, and yet not altogether unfamiliar, like a song whose name is long forgotten, and the circumstances in which you heard completely unremembered. Not the whole song has stayed with you, but just a little wisp of melody, attached not to a person or a place or anything particular. But you remember, from just this little part, how lovely was the song, how wonderful the setting where you heard it, and how you loved those who were there and listened with you.

The notes are nothing. Yet you have kept them with you, not for themselves, but as a soft reminder of what would make you weep if you remembered how dear it was to you. You could remember, yet you are afraid, believing you would lose the world you learned since then. And yet you know that nothing in the world you learned is half so dear as this. Listen, and see if you remember an ancient song you knew so long ago and held more dear than any melody you taught yourself to cherish since.

Beyond the body, beyond the sun and stars, past everything you see and yet somehow familiar, is an arc of golden light that stretches as you look into a great and shining circle. And all the circle fills with light before your eyes. The edges of the circle disappear, and what is in it is no longer contained at all. The light expands and covers everything, extending to infinity forever shining and with no break or limit anywhere. Within it everything is joined in perfect continuity. Nor is it possible to imagine that anything could be outside, for there is nowhere that this light is not.

This is the vision of the Son of God, whom you know well. Here is the sight of him who knows his Father. Here is the memory of what you are; a part of this, with all of it within, and joined to all as surely as all is joined in you. Accept the vision that can show you this, and not the body. You know the ancient song, and know it well. Nothing will ever be as dear to you as is this ancient hymn of love the Son of God sings to his Father still.

And now the blind can see, for that same song they sing in honor of their Creator gives praise to them as well. The blindness that they made will not withstand the memory of this song. And they will look upon the vision of the Son of God, remembering who he is they sing of. What is a miracle but this remembering? And who is there in whom this memory lies not? The light in one awakens it in all. And when you see it in your brother, you are remembering for everyone.

(R35 p446-447 I.5.5; 1.6-10 )

End Chapter Twenty-One
CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO
SALVATION AND THE HOLY RELATIONSHIP

Main Theme: The holy relationship and reason.

Chapters 15-19, 23-24 and through the remainder of the Text are heavily focused on the darkness of the ego and special relationships. Chapters 20-22 are focused on the light of the holy relationship.

Introduction: This chapter also addresses the ego's perception of differences in form, contrasted with the Holy Spirit's perception of the sameness in content. "Nothing so blinding as perception of form." The ego's purpose for making the world of form is to blind us to the belief in sin and guilt in our mind, and project it out so we see sin and guilt in everyone else. The belief in sin and guilt in the wrong mind is a defense against the Atonement principle in our right mind.

We begin by addressing the ego's strategy to defend against the Son changing his mind and choosing the Atonement which would dissolve the ego, as the ego is only sustained by our belief in it. The ego has us believe that the mind is a fearful place from which we must flee to avoid the punishment of God for sinning against Him by leaving Him.

The introduction of reason into the ego's thought system is the beginning of its undoing, for reason and the ego are contradictory. Nor is it possible for them to coexist in your awareness. (Reference I p474 III.1.1-2)

Reason is used as a synonym for the Holy Spirit's thought system or the Atonement which corrects the ego's thought system of separation. It is the ego's fear of our choosing reason that impels it to block the Voice of the Holy Spirit, because in the presence of reason, madness is dispelled.

The ego's whole continuance depends on its belief you cannot learn this course. Share this belief, and reason will be unable to see your errors and make way for their correction. For reason sees through errors, telling you what you thought was real is not. (R2 p474-475 III.2.1-3)

Learning this Course facilitates the dissolution of the ego, and the realization of our identity as spirit. Our original error was in choosing to believe in the separation, sin and guilt. Reason helps us look at our mistaken choice so we can choose again for the Atonement instead of the ego's separation. To ensure we don't choose against it, the ego makes up a world of form that blinds us to the content of sin and guilt in our mind.

Our fear of dissolution is why we are so attached to our world of form, bodies and relationships. And why we try to drag the Course, Jesus and the Holy Spirit down into the world and make Them part of the world, rather than allowing Them to lead us out of the world and awaken to the dream entirely. We want to pull the Course, Jesus and the Holy Spirit into our world so we can maintain and glorify our special separate egoic identity. By doing so we are trying to bring the light into our darkness while remaining in the dark — exactly what the ego wants, and exactly what traditional religion has done with Jesus and the Holy Spirit.

Sin is a block, set like a heavy gate, locked and without a key, across the road to peace. No one who looks on it without the help of reason would try to pass it. The body's eyes behold it as solid granite, so thick it would be madness to attempt to pass it. Yet reason sees through it easily, because it is an error. The form it takes cannot conceal its emptiness from reason's eyes.

Believing that sin is real, we are blocking the Atonement and Heaven from our awareness. As we look on the form of sin with the reason of the Holy Spirit, we realize sin has no content as it is based on a separation from God that never happened — and that is the ego's fear, and why we do not want to learn this Course.

Only the form of error attracts the ego. Meaning it does not recognize, and does not see if it is there or not. Everything the body's eyes can see is a mistake, an error in perception, a distorted fragment of the whole without the meaning that the whole would give. And yet mistakes, regardless of their form, can be corrected. Sin is but error in a special form the ego venerates. It would preserve all errors and make them sins. For here is its own stability, its heavy anchor in the shifting world it made; the rock on which its
church is built, and where its worshippers are bound to bodies, believing the body's freedom is their own. (R3 p475 III.3.2-6;III.4)

The ego has built its Church on sin. Sin says the ego is real because the separation from God is real.

The body's eyes see only form. They cannot see beyond what they were made to see. And they were made to look on error and not see past it. Theirs is indeed a strange perception, for they can see only illusions, unable to look beyond the granite block of sin, and stopping at the outside form of nothing. To this distorted form of vision the outside of everything, the wall [sin] that stands between you and the truth, is wholly true. Yet how can sight that stops at nothingness, as if it were a solid wall, see truly? It is held back by form, having been made to guarantee that nothing else but form will be perceived.

These eyes, made not to see, will never see. For the idea they represent [separation] left not its maker [the decision maker's choice for the ego], and it is their maker that sees through them [the ego's eyes]. What was its maker's goal but not to see? For this the body's eyes are perfect means, but not for seeing. See how the body's eyes rest on externals and cannot go beyond. Watch how they stop at nothingness, unable to go beyond the form to meaning. Nothing so blinding as perception of form. For sight of form means understanding has been obscured. (R4 p475-476 III.5.3-9;III.6)

Every illusion carries pain and suffering in the dark folds of the heavy garments in which it hides its nothingness. Yet by these dark and heavy garments are those who seek illusions covered, and hidden from the joy of truth. (R5 p471 II.1.5-6)

The heavy garments are the world of form, our bodies and special relationships, whose purpose is to veil the inherent nothingness of the ego's thought system. We made the entire cosmos to veil the illusion of the ego's separate existence.

Illusions carry only guilt and suffering, sickness and death, to their believers. The form in which they are accepted is irrelevant. No form of misery in reason's eyes can be confused with joy. (R6 p471 II.3.1-3)

Pleasure and pain, beauty and ugliness, happiness and sadness are all forms of illusion. Joy is beyond the world of form, beyond duality in our Identity with the oneness of God's love.

Reason will tell you that the only way to escape from misery is to recognize it and go the other way. Truth is the same and misery the same, but they are different from each other in every way, in every instance and without exception. To believe that one exception can exist is to confuse what is the same with what is different. One illusion cherished and defended against the truth makes all truth meaningless, and all illusions real. Such is the power of belief. It cannot compromise. And faith in innocence is faith in sin, if the belief excludes one living thing and holds it out, apart from its forgiveness. (R7 p472 II.4)

Truth and illusion are mutually exclusive. To believe in one illusion is to deny the whole truth. Peace, love and joy are not in the world of illusion. To believe that peace or love or joy can be found in the world is to deny the truth and remain asleep in the misery of illusion. Forgiveness, love and the Atonement apply to all; no one can be excluded, or they apply to no one.

The ego will assure you now that it is impossible for you to see no guilt in anyone. And if this seeing is the only means by which escape from guilt can be attained, then the belief in sin must be eternal. (R8 p472 II.5.2-3)

If we forgive everyone in the world except one person, the ego retains its "eternal" special separate existence.

How does one overcome illusions? Surely not by force or anger, nor by opposing them in any way. Merely by letting reason tell you that they contradict reality. They go against what must be true. The opposition comes from them, and not reality. Reality opposes nothing. What merely is needs no defense, and offers none. Only illusions need defense because of weakness. And how can it be difficult to walk the way of truth when only weakness interferes? You are the strong one in this seeming conflict. And you need no defense. Everything that needs defense you do not want, for anything that needs defense will weaken you.
This is a Course in content and not form. To be defenseless means to realize the truth (the content) of what you are needs no defense. To be defenseless does not mean we do not defend the body (the form). This Course addresses our identity with spirit (content) in the mind, not the behavior (form) of the body in the world.

Consider what the ego wants defenses for. Always to justify what goes against the truth, flies in the face of reason and makes no sense. Can this be justified? What can this be except an invitation to insanity, to save you from the truth? And what would you be saved from but what you fear? Belief in sin needs great defense, and at enormous cost. All that the Holy Spirit offers must be defended against and sacrificed. For sin is carved into a block out of your peace, and laid between you and its return. (R9 p478 V.1-2)

The entire world is made as a defense against the truth of who we really are. The world of separation is made as an attack on the wholeness of God.

Who can attack the Son of God and not attack his Father? How can God's Son be weak and frail and easily destroyed unless his Father is? You do not see that every sin and every condemnation that you perceive and justify is an attack upon your Father. And that is why it has not happened, nor could be real. You do not see that this is your attempt because you think the Father and the Son are separate. And you must think that They are separate, because of fear. For it seems safer to attack another or yourself than to attack the great Creator of the universe, Whose power you know. If you were one with God and recognized this oneness, you would know His power is yours. But you will not remember this while you believe attack of any kind means anything. It is unjustified in any form, because it has no meaning. (R10 p483 V1.11-12.1-3)

Because we believe in two powers, us and God, rather than go back into our mind and go to war with God over our sin and guilt of separation, we project a world and body in which we can hide. There is one power in the universe. The one power cannot attack itself, as it is not separate from itself.

Attack is neither safe nor dangerous. It is impossible. And this is so because the universe is one. You would not choose attack on its reality if it were not essential to attack to see it separated from its maker [the ego mind]. And thus it seems as if love could attack and become fearful. Only the different can attack. So you conclude because you can attack, you and your brother must be different. Yet does the Holy Spirit explain this differently. Because you and your brother are not different, you cannot attack. Either position is a logical conclusion. Either could be maintained, but never both. The only question to be answered in order to decide which must be true is whether you and your brother are different. From the position of what you understand you seem to be [different], and therefore can attack. Of the alternatives, this seems more natural and more in line with your experience. (R11 p483 V1.12.8-12;V1.13.1-9)

The next passage describes our experience of special relationships which is a synonym for unholy relationships.

Who has need for sin? Only the lonely and alone, who see their brothers different from themselves. It is this difference, seen but not real, that makes the need for sin, not real but seen, seem justified. And all this would be real if sin were so. For an unholy relationship is based on differences, where each one thinks the other has what he has not. They come together, each to complete himself and rob the other. They stay until they think that there is nothing left to steal, and then move on. And so they wander through a world of strangers, unlike themselves, living with their bodies perhaps under a common roof that shelters neither; in the same room and yet a world apart. (R12 p467 in.2)

We are all lonely and alone because we believe we separated ourselves from each other and our Creator. We think we are together when our bodies are together, but we are alone because we have separated ourselves in our minds.

If you attack whom God would heal and hate the one He loves [our special relationships — love and hate], then you and your Creator have a different will. Yet if you are His Will, what you must then believe is that you are not yourself. You can indeed believe this, and you do. And you have
faith in this and see much evidence on its behalf. (R13 p468 I.1.2-5)

The next few passages address the decision making part of the mind as the observer that chooses to identify with the ego and see through the ego's eyes, rather than the vision and reason of the Holy Spirit. The Son of God as the decision maker is the "you" to whom the Course is addressed. "The eyes that are not yours" are the eyes of the ego whose perception sends messages back to you which cannot be understood because they are messages of separation, not of the wholeness of God.

Reason would tell you that the world you see through eyes that are not yours must make no sense to you. To whom would seeing such as this send back its messages? Surely not you, whose sight is wholly independent of the eyes that look upon the world. If this is not your vision, what can it show to you? The brain cannot interpret what your vision sees. This you would understand. The brain interprets to the body, of which it is a part. But what it says you cannot understand. Yet you have listened to it. And long and hard you tried to understand its messages.

You have not realized it is impossible to understand what fails entirely to reach you. You have received no messages at all you understand. For you have listened to what can never communicate at all. Think, then, what happens. Denying what you are, and firm in faith that you are something else [the ego], this "something else" that you have made to be yourself becomes your sight. Yet it must be the "something else" that sees, and as not you, explains its sight to you. Your vision would, of course, render this quite unnecessary. Yet if your eyes are closed and you have called upon this thing to lead you, asking it to explain to you the world it sees, you have no reason not to listen, nor to suspect that what it tells you is not true. Reason would tell you it cannot be true because you do not understand it. God has no secrets. He does not lead you through a world of misery, waiting to tell you, at the journey's end, why He did this to you.

What could be secret from God's Will? Yet you believe that you have secrets. What could your secrets be except another "will" that is your own, apart from His? Reason would tell you that this is no secret that need be hidden as a sin. But a mistake indeed! Let not your fear of sin protect it from correction, for the attraction of guilt is only fear. Here is the one emotion [fear] that you made, whatever it may seem to be. This is the emotion of secrecy, of private thoughts and of the body. This is the one emotion that opposes love, and always leads to sight of differences and loss of sameness. Here is the one emotion that keeps you blind, dependent on the self you think you made to lead you through the world it made for you. (R14 p468-469 I.2.3-12;1.3-4)

The body and world were made to keep our secret sin of separation hidden, and to project our sin, guilt and fear out of ourselves and onto others in the world. The purpose of the Course is to guide us back to the decision making part of our mind where we can break our identification with the ego and the body, and choose again for the Holy Spirit and our Identity with God as His Son.

This is a crucial period in this course, for here the separation of you and the ego must be made complete. For if you have the means [our special relationships] to let the Holy Spirit's purpose be accomplished, they can be used. And through their use will you gain faith in them. Yet to the ego this must be impossible, and no one undertakes to do what holds no hope of ever being done. You know what your Creator wills is possible, but what you made believes it is not so. Now must you choose between yourself and an illusion of yourself. Not both, but one. There is no point in trying to avoid this one decision. It must be made. Faith and belief can fall to either side, but reason tells you misery lies only on one side and joy upon the other.

The miracle facilitates the shift in the Son's identity from the ego to the Holy Spirit where the Son remembers his Identity with the Father as Christ.

Forsake not now your brother. For you who are the same will not decide alone nor differently. Either you give each other life or death [Reference to Deuteronomy]; either you are each other's savior or his judge, offering him sanctuary or condemnation. This course will be believed entirely or not at all. For it is wholly true or wholly false, and cannot be but partially believed. And you will either escape from misery entirely
or not at all. Reason will tell you that there is no middle ground where you can pause uncertainly, waiting to choose between the joy of Heaven and the misery of hell. Until you choose Heaven, you are in hell and misery. (R15 p472-473 II.6-7)

• Now we will look at the ego and the projection of the world.

Let us look closer at the whole illusion that what you made has power to enslave its maker. This is the same belief that caused the separation. It is the meaningless idea that thoughts can leave the thinker's mind, be different from it and in opposition to it. If this were true, thoughts would not be the mind's extensions, but its enemies. And here we see again another form of the same fundamental illusion we have seen many times before. Only if it were possible the Son of God could leave his Father's Mind, make himself different and oppose His Will, would it be possible that the self he made, and all it made, should be his master.

Behold the great projection, but look on it with the decision that it must be healed, and not with fear. Nothing you made has any power over you unless you still would be apart from your Creator, and with a will opposed to His. For only if you would believe His Son could be His enemy does it seem possible that what you made is yours. You would condemn His joy to misery, and make Him different. And all the misery you made has been your own. Are you not glad to learn it is not true? Is it not welcome news to hear not one of the illusions that you made replaced the truth? (R17 p482 VI.10)

When we look at the ego through the eyes of the Holy Spirit we see it as it truly is.

How weak is fear; how little and how meaningless. How insignificant before the quiet strength of those whom love has joined! This is your "enemy" – a frightened mouse that would attack the universe. How likely is it that it will succeed? Can it be difficult to disregard its feeble squeaks that tell of its omnipotence, and would drown out the hymn of praise to its Creator that every heart throughout the universe forever sings as one? Which is the stronger? Is it this tiny mouse or everything that God created? You and your brother are not joined together by this mouse, but by the Will of God. And can a mouse betray whom God has joined? (R18 p479 V.4)

The mouse is the tiny mad idea that we separated from God. The Holy Spirit teaches us that the separation never happened, and He helps transform our unholy relationships into the holy relationship.

• Now we focus on the holy relationship.

A holy relationship starts from a different premise. Each one has looked within and seen no lack. Accepting his completion, he would extend it by joining with another, whole as himself. He sees no difference between these selves, for differences are only of the body. Therefore, he looks on nothing he would take. He denies not his own reality because it is the truth. Just under Heaven does he stand, but close enough not to return to earth. For this relationship has Heaven's Holiness. How far from home can a relationship so like to Heaven be?

Think what a holy relationship can teach! Here is belief in differences undone. Here is the faith in differences shifted to sameness. And here is sight of differences transformed to vision. Reason now can lead you and your brother to the logical conclusion of your union. It must extend, as you extended when you and he joined. It must reach out beyond itself, as you reached out beyond the body, to let you and your brother be joined. And now the sameness that you saw extends and finally removes all sense of differences, so that the
sameness that lies beneath them all becomes apparent. Here is the golden circle where you recognize the Son of God. For what is born into a holy relationship can never end.

We all share the same illusory egoic thought system; we all share the same Identity as the Son of God. We share the same illusion, and we share the same truth. There is no separation. And we all share the same need to awaken from the ego's nightmare of separation.

As our special relationships are being transformed into the holy relationship, we are like infants, and it will take time for us to learn to let go of our unholy relationships as they are reborn into the holy one.

Of all the messages you have received and failed to understand, this course alone is open to your understanding and can be understood. This is your language. You do not understand it yet only because your whole communication is like a baby's. The sounds a baby makes and what he hears are highly unreliable, meaning different things to him at different times. Neither the sounds he hears nor sights he sees are stable yet. But what he hears and does not understand will be his native tongue, through which he will communicate with those around him, and they with him. And the strange, shifting ones he sees about him will become to him his comforters, and he will recognize his home and see them there with him.

So in each holy relationship is the ability to communicate instead of separate reborn. Yet a holy relationship, so recently reborn itself from an unholy relationship, and yet more ancient than the old illusion it has replaced, is like a baby now in its rebirth. Still in this infant is your vision returned to you, and he will speak the language you can understand. He is not nurtured by the "something else" you thought was you. He was not given there, nor was received by anything except yourself. For no two brothers can unite except through Christ, Whose vision sees them one.

Think what is given you, my holy brother. This child will teach you what you do not understand, and make it plain. For his will be no alien tongue.

He will need no interpreter to you, for it was you who taught him what he knows because you knew it. He could not come to anyone but you, never to "something else." Where Christ has entered no one is alone, for never could He find a home in separate ones. Yet must He be reborn into His ancient home, so seeming new and yet as old as He, a tiny newcomer, dependent on the holiness of your relationship to let Him live.

The decision maker is the infant who is already Christ, but forgot, and is now remembering with the help of the Holy Spirit through the holy instant.

Here is the first direct perception that you can make. You make it through awareness older than perception, and yet reborn in just an instant. For what is time to what was always so? Think what that instant brought; the recognition that the "something else" you thought was you is an illusion. And truth came instantly, to show you where your Self must be. (R21 p470 I.10)

Christ comes to what is like Himself; the same, not different. For He is always drawn unto Himself. What is as like Him as a holy relationship? (R22 p471 I.11.1-3)

The holy relationship is the reflection of the oneness of Christ and Heaven. Through forgiveness of our brothers, our unholy relationships are transformed into the holy relationship, and we remember the truth of our identity and our brothers' identity as the one Son of God. All brothers are included without exception, or the Sonship remains divided.

Beyond the body that you interposed between you and your brother, and shining in the golden light that reaches it from the bright, endless circle that extends forever, is your holy relationship, beloved of God Himself. How still it rests, in time and yet beyond, immortal yet on earth. How great the power that lies in it. Time waits upon its will, and earth will be as it would have it be. Here is no separate will, nor the desire that anything be separate. Its will has no exceptions, and what it wills is true. Every illusion brought to its forgiveness is gently overlooked and disappears. For at its center Christ has been reborn, to light His home with vision that overlooks the world.
Would you not have this holy home be yours as well? No misery is here, but only joy.

All you need do to dwell in quiet here with Christ is share His vision. Quickly and gladly is His vision given anyone who is but willing to see his brother sinless. And no one can remain beyond this willingness, if you would be released entirely from all effects of sin. Would you have partial forgiveness for yourself? Can you reach Heaven while a single sin still tempts you to remain in misery? Heaven is the home of perfect purity, and God created it for you. Look on your holy brother, sinless as yourself, and let him lead you there. (R23 p.474 II.12-13)

Forgiveness is for everyone with no exception. If you leave even one person unforgiven (past, present or future) you hold yourself in hell.

A holy relationship, however newly born, must value holiness above all else. Unholy values will produce confusion, and in awareness. In an unholy relationship, each one is valued because he seems to justify the Other's sin. Each sees within the other what impels him to sin against his will. And thus he lays his sins upon the other, and is attracted to him to perpetuate his sins. And so it must become impossible for each to see himself as causing sin by his desire to have sin real. Yet reason sees a holy relationship as what it is; a common state of mind, where both give errors gladly to correction, that both may happily be healed as one. (R24 p476 III.9)

To see even one sinner in the world, you are refusing forgiveness for yourself and blocking the love of God from your awareness. The Sonship is forgiven and healed as one, or not at all.

This holy relationship, lovely in its innocence, mighty in strength, and blazing with a light far brighter than the sun that lights the sky you see, is chosen of your Father as a means for His Own plan. Be thankful that it serves yours not at all. Nothing entrusted to it can be misused, and nothing given it but will be used. This holy relationship has the power to heal all pain, regardless of its form. Neither you nor your brother alone can serve at all. Only in your joint will does healing lie. For here your healing is, and here will you accept Atonement. And in your healing is the Sonship healed because your will and your brother's are joined.

Healing is in the mind, not of the body or world.

Before a holy relationship there is no sin. The form of error is no longer seen, and reason, joined with love, looks quietly on all confusion, observing merely, "This was a mistake." And then the same Atonement you accepted in your relationship corrects the error, and lays a part of Heaven in its place. How blessed are you who let this gift be given! Each part of Heaven that you bring is given you. And every empty place in Heaven that you fill again with the eternal light you bring, shines now on you. The means of sinlessness can know no fear because they carry only love with them. (R25 p.481 VI.4-5)

When you have looked upon your brother with complete forgiveness, from which no error is excluded and nothing kept hidden, what mistake can there be anywhere you cannot overlook? What form of suffering could block your sight, preventing you from seeing past it? And what illusion could there be you will not recognize as a mistake; a shadow through which you walk completely undismayed? (R26 p481-482 VI.7.1-3)

You will see your value through your brother's eyes, and each one is released as he beholds his savior in place of the attacker who he thought was there. Through this releasing is the world released. This is your part in bringing peace. (R27 p.482 VI.8.1-3)

My part in the Atonement is to look past the differences I see between us, and see our common state of mind. I release you from the projection of my own belief in sin and guilt which was predicated on my belief that I had sinned against God by separating from Him. My function in the Atonement and forgiveness is to accept them for myself. The Holy Spirit's function is to extend the Atonement and forgiveness to the whole Sonship.

Extension of forgiveness is the Holy Spirit's function. Leave this to Him. Let your concern be only that you give to Him that which can be extended. Save no dark secrets that He cannot use, but offer Him the tiny gifts He can extend forever. He will take each one and make of it a
potent force for peace. He will withhold no blessing from it, nor limit it in any way. He will join to it all the power that God has given Him, to make each little gift of love a source of healing for everyone. (R28 p482 V1.9.2-8)

We are to offer all of our dark thoughts, feelings and experiences to the light of the Holy Spirit for forgiveness. We are to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us look at all our sin, guilt and hate, and let go of all our grievances.

And therefore it is necessary that you have other experiences, more in line with truth, to teach you what is natural and true. This is the function of your holy relationship. (R29 p483VI.13.10;VI.14.1)

More and more we experience the peace and joy of forgiveness as our natural state.

The light that joins you and your brother shines throughout the universe, and because it joins you and him, so it makes you and him one with your Creator. And in Him is all creation joined. Would you regret you cannot fear alone, when your relationship can also teach the power of love is there, which makes all fear impossible? Do not attempt to keep a little of the ego with this gift. For it was given you to be used, and not obscured. What teaches you that you cannot separate denies the ego. Let truth decide if you and your brother be different or the same, and teach you which is true. (R30 p484 VI.15)

We all share the same insane thought system of the ego, and the same sanity of the Holy Spirit.

We close with the passages below. Healing is of the belief in separation in the mind only. There is no healing in the world. The passages below speak of messengers walking through the world sharing the healing love of God to all — this is beautiful, symbolic language used to paint a picture of the healing of the mind.

And so you and your brother stand, here in this holy place, before the veil of sin that hangs between you and the face of Christ. Let it be lifted! Raise it together with your brother, for it is but a veil that stands between you. Either you or your brother alone will see it as a solid block, nor realize how thin the drapery that separates you now. Yet it is almost over in your awareness, and peace has reached you even here, before the veil. Think what will happen after. The Love of Christ will light your face, and shine from it into a darkened world that needs the light. And from this holy place He will return with you, not leaving it nor you. You will become His messenger, returning Him unto Himself.

Think of the loveliness that you will see, who walk with Him! And think how beautiful will you and your brother look to the other! How happy you will be to be together, after such a long and lonely journey where you walked alone. The gates of Heaven, open now for you, will you now open to the sorrowful. And none who looks upon the Christ in you but will rejoice. How beautiful the sight you saw beyond the veil, which you will bring to light the tired eyes of those as weary now as once you were. How thankful will they be to see you come among them, offering Christ's forgiveness to dispel their faith in sin. (R31 p477 IV.3-4)

So shall you walk the world with me, whose message has not yet been given everyone. For you are here to let it be received. God's offer still is open, yet it waits acceptance. From you who have accepted it is it received. Into your hand, joined with your brother's, is it safely given, for you who share it have become its willing guardian and protector.

To all who share the Love of God the grace is given to be the givers of what they have received. And so they learn that it is theirs forever. All barriers disappear before their coming, as every obstacle was finally surmounted that seemed to rise and block their way before. This veil you and your brother lift together opens the way to truth to more than you. Those who would let illusions be lifted from their minds are this world's saviors, walking the world with their Redeemer, and carrying His message of hope and freedom and release from suffering to everyone who needs a miracle to save him.

How easy is it to offer this miracle to everyone! No one who has received it for himself could find it difficult. For by receiving it, he learned it was not given him alone. Such is the function of a holy
relationship; to receive together and give as you received. Standing before the veil, it still seems difficult. But hold out your hand, joined with your brother's, and touch this heavy-seeming block, and you will learn how easily your fingers slip through its nothingness. It is no solid wall.

And only an illusion stands between you and your brother, and the holy Self you share together.

(R32 p478 IV.5.4-8;IV.6-7)

End Chapter Twenty-Two
CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE
THE WAR AGAINST YOURSELF

Main Theme: The "Laws of Chaos" are addressed here. The five laws of chaos are a detailed summary of the thought system of the ego. Chapters 20-22 were lighter emotionally than previous chapters, and beginning here in Chapter 23 to the end of the Text we get deeper into the ego thought system.

Introduction: The Five laws of chaos:

The first chaotic law is that the truth is different for everyone.

The second law of chaos is that each one must sin, and therefore deserves attack and death.

The third preposterous belief is that God must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it.

The fourth law of chaos is the belief you have what you have taken; another's loss is your gain.

The fifth principle of chaos holds there is a substitute for love.

We start with the Holy Spirit's vision of the truth of who we are as Christ: innocent and one with God.

Walk you in glory, with your head held high, and fear no evil. The innocent are safe because they share their innocence. Nothing they see is harmful, for their awareness of the truth releases everything from the illusion of harmfulness. And what seemed harmful now stands shining in their innocence, released from sin and fear and happily returned to love. (Reference 1 p485 in.3.1-4)

Those who have realized the separation never happened, and that sin and guilt are based on an illusion, know we are all innocent and they share their innocence with others. Those who believe in separation, sin and guilt hide it by projecting it onto others, and showing their own face of innocence.

Let not the little interferers [the ego's lies of separation] pull you [the Son of God] to littleness. There can be no attraction of guilt in innocence. Think what a happy world you walk, with truth beside you! Do not give up this world of freedom for a little sigh of seeming sin, nor for a tiny stirring of guilt's attraction. Would you, for all these meaningless distractions, lay Heaven aside? Your destiny and purpose are far beyond them, in the clean place where littleness does not exist. Your purpose is at variance with littleness of any kind. And so it is at variance with sin. Let us not let littleness lead God's Son into temptation. His glory is beyond it, measureless and timeless as eternity. Do not let time intrude upon your sight of him. Leave him not frightened and alone in his temptation, but help him rise above it and perceive the light of which he is a part. (R2 p485-486 in.4.5.1-4)

Our experience of ourselves and our life is set at the original instant (now) that we choose to believe the ego's story of separation from God, or we choose the Atonement of the Holy Spirit. If we choose the ego we belittle ourselves; when we choose the Holy Spirit we realize our magnitude as Christ.

The memory of God comes to the quiet mind. It cannot come where there is conflict, for a mind at war against itself remembers not eternal gentleness. The means of war are not the means of peace, and what the warlike would remember is not love. War is impossible unless belief in victory is cherished. Conflict within you must imply that you believe the ego has the power to be victorious. Why else would you identify with it? Surely you realize the ego is at war with God. Certain it is it has no enemy. Yet just as certain is its fixed belief it has an enemy that it must overcome and will succeed.

The ego's strategy is to keep the Son's mind filled with the raucous shrieking of conflict, sin and guilt, distracted by special relationships between bodies in a world so he cannot hear the Voice for God. The way to remember God in the world is to see the face of Christ in our brothers through forgiveness. To maintain our special separate existence we make the world into a battleground and live our lives at war. Winning or losing the war is irrelevant; either way we maintain our special egoic existence. The ego is at war with a god of its own making. The true God is not at war and knows only love.
Do you not realize a war against yourself would be a war on God? Is victory conceivable? And if it were, is this a victory that you would want? The death of God, if it were possible, would be your death. Is this a victory? The ego always marches to defeat, because it thinks that triumph over you is possible. And God thinks otherwise. This is no war; only the mad belief the Will of God can be attacked and overthrown. You may identify with this belief, but never will it be more than madness. And fear will reign in madness, and will seem to have replaced love there. This is the conflict's purpose. (R3 p486-487 I.1-2)

The ego's purpose of conflict is to replace love with fear, and by making the fear in our mind so terrifying that we have to defend against it by projecting it onto the world.

The Son of God at war with his Creator is a condition as ridiculous as nature roaring at the wind in anger, proclaiming it is part of itself no more. Could nature possibly establish this, and make it true? Nor is it up to you to say what shall be part of you and what is kept apart.

Our entire experience of being a body in a world of bodies in special relationships (love and hate) is a projection of the unconscious belief that we are at war with God. The ego loves the imaginary war. God knows nothing of it.

The war against yourself was undertaken to teach the Son of God that he is not himself, and not his Father's Son. For this, the memory of his Father must be forgotten. It is forgotten in the body's life, and if you think you are a body, you will believe you have forgotten it. Yet truth can never be forgotten by itself, and you have not forgotten what you are. Only a strange illusion of yourself, a wish to triumph over what you are, remembers not.

The war against yourself is but the battle of two illusions, struggling to make them different from each other, in the belief the one that conquers will be true. There is no conflict between them and the truth. Nor are they different from each other. Both are not true [the victim and the victimizer]. And so it matters not what form they take [man vs. god; man vs. man; man vs. disease; man vs. the universe]. What made them is insane, and they remain part of what made them. Madness holds out no menace to reality, and has no influence upon it. Illusions cannot triumph over truth, nor can they threaten it in any way. (R4 p487-488 I.4.7-9; I.5.6.1-8)

Your entire world is a defense against the imaginary war against God in your mind, and serves to maintain the existence of your imaginary ego. God knows nothing of your imaginings.

Thus, conflict is the choice between illusions, one to be crowned as real, the other vanquished and despised. Here will the Father never be remembered. (R5 p488 I.9.3-4)

God will not be remembered in a noisy battleground. The conflict of the battleground serves to keep us distracted from the memory of our Identity with God.

How can the resting place of God turn on itself, and seek to overcome the One Who dwells there? And think what happens when the house of God perceives itself divided. The altar disappears, the light grows dim, the temple of the Holy One becomes a house of sin. And nothing is remembered except illusions. (R6 p489 I.11.1-4)

The resting place of God is the Son of God. The house of God is the Son's mind. When the Son's mind is divided, God is forgotten.

Conflict and peace are opposites. Where one abides the other cannot be; where either goes the other disappears. (R7 p489 I.12.6-7)

The ego's strategy for perpetuating conflict is through the ego's "Laws of Chaos."

The [five] "laws" of chaos can be brought to light, though never understood. Chaotic laws are hardly meaningful, and therefore out of reason's sphere. Yet they appear to be an obstacle to reason and to truth. Let us, then, look upon them calmly, that we may look beyond them, understanding what they are, not what they would maintain. It is essential it be understood what they are for, because it is their purpose to make meaningless, and to attack the truth. Here are the laws that rule the world you made. And yet they govern nothing, and need not be broken; merely looked upon and gone beyond.
The ego's strategy is to maintain its special separate existence by keeping the truth of our Identity with God out of our awareness. The ego's laws of chaos serve to fulfill the ego's strategy. As we look at the dynamics of the ego and see the insanity of its "laws" we realize the error we made in choosing to identify with it, and we can choose the Holy Spirit instead.

The first chaotic law is that the truth is different for everyone. Like all these principles, this one maintains that each is separate and has a different set of thoughts that set him off from others. This principle evolves from the belief there is a hierarchy of illusions; some are more valuable and therefore true. Each one establishes this for himself, and makes it true by his attack on what another values. And this is justified because the values differ, and those who hold them seem to be unlike, and therefore enemies.

Think how this seems to interfere with the first principle of miracles. For this establishes degrees of truth among illusions, making it seem that some of them are harder to overcome than others. (R8 p489-490 II.1-3.1-2)

Socrates' great philosophical debate with the sophists was on the nature of truth. Socrates, and later Plato, maintained that truth was absolute; the sophists held that truth was relative. The Course says that truth is absolute; one for all, not different for each. The general philosophy of the Course falls within the Neo-Platonic tradition. Only God is real. And God is love.

The second law of chaos, dear indeed to every worshipper of sin, is that each one must sin, and therefore deserves attack and death. This principle, closely related to the first, is the demand that errors call for punishment and not correction. Sin cannot be remitted… (R9 p490 II.4.1-2;II.4.5)

Think what this seems to do to the relationship between the Father and the Son. Now are They different, and enemies. And Their relationship is one of opposition, just as the separate aspects of the Son meet only to conflict but not to join. One becomes weak, the other strong by his defeat. (R10 p490 II.5.1;II.5.4-6)

Sin is the belief in separation from God. Being separate from God we are in conflict with Him to maintain our separate existence. We project our belief in separation and sin onto the world, so the world becomes our battleground where our war with God is played out in the conflict of special relationships with our brothers. The world is an outward picture of an inward belief.

The arrogance on which the laws of chaos stand could not be more apparent than emerges here. Here is a principle that would define what the Creator of reality must be; what He must think and what He must believe; and how He must respond, believing it. This leads directly to the third preposterous belief that seems to make chaos eternal. For if God cannot be mistaken, He must accept His Son's belief in what he is, and hate him for it. (R10A p490 II.6.1-2;II.6.5-6)

See how the fear of God is reinforced by this third principle. Now it becomes impossible to turn to Him for help in misery. For now He has become the "enemy" Who caused it, to Whom appeal is useless. There can be no release and no escape. Atonement thus becomes a myth; and vengeance, not forgiveness, is the Will of God.

The ego values only what it takes. This leads to the fourth law of chaos, which, if the others are accepted, must be true. This seeming law is the belief you have what you have taken. By this, another's loss becomes your gain, and thus it fails to recognize that you can never take away save from yourself. (R10B p490 II.7.1-3;II.8.1-2;II.9.1-4)

By separating from God we took His life; now we have life and He is dead. We projected our sin and guilt onto our brothers and took their innocence; now we have innocence and they have sin and guilt. The sin and guilt of separation from God has been buried and hidden from consciousness, but is experienced as selfishness in relationships in our daily lives. If you find it difficult to relate to the ideas of sin and guilt over the separation from God, you will find it easier to relate to the experience of selfishness; and when you observe your thoughts and feelings you will notice it is the fundamental emotion of your daily experience, and is the effect of the belief in separation from God and your brothers.
The next passages address the fifth law, and are a powerful overview of the five laws of chaos — the laws by which we live our miserable lives.

And what your enemies would keep from you must be worth having, because they keep it hidden from your sight. All of the mechanisms of madness are seen emerging here: the "enemy" made strong by keeping hidden the valuable inheritance that should be yours; your justified position and attack for what has been withheld; and the inevitable loss the enemy must suffer to save yourself. Thus do the guilty ones protest their "innocence." Were they not forced into this foul attack by the unscrupulous behavior of the enemy, they would respond with only kindness. But in a savage world the kind cannot survive, so they must take or else be taken from.

And now there is a vague unanswered question, not yet "explained." What is this precious thing [innocence, wholeness, love], this priceless pearl, this hidden secret treasure, to be wrested in righteous wrath from this most treacherous and cunning enemy? It must be what you want but never found. And now you "understand" the reason why you found it not. For it was taken from you by this enemy, and hidden where you would not think to look. He hid it in his body, making it the cover for his guilt, the hiding place for what belongs to you. Now must his body be destroyed and sacrificed, that you may have that which belongs to you. His treachery demands his death, that you may live. And you attack only in self-defense.

But what is it you want that needs his death? Can you be sure your murderous attack is justified unless you know what it is for? And here a final [fifth] principle of chaos comes to the "rescue." It holds there is a substitute for love. This is the magic that will cure all of your pain; the missing factor in your madness that makes it "sane." This is the reason why you must attack. Here is what makes your vengeance justified. Behold, unveiled, the ego's secret gift, torn from your brother's body, hidden there in malice and in hatred for the one to whom the gift belongs. He would deprive you of the secret ingredient that would give meaning to your life. The substitute for love, born of your enmity to your brother, must be salvation. It [love] has no substitute, and there is only one.

And all your relationships have but the purpose of seizing it [love] and making it your own.

Never is your possession made complete. And never will your brother cease his attack on you for what you stole. Nor will God end His vengeance upon both, for in His madness He must have this substitute for love, and kill you both. You who believe you walk in sanity with feet on solid ground, and through a world where meaning can be found, consider this: These are the laws on which your "sanity" appears to rest. These are the principles which make the ground beneath your feet seem solid. And it is here you look for meaning. These are the laws you made for your salvation. They hold in place the substitute for Heaven which you prefer. This is their purpose; they were made for this.

When we observe the dynamics of the ego as codified in its laws of chaos, it is obvious that we are insane. So why do we continue to imprison ourselves by living under such an insane thought system? The reason is that we have not looked closely enough at our own insanity, and we have accepted insanity as our normal state. The insane thought system represented by the ego's laws of chaos has become deeply ingrained in our culture, religions, and governments. We have accepted illusion as truth; war as a means to peace; fear as love; insanity as sanity. To be free of our insanity, we must first become fully conscious of it; and that is the purpose of the scathing revelations in these horrific and painful passages. As we become aware of our insanity we are able to make an enlightened choice for the Holy Spirit instead of ego.

No one wants madness, nor does anyone cling to his madness if he sees that this is what it is. What protects madness is the belief that it is true. It is the function of insanity to take the place of truth. It must be seen as truth to be believed. And if it is the truth, then must its opposite, which was the truth before, be madness now. Such a reversal, completely turned around, with madness sanity, illusions true, attack a kindness, hatred love, and murder benediction, is the goal the laws of chaos serve. (R12 p492 II.14.1-6)

These do not seem to be the goals of chaos, for by the great reversal they appear to be the laws of
order. How could it not be so? Chaos is lawlessness, and has no laws. To be believed, its seeming laws must be perceived as real. Their goal of madness must be seen as sanity. And fear, with ashen lips and sightless eyes, blinded and terrible to look upon, is lifted to the throne of love, its dying conqueror, its substitute, the savior from salvation. How lovely do the laws of fear make death appear. Give thanks unto the hero on love's throne, who saved the Son of God for fear and death! And yet, how can it be that laws like these can be believed? There is a strange device that makes it possible. (R13 p493 II.15-16.1-2)

No law of chaos could compel belief but for the emphasis on form and disregard of content. No one who thinks that one of these laws is true sees what it says. Some forms it takes seem to have meaning, and that is all. How can some forms of murder not mean death? Can an attack in any form be love? What form of condemnation is a blessing? Who makes his savior powerless and finds salvation? Let not the form of the attack on him deceive you. You cannot seek to harm him and be saved. (R14 p493 II.16.5-7;II.17.1-6)

The insanity of the ego's thought system rules our lives because we do not go back into our minds and look at it. We have become so completely distracted and identified with the body and world of form, that we ignore the source of our insanity which is the content in our mind. We are so deluded by the effect (the body and world) that we have forgotten the cause (the mind). The purpose of the Course is to lead us back to the decision making part of our mind so we can make another choice. In the mind we choose either for the separation, conflict, fear and hate of the ego; or for the oneness, peace, joy and love of the Holy Spirit.

Be not deceived when madness takes a form you think is lovely. What is intent on your destruction is not your friend. (R15 p493 II.17.10-11)

Love is all inclusive; it excludes no one. If even one person is excluded; past, present or future; it is not love. If your love is special, it is not love but fear and hate. Be not deceived by a special love that is in fact veiled hate.

Is it not true you do not recognize some of the forms attack can take? If it is true attack in any form will hurt you, and will do so just as much as in another form that you do recognize, then it must follow that you do not always recognize the source of pain. Attack in any form is equally destructive. Its sole intent is murder, and what form of murder serves to cover the massive guilt and frantic fear of punishment the murderer must feel? He may deny he is a murderer and justify his savagery with smiles as he attacks. Yet he will suffer, and will look on his intent in nightmares where the smiles are gone, and where the purpose rises to meet his horrified awareness and pursue him still. For no one thinks of murder and escapes the guilt the thought entails. If the intent is death, what matter the form it takes?

Is death in any form, however lovely and charitable it may seem to be, a blessing and a sign the Voice for God speaks through you to your brother? The wrapping does not make the gift you give. An empty box, however beautiful and gently given, still contains nothing. (R16 p495 III.1-2.1-3)

The special love we offer is hate — boxed, wrapped and tied with a bow.

Salvation is no compromise of any kind. To compromise is to accept but part of what you want; to take a little and give up the rest. Salvation gives up nothing. It is complete for everyone. Let the idea of compromise but enter, and the awareness of salvation's purpose is lost because it is not recognized. It is denied where compromise has been accepted, for compromise is the belief salvation is impossible. It would maintain you can attack a little, love a little, and know the difference. (R17 p495 III.3.1-7)

Love is absolute, unconditional, all inclusive, and excludes no one; otherwise it is fear and hate masked in special love.

This course is easy just because it makes no compromise. Yet it seems difficult to those who still believe that compromise is possible. They do not see that, if it is, salvation is attack. (R18 p495 III.4.1-3)

You would maintain, and think it true, that you do not believe these senseless laws, nor act upon
them. And when you look at what they say, they cannot be believed. Brother, you do believe them. For how else could you perceive the form they take, with content such as this?
(R19 p493 II.18.1-4)

If you believe and experience yourself as being in a body, living in a world of bodies, then you believe all five of the laws of chaos and you have imprisoned yourself by choosing to live under their rule.

Can you paint rosy lips upon a skeleton, dress it in loveliness, pet it and pamper it, and make it live? And can you be content with an illusion that you are living? There is no life outside of Heaven. Where God created life, there life must be. In any state apart from Heaven life is illusion. At best it seems like life; at worst, like death. Yet both are judgments on what is not life, equal in their inaccuracy and lack of meaning. Life not in Heaven is impossible, and what is not in Heaven is not anywhere. (R20 p493-494 II.18.8-9;II.19.1-6)

Life is Spirit. Life is formless and eternal. Life has no opposite — there is neither birth nor death in life.

From the belief in sin, the faith in chaos must follow. It is because it follows that it seems to be a logical conclusion; a valid step in ordered thought. The steps to chaos do follow neatly from their starting point. Each is a different form in the progression of truth's reversal, leading still deeper into terror and away from truth. Think not one step is smaller than another, nor that return from one is easier. The whole descent from Heaven lies in each one. And where your thinking starts, there must it end [in the mind]. Brother, take not one step in the descent to hell. For having taken one, you will not recognize the rest for what they are. And they will follow. Attack in any form has placed your foot upon the twisted stairway that leads from Heaven. Yet any instant it is possible to have all this undone.
(R21 p494 II.21-22.1-5)

When we have had enough suffering and conflict, and are willing to ask for help, we rise above the battleground we made, and consider another way.

Be lifted up, and from a higher place look down upon it. From there will your perspective be quite different. Here in the midst of it, it does seem real. Here you have chosen to be part of it. Here murder is your choice. Yet from above, the choice is miracles instead of murder. And the perspective coming from this choice shows you the battle is not real, and easily escaped.
(R22 p497 IV.5.1-7)

When we experience problems in our lives we are to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us rise above the conflict, and see it in the light of the Holy Spirit instead of the darkness of the ego.

When the temptation to attack rises to make your mind darkened and murderous, remember you can see the battle from above. Even in forms you do not recognize, the signs you know. There is a stab of pain, a twinge of guilt, and above all, a loss of peace. This you know well. When they occur leave not your place on high, but quickly choose a miracle instead of murder. And God Himself and all the lights of Heaven will gently lean to you, and hold you up. For you have chosen to remain where He would have you, and no illusion can attack the peace of God together with His Son.

See no one from the battleground, for there you look on him from nowhere. You have no reference point from where to look, where meaning can be given what you see. For only bodies could attack and murder, and if this is your purpose, then you must be one with them. Only a purpose unifies, and those who share a purpose have a mind as one. The body has no purpose of itself, and must be solitary. From below, it cannot be surmounted. From above, the limits it exerts on those in battle still are gone, and not perceived. The body stands between the Father and the Heaven He created for His Son because it has no purpose.
(R23 p497-498 IV.6-7)

The body by itself has no purpose. The Holy Spirit teaches us that our shared purpose in the world is to forgive, and accept the Atonement for ourselves. Our purpose in Heaven is to create and extend the love of God. By rising above the ego's battleground in the world we are able to ask the Holy Spirit for help in fulfilling our shared purpose. The ego believes in separation and separate interests. The ego's purpose for the body is to kill or be killed, and maintain a separate existence for ourselves. As Sons of God we all share the ego thought system, and the Holy
Spirit's thought system, and we all have the power to choose between the two.

Forgiveness cannot be withheld a little. Nor is it possible to attack for this and love for that and understand forgiveness. (R24 p495-496 III.4.5-6)

Forgiveness, like love, is absolute and all inclusive; not even one can be excluded or we remain on the battleground we made of sin, guilt, fear and hate.

Those who believe that peace can be defended, and that attack is justified on its behalf, cannot perceive it lies within them. How could they know? Could they accept forgiveness side by side with the belief that murder takes some forms by which their peace is saved? Would they be willing to accept the fact their savage purpose is directed against themselves? (R25 p496 III.5.1-4)

Mistake not truce for peace, nor compromise for the escape from conflict. To be released from conflict means that it is over. The door is open; you have left the battleground. You have not lingered there in cowering hope that it will not return because the guns are stilled an instant, and the fear that haunts the place of death is not apparent. There is no safety in a battleground.

You can look down on it in safety from above and not be touched. But from within it you can find no safety. Not one tree left still standing will shelter you. Not one illusion of protection stands against the faith in murder. Here stands the body, torn between the natural desire to communicate and the unnatural intent to murder and to die. Think you the form that murder takes can offer safety? Can guilt be absent from a battlefield?

Above the battleground you are the observer, the decision maker, the dreamer of the dream, the Son of God one with the Sonship. On the battleground you are the ego, the body, the dream character, separate from your brothers and at war.

Do not remain in conflict, for there is no war without attack. The fear of God is fear of life, and not of death. Yet He remains the only place of safety. In Him is no attack, and no illusion in any form stalks Heaven. Heaven is wholly true. No difference enters, and what is all the same cannot conflict. You are not asked to fight against your wish to murder. But you are asked to realize the form it takes conceals the same intent. And it is this you fear, and not the form. What is not love is murder. What is not loving must be an attack. (R26 p496 III.6;IV.1.1-11)

Murder and love are incompatible. Yet if they both are true, then must they be the same, and indistinguishable from one another. So will they be to those who see God's Son a body. For it is not the body that is like the Son's Creator. And what is lifeless cannot be the Son of Life. (R27 p497 IV.2.2-6)

God does not share His function with a body. He gave the function to create unto His Son because it is His Own. It is not sinful to believe the function of the Son is murder, but it is insanity. What is the same can have no different function. Creation is the means for God's extension, and what is His must be His Son's as well. Either the Father and the Son are murderers, or neither is. Life makes not death, creating like itself. The lovely light of your relationship is like the Love of God. It cannot yet assume the holy function God gave His Son, for your forgiveness of your brother is not complete as yet, and so it cannot be extended to all creation. (R28 p497 IV.3;IV.4.1-2)

This is your part; to realize that murder in any form is not your will. The overlooking of the battleground is now your purpose. (R29 p497 IV.4.6-7)

Forgiveness undoes the laws of chaos which rule the battleground. As we rise above the conflict we see ourselves and our brothers with the vision and love of the Holy Spirit, and we are all forgiven together.

Think what is given those who share their Father's purpose, and who know that it is theirs. They want for nothing. Sorrow of any kind is inconceivable. Only the light they love is in awareness, and only love shines upon them forever. It is their past, their present and their future; always the same, eternally complete and wholly shared. They know it is impossible their happiness could ever suffer change of any kind.

Perhaps you think the battleground can offer something you can win. Can it be anything that offers you a perfect calmness, and a sense of love
so deep and quiet that no touch of doubt can ever
mar your certainty? And that will last forever?
(R30 p498 IV.8)

The senselessness of conquest is quite apparent
from the quiet sphere above the battleground.
What can conflict with everything? And what is
there that offers less, yet could be wanted more?
Who with the Love of God upholding him could
find the choice of miracles or murder hard to
make? (R31 p498 IV.9.5-8)

End Chapter Twenty-Three
CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR
THE GOAL OF SPECIALNESS

Main Theme: This chapter and the next contain some of the most pointed, hard hitting sections in the Text that address the ego's specialness. This chapter focuses on the goal of specialness which is to kill. In murder, somebody loses and somebody gains which is the sum and substance of specialness and the ego.

Introduction: We start with what specialness and the ego defend against; the Atonement.

Can you believe a shadow can hold back the Will that holds the universe [of Spirit – The Kingdom of God] secure? God does not wait upon illusions to let Him be Himself. No more His Son. They are. And what illusion that idly seems to drift between Them has the power to defeat what is Their Will? (Reference 1 p499 in.1.8-12)

The Father keeps what He created safe. You cannot touch it with the false ideas you made, because it was created not by you. Let not your foolish fancies frighten you. What is immortal cannot be attacked; what is but temporal has no effect. (R2 p515 VII.5.1-4)

The ego's world is temporal. The Kingdom of God is eternal.

Specialness is the function that you gave yourself. It stands for you alone, as self-created, self-maintained, in need of nothing, and unjoined with anything beyond the body. In its eyes you are a separate universe, with all the power to hold itself complete within itself, with every entry shut against intrusion, and every window barred against the light. Always attacked and always furious, with anger always fully justified, you have pursued this goal with vigilance you never thought to yield, and effort that you never thought to cease. And all this grim determination was for this; you wanted specialness to be the truth. (R3 p513 VI.11)

Specialness is the ego's response to the function God gave us which is to create, which means to extend His love. Specialness is an expression of the ego's function of miscreation. The origin of our specialness is in our belief that we can be separate from God, and have a special and separate identity apart from Him.

You who believe it easier to see your brother's body than his holiness, be sure you understand what made this judgment. Here is the voice of specialness heard clearly, judging against the Christ and setting forth for you the purpose that you can attain, and what you cannot do. (R4 p514 VI.13.1-2)

We made and see our brothers as bodies so we can project our sin and guilt onto them. When we are free of the illusion of sin and separation we see our brother's holiness, and the ego dissolves. Judging against the Christ in our brother establishes the need of our purpose of forgiveness and acceptance of the Atonement. By identifying with the ego's specialness we have substituted our true Identity as Christ, which is the attempt to substitute specialness for true love.

Love is extension. To withhold the smallest gift is not to know love's purpose. Love offers everything forever. Hold back but one belief, one offering, and love is gone, because you asked a substitute to take its place. And now must war, the substitute for peace, come with the one alternative that you can choose for love. Your choosing it has given it all the reality it seems to have. (R5 p499 I.1)

Looking within and watching the dynamics of the ego as reflected in our belief in specialness is crucial to be free of the self imposed limitations of egoic identity.

To learn this course requires willingness to question every value that you hold. Not one can be kept hidden and obscure but it will jeopardize your learning. No belief is neutral. Every one has the power to dictate each decision you make. For a decision is a conclusion based on everything that you believe. It is the outcome of belief, and follows it as surely as does suffering follow guilt and freedom sinlessness. (R6 p499 in.2.1-6)

Our experience in the world of special relationships is a reflection of our belief in who we are. Are you a separate ego in a body, or are you the Son of God in
spirit? Your belief (conscious or unconscious) in who you are determines your experience in the world. The world is your projection. This is the importance of looking within.

The secret enemies of peace, your least decision to choose attack instead of love, unrecognized and swift to challenge you to combat and to violence far more inclusive than you think, are there by your election. Do not deny their presence nor their terrible results. All that can be denied is their reality, but not their outcome.

All that is ever cherished as a hidden belief, to be defended though unrecognized, is faith in specialness. This takes many forms, but always clashes with the reality of God's creation and with the grandeur that He gave His Son. What else could justify attack? For who could hate someone whose Self is his, and Whom he knows? Only the special could have enemies, for they are different and not the same. And difference of any kind imposes orders of reality, and a need to judge that cannot be escaped.

What God created cannot be attacked, for there is nothing in the universe unlike itself. But what is different calls for judgment, and this must come from someone "better," someone incapable of being like what he condemns, "above" it, sinless by comparison with it. (R6A p500 I.2.6-7;I.3-4.1-2)

Specialness can be equated with selfishness and the guilt of separation; the selfish desire for specialness is the ruler of our lives as separate egos. The next several passages highlight the importance of specialness in the ego thought system, and its effects on our experience in relationship with our brothers.

Specialness is the great dictator of the wrong decisions. Here is the grand illusion of what you are and what your brother is. And here is what must make the body dear and worth preserving. Specialness must be defended. Illusions can attack it [our specialness], and they do. For what your brother must become [sinful and guilty] to keep your specialness is an illusion. He who is "worse" than you must be attacked, so that your specialness can live on his defeat. For specialness is triumph, and its victory is his defeat and shame.

How can he live, with all your sins upon him? And who must be his conqueror but you? (R7 p500 I.5)

The passage above reveals the underlying cause of dispute, conflict and war throughout the history of mankind.

You would oppose this course because it teaches you that you and your brother are alike. (R8 p501 I.8.6)

If we are like our sinful, guilty brothers, then we too are sinful and guilty.

Those who are special must defend illusions against the truth. For what is specialness but an attack upon the Will of God? You love your brother not while it is this you would defend against him. This is what he attacks, and you protect. Here is the ground of battle which you wage against him. Here must he be your enemy and not your friend. Never can there be peace among the different. He is your friend because you are the same.

Comparison must be an ego device, for love makes none. Specialness always makes comparisons. It is established by a lack seen in another, and maintained by searching for, and keeping clear in sight, all lacks it can perceive. This does it seek, and this it looks upon. And always whom it thus diminishes would be your savior, had you not chosen to make of him a tiny measure of your specialness instead. Against the littleness you see in him you stand as tall and stately, clean and honest, pure and unsullied, by comparison with what you see. Nor do you understand it is yourself that you diminish thus. Pursuit of specialness is always at the cost of peace. (R9 p501-502 I.9;II.1-2.1)

Specialness is the idea of sin made real. Sin is impossible even to imagine without this base. For sin arose from it, out of nothingness; an evil flower with no roots at all. Here is the self-made "savior," the "creator" who creates unlike the Father, and which made His Son like to itself and not like unto Him. His "special" sons are many, never one, each one in exile from himself, and Him of Whom they are a part. Nor do they love the Oneness which created them as one with Him.
They chose their specialness instead of Heaven and instead of peace, and wrapped it carefully in sin, to keep it "safe" from truth.

Sin is separation. Specialness means sin is real. Specialness is the son of the ego. The ego is the miscreator of all its sons of specialness with whom it forms special relationships — special love and special hate.

You are not special. If you think you are, and would defend your specialness against the truth of what you really are, how can you know the truth? What answer that the Holy Spirit gives can reach you, when it is your specialness to which you listen, and which asks and answers? Its tiny answer, soundless in the melody that pours from God to you eternally in loving praise of what you are, is all you listen to. And that vast song of honor and of love for what you are seems silent and unheard before its "mightiness." You strain your ears to hear its soundless voice, and yet the Call of God Himself is soundless to you.

You can defend your specialness, but never will you hear the Voice for God beside it. They speak a different language and they fall on different ears. To every special one a different message, and one with different meaning, is the truth. Yet how can truth be different to each one? The special messages the special hear convince them they are different and apart; each in his special sins and "safe" from love, which does not see his specialness at all. Christ's vision is their "enemy," for it sees not what they would look upon, and it would show them that the specialness they think they see is an illusion.

The vision of Christ sees everyone as the same. We all share the same insanity of the illusory ego, and we share the same perfect love in our Identity with God. The ego's specialness dissolves in the presence of God's all inclusive love — this is the ego's fear.

What would they see instead? The shining radiance of the Son of God, so like his Father that the memory of Him springs instantly to mind. And with this memory, the Son remembers his own creations, as like to him as he is to his Father. And all the world he made, and all his specialness, and all the sins he held in its defense against himself, will vanish as his mind accepts the truth about himself, as it returns to take their place. This is the only "cost" of truth: You will no longer see what never was, nor hear what makes no sound. Is it a sacrifice to give up nothing, and to receive the Love of God forever? (R10 p502-503 II.3-6)

By looking within and watching the dynamics of the ego, we realize how much our specialness has imprisoned us, and we are able to choose again for the freedom and unity of the Holy Spirit.

Specialness is the seal of treachery upon the gift of love. Whatever serves its purpose must be given to kill. No gift that bears its seal but offers treachery to giver and receiver. Not one glance from eyes it veils but looks on sight of death. Not one believer in its potency but seeks for bargains and for compromise that would establish sin love's substitute, and serve it faithfully. And no relationship that holds its purpose dear but clings to murder as safety's weapon, and the great defender of all illusions from the "threat" of love. (R11 p504-505 II.12)

Anything that I see as separate from me that does not support my special separate existence is seen as a threat, and I will seek to kill it; either physically or psychologically.

Here are the gates of hell you closed upon yourself, to rule in madness and in loneliness your special kingdom, apart from God, away from truth and from salvation. (R12 p505 II.13.4)

The guilt of separation and selfishness is so overwhelmingly painful, we deny it in ourselves, project it out onto everyone else and blame them for their sin and selfishness instead of facing it within. Disputes, conflict and wars are fought in the world in an attempt to kill the sin and guilt we feel within our mind.

Through this despair you travel now, yet it is but illusion of despair. The death of specialness is not your death, but your awaking into life eternal. You but emerge from an illusion of what you are to the acceptance of yourself as God created you. (R13 p505 II.14.3-5)
Fear of death is the fear of death of the special separate ego-self. Our true Self is God's one life and cannot die.

Whatever form of specialness you cherish, you have made sin. Inviolate it stands, strongly defended with all your puny might against the Will of God. And thus it stands against yourself; your enemy, not God's. So does it seem to split you off from God, and make you separate from Him as its defender. You would protect what God created not. And yet, this idol that seems to give you power has taken it away. For you have given your brother's birthright to it, leaving him alone and unforgiven, and yourself in sin beside him, both in misery, before the idol that can save you not. It is not you who are so vulnerable and open to attack that just a word, a little whisper that you do not like, a circumstance that suits you not, or an event that you did not anticipate upsets your world, and hurls it into chaos.

Sin says separation from God is real. And the special separate ego-body you now identify as yourself is proof that separation from God is real. To question the reality of the special separate ego-body is to face your own "death." You are completely vulnerable as a separate ego; and absolutely invulnerable as the Son of God.

It is your specialness that is attacked by everything that walks and breathes, or creeps or crawls, or even lives at all. Nothing is safe from its attack, and it is safe from nothing. It will forevermore be unforgiving, for that is what it is; a secret vow that God wants for you will never be, and that you will oppose His Will forever. Nor is it possible the two can ever be the same, while specialness stands like a flaming sword of death [Reference to the Garden of Eden in Genesis] between them, and makes them enemies. (R14 p505-506 III.2-3.1)

Our secret vow is our commitment to remain separate from God and eternally loyal to the special separate ego-self. The war between us is a reflection of the secret vow we each make to ourselves and each other.

There is no dream of specialness, however hidden or disguised the form, however lovely it may seem to be, however much it delicately offers the hope of peace and the escape from pain, in which you suffer not your condemnation. In dreams effect and cause are interchanged, for here the maker of the dream believes that what he made is happening to him. He does not realize he picked a thread from here, a scrap from there, and wove a picture out of nothing. For the parts do not belong together, and the whole contributes nothing to the parts to give them meaning. (R16 p509 V.2)

I condemn you because I first condemned myself. When I forgive you, I forgive myself. We share the same need to be free of the ego's belief in sin and guilt. We share the same need to unite in our true Identity as Christ. We are the same in truth, and the same in the illusion.

The viciousness of the ego and its ultimate goal is graphically illustrated in the passage below.

Yet let your specialness direct his [your brother as you perceive him] way, and you will follow. And both will walk in danger, each intent, in the dark forest of the sightless, unlit but by the shifting tiny gleams that spark an instant from the fireflies of sin and then go out, to lead the other to a nameless precipice and hurl him over it. For what can specialness delight in but to kill? What does it seek for but the sight of death? Where does it lead but to destruction? Yet think not that it looked upon your brother first, nor hated him before it hated you. The sin its eyes behold in him and love to look upon it saw in you, and looks on still with joy. Yet is it joy to look upon decay and madness, and believe this crumbling thing, with flesh already loosened from the bone and sightless holes for eyes, is like yourself? (R17 p509-510 V.4)

And now we consider the ego's purpose for the body.

Ask yourself this: Can you protect the mind? The body, yes, a little; not from time, but temporarily. And much you think you save, you hurt. What would you save it for? For in that choice lie both its health and harm. Save it for show, as bait to catch another fish, to house your specialness in better style, or weave a frame of loveliness around your hate, and you condemn it to decay and death. And if you see this purpose in your
By identifying with the separate ego and body we are condemning ourselves to the temporal existence of birth, suffering and death. All to prove that separation from God is real, and we are special separate egos. What a shallow "victory" indeed!

Specialness is a lack of trust in anyone except yourself. Faith is invested in yourself alone. Everything else becomes your enemy; feared and attacked, deadly and dangerous, hated and worthy only of destruction. Whatever gentleness it offers is but deception, but its hate is real. In danger of destruction it must kill, and you are drawn to it to kill it first. And such is guilt's attraction. Here is death enthroned as savior; crucifixion is now redemption, and salvation can only mean destruction of the world, except yourself.

You cannot trust anyone because you believe you were born in sin, separation and selfishness; and you have projected your sin, separation and selfishness onto all your brothers — how can you trust them when you have condemned yourself, their maker? The world you made and live in is a colossal battleground projected from your mind where you believe the original battle was won in the separation from your Creator. And in the world you made you are all alone; brotherless and Fatherless.

What could the purpose of the body be but specialness? And it is this that makes it frail and helpless in its own defense. It was conceived to make you frail and helpless. The goal of separation is its curse. Yet bodies have no goal. Purpose is of the mind. And minds can change as they desire. What they are, and all their attributes, they cannot change. But what they hold as purpose can be changed, and body states must shift accordingly. Of itself the body can do nothing. See it as means to hurt, and it is hurt. See it as means to heal, and it is healed.

You can but hurt yourself. This has been oft repeated, but is difficult to grasp as yet. To minds intent on specialness it is impossible. Yet to those who wish to heal and not attack, it is quite obvious. The purpose of attack is in the mind, and its effects are felt but where it is. Nor is the mind limited; so must it be that harmful purpose hurts the mind as one. Nothing could make less sense to specialness. Nothing could make more sense to miracles. For miracles are merely change of purpose from hurt to healing. This shift in purpose does "endanger" specialness, but only in the sense that all illusions are "threatened" by the truth. They will not stand before it. Yet what comfort has ever been in them, that you would keep the gift your Father asks from Him [the gift of choosing for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego; faith vs. faithlessness], and give it there instead? Given to Him, the universe is yours. Offered to them, no gifts can be returned. What you have given specialness has left you bankrupt and your treasure house barren and empty, with an open door inviting everything that would disturb your peace to enter and destroy.

Earlier I said consider not the means by which salvation is attained, nor how to reach it. But do consider, and consider well, whether it is your wish that you might see your brother sinless. To specialness the answer must be "no." A sinless brother is its enemy, while sin, if it were possible, would be its friend. Your brother's sin would justify itself, and give it meaning that the truth denies. All that is real proclaims his sinlessness. All that is false proclaims his sins as real. If he is sinful, then is your reality not real, but just a dream of specialness that lasts an instant, crumbling into dust. (R19 p507-508 IV.1-4)

And now we turn to the Holy Spirit's purpose for the body and world contrasted with the ego's purpose. The test of everything on earth is simply this; "What is it for?" The answer makes it what it is for you. It has no meaning of itself, yet you can give reality to it, according to the purpose that you serve. Here you are but means, along with it. God is a Means as well as End. In Heaven, means and end are one, and one with Him. This is the state of true creation, found not within time, but in eternity. To no one here is this describable. Nor is there any way to learn what this condition means. Not till you go past learning to the Given; not till you make again a holy home for your creations is it understood. (R20 p515-516 VII.6)
to maintain our separate existence. The Holy Spirit's purpose of the body and world is as a classroom to learn forgiveness, and to remember the truth of who we are as the one Son of God.

All this [our oneness with God] is true, and yet it has no meaning to anyone who still retains one unlearned lesson in his memory, one thought with purpose still uncertain, or one wish with a divided aim.

This course makes no attempt to teach what cannot easily be learned. Its scope does not exceed your own, except to say that what is yours will come to you when you are ready. Here are the means [the body and special relationships] and the purpose [to affirm the reality of our separate ego-self] separate because they were so made and so perceived. And therefore do we deal with them as if they were. It is essential it be kept in mind that all perception still is upside down until its purpose has been understood. Perception does not seem to be a means. And it is this that makes it hard to grasp the whole extent to which it must depend on what you see it for. Perception seems to teach you what you taught. It is the outward picture of a wish; an image that you wanted to be true.

We perceive the world we have projected. The projection of a separate world serves as a means to proving our separate ego-self is real. Projection makes perception. I wish to perceive myself as a special separate self apart from God; so I project a special separate world to fulfill my wish. The world you see is the world you wish to see, and then made as you wished it be. The world serves the purpose you give it.

Look at yourself, and you will see a body. Look at this body in a different light and it looks different. And without a light it seems that it is gone. Yet you are reassured that it is there because you still can feel it with your hands and hear it move. Here is an image that you want to be yourself. It is the means to make your wish come true. It gives the eyes with which you look on it, the hands that feel it, and the ears with which you listen to the sounds it makes. It proves its own reality to you.

I destroyed God and crucified His Son so I could glorify my own special separate bodily existence.

Thus is the body made a theory of yourself, with no provisions made for evidence beyond itself [the mind and Spirit], and no escape within its sight. Its course is sure, when seen through its own eyes. It grows and withers, flourishes and dies. And you cannot conceive of you apart from it. You brand it sinful and you hate its acts, judging it evil. Yet your specialness whispers, "Here is my own beloved son, in whom I am well pleased." [Reference to the gospel of Matthew] Thus does the "son" [the body] become the means to serve his "father's" [the Son identified as the ego] purpose. Not identical, not even like, but still a means to offer to the "father" what he wants. Such is the travesty on God's creation. For as His Son's creation gave Him joy and witness to His Love and shared His purpose, so does the body testify to the idea that made it, and speak for its reality and truth. (R21 p516-517 VII.7.5; VII.8-10)

We cherish and defend our special identity with the separate ego-body — even to the death.

How bitterly does everyone tied to this world defend the specialness he wants to be the truth! His wish is law to him, and he obeys. Nothing his specialness demands does he withhold. Nothing it needs does he deny to what he loves. And while it calls to him he hears no other Voice. No effort is too great, no cost too much, no price too dear to save his specialness from the least slight, the tiniest attack, the whispered doubt, the hint of threat, or anything but deepest reverence. This is your son, beloved of you as you are to your Father. Yet it stands in place of your creations, who are son to you, that you might share the Fatherhood of God, not snatch it from Him. What is this son that you have made to be your strength? What is this child of earth on whom such love is lavished? What is this parody of God's creation that takes the place of yours? And where are they, now that the host of God has found another son whom he prefers to them? (R22 p514 VII.1)

And thus are two sons made, and both appear to walk this earth without a meeting place and no encounter. One do you perceive outside yourself, your own beloved son [the ego-body]. The other
rests within [the Son of God reflected in the right mind], his Father's Son, within your brother as he is in you. Their difference does not lie in how they look, nor where they go, nor even what they do. They have a different purpose. It is this that joins them to their like, and separates each from all aspects with a different purpose. The Son of God retains his Father's Will. The son of man [the ego] perceives an alien will and wishes it were so. And thus does his perception serve his wish by giving it appearances of truth. Yet can perception serve another goal. It is not bound to specialness but by your choice. And it is given you to make a different choice, and use perception for a different purpose. And what you see will serve that purpose well, and prove its own reality to you. (R23 p517 VII.11)

And now we turn to how we are to choose a different purpose for the body and world we made.

Forgiveness is the end of specialness. Only illusions can be forgiven, and then they disappear. Forgiveness is release from all illusions, and that is why it is impossible but partly to forgive. No one who clings to one illusion can see himself as sinless, for he holds one error to himself as lovely still. And so he calls it "unforgivable," and makes it sin. How can he then give his forgiveness wholly, when he would not receive it for himself? For it is sure he would receive it wholly the instant that he gave it so. And thus his secret guilt would disappear, forgiven by himself. (R24 p505 III.1)

Forgiveness is absolute, unconditional, and all inclusive with not even one exception. All your dark, secret sins must be brought to the light of the Holy Spirit's love. All illusions must be brought to the truth.

The next passages address the importance of our forgiveness of God. Forgiveness of our brothers is a reflection of our decision to forgive God for what He never did.

Forgive the great Creator of the universe, the Source of life, of love and holiness, the perfect Father of a perfect Son, for your illusions of your specialness. Here is the hell you chose to be your home. He chose not this for you. Ask not He enter this. The way is barred to love and to salvation. Yet if you would release your brother from the depths of hell, you have forgiven Him Whose Will it is you rest forever in the arms of peace, in perfect safety, and without the heat and malice of one thought of specialness to mar your rest. Forgive the Holy One the specialness He could not give, and that you made instead.

The special ones are all asleep, surrounded by a world of loveliness they do not see. Freedom and peace and joy stand there, beside the bier [stand for a coffin] on which they sleep, and call them to come forth and waken from their dream of death. Yet they hear nothing. They are lost in dreams of specialness. They hate the call that would awaken them, and they curse God because He did not make their dream reality. Curse God and die [Reference to the book of Job], but not by Him Who made not death; but only in the dream. Open your eyes a little; see the savior God gave to you that you might look on him, and give him back his birthright [his Identity with God]. It is yours. The slaves of specialness will yet be free. Such is the Will of God and of His Son. Would God condemn Himself to hell and to damnation? And do you will that this be done unto your savior? God calls to you from him to join His Will to save you both from hell. (R25 p506 III.6-8.1-5)

Through forgiveness, our special relationships become the holy relationship.

Would it be possible for you to hate your brother if you were like him? Could you attack him if you realized you journey with him, to a goal that is the same? Would you not help him reach it in every way you could, if his attainment of it were perceived as yours? You are his enemy in specialness; his friend in a shared purpose. Specialness can never share, for it depends on goals that you alone can reach. And he must never reach them, or your goal is jeopardized. Can love have meaning where the goal is triumph? And what decision can be made for this that will not hurt you? Your brother is your friend because his Father created him like you. There is no difference. (R26 p501 I.6-7.1-2)

The purpose of our special relationships with our brothers is to maintain our separate existence. The purpose of the holy relationship is to realize our shared Identity with Christ in Spirit through our
shared function of forgiveness in the world. In the world, we are one in purpose: forgiveness and Atonement. In Spirit we are one in God.

You who have chained your savior [your brother] to your specialness, and given it his place, remember this: He has not lost the power to forgive you all the sins you think you placed between him and the function of salvation given him for you. Nor will you change his function, any more than you can change the truth in him and in yourself. But be you certain that the truth is just the same in both. It gives no different messages, and has one meaning. And it is one you and your brother both can understand, and one that brings release to both of you. Here stands your brother with the key to Heaven in his hand, held out to you. Let not the dream of specialness remain between you. What is one is joined in truth. Think of the loveliness that you will see within yourself, when you have looked on him as on a friend. (R27 p503 II.7-8.1)

We share the same nightmare of separation from God; and we share the same need to awaken to the truth of our Identity with God.

You have come far along the way of truth; too far to falter now. Just one step more, and every vestige of the fear of God will melt away in love. Your brother's specialness and yours are enemies, and bound in hate to kill each other and deny they are the same. Yet it is not illusions that have reached this final obstacle which seems to make God and His Heaven so remote that They cannot be reached. Here in this holy place does truth stand waiting to receive you and your brother in silent blessing, and in peace so real and so encompassing that nothing stands outside. Leave all illusions of yourself outside this place, to which you come in hope and honesty.

Forgiveness of our brothers helps us go beyond the final obstacle to peace which is our fear of God's all inclusive love. In God's all inclusive love our specialness is dissolved.

Here is your savior from your specialness. He is in need of your acceptance of himself as part of you, as you for his. You are alike to God as God is to Himself. He is not special, for He would not keep one part of what He is unto Himself, not given to His Son but kept for Him alone. And it is this you fear, for if He is not special, then He willed His Son to be like Him, and your brother is like you. Not special, but possessed of everything, including you. Give him but what he has, remembering God gave Himself to you and your brother in equal love, that both might share the universe with Him. Who chose that love could never be divided, and kept separate from what it is and must forever be. (R28 p504 II.9-10)

God's love excludes no one. The ego's special love excludes all except the "special" one, and in truth is not love, but hate veiled with a smile.

Now we consider salvation as seeing the holiness in our brother; contrasted with bondage as seeing the sin and guilt in our brother.

Before your brother's holiness the world is still, and peace descends on it in gentleness and blessing so complete that not one trace of conflict still remains to haunt you in the darkness of the night. He is your savior from the dreams of fear. He is the healing of your sense of sacrifice and fear that what you have will scatter with the wind and turn to dust. In him is your assurance God is here, and with you now. While he is what he is, you can be sure that God is knowable and will be known to you. (R29 p511 VI.1.1-5)

Without you there would be a lack in God, a Heaven incomplete, a Son without a Father. There could be no universe [of Spirit] and no reality. For what God wills is whole, and part of Him because His Will is One. Nothing alive that is not part of Him, and nothing is but is alive in Him. Your brother's holiness shows you that God is One with him and you; that what he has is yours because you are not separate from him nor from his Father. (R30 p511 VI.2)

Your brother is as He created him. And it is this that saves you from a world that He created not. Forget not that the healing of God's Son is all the world is for. That is the only purpose the Holy Spirit sees in it, and thus the only one it has. Until you see the healing of the Son as all you wish to be accomplished by the world, by time and all appearances, you will not know the Father nor yourself. For you will use the world for what is
not its purpose, and will not escape its laws of violence and death. (R31 p511 VI.3.6-7;VI.4.1-4)

The one purpose of the world is to heal God's Son of the belief in separation and specialness through forgiveness and the Atonement. Who is God's Son? I am — God's Son is me. I see everything in my daily life as an opportunity to learn this lesson and fulfill this purpose. No longer does the world serve the purpose of keeping me asleep in the nightmare of specialness.

Look on your brother, and behold in him the whole reversal of the laws that seem to rule this world. See in his freedom yours, for such it is. (R32 p512 VI.5.1-2)

The laws of chaos served to keep the Son asleep in the world of separation. The laws of forgiveness and the Atonement serve to awaken the Son to the truth of his shared identity in spirit.

Within your brother's holiness, the perfect frame for your salvation and the world's, is set the shining memory of Him in Whom your brother lives, and you along with him. Let not your eyes be blinded by the veil of specialness that hides the face of Christ from him, and you as well. And let the fear of God no longer hold the vision you were meant to see from you. Your brother's body shows not Christ to you. He is set forth within his holiness. Choose, then, his body or his holiness as what you want to see, and which you choose is yours to look upon. Yet will you choose in countless situations, and through time that seems to have no end, until the truth be your decision. (R33 p512 VI.6.4-8;VI.7.1-2)

Every situation in your daily life offers you the opportunity to forgive and to accept the Atonement for yourself.

Your brother's holiness is sacrament and benediction unto you. (R34 p513 VI.8.1)

Your sin is a projection of my belief in sin. By forgiving you, I am forgiven. Your holiness is my holiness.

He is the mirror of yourself, wherein you see the judgment you have laid on both of you. The Christ in you beholds his holiness. Your specialness looks on his body and beholds him not. (R35 p513 VI.8.6-8)

Christ's vision allows me to see your body and look beyond it to the wholeness of Spirit. The ego's eyes sees the body as proof of separation and as a depository of sin and guilt.

Think, then, how great the Love of God for you must be, that He has given you a part of Him to save from pain and give you happiness. And never doubt but that your specialness will disappear before the Will of God, Who loves each part of Him with equal love and care. The Christ in you can see your brother truly. Would you decide against the holiness He sees? (R36 p513 VI.10.5-8)

The last series of passages paint a beautiful picture of how the Holy Spirit perceives the truth of who we are as Christ, the one Son of God.

The Christ in you is very still. He looks on what He loves, and knows it as Himself. And thus does He rejoice at what He sees, because He knows that it is one with Him and with His Father. (R37 p509 V.1.1-3)

Where could your peace arise but from forgiveness? The Christ in you looks only on the truth, and sees no condemnation that could need forgiveness. He is at peace because He sees no sin. Identify with Him, and what has He that you have not? He is your eyes, your ears, your hands, your feet. How gentle are the sights He sees, the sounds He hears. How beautiful His hand that holds His brother's, and how lovingly He walks beside him, showing him what can be seen and heard, and where he will see nothing and there is no sound to hear. (R38 p509 V.3)

Rejoice you have no eyes with which to see; no ears to listen, and no hands to hold nor feet to guide. Be glad that only Christ can lend you His, while you have need of them. They are illusions, too, as much as yours. And yet because they serve a different purpose, the strength their purpose holds is given them. And what they see and hear and hold and lead is given light, that you may lead as you were led.

The Christ in you is very still. He knows where you are going, and He leads you there in
gentleness and blessing all the way. His Love for God replaces all the fear you thought you saw within yourself. His Holiness shows you Himself in him whose hand you hold, and whom you lead to Him. And what you see is like yourself. For what but Christ is there to see and hear and love and follow home? He looked upon you first, but recognized that you were not complete. And so He sought for your completion in each living thing that He beholds and loves. And seeks it still, that each might offer you the Love of God.

Yet is He quiet, for He knows that love is in you now, and safely held in you by that same hand that holds your brother's in your own. Christ's hand holds all His brothers in Himself. He gives them vision for their sightless eyes, and sings to them of Heaven, that their ears may hear no more the sound of battle and of death. He reaches through them, holding out His hand, that everyone may bless all living things, and see their holiness. And He rejoices that these sights are yours, to look upon with Him and share His joy. His perfect lack of specialness He offers you, that you may save all living things from death, receiving from each one the gift of life that your forgiveness offers to your Self. The sight of Christ is all there is to see. The song of Christ is all there is to hear. The hand of Christ is all there is to hold. There is no journey but to walk with Him. You who would be content with specialness, and seek salvation in a war with love, consider this: The holy Lord of Heaven has Himself come down to you, to offer you your own completion. What is His is yours because in your completion is His Own. He Who willed not to be without His Son could never will that you be brotherless. And would He give a brother unto you except he be as perfect as yourself, and just as like to Him in holiness as you must be?

There must be doubt before there can be conflict. And every doubt must be about yourself. Christ has no doubt, and from His certainty His quiet comes. He will exchange His certainty for all your doubts, if you agree that He is One with you, and that this Oneness is endless, timeless, and within your grasp because your hands are His. He is within you, yet He walks beside you and before, leading the way that He must go to find Himself complete. His quietness becomes your certainty. And where is doubt when certainty has come?

(R39 p510 V.5-9)

End Chapter Twenty-Four
CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE
THE JUSTICE OF GOD

Main Theme: The miracle and the aspect of the miracle referred to as justice. Justice is the Holy Spirit's principle that nobody loses and everybody gains. Justice is the Holy Spirit's answer to the ego's goal of murder in which somebody wins and somebody loses.

Introduction: The ego's justice is that I am innocent, and you are guilty and must die for my sins that I have projected onto you. I gain because I am innocent; you lose because you are sinful and are punished. The Holy Spirit's justice says that separation and sin never happened; all are innocent; everybody gains; and nobody loses.

In this chapter we also address the purpose of the body and world from the ego's perspective with its desire to kill; and from the Holy Spirit's perspective of forgiveness and healing.

We start by addressing the ego's need to imprison us in a body and world while keeping us unaware that it is a prison by distracting us from our mind where we could choose the miracle instead of murder.

The Christ in you inhabits not a body. Yet He is in you. And thus it must be that you are not within a body. What is within you cannot be outside. (Reference 1 p518 in.1.1-4)

The Christ in you is the memory in your mind of who you are as Christ, God's one Son in Spirit.

No one who carries Christ in him can fail to recognize Him everywhere. Except in bodies. And as long as he believes he is in a body, where he thinks he is He cannot be. And so he carries Him unknowingly, and does not make Him manifest. And thus he does not recognize Him where He is. The son of man [the ego] is not the risen Christ. Yet does the Son of God abide exactly where he is, and walks with him within his holiness, as plain to see as is his specialness set forth within his body.

The body needs no healing. But the mind that thinks it is a body is sick indeed! And it is here that Christ sets forth the remedy. His purpose folds the body in His light, and fills it with the Holiness that shines from Him. And nothing that the body says or does but makes Him manifest. (R2 p518 in.2-3.1-5)

Forgiveness, the Atonement, salvation and the memory of our Identity with Christ are in our mind, and are realized when the decision making part of our mind chooses to be guided by the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. When we are identified with the ego we are distracted by the body and world so we are unable to use the power of our mind to choose for the Holy Spirit.

Attack makes Christ your enemy, and God along with Him. Must you not be afraid with "enemies" like these? And must you not be fearful of yourself? For you have hurt yourself, and made your Self your "enemy." And now you must believe you are not you, but something alien to yourself and "something else," a "something" to be feared instead of loved. Who would attack whatever he perceives as wholly innocent? And who, because he wishes to attack, can fail to think he must be guilty to maintain the wish, while wanting innocence? For who could see the Son of God as innocent and wish him dead? Christ stands before you, each time you look upon your brother. He has not gone because your eyes are closed. But what is there to see by searching for your Savior, seeing Him through sightless eyes?

Attack shows that the ego, sin and separation from God are real, and serve to keep the love of Christ away. All attack is a call for love.

It is not Christ you see by looking thus. It is the "enemy," confused with Christ, you look upon. And hate because there is no sin in him for you to see. Nor do you hear his plaintive call, unchanged in content in whatever form the call is made, that you unite with him, and join with him in innocence and peace. And yet, beneath the ego's senseless shrieks, such is the call that God has given him, that you might hear in him His Call to you, and answer by returning unto God what is His Own. (R3 p527-528 V.2-3)

We have become so accustomed to living in the ego's darkness of guilt, fear, hate and attack that we cannot
bear the light of God's love. The ego cannot survive in the light; it must remain in darkness. The passage below is a reference to Plato's Cave Allegory.

Eyes become used to darkness, and the light of brilliant day seems painful to the eyes grown long accustomed to the dim effects perceived at twilight. And they turn away from sunlight and the clarity it brings to what they look upon. Dimness seems better; easier to see, and better recognized. Somehow the vague and more obscure seems easier to look upon; less painful to the eyes than what is wholly clear and unambiguous. Yet this is not what eyes are for, and who can say that he prefers the darkness and maintain he wants to see? (R4 p529 VI.2)

Sin says that the separation from God is real and deserves punishment; so we flee the mind, hide in the body and project our sin and guilt onto others in the world.

Sin is the only thing in all the world that cannot change. It is immutable. And on its changelessness the world depends. The magic of the world can seem to hide the pain of sin from sinners, and deceive with glitter and with guile. Yet each one knows the cost of sin is death. And so it is. For sin is a request for death, a wish to make this world's foundation sure as love, dependable as Heaven, and as strong as God Himself. The world is safe from love to everyone who thinks sin possible. Nor will it change. Yet is it possible what God created not should share the attributes of His creation, when it opposes it in every way? (R5 p531 VII.1.2-11)

If you could realize nothing is changeless but the Will of God, this course would not be difficult for you. For it is this that you do not believe. Yet there is nothing else you could believe, if you but looked at what it really is. (R6 p531 VII.2.8-10)

The original change is the original sin which is the belief in separation from God. Believing we are separate from God, we made a body with which we identified, thereby becoming our own father. By looking at the original change we realize that separation never happened, which means there is no original sin, no ego, no separate body and no separate world.

There is a kind of justice in salvation of which the world knows nothing. To the world, justice and vengeance are the same, for sinners see justice only as their punishment, perhaps sustained by someone else, but not escaped. The laws of sin demand a victim. Who it may be makes little difference. But death must be the cost and must be paid. This is not justice, but insanity. Yet how could justice be defined without insanity where love means hate, and death is seen as victory and triumph over eternity and timelessness and life? (R7 p535 VIII.3)

Justice demands no sacrifice, for any sacrifice is made that sin may be preserved and kept. It is a payment offered for the cost of sin, but not the total cost. The rest is taken from another, to be laid beside your little payment, to "atone" for all that you would keep, and not give up. So is the victim seen as partly you, with someone else by far the greater part. And in the total cost, the greater his the less is yours. And justice, being blind, is satisfied by being paid, it matters not by whom. (R8 p535 VIII.4.5-10)

The ego's separate existence is based on the belief that "I gained and God lost." The ego believes it attains its innocence by projecting its sin and guilt onto someone else and having them pay the price for sin. "I win and you lose" is the ego's form of justice. The Holy Spirit's justice says, "The separation from God never happened, there is no original sin; all are innocent!"

It is extremely hard for those who still believe sin meaningful to understand the Holy Spirit's justice. They must believe He shares their own confusion, and cannot avoid the vengeance that their own belief in justice must entail. And so they fear the Holy Spirit, and perceive the "wrath" of God in Him. Nor can they trust Him not to strike them dead with lightning bolts torn from the "fires" of Heaven by God's Own angry Hand. They do believe that Heaven is hell, and are afraid of love. And deep suspicion and the chill of fear comes over them when they are told that they have never sinned. Their world depends on sin's stability. And they perceive the "threat" of what God knows as justice to be more destructive to themselves and to their world than vengeance, which they understand and love.
The ego cannot exist without sin, guilt, conflict and fear. Innocence is the great heresy in the ego's thought system.

So do they think the loss of sin a curse. And flee the Holy Spirit as if He were a messenger from hell, sent from above, in treachery and guile, to work God's vengeance on them in the guise of a deliverer and friend. What could He be to them except a devil, dressed to deceive within an angel's cloak? And what escape has He for them except a door to hell that seems to look like Heaven's gate? (R9 p535-536 VIII.6-7)

The ego is terrified of unconditional love, as it is dissolved in the light of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness and declaration of the innocence of all. The ego needs sin and guilt to maintain its existence, and a body to call its home, proof of the ego's reality.

Perception tells you that you are manifest in what you see. Behold the body, and you will believe that you are there. And every body that you look upon reminds you of yourself; your sinfulness, your evil and, above all, your death. And would you not despise the one who tells you this, and seek his death instead? The message and the messenger are one. And you must see your brother as yourself. Framed in his body you will see your sinfulness, wherein you stand condemned. (R10 p519 I.2.2-8)

Is it not evident that what the body's eyes perceive fills you with fear? Perhaps you think you find a hope of satisfaction there. Perhaps you fancy to attain some peace and satisfaction in the world as you perceive it. Yet it must be evident the outcome does not change. Despite your hopes and fancies, always does despair result. And there is no exception, nor will there ever be. (R11 p520 II.1.1-6)

The ego made the body and world as a depository for its sin and guilt, and as a hiding place to avoid God's punishment for sinning against Him. Can we find love, peace and happiness in a place we made out of sin, guilt and fear of God's vengeance?

Is it not strange that you should cherish still some hope of satisfaction from the world you see? In no respect, at any time or place, has anything but fear and guilt been your reward. How long is needed for you to realize the chance of change in this respect is hardly worth delaying change that might result in better outcome? For one thing is sure; the way you see, and long have seen, gives no support to base your future hopes, and no suggestions of success at all. To place your hopes where no hope lies must make you hopeless. Yet is this hopelessness your choice, while you would seek for hope where none is ever found. (R12 p521 II.2)

The ego loves when we seek for love, peace and happiness through the body and world of special relationships because there is no love, peace and happiness to be found there. The ego's creed is "Seek but do not find." If we find true love, peace and happiness, the ego is dead. The ego can only live in conflict, fear and seeking.

Content is of the mind; form is of the body and world. Cause is of the mind; effect is the body and world. It is crucial to be clear on the relationship of content and form; cause and effect. The content of sin and guilt in our mind projects the forms of the body and world. Sin and guilt in the mind are the cause of the body and world which are effects. The cause of healing is in the mind, not the body or world which are but effects.

Take not the form for content, for the form is but a means for content. And the frame is but a means to hold the picture up, so that it can be seen. A frame that hides the picture has no purpose. It cannot be a frame if it is what you see. Without the picture is the frame without its meaning. Its purpose is to set the picture off, and not itself. Who hangs an empty frame upon a wall and stands before it, deep in reverence, as if a masterpiece were there to see? Yet if you see your brother as a body, it is but this you do. (R13 p521 II.4.3-8;II.5.1-2)

Special relationships between bodies form a lovely, glittery frame that distracts us from the content of the picture. The picture is pain, suffering, sin, guilt and death; the content of our special relationships.

Perception is a choice of what you want yourself to be; the world you want to live in, and the state in which you think your mind will be content and satisfied. It chooses where you think your safety lies, at your decision. It reveals yourself to you as
you would have you be. And always is it faithful
to your purpose, from which it never separates,
nor gives the slightest witness unto anything the
purpose in your mind upholdeth not. Perception
is a part of what it is your purpose to behold, for
means and end are never separate. And thus you
learn what seems to have a life apart has none.
(R14 p519 I.3)

Before we perceive the world outside, we first look
inside and ask what it is we want to see. When we
decide for the ego we choose to see a world of
separation, selfishness and fear. When we decide for
the Holy Spirit we choose to see a world of union,
shared purpose and love. The ego's goal is to keep us
out of our mind, distracted by and identified with the
form of the body and world. The Holy Spirit's
purpose is to guide us back to our mind where we
can choose the content of Atonement through
forgiveness, and identify with Christ in Spirit. The
body and world are not separate from the purpose we
choose for them in the mind.

To the extent to which you value guilt, to that
extent will you perceive a world in which attack is
justified. To the extent to which you recognize
that guilt is meaningless, to that extent you will
perceive attack cannot be justified. This is in
accord with perception's fundamental law: You
see what you believe is there, and you believe it
there because you want it there. Perception has no
other law than this. The rest but stems from this,
to hold it up and offer it support. This is
perception's form, adapted to this world, of God's
more basic law; that love creates itself, and
nothing but itself.

God's laws do not obtain directly to a world
perception rules, for such a world could not have
been created by the Mind to which perception has
no meaning. Yet are His laws reflected
everywhere. Not that the world where this
reflection is, is real at all. Only because His Son
believes it is, and from His Son's belief He could
not let Himself be separate entirely. He could not
enter His Son's insanity with him, but He could be
sure His sanity went there with him, so he could
not be lost forever in the madness of his wish.

Perception rests on choosing; knowledge does not.
Knowledge has but one law because it has but one
Creator. But this world has two who made it, and
they do not see it as the same. To each it has a
different purpose, and to each it is a perfect
means to serve the goal for which it is perceived.
For specialness, it is the perfect frame to set it off;
the perfect battleground to wage its wars, the
perfect shelter for illusions which it would make
real. Not one but it upholds its perception; not
one but can be fully justified.

There is another Maker [the Holy Spirit – Maker
not the Creator] of the world [the real world], the
simultaneous Corrector of the mad belief that
anything could be established and maintained
without some link that kept it still within the laws
of God; not as the law itself upholds the universe
of Spirit as God created it, but in some form
adapted to the need the Son of God believes he
has. Corrected error is the error's end. And thus
has God protected still His Son, even in error.

There is another purpose in the world that error
made, because it has another Maker [the Holy
Spirit] Who can reconcile its goal [Atonement
through forgiveness] with His Creator's [God's]
purpose [to Create or extend Love]. In His
perception of the world, nothing is seen but
justifies forgiveness and the sight of perfect
sinlessness. Nothing arises but is met with instant
and complete forgiveness. Nothing remains an
instant, to obscure the sinlessness that shines
unchanged, beyond the pitiful attempts of
specialness to put it out of mind, where it must be,
and light the body up instead of it. The lamps of
Heaven are not for mind to choose to see them
where it will. If it elects to see them elsewhere
from their home, as if they lit a place where they
could never be, then must the Maker [the Holy
Spirit] of the world correct your error, lest you
remain in darkness where the lamps are not.

Everyone here has entered darkness, yet no one
has entered it alone. Nor need he stay more than
an instant. For he has come with Heaven's Help
within him, ready to lead him out of darkness into
light at any time. (R15 p523-524 III.1-6.1-3)

Realizing there is no hope for love, peace and
happiness in the world we made, we are ready to turn
within and ask for another way.

This world has much to offer to your peace, and
many chances to extend your own forgiveness.
Such its purpose is, to those who want to see peace and forgiveness descend on them, and offer them the light. The Maker of the world of gentleness has perfect power to offset the world of violence and hate that seems to stand between you and His gentleness. It is not there in His forgiving eyes. And therefore it need not be there in yours. Sin is the fixed belief perception cannot change. What has been damned is damned and damned forever, being forever unforgivable. If, then, it is forgiven, sin's perception must have been wrong. And thus is change made possible. (R16 p525 III.7.8-9)

Every situation we are in, every special relationship we are in can be used to transform our purpose through forgiveness of our brothers.

Is it your purpose that he be saved or damned? Forgetting not that what he is to you will make this choice your future? For you make it now, the instant when all time becomes a means to reach a goal. Make, then, your choice. But recognize that in this choice the purpose of the world you see is chosen, and will be justified. (R17 p525 III.9.6-10)

We are condemned as one, and we are forgiven as one. You make of the world and your brothers what you believe will lead to your salvation.

Perception's basic law could thus be said, "You will rejoice at what you see because you see it to rejoice." And while you think that suffering and sin will bring you joy, so long will they be there for you to see. Nothing is harmful or beneficent apart from what you wish. It is your wish that makes it what it is in its effects on you. Because you chose it as a means to gain these same effects, believing them to be the bringers of rejoicing and of joy. (R18 p526 IV.2.1-5)

Our entire existence is based on the belief that we took our existence from God, and our gain was His loss. And we project this notion of the separation of a winner and a loser onto the world of special relationships we made.

The Holy Spirit can use all that you give to Him for your salvation. But He cannot use what you withhold, for He cannot take it from you without your willingness. For if He did, you would believe He wrested it from you against your will. And so you would not learn it is your will to be without it.

You need not give it to Him wholly willingly, for if you could you had no need of Him. But this He needs; that you prefer He take it than that you keep it for yourself alone, and recognize that what brings loss to no one you would not know. This much is necessary to add to the idea no one can lose for you to gain. And nothing more.

Here is the only principle salvation needs. Nor is it necessary that your faith in it be strong, unswerving, and without attack from all beliefs opposed to it. You have no fixed allegiance. But remember salvation is not needed by the saved. You are not called upon to do what one divided still against himself would find impossible. Have little faith that wisdom could be found in such a state of mind. But be you thankful that only little faith is asked of you. What but a little faith remains to those who still believe in sin? What could they know of Heaven and the justice of the saved? (R19 p534-535 VIII.1-2)

We do not want peace, love and salvation because it means the end of our special separate existence. We would rather live in fear, pain, conflict and war than give up our illusory existence as special separate ego-bodies.

And now we turn to the holy relationship as the reflection of the oneness of Heaven on earth. And in the Holy Spirit's justice we see that nobody loses and everyone gains, which is also a reflection of Heaven's oneness on earth.

In the passages below we find an explanation for why the Course uses the symbols, metaphors, anthropomorphic terms, and language of duality to teach the truth of our non-dual reality of oneness. The non-dual truth is that there is no one separate from us, so whom are we to forgive? And the non-dual truth is that there is no separation from God which means there is no sin; so there is no need of forgiving what never happened. When you have realized the non-dual truth, there is no need of studying this Course. The Course uses dual symbols, metaphors and anthropomorphic language to facilitate the non-dual understanding that there is one truth, that is God.

Since you believe that you are separate, Heaven presents itself to you as separate, too. Not that it is in truth, but that the link that has been given you
to join the truth may reach to you through what you understand. Father and Son and Holy Spirit are as One, as all your brothers join as one in truth. Christ and His Father never have been separate, and Christ abides within your understanding [in the right mind], in the part of you that shares His Father's Will. The Holy Spirit links the other part [the wrong mind] – the tiny, mad desire to be separate, different and special – to the Christ, to make the oneness clear to what is really one. In this world this [non-duality] is not understood, but can be taught [with dualistic terms].

The Holy Spirit serves Christ's purpose in your mind, so that the aim of specialness can be corrected where the error lies. Because His purpose still is one with both the Father and the Son, He knows the Will of God and what you really will. But this is understood by mind perceived as one, aware that it is one, and so experienced. It is the Holy Spirit's function to teach you how this oneness is experienced [in the holy instant], what you must do [forgiveness] that it can be experienced, and where you should go [to your special relationships] to do it.

The Course teaches us the what, where and how of awakening from the dualistic nightmare of egoic separation to the non-dualistic truth of our oneness with God.

All this takes note of time and place as if they were discrete, for while you think that part of you is separate, the concept of a Oneness joined as One is meaningless. It is apparent that a mind so split could never be the Teacher of a Oneness which unites all things within Itself. And so What is within this mind, and does unite all things together, must be its Teacher. Yet must It use the [dualistic] language that this mind can understand, in the condition in which it thinks it is. And It must use all learning to transfer illusions to the [non-dual] truth, taking all false [dualistic] ideas of what you are, and leading you beyond them to the [non-dual] truth that is beyond them. All this can very simply be reduced to this:

*What is the same can not be different, and what is one can not have separate parts.*

(R20 p519-520 I.5-7)

We facilitate the realization of the non-dual truth in the dualistic world by recognizing that we share with our brothers the same insanity of separation; we share the same need to awaken from insanity; and we share the same Identity with Christ in our awakened state.

The masterpiece [our Identity as Christ] that God has set within this frame [the holy relationship] is all there is to see. The body holds it [the masterpiece] for a while, without obscuring it in any way. Yet what God has created needs no frame, for what He has created He supports and frames within Himself. His masterpiece He offers you to see. And would you rather see the frame instead of this? And see the picture not at all?

The Holy Spirit is the frame God set around the part of Him that you would see as separate. Yet its frame is joined to its Creator, One with Him and with His masterpiece. This is its purpose, and you do not [do not make the person holy in the holy relationship] make the frame into the picture [God's oneness] when you choose to see it in its place. The frame [holiness] that God has given it but serves His purpose [Atonement through forgiveness], not yours apart from His. It is your separate purpose that obscures the picture, and cherishes the frame [the body – person] instead of it. Yet God has set His masterpiece within a frame that will endure forever, when yours has crumbled into dust. But think you not the picture is destroyed in any way. What God creates is safe from all corruption, unchanged and perfect in eternity.

The two passages above and the two below say that our unholy relationships are made holy through forgiveness and Atonement when we offer our relationships to the Holy Spirit, rather than to the ego. And we are not to cherish the body of the person with whom we are in relationship, but cherish the Spirit of Christ in ourselves and all our brothers.

Accept God's frame [Forgiveness – Atonement] instead of yours, and you will see the masterpiece. Look at its loveliness, and understand the Mind that thought it, not in flesh and bones, but in a frame as lovely as itself. Its holiness lights up the sinlessness the frame [the body – unholy relationship] of darkness hides, and casts a veil of light across the picture's face which but reflects
the light that shines from it to its Creator. Think not this face was ever darkened because you saw it in a frame of death. God kept it safe that you might look on it, and see the holiness that He has given it. Within the darkness see the savior from the dark, and understand your brother as his Father's Mind shows him to you.

(R21 p521-522 II.5.3-8; II.6-7)

He is the frame in which your holiness is set, and what God gave him must be given you. However much he overlooks the masterpiece in him and sees only a frame of darkness, it is still your only function to behold in him what he sees not. And in this seeing is the vision shared that looks on Christ instead of seeing death. How could the Lord of Heaven not be glad if you appreciate His masterpiece? What could He do but offer thanks to you who love His Son as He does?

(R22 p522 II.8.6-8;II.9.1-2)

Not one ray of darkness can be seen by those who will to make their Father's happiness complete, and theirs along with His. The gratitude of God Himself is freely offered to everyone who shares His purpose. It is not His Will to be alone. And neither is it yours. Forgive your brother, and you cannot separate yourself from him nor from his Father. You need no forgiveness, for the wholly pure have never sinned. Give, then, what He has given you, that you may see His Son as one, and thank his Father as He thanks you.

(R23 p522-523 II.9.10-12;II.10.1-3)

While we cannot understand a non-dual reality, we can learn and understand how to forgive ourselves and our brothers in a dual world. God's love is one, unconditional, all inclusive and excludes no one.

You and your brother are the same, as God Himself is One and not divided in His Will. And you must have one purpose, since He gave the same to both of you. His Will is brought together as you join in will, that you be made complete by offering completion to your brother. See not in him the sinfulness he sees, but give him honor that you may esteem yourself and him. To you and your brother is given the power of salvation, that escape from darkness into light be yours to share; that you may see as one what never has been separate, nor apart from all God's Love as given equally. (R24 p523 II.11)

In the world, we have one purpose or one function; accepting the Atonement for ourselves through forgiveness of ourselves and all our brothers. When we offer all our special relationships to the Holy Spirit they serve His purpose of forgiveness and Atonement, and are transformed into the holy relationship.

Such is the Holy Spirit's kind perception of specialness; His use of what you made, to heal instead of harm. To each He gives a special function [forgiveness] in salvation he alone can fill; a part for only him. Nor is the plan [the Atonement] complete until he finds his special function, and fulfills the part assigned to him, to make himself complete within a world where incompleteness rules.

The special function assigned to all of us is the same: Healing our special relationships through forgiveness with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Here, where the laws of God do not prevail in perfect form, can he yet do one perfect thing and make one perfect choice. And by this act of special faithfulness to one perceived as other than himself, he learns the gift was given to himself, and so they must be one. Forgiveness is the only function meaningful in time. It is the means the Holy Spirit uses to translate specialness from sin into salvation. Forgiveness is for all. But when it rests on all it is complete, and every function of this world completed with it. Then is time no more. Yet while in time, there is still much to do [in the mind, not the world]. And each must do what is allotted him, for on his part does all the plan depend. He has a special part in time for so he chose, and choosing it, he made it for himself. His wish was not denied but changed in form, to let it serve his brother and himself, and thus become a means to save instead of lose.

(R25 p530 VI.4-5)

By turning them over to the Holy Spirit, our special relationships are transformed into the holy relationship; and become a classroom for forgiveness and healing rather than a battleground of sin, guilt and conflict.

The specialness he chose to hurt himself did God appoint to be the means for his salvation, from the very instant that the choice was made. His
special sin was made his special grace. His special hate became his special love [in the positive sense]. (R26 p530 VI.6.6-8)

Even in the original instant we chose to believe we were separate from God, the Holy Spirit and forgiveness and the Atonement were still with us ensuring our return to God's love and oneness.

Only in darkness does your specialness appear to be attack. In light, you see it as your special function in the plan to save the Son of God from all attack, and let him understand that he is safe, as he has always been, and will remain in time and in eternity alike. This is the function given you for your brother. Take it gently, then, from your brother's hand, and let salvation be perfectly fulfilled in you. Do this one thing, that everything be given you. (R27 p530-531 VI.7.6-10)

We are to be aware of the ego's inclination to hold onto specialness, sin, guilt and fear; and we are to continue to turn to the Holy Spirit for healing, forgiveness and Atonement. The Holy Spirit helps us fulfill our function by transforming all specialness to holiness. In holiness everyone wins and no one loses; this is the test of true perception and the dawning of the real world in our experience.

The Holy Spirit has the power to change the whole foundation of the world you see to something else; a basis not insane, on which a sane perception can be based, another world [the real world] perceived. And one in which nothing is contradicted that would lead the Son of God to sanity and joy. Nothing attests to death and cruelty; to separation and to differences. For here is everything perceived as one, and no one loses that each one may gain. Test everything that you believe against this one requirement, and understand that everything that meets this one demand is worthy of your faith. But nothing else. What is not love is sin, and either one perceives the other as insane and meaningless. (R28 p532 VII.5-6.1-3)

By exercising our power to choose the Holy Spirit as our guide rather than the ego, the Holy Spirit's power is applied to healing and forgiving our special relationships in our dream. As the decision maker, we have the power to determine our teacher in our dream. It would be madness to entrust salvation to the insane. Because He is not mad has God appointed One as sane as He to raise a saner world to meet the sight of everyone who chose insanity as his salvation. To this One is given the choice of form [our special relationships] most suitable to him; one which will not attack the world he sees, but enter into it in quietness and show him he is mad. This One but points to an alternative, another way of looking at what he has seen before, and recognizes as the world in which he lives, and thought he understood before.

Now must he question this, because the form of the alternative is one which he cannot deny, nor overlook, nor fail completely to perceive at all. To each his special function is designed to be perceived as possible, and more and more desired, as it proves to him that it is an alternative he really wants. From this position does his sinfulness, and all the sin he sees within the world, offer him less and less. Until he comes to understand it cost him his sanity, and stands between him and whatever hope he has of being sane. (R29 p533 VII.8-9.1-4)

The whole belief that someone loses but reflects the underlying tenet God must be insane. For in this world it seems that one must gain because another lost. If this were true, then God is mad indeed! But what is this belief except a form of the more basic tenet, "Sin is real, and rules the world"? For every little gain must someone lose, and pay exact amount in blood and suffering. For otherwise would evil triumph, and destruction be the total cost of any gain at all. You who believe that God is mad, look carefully at this, and understand that it must be either God or this must be insane, but hardly both.

Salvation is rebirth of the idea no one can lose for anyone to gain. And everyone must gain, if anyone would be a gainer. Here is sanity restored. And on this single rock of truth can faith in God's eternal saneness rest in perfect confidence and perfect peace. Reason is satisfied, for all insane beliefs can be corrected here. And sin must be impossible, if this is true. This is the rock on which salvation rests, the vantage point from which the Holy Spirit gives meaning and direction to the plan in which your special function has a
part. For here your special function is made whole, because it shares the function of the whole.  
(R30 p533-534 VII.11-12)

The rock on which salvation rests is the Son of God as the decision maker and observer above the battleground of the ego.

Be certain any answer to a problem the Holy Spirit solves will always be one in which no one loses.  
(R31 p539 IX.3.1)

The Holy Spirit's problem solving is the way in which the problem ends. It has been solved because it has been met with justice. Until it has it will recur, because it has not yet been solved. The principle that justice means no one can lose is crucial to this course. For miracles depend on justice. Not as it is seen through this world's eyes, but as God knows it and as knowledge is reflected in the sight the Holy Spirit gives.

The justice of the Holy Spirit is the undoing of separate interests; everyone wins, no one loses.

No one deserves to lose. And what would be unjust to him cannot occur. Healing must be for everyone, because he does not merit an attack of any kind. What order can there be in miracles, unless someone deserves to suffer more and others less? And is this justice to the wholly innocent? A miracle is justice. It is not a special gift to some, to be withheld from others as less worthy, more condemned, and thus apart from healing. Who is there who can be separate from salvation, if its purpose is the end of specialness? Where is salvation's justice if some errors are unforgivable, and warrant vengeance in place of healing and return of peace?  
(R32 p539-540 IX.5-6)

All behavior in the world is either an expression of love or a call for love. Sin calls for correction, not punishment. Your sin is my sin. Your forgiveness is my forgiveness. Your healing is my healing. We are healed as one, or not at all.

No one can be unjust to you, unless you have decided first to be unjust. And then must problems rise to block your way, and peace be scattered by the winds of hate. Unless you think that all your brothers have an equal right to miracles with you, you will not claim your right to them because you were unjust to one with equal rights. Seek to deny and you will feel denied. Seek to deprive, and you have been deprived. A miracle can never be received because another could receive it not. Only forgiveness offers miracles. And pardon must be just to everyone.  
(R33 p540 IX.7.7-8;IX.8)

The unforgiven have no mercy to bestow upon another. That is why your sole responsibility must be to take forgiveness for yourself. The miracle that you receive, you give. Each one becomes an illustration of the law on which salvation rests; that justice must be done to all, if anyone is to be healed. No one can lose, and everyone must benefit. Each miracle is an example of what justice can accomplish when it is offered to everyone alike. It is received and given equally. It is awareness that giving and receiving are the same. Because it does not make the same unlike, it sees no differences where none exists. And thus it is the same for everyone, because it sees no differences in them. Its offering is universal, and it teaches but one message:

*What is God's belongs to everyone, and is his due.*  
(R34 p540-541 IX.9.5-6;IX.10)

And we close with these beautiful passages.

You, maker of a world that is not so, take rest and comfort in another world [the real world] where peace abides. This world you bring with you to all the weary eyes and tired hearts that look on sin and beat its sad refrain. From you can come their rest. From you can rise a world they will rejoice to look upon, and where their hearts are glad. In you there is a vision that extends to all of them, and covers them in gentleness and light. And in this widening world of light the darkness that they thought was there is pushed away, until it is but distant shadows, far away, not long to be remembered as the sun shines them to nothingness. And all their "evil" thoughts and "sinful" hopes, their dreams of guilt and merciless revenge, and every wish to hurt and kill and die, will disappear before the sun you bring.

Would you not do this for the Love of God? And for yourself? For think what it would do for you. Your "evil" thoughts that haunt you now will
seem increasingly remote and far away from you. And they go farther and farther off, because the sun in you has risen that they may be pushed away before the light. They linger for a while, a little while, in twisted forms too far away for recognition, and are gone forever. And in the sunlight you will stand in quiet, in innocence and wholly unafraid. And from you will the rest you found extend, so that your peace can never fall away and leave you homeless. Those who offer peace to everyone have found a home in Heaven the world cannot destroy. For it is large enough to hold the world within its peace.

In you is all of Heaven. Every leaf that falls is given life in you. Each bird that ever sang will sing again in you. And every flower that ever bloomed has saved its perfume and its loveliness for you. What aim can supersede the Will of God and of His Son, that Heaven be restored to him for whom it was created as his only home? Nothing before and nothing after it. No other place; no other state nor time. Nothing beyond nor nearer. Nothing else. In any form. This can you bring to all the world, and all the thoughts that entered it and were mistaken for a little while. How better could your own mistakes be brought to truth than by your willingness to bring the light of Heaven with you, as you walk beyond the world of darkness into light?

(R35 p526-527 IV.3-5)

End Chapter Twenty-Five
CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX
THE TRANSITION

Main Themes: The real world is the borderland beyond the dream world we made, yet before the gates of Heaven. The "transition" is from the dream world we made to the real world and on to Heaven. The Course's formula simply put is this: "We see the face of Christ in our brother and we remember God." In the section "For They Have Come" we see this articulated wonderfully.

Introduction: The style of the writing continues to soar to new heights here and through the remainder of the Text in terms of the beauty of the form and the profundity of the content. A lot of the writing is in blank verse, iambic pentameter, the writing style of Shakespeare.

There are several passages in this chapter that provide a summary of the teachings of the Course and its purpose, and this is where we begin.

Yet is this magnitude [the oneness of Heaven] beyond the scope of this curriculum. Nor is it necessary we dwell on anything that cannot be immediately grasped. (Ref. 1 p546 III.1.13-14)

The oneness of Heaven cannot be taught; therefore the Course teaches us to recognize the blocks to the realization of Heaven's oneness in our awareness, and how to undo the blocks.

Salvation stops just short of Heaven, for only perception needs salvation. Heaven was never lost, and so cannot be saved. Yet who can make a choice between the wish for Heaven and the wish for hell unless he recognizes they are not the same? This difference is the learning goal this course has set. It will not go beyond this aim. Its only purpose is to teach what is the same and what is different, leaving room to make the only choice that can be made. (R2 p547 III.5)

The purpose of the Course is to help us distinguish between the ego's thought system of separation, and the Holy Spirit's thought system of oneness so we can make the enlightened choice.

A little hindrance can seem large indeed to those who do not understand that miracles are all the same. Yet teaching that is what this course is for. This is its only purpose, for only that is all there is to learn. And you can learn it in many different ways. (R3 p549 V.1.1-4)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles because there is only one error; the belief we have separated from God's love and wholeness. And there is one correction; the Atonement principle which states that the separation from God never happened. When you understand this first miracle principle, you have understood the underlying principle of the whole Course. We can learn the underlying principle in the school of our special relationships (love and hate) through forgiveness and the Atonement.

This is a course in miracles. As such, the laws of healing must be understood before the purpose of the course can be accomplished. (R4 p553 VII.1.1-2)

All miracles are the same. All sickness is the same. All healing is the same. There is no order of difficulty in miracles or in healing. The realization that the separation from God never happened is the Atonement, the miracle, and the healing of sickness. Sickness is caused by the belief in separation in the mind. The mind's error is healed; not the body. The mind is the cause; the body an effect.

Would God allow His Son to lose his way along a road long since a memory of time gone by? This course will teach you only what is now. A dreadful instant in a distant past, now perfectly corrected, is of no concern nor value. (R5 p551 V.10.1-3)

The passage above is a reference to the holy instant which is a central theme in the Holy Spirit's thought system. The holy instant teaches us that linear time is illusory because it is based on the belief in original sin which never happened. Linear time is the ego's projection of past sin; present guilt; and future fear. The holy instant reveals there is no order of difficulty in miracles because the separation from God (original sin) never happened. The realization and acceptance of the Atonement is healing.

And now we move to the Atonement principle. The purpose of the ego's thought system is to maintain
that the separation from God happened and is real. The purpose of the Holy Spirit's thought system is to show that separation from God is illusory and we are one with God, always have been and always will be one with Him.

You can lose sight of oneness, but can not make sacrifice of its reality. Nor can you lose what you would sacrifice, nor keep the Holy Spirit from His task of showing you that it has not been lost. (R6 p543 I.6.1-2)

We can forget and temporarily lose awareness of our oneness with God, but we can not change our eternal oneness with Him.

Complexity is not of God. How could it be, when all He knows is One? He knows of one creation, one reality, one truth and but one Son. Nothing conflicts with oneness. How, then, could there be complexity in Him? What is there to decide? For it is conflict that makes choice possible. The truth is simple; it is one, without an opposite. And how could strife enter in its simple presence, and bring complexity where oneness is? The truth makes no decisions, for there is nothing to decide between. And only if there were could choosing be a necessary step in the advance toward oneness. What is everything leaves room for nothing else. (R7 p546 III.1.1-12)

What is the Will of God? He wills His Son have everything. And this He guaranteed when He created him as everything. It is impossible that anything be lost, if what you have is what you are. This is the miracle by which creation became your function [in Heaven], sharing it with God. It [Creation] is not understood apart from Him, and therefore has no meaning in this world. Here does the Son of God ask not too much, but far too little. He would sacrifice his own identity with everything, to find a little treasure of his own. And this he cannot do without a sense of isolation, loss and loneliness. This is the treasure he has sought to find. And he could only be afraid of it. Is fear a treasure? Can uncertainty be what you want? Or is it a mistake about your will, and what you really are? (R8 p556 VII.11)

We have the love of God because we are the love of God. Having and being are one in truth. Creation is not of this world. Creation is a function of Spirit which extends itself, but never leaves itself. The body and world are made by the ego mind; not created by God. God is oneness, and knows only oneness. There is no separation in God; no separate body or world were created or known by God. God knows nothing of the illusory dream world we made. God creates and knows only perfect oneness. To know God is to be God.

In seeking our specialness separate from God, the treasure we find is loneliness, isolation, insecurity and fear. There is no treasure apart from our Identity with the wholeness of God.

Cause and effect are one, not separate. God wills you learn what always has been true: that He created you as part of Him, and this must still be true because ideas leave not their source. Such is creation's law; that each idea the mind conceives but adds to its abundance, never takes away. This is as true of what is idly wished as what is truly willed, because the mind can wish to be deceived, but cannot make it be what it is not. And to believe ideas can leave their source is to invite illusions to be true, without success. For never will success be possible in trying to deceive the Son of God. (R9 p556 VII.13)

We, as Christ, the one Son of God, are an idea in the Mind of God. Ideas leave not there source. We never left God; we will always be one with Him in Spirit. We have the power to believe and experience that we did separate from God, but believing we are separate does not make it true.

If you believe what is the same is different you but deceive yourself. What God calls One will be forever One, not separate. His Kingdom is united; thus it was created, and thus will it ever be. (R10 p557 VII.15.6-8)

We are free to believe we are separate from God and deceive ourselves, but not Him.

And who can stand upon a distant shore, and dream himself across an ocean, to a place and time that have long since gone by? How real a hindrance can this dream be to where he really is? For this is fact, and does not change whatever dreams he has. Yet can he still imagine he is elsewhere, and in another time. In the extreme, he can delude himself that this is true, and pass from
mere imagining into belief and into madness, quite convinced that where he would prefer to be, he is. (R11 p551 V.6.6-10)

And one last look at the Atonement in this chapter review. We also address the Holy Spirit as our Friend and Guide Who helps us choose the Atonement through our holy relationship with Him instead of separation in our special relationships.

Lead not your little life in solitude, with one illusion as your only friend. This is no friendship worthy of God's Son, nor one with which he could remain content. Yet God has given him a better Friend, in Whom all power in earth and Heaven rests. The one illusion that you think is friend obscures His grace and majesty from you, and keeps His friendship and forgiveness from your welcoming embrace. Without Him you are friendless. Seek not another friend to take His place. There is no other friend. What God appointed has no substitute, for what illusion can replace the truth?

Who dwells with shadows is alone indeed, and loneliness is not the Will of God. Would you allow one shadow to usurp the throne that God appointed for your Friend, if you but realized its emptiness has left yours empty and unoccupied? Make no illusion friend, for if you do, it can but take the place of Him Whom God has called your Friend. And it is He Who is your only Friend in truth. He brings you gifts that are not of this world, and only He to Whom they have been given can make sure that you receive them. He will place them on your throne, when you make room for Him on His. (R12 p553 VI.2-3)

To dissuade us from getting back to the decision making part of our mind and choosing the Holy Spirit as our true Friend and guide, the ego's strategy is to keep us identified with the body, and distracted by the world of special relationships. The ego warns us not to go back to the mind, for the mind is the battleground of the original sin, and God is waiting to strike us dead. Rather than face the source of sin, guilt and fear in the mind, the ego hides it by making a world of bodies and projecting the sin and guilt onto the world. The ego's fear is that we will get back to our mind, realize our mistaken belief in separation and choose the Holy Spirit's Atonement which means the end of the ego.

Sin is belief attack can be projected outside the mind where the belief arose. Here is the firm conviction that ideas can leave their source made real and meaningful. And from this error does the world of sin and sacrifice arise. This world is an attempt to prove your innocence, while cherishing attack. Its failure lies in that you still feel guilty, though without understanding why. Effects are seen as separate from their source, and seem to be beyond you to control or to prevent. What is thus kept apart can never join. (R13 p556 VII.12.2-8)

The ego made the world of bodies as a depository for sin, guilt and fear. But ideas leave not their source, so we still feel the effects of sin and guilt, but now we do not remember their true cause as it is hidden from our awareness.

Sins are beliefs that you impose between your brother and yourself. They limit you to time and place, and give a little space to you, another little space to him. This separating off is symbolized, in your perception, by a body which is clearly separate and a thing apart. Yet what this symbol represents is but your wish to be apart and separate. (R14 p555 VII.8.7-10)

Sin is the belief that separation from God is real. Making a separate body and identifying with it gives form to the belief in separation from God. Seeing our body as separate from God and separate from our brothers is the symbol of sin as it represents the wish and the belief in separation in the mind.

The ego sees itself as a victim in an unjust world because sinful, evil, hateful people do vicious things to "me" or groups with whom I identify, and so the sinful, evil people must be brought to the ego's justice which is punishment.

...you have a differential view of when attack is justified, and when you think it is unfair and not to be allowed. When you perceive it as unfair, you think that a response of anger now is just. And thus you see what is the same as different. (R15 p562 X.1.2-4)

My attack on you is justified because I am innocent and you are guilty. Your attack on me is not justified because I attacked you merely in self defense, and you are the guilty one, not me!
And this [differentiating views of attack] denies the fact that all are senseless, equally without a cause or consequence, and cannot have effects of any kind. Their Presence [God and Christ] is obscured by any veil that stands between Their shining innocence, and your awareness that it is your own and equally belongs to every living thing along with you. God limits not. And what is limited cannot be Heaven. So it must be hell.

Unfairness and attack are one mistake, so firmly joined that where one is perceived the other must be seen. You cannot be unfairly treated. The belief you are is but another form of the idea you are deprived by someone not yourself. Projection of the cause of sacrifice is at the root of everything perceived to be unfair and not your just deserts. Yet it is you who ask this of yourself, in deep injustice to the Son of God. (R16 p563 X.2.6-10;X.3.1-5)

To maintain its innocence and its special separate existence, the ego needs a villain to blame, hate, attack and punish. This applies to us as individuals, social groups, political groups, religious groups, and nation states; we need someone or some group onto whom we can project our unconscious self disdain, sin and guilt. If this Course does not make you feel uncomfortable you are probably not reading it. It is crucial to look within at our own unconscious guilt and shame whose root lies in the belief in our original, sinful separation from God. By bringing our dark, unconscious guilt to the light of awareness, it can be healed. If it is left in the dark it will continue to fester, you will continue to suffer, but you will not know why; so you will blame the "villains, betrayers and evil doers;" all characters in the dream world you made. Is it time for you to wake up from this self-made nightmare?

Beware of the temptation to perceive yourself unfairly treated. In this view, you seek to find an innocence that is not Theirs but yours alone, and at the cost of someone else's guilt. Can innocence be purchased by the giving of your guilt to someone else? And is it innocence that your attack on him attempts to get? Is it not retribution for your own attack upon the Son of God you seek? Is it not safer to believe that you are innocent of this, and victimized despite your innocence? Whatever way the game of guilt is played, there must be loss. Someone must lose his innocence that someone else can take it from him, making it his own. You think your brother is unfair to you because you think that one must be unfair to make the other innocent. And in this game do you perceive one purpose for your whole relationship. And this you seek to add unto the purpose given it. (R17 p563 X.4;X.5.1-3)

The ego made the entire world to fulfill our temptation to perceive ourselves as unfairly treated. The Holy Spirit's purpose for the world and our relationships is Atonement through forgiveness.

And each unfairness that the world appears to lay upon you, you have laid on it by rendering it purposeless, without the function that the Holy Spirit sees. And simple justice has been thus denied to every living thing upon the earth. What this injustice does to you who judge unfairly, and who see as you have judged, you cannot calculate. The world grows dim and threatening, not a trace of all the happy sparkle that salvation brings can you perceive to lighten up your way. And so you see yourself deprived of light, abandoned to the dark, unfairly left without a purpose in a futile world. (R18 p564 X.5.7-8;X.6.1-3)

All sickness comes from separation. When the separation is denied, it goes. For it is gone as soon as the idea that brought it has been healed, and been replaced by sanity. Sickness and sin are seen as consequence and cause, in a relationship kept hidden from awareness that it may be carefully preserved from reason's light. Guilt asks for punishment, and its request is granted. Not in truth, but in the world of shadows and illusions built on sin. The Son of God perceived what he would see because perception is a wish fulfilled. Perception changes, made to take the place of changeless knowledge. (R19 p554 VII.2;VII.3.1-4)

Sickness is of the mind; symptoms appear to be of the body. Healing is of the sickness of the belief in separation in the mind, not the body.

Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but seem to be apart from them. Ideas are of the mind. What is projected out, and seems to be external to the mind, is not outside at all, but an effect of what is in, and has not left its source. (R20 p554 VII.4.7-9)
The world is your own mind. Your body is your own mind. There is no separate body or world apart from your mind's ideas of them. When the ideas of a body and world are gone, the body and world are gone. When the idea of a sick body is gone, the sick body is gone.

Sin is not error, for it goes beyond correction to impossibility. Yet the belief that it is real has made some errors seem forever past the hope of healing, and the lasting grounds for hell. If this were so, would Heaven be opposed by its own opposite, as real as it. Then would God's Will be split in two, and all creation be subjected to the laws of two opposing powers, until God becomes impatient, splits the world apart, and relegates attack unto Himself. Thus has He lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His Love at last to vengeance's heels. For such an insane picture an insane defense can be expected, but can not establish that the picture must be true. (R21 p555 VII.7)

In the "dynamics" of attack is sacrifice a key idea. It is the pivot upon which all compromise, all desperate attempts to strike a bargain, and all conflicts achieve a seeming balance. It is the symbol of the central theme that somebody must lose. Its focus on the body is apparent, for it is always an attempt to limit loss. The body is itself a sacrifice: a giving up of power in the name of saving just a little for yourself. To see a brother in another body, separate from yours, is the expression of a wish to see a little part of him and sacrifice the rest. Look at the world, and you will see nothing attached to anything beyond itself. All seeming entities can come a little nearer, or go a little farther off, but cannot join.

The world you see is based on "sacrifice" of oneness. It is a picture of complete disunity and total lack of joining. Around each entity is built a wall so seeming solid that it looks as if what is inside can never reach without, and what is out can never reach and join with what is locked away within the wall. Each part must sacrifice the other part, to keep itself complete. For if they joined each one would lose its own identity, and by their separation are their selves maintained. (R22 p542 I.1-2)

The world of separation and sin we made and live in is a reflection of the original sin of separation within our mind. The original sin of separation from God is an illusion, as is the world of sin and separation we made. When we realize the sin of separation from God and the world is illusory, the ego dissolves along with the world we made. And what remains is the real world, the reflection of Heaven in the healed mind.

The body is a loss, and can be made to sacrifice. And while you see your brother as a body, apart from you and separate in his cell, you are demanding sacrifice of him and you. What greater sacrifice could be demanded than that God's Son perceive himself without his Father? And his Father be without His Son? Yet every sacrifice demands that They be separate and without the Other. The memory of God must be denied if any sacrifice is asked of anyone. What witness to the Wholeness of God's Son is seen within a world of separate bodies, however much he witnesses to truth? He is invisible in such a world. Nor can his song of union and of love be heard at all. (R23 p542-543 I.4.1-9)

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And now we look at the ego's projection of space-time.

For time and space are one illusion, which takes different forms. If it has been projected beyond your mind you think of it as time. The nearer it is brought to where it is, the more you think of it in terms of space. (R24 p558 VIII.1.3-5)

The ego makes linear space-time through the projection of sin, guilt and fear onto the world of bodies. Sin is the past. Guilt is the present. Fear is the future. The world of sinful, guilty, fearful bodies makes the ego's time and space.

Salvation would wipe out the space you see between you still, and let you instantly become as one. And it is here you fear the loss would lie. Do not project this fear to time, for time is not the enemy that you perceive. Time is as neutral as the body is, except in terms of what you see it for. (R25 p559 VIII.3.4-7)

The holy instant collapses time and space by forgiving sin, guilt, fear and the world of bodies.
Future loss is not your fear. But present joining is your dread. Who can feel desolation except now? A future cause as yet has no effects. And therefore must it be that if you fear, there is a present cause. And it is this that needs correction, not a future state. (R26 p559 VIII.4.3-8)

Our real fear is not of tomorrow's crucifixion, but of today's redemption. The present cause of fear is sin. The ego is happy to be redeemed tomorrow, but not today!

Belief in sin arouses fear, and like its cause, is looking forward, looking back, but overlooking what is here and now. (R27 p559 VIII.5.5)

Here and now in the holy instant there is no sin, no guilt, no fear, no time, no space, no ego and no world. Here and now there is only our eternal Identity as Christ in Spirit, the one Son of God.

And now we turn to the important theme of purpose. Specifically we will look at the purpose we choose to give our relationships: to forgive and awaken from the dream; or to attack and keep us asleep in the dream.

Those who would see the witnesses to truth instead of to illusion merely ask that they might see a purpose in the world that gives it sense and makes it meaningful. Without your special function has this world no meaning for you. Yet it can become a treasure house as rich and limitless as Heaven itself. No instant passes here in which your brother's holiness cannot be seen, to add a limitless supply to every meager scrap and tiny crumb of happiness that you allot yourself. (R28 p543 I.5)

We give the world meaning through the purpose we choose for it. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our teacher, we see the world as a classroom in which we learn forgiveness as a means to awakening to the truth of our Identity as Christ. When we choose the ego as our teacher, we see the world as a prison and a battleground where we live in fear, conflict and hate; and we remain identified with the body, asleep in our nightmare of separation.

Illusions serve the purpose they were made to serve. And from their purpose they derive whatever meaning that they seem to have. God gave to all illusions that were made another purpose that would justify a miracle whatever form they took. In every miracle all healing lies, for God gave answer to them all as one. And what is one to Him must be the same. (R29 p557 VII.15.1-5)

There is no basis for a choice in this complex and overcomplicated world. For no one understands what is the same, and seems to choose where no choice really is. The real world is the area of choice made real, not in the outcome, but in the perception of alternatives for choice. That there is choice is an illusion. Yet within this one lies the undoing of every illusion, not excepting this.

Is not this like your special function, where the separation is undone by change of purpose in what once was specialness, and now is union? All illusions are but one. And in the recognition this is so lies the ability to give up all attempts to choose between them, and to make them different. How simple is the choice between two things so clearly unlike. There is no conflict here. No sacrifice is possible in the relinquishment of an illusion recognized as such. Where all reality has been withdrawn from what was never true, can it be hard to give it up, and choose what must be true? (R30 p547-548 III.6-7)

Forgiveness, salvation, the Atonement and the miracle are all illusions that facilitate awakening from the original illusion, which is separation from God. All choices are illusory. The choice to take the Holy Spirit as our teacher rather than the ego also facilitates our awakening from the original illusion.

All learning is a help or hindrance to the gate of Heaven. Nothing in between is possible. There are two teachers only, who point in different ways. And you will go along the way your chosen teacher leads. There are but two directions you can take, while time remains and choice is meaningful. For never will another road be made except the way to Heaven. You but choose whether to go toward Heaven, or away to nowhere. There is nothing else to choose. (R31 p549-550 V.1.5-12)

The passages below help us understand the illusion of linear time and space. The ego's linear time is the projection of sin, guilt and fear, and begins in the
God gave His Teacher to replace the one you made, not to conflict with it. And what He would replace has been replaced. Time lasted but an instant in your mind, with no effect upon eternity. And so is all time past, and everything exactly as it was before the way to nothingness was made. The tiny tick of time in which the first mistake was made, and all of them within that one mistake, held also the Correction for that one, and all of them that came within the first. And in that tiny instant time was gone, for that was all it ever was. What God gave answer to is answered and is gone.

To you who still believe you live in time and know not it is gone, the Holy Spirit still guides you through the infinitely small and senseless maze you still perceive in time, though it has long since gone. You think you live in what is past. Each thing you look upon you saw but for an instant, long ago, before its unreality gave way to truth. Not one illusion still remains unanswered in your mind. Uncertainty was brought to certainty so long ago that it is hard indeed to hold it to your heart, as if it were before you still.

The tiny instant you would keep and make eternal, passed away in Heaven too soon for anything to notice it had come. What disappeared too quickly to affect the simple knowledge of the Son of God can hardly still be there, for you to choose to be your teacher. Only in the past – an ancient past, too short to make a world in answer to creation – did this world appear to rise. So very long ago, for such a tiny interval of time, that not one note in Heaven's song was missed. Yet in each unforgiving act or thought, in every judgment and in all belief in sin, is that one instant still called back, as if it could be made again in time. You keep an ancient memory before your eyes. And he who lives in memories alone is unaware of where he is. (R32 p550-551 V.3-5)

The entire universe of time and space is a projection of your own mind, born in the original instant, now, that you believed you separated from the infinite, eternal, wholeness of God. The entire universe of time and space is undone in the holy instant, now, as you realize you never separated from the love and wholeness of God.

And do you want that fearful instant kept, when Heaven seemed to disappear and God was feared and made a symbol of your hate? Forget the time of terror that has been so long ago corrected and undone. Can sin withstand the Will of God? Can it be up to you to see the past and put it in the present? You can not go back. And everything that points the way in the direction of the past but sets you on a mission whose accomplishment can only be unreal. Such is the justice your All-Loving Father has ensured must come to you. And from your own unfairness to yourself has He protected you. You cannot lose your way because there is no way but His, and nowhere can you go except to Him. (R33 p551 V.8.4;V.9)

The Son whom God created is as free as God created him. He was reborn the instant that he chose to die instead of live. And will you not forgive him now, because he made an error in the past that God remembers not, and is not there? Now you are shifting back and forth between the past and present. Sometimes the past seems real, as if it were the present. Voices from the past are heard and then are doubted. You are like to one who still hallucinates, but lacks conviction in what he perceives. This is the borderland between the worlds, the bridge between the past and present. Here the shadow of the past remains, but still a present light is dimly recognized. Once it is seen, this light can never be forgotten. It must draw you from the past into the present, where you really are. (R34 p552 V.11)

We die each time we choose to identify with the ego. We are born again each time we choose the Holy Spirit.

Each day, and every minute in each day, and every instant that each minute holds, you but relive the single instant when the time of terror took the place of love. And so you die each day to live again, until you cross the gap between the past and present, which is not a gap at all. Such is each life; a seeming interval from birth to death and on to life again, a repetition of an instant gone by long ago that cannot be relived. And all of time
is but the mad belief that what is over is still here and now.

Forgive the past and let it go, for it is gone. You stand no longer on the ground that lies between the worlds. You have gone on, and reached the world [the real world] that lies at Heaven's gate. There is no hindrance to the Will of God, nor any need that you repeat again a journey that was over long ago. Look gently on your brother, and behold the world in which perception of your hate has been transformed into a world of love.

(R35 p552 V.13-14)

Hear, then, the song your brother sings to you, and let the world recede, and take the rest his witness offers on behalf of peace. But judge him not, for you will hear no song of liberation for yourself, nor see what it is given him to witness to, that you may see it and rejoice with him. Make not his holiness a sacrifice to your belief in sin. You sacrifice your innocence with his, and die each time you see in him a sin deserving death.

(R36 p543 I.6.3-6)

You who would make a sacrifice of life [oneness], and make your eyes and ears bear witness to the death of God and of His holy Son, think not that you have power to make of Them what God willed not They be. In Heaven, God's Son is not imprisoned in a body, nor is sacrificed in solitude to sin. And as he is in Heaven, so must he be eternally and everywhere. He is the same forever. Born again each instant, untouched by time, and far beyond the reach of any sacrifice of life or death. For neither did he make, and only one was given him by One Who knows His gifts can never suffer sacrifice and loss. (R37 p543 I.7.3-8)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is one problem: the belief in separation from God; and one solution: the realization of the Atonement. All problems in your dream world have one cause and one solution. If the one cause is not resolved, your problems will recur in a new form.

Every problem is the same to Him, because each one is solved in just the same respect and through the same approach. The aspects that need solving do not change, whatever form the problem seems to take. A problem can appear in many forms, and it will do so while the problem lasts. It serves no purpose to attempt to solve it in a special form. It will recur and then recur again and yet again, until it has been answered for all time and will not rise again in any form. And only then are you released from it.

The Holy Spirit offers you release from every problem that you think you have. They are the same to Him because each one, regardless of the form it seems to take, is a demand that someone suffer loss and make a sacrifice that you might gain. And when the situation is worked out so no one loses is the problem gone, because it was an error in perception that now has been corrected. One mistake is not more difficult for Him to bring to truth than is another. For there is but one mistake; the whole idea that loss is possible, and could result in gain for anyone. If this were true, then God would be unfair; sin would be possible, attack be justified and vengeance fair.

(R38 p544 II.1.3-8:II.2)

The entire world of suffering, sickness, pain and death is born in the original instant (now) that we believe we separated from God's eternal life; yet the separation from God never happened.

Consider once again your special function. One is given you to see in him his perfect sinlessness. And you will ask no sacrifice of him because you could not will he suffer loss. The miracle of justice you call forth will rest on you as surely as on him. Nor will the Holy Spirit be content until it is received by everyone. For what you give to Him is everyone's, and by your giving it can He ensure that everyone receives it equally.

(R39 p545 II.6.5-10)

Our function in the world is forgiveness, and forgiveness is for everyone with no exceptions. To hold back forgiveness for even one person is to hold yourself back in darkness. We are all forgiven together or not at all; the Sonship is one. We are crucified as one and redeemed as one.

What seemed once to be a special problem, a mistake without a remedy, or an affliction without a cure, has been transformed into a universal blessing. Sacrifice is gone. And in its place the Love of God can be remembered, and will shine away all memory of sacrifice and loss.

(R40 p546 II.7.5-7)
When we choose to take the Holy Spirit as our teacher, we choose Heaven for ourselves and our brothers. When we choose the ego as our teacher, we choose hell for ourselves and our brothers.

Your special function opens wide the door beyond which is the memory of His Love kept perfectly intact and undefiled. And all you need to do is but to wish that Heaven be given you instead of hell, and every bolt and barrier that seems to hold the door securely barred and locked will merely fall away and disappear. For it is not your Father's Will that you should offer or receive less than He gave, when He created you in perfect love. (R41 p546 II.8.4-6)

Forgiveness is the only function here, and serves to bring the joy this world denies to every aspect of God's Son where sin was thought to rule. Perhaps you do not see the role forgiveness plays in ending death and all beliefs that rise from mists of guilt. (R42 p555 VII.8.5-6)

Forgiveness is asking Jesus or the Holy Spirit to help us bring the problem of sin and guilt that we have projected onto our brothers back into our mind where it can be healed. The relationship between two people in the world cannot be healed because sin, guilt, sickness and discord are in the mind, not in the relationship between two people in the world.

Forgiveness takes away what stands between your brother and yourself. It is the wish that you be joined with him, and not apart. We call it "wish" because it still conceives of other choices, and has not yet reached beyond the world of choice entirely. Yet is this wish in line with Heaven's state, and not in opposition to God's Will. Although it falls far short of giving you your full inheritance, it does remove the obstacles that you have placed between the Heaven where you are, and recognition of where and what you are. Facts are unchanged. Yet facts can be denied and thus unknown, though they were known before they were denied.

Salvation, perfect and complete, asks but a little wish that what is true be true; a little willingness to overlook what is not there; a little sigh that speaks for Heaven as a preference to this world that death and desolation seem to rule. In joyous answer will creation rise within you, to replace the world you see with Heaven, wholly perfect and complete. What is forgiveness but a willingness that truth be true? What can remain unhealed and broken from a unity which holds all things within itself? There is no sin. And every miracle is possible the instant that the Son of God perceives his wishes and the Will of God are one. (R43 p555-556 VII.9-10)

The miracle but calls your ancient Name, which you will recognize because the truth is in your memory. And to this Name your brother calls for his release and yours. Heaven is shining on the Son of God. Deny him not, that you may be released. Each instant is the Son of God reborn until he chooses not to die again. In every wish to hurt he chooses death instead of what his Father wills for him. Yet every instant offers life to him because his Father wills that he should live. In crucifixion is redemption laid, for healing is not needed where there is no pain or suffering. Forgiveness is the answer to attack of any kind. So is attack deprived of its effects, and hate is answered in the name of love. (R44 p557 VII.16;VII.17.1-3)

It is crucial to fully understand the source of your pain and suffering, so you can understand the source of healing; in your mind. That is the meaning of "In crucifixion is redemption laid" in the passage above.

There is no difference among the Sons of God. The unity that specialness denies will save them all, for what is one can have no specialness. And everything belongs to each of them. No wishes lie between a brother and his own. To get from one is to deprive them all. And yet to bless but one gives blessing to them all as one.

Your ancient Name belongs to everyone, as theirs to you. Call on your brother's name and God will answer, for on Him you call. Could He refuse to answer when He has already answered all who call on Him? A miracle can make no change at all. But it can make what always has been true be recognized by those who know it not; and by this little gift of truth but let to be itself, the Son of God allowed to be himself, and all creation freed to call upon the Name of God as One. (R45 p558 VII.19.5-10;VII.20)
And now we look on the real world which is a reflection of the love of God in the right mind of the Son.

There is a borderland of thought that stands between this world and Heaven. It is not a place, and when you reach it is apart from time. Here is the meeting place where thoughts are brought together; where conflicting values meet and all illusions are laid down beside the truth, where they are judged to be untrue. This borderland is just beyond [before] the gate of Heaven. Here is every thought made pure and wholly simple. Here is sin denied, and everything that is received instead.

This is the journey's end. We have referred to it as the real world. And yet there is a contradiction here, in that the words imply a limited reality, a partial truth, a segment of the universe made true. This is because knowledge makes no attack upon perception. They are brought together, and only one continues past the gate where oneness is. Salvation is a borderland where place and time and choice have meaning still, and yet it can be seen that they are temporary, out of place, and every choice has been already made.

The real world is the state of awakening from the nightmare of separate existence and identification with a body in the dream world.

Nothing the Son of God believes can be destroyed. But what is truth to him must be brought to the last comparison that he will ever make; the last evaluation that will be possible, the final judgment upon this world. It is the judgment of the truth upon illusion, of knowledge on perception: "It has no meaning, and does not exist." This is not your decision. It is but a simple statement of a simple fact. But in this world there are no simple facts, because what is the same and what is different remain unclear. The one essential thing to make a choice at all is this distinction. And herein lies the difference between the worlds. In this one, choice is made impossible. In the real world is choosing simplified.

The four passages below are a beautiful description of what the world is like when we finally let go of our belief in sin. This is the culmination of the process of forgiveness that ushers in the real world.

Forgiveness is this world's equivalent of Heaven's justice. It translates the world of sin into a simple world, where justice can be reflected from beyond the gate behind which total lack of limits lies. Nothing in boundless love could need forgiveness. And what is charity within the world gives way to simple justice past the gate that opens into Heaven. No one forgives unless he has believed in sin, and still believes that he has much to be forgiven. Forgiveness thus becomes the means by which he learns he has done nothing to forgive. Forgiveness always rests upon the one who offers it, until he sees himself as needing it no more. And thus is he returned to his real function of creating, which his forgiveness offers him again.

Forgiveness turns the world of sin into a world of glory, wonderful to see. Each flower shines in light, and every bird sings of the joy of Heaven. There is no sadness and there is no parting here, for everything is totally forgiven. And what has been forgiven must join, for nothing stands between to keep them separate and apart. The sinless must perceive that they are one, for nothing stands between to push the other off. And in the space that sin left vacant do they join as one, in gladness recognizing what is part of them has not been kept apart and separate.

The holy place on which you stand is but the space that sin has left. And here you see the face of Christ, arising in its place. Who could behold the face of Christ and not recall His Father as He really is? Who could fear love, and stand upon the ground where sin has left a place for Heaven's altar to rise and tower far above the world, and reach beyond the universe to touch the Heart of all creation? What is Heaven but a song of gratitude and love and praise by everything created to the Source of its creation? The holiest of altars is set where once sin was believed to be And here does every light of Heaven come, to be rekindled and increased in joy. For here is what was lost restored to them, and all their radiance made whole again. (R47 p548-549 IV.1-3)

Where sin once was perceived will rise a world that will become an altar to the truth, and you will join the lights of Heaven there, and sing their
song of gratitude and praise. And as they come to you to be complete, so will you go with them. For no one hears the song of Heaven and remains without a voice that adds its power to the song, and makes it sweeter still. And each one joins the singing at the altar that was raised within the tiny spot that sin proclaimed to be its own. And what was tiny then has soared into a magnitude of song in which the universe has joined with but a single voice. This tiny spot of sin that stands between you and your brother still is holding back the happy opening of Heaven's gate. How little is the hindrance that withholds the wealth of Heaven from you. And how great will be the joy in Heaven when you join the mighty chorus to the Love of God! (R48 p549 IV.5-6)

We will close with the beautiful section, "For They Have Come."

Think but how holy you must be from whom the Voice for God calls lovingly unto your brother, that you may awake in him the Voice that answers to your call! And think how holy he must be when in him sleeps your own salvation, with his freedom joined! However much you wish he be condemned, God is in him. And never will you know He is in you as well while you attack His chosen home, and battle with His host. Regard him gently. Look with loving eyes on him who carries Christ within him, that you may behold his glory and rejoice that Heaven is not separate from you.

Is it too much to ask a little trust for him who carries Christ to you, that you may be forgiven all your sins, and left without a single one you cherish still? Forget not that a shadow held between your brother and yourself obscures the face of Christ and memory of God. And would you trade Them for an ancient hate? The ground whereon you stand is holy ground because of Them Who, standing there with you, have blessed it with Their innocence and peace.

The blood of hatred fades to let the grass grow green again, and let the flowers be all white and sparkling in the summer sun. What was a place of death has now become a living temple in a world of light. Because of Them. It is Their Presence which has lifted holiness again to take its ancient place upon an ancient throne. Because of Them have miracles sprung up as grass and flowers on the barren ground that hate had scorched and rendered desolate. What hate has wrought have They undone. And now you stand on ground so holy Heaven leans to join with it, and make it like itself. The shadow of an ancient hate has gone, and all the blight and withering have passed forever from the land where They have come.

What is a hundred or a thousand years to Them, or tens of thousands? When They come, time's purpose is fulfilled. What never was passes to nothingness when They have come. What hatred claimed is given up to love, and freedom lights up every living thing and lifts it into Heaven, where the lights grow ever brighter as each one comes home. The incomplete is made complete again, and Heaven's joy has been increased because what is its own has been restored to it. The bloodied earth is cleansed, and the insane have shed their garments of insanity to join Them on the ground whereon you stand.

Heaven is grateful for this gift of what has been withheld so long. For They have come to gather in Their Own. What has been locked is opened; what was held apart from light is given up, that light may shine on it and leave no space nor distance lingering between the light of Heaven and the world.

The holiest of all the spots on earth is where an ancient hatred has become a present love. And They come quickly to the living temple, where a home for Them has been set up. There is no place in Heaven holier. And They have come to dwell within the temple offered Them, to be Their resting place as well as yours. What hatred has released to love becomes the brightest light in Heaven's radiance. And all the lights in Heaven brighter grow, in gratitude for what has been restored.

Around you angels hover lovingly, to keep away all darkened thoughts of sin, and keep the light where it has entered in. Your footprints lighten up the world, for where you walk forgiveness gladly goes with you. No one on earth but offers thanks to one who has restored his home, and sheltered him from bitter winter and the freezing cold. And shall the Lord of Heaven and His Son give less in gratitude for so much more?
Now is the temple of the living God rebuilt as host again to Him by Whom it was created. Where He dwells, His Son dwells with Him, never separate. And They give thanks that They are welcome made at last. Where stood a cross stands now the risen Christ, and ancient scars are healed within His sight. An ancient miracle has come to bless and to replace an ancient enmity that came to kill. In gentle gratitude do God the Father and the Son return to what is Theirs, and will forever be. Now is the Holy Spirit's purpose done. For They have come! For They have come at last!

(R49 p560-562 IX.1-8)

End Chapter Twenty-Six
Main Theme: Awakening from the secret dream and the world's dream.

Introduction: This chapter is a powerful, poignant and beautifully written overview of the Course. It describes the right mind, the wrong mind, and the purpose that the body and world serve the ego and the Holy Spirit. The core of the wrong mind is the belief in the unholy trinity of sin, guilt and fear which is referred to as the ego's "secret dream." The secret dream is the ego's story of separation from God, which evokes guilt, and fear of punishment. The ego tells us that God is angry and will punish us so we better hide. The ego makes a body and a world of bodies in which we can hide from God and blame everyone else for our sin and guilt. The projection of the body and world is referred to as the "world's dream."

The Course, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit, teaches us that the source of all our problems in the body and the world is in our secret dream in which we believe we separated from God. The ego's strategy is to keep us distracted by the world's dream so we will not get back to the real source of our problems which is the secret dream of separation in the mind. When we get back to the decision making part of our mind we can choose the Holy Spirit and wake up from the world's dream and the secret dream which means the dissolution of the ego, and the realization of our true Identity as Christ.

We start by looking at the secret dream, the source of the dream of the world.

The dreaming of the world is but a part of your own dream you gave away, and saw as if it were its start and ending, both. Yet was it started by your secret dream, which you do not perceive although it caused the part you see and do not doubt is real. How could you doubt it while you lie asleep, and dream in secret that its cause is real?

A brother separated from yourself, an ancient enemy, a murderer who stalks you in the night and plots your death, yet plans that it be lingering and slow; of this you dream [the world's dream]. Yet underneath this dream is yet another, in which you become the murderer, the secret enemy, the scavenger and the destroyer of your brother and the world alike. Here is the cause of suffering, the space between your little dreams and your reality. The little gap you do not even see, the birthplace of illusions and of fear, the time of terror and of ancient hate, the instant of disaster, all are here. Here is the cause of unreality. And it is here that it will be undone. (Reference 1 p584 VII.11.6-8;VII.12)

The original instant of belief in separation from God is the birthplace of the ego's secret dream and the source of the world's dream. We must return to the original instant of the secret dream and realize we never separated from God's wholeness to resolve all our problems of separation in the world's dream. The "hero" of the world's dream is the body.

The body is the central figure in the dreaming of the world. There is no dream without it, nor does it exist without the dream in which it acts as if it were a person to be seen and be believed. It takes the central place in every dream, which tells the story of how it was made by other bodies, born into the world outside the body, lives a little while and dies, to be united in the dust with other bodies dying like itself. In the brief time allotted it to live, it seeks for other bodies as its friends and enemies. Its safety is its main concern. Its comfort is its guiding rule. It tries to look for pleasure, and avoid the things that would be hurtful. Above all, it tries to teach itself its pains and joys are different and can be told apart.

The dreaming of the world takes many forms, because the body seeks in many ways to prove it is autonomous and real. It puts things on itself that it has bought with little metal discs or paper strips the world proclaims as valuable and real. It works to get them, doing senseless things, and tosses them away for senseless things it does not need and does not even want. It hires other bodies, that they may protect it and collect more senseless things that it can call its own. It looks about for special bodies that can share its dream. Sometimes it dreams it is a conqueror of bodies weaker than itself. But in some phases of the dream, it is the slave of bodies that would hurt and torture it.
The body's serial adventures, from the time of birth to dying are the theme of every dream the world has ever had. The "hero" of this dream will never change, nor will its purpose. Though the dream itself takes many forms, and seems to show a great variety of places and events wherein its "hero" finds itself, the dream has but one purpose, taught in many ways. This single lesson does it try to teach again, and still again, and yet once more; that it is cause and not effect. And you are its effect, and cannot be its cause.

Thus are you not the dreamer, but the dream. And so you wander idly in and out of places and events that it contrives. That this is all the body does is true, for it is but a figure in a dream. (R2 p585-586 VIII.1-4.1-3)

The world you see depicts exactly what you thought you did [destroyed God]. Except that now you think that what you did is being done to you. The guilt for what you thought is being placed outside yourself, and on a guilty world that dreams your dreams and thinks your thoughts instead of you. It brings its vengeance, not your own. It keeps you narrowly confined within a body, which it punishes because of all the sinful things the body does within its dream. You have no power to make the body stop its evil deeds because you did not make it, and cannot control its actions nor its purpose nor its fate.

The world but demonstrates an ancient truth; you will believe that others do to you exactly what you think you did to them. The guilt for what you thought is being placed outside yourself, and on a guilty world that dreams your dreams and thinks your thoughts instead of you. It brings its vengeance, not your own. It keeps you narrowly confined within a body, which it punishes because of all the sinful things the body does within its dream. You have no power to make the body stop its evil deeds because you did not make it, and cannot control its actions nor its purpose nor its fate. (R3 p587 VIII.7.2-7;VIII.8.1-2)

The wish to be unfairly treated is a compromise attempt that would combine attack and innocence. Who can combine the wholly incompatible, and make a unity of what can never join? (R4 p565 I.1.1-2)

I attack you because you attacked me. I am innocent, you are guilty. My attack is justified, yours is not. So says the ego.

But every pain you suffer do you see as proof that he [your brother] is guilty of attack. Thus would you make yourself to be the sign that he has lost his innocence, and need but look on you to realize that he has been condemned. And what to you has been unfair will come to him in righteousness. The unjust vengeance that you suffer now belongs to him, and when it rests on him are you set free. Wish not to make yourself a living symbol of his guilt, for you will not escape the death you made for him. But in his innocence you find your own. Whenever you consent to suffer pain, to be deprived, unfairly treated or in need of anything, you but accuse your brother of attack upon God's Son. You hold a picture of your crucifixion before his eyes, that he may see his sins are writ in Heaven in your blood and death, and go before him, closing off the gate and damning him to hell. (R5 p565 I.2.2-7;I.3)

A sick and suffering you but represents your brother's guilt; the witness that you send lest he forget the injuries he gave, from which you swear he never will escape. This sick and sorry picture you accept, if only it can serve to punish him. The sick are merciless to everyone, and in contagion do they seek to kill. Death seems an easy price, if they can say, "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die." For sickness is the witness to his guilt, and death would prove his errors must be sins. (R6 p566 I.4.3-7)

And everything that it has shown to him have you believed, because it witnessed to the guilt in him which you perceived and loved. (R7 p566 I.4.11)

It is not will for life but wish for death that is the motivation for this world. Its only purpose is to prove guilt real. No worldly thought or act or feeling has a motivation other than this one. (R8 p566 I.6.3-5)

If the world you made is real, separation from God is real, sin is real, guilt is real, fear is real, death is real and the ego is real. Without separation from God — sin, guilt, fear, death and the ego do not exist. This is why you love sin, guilt, fear, attack, sacrifice and death; without them, you, as you believe yourself to be, are dead.

Adornment of the body seeks to show how lovely are the witnesses for guilt. Concerns about the body demonstrate how frail and vulnerable is your life; how easily destroyed is what you love.
Depression speaks of death, and vanity of real concern with anything at all. The strongest witness to futility, that bolsters all the rest and helps them paint the picture in which sin is justified, is sickness in whatever form it takes. The sick have reason for each one of their unnatural desires and strange needs. For who could live a life so soon cut short and not esteem the worth of passing joys?

(R9 p566-567 I.6.9-10;I.7.1-3)

These [seeking pleasure and avoiding pain for the body] are not sins, but witnesses unto the strange belief that sin and death are real, and innocence and sin will end alike within the termination of the grave. If this were true, there would be reason to remain content to seek for passing joys and cherish little pleasures where you can. Yet in this picture is the body not perceived as neutral and without a goal inherent in itself. For it becomes the symbol of reproach, the sign of guilt whose consequences still are there to see, so that the cause can never be denied. (R10 p567 I.8)

We made the body weak, vulnerable and completely at the mercy of events beyond its control to prove we are innocent victims of a sinful, guilty world of others who should be punished instead of us. Sickness, vulnerability, suffering and death prove we have our own special separate existence apart from God and the world.

Pain demonstrates the body must be real. It is a loud, obscuring voice whose shrieks would silence what the Holy Spirit says, and keep His words from your awareness. Pain compels attention, drawing it away from Him and focusing upon itself. Its purpose is the same as pleasure, for they both are means to make the body real. What shares a common purpose is the same. This is the law of purpose, which unites all those who share in it within itself. Pleasure and pain are equally unreal, because their purpose cannot be achieved. Thus are they means for nothing, for they have a goal without a meaning. And they share the lack of meaning which their purpose has. Sin shifts from pain to pleasure, and again to pain. For either witness is the same, and carries but one message: "You are here, within this body, and you can be hurt. (R11 p579 VI.1;VI.2.1-2)

Everything in the world you made serves the purpose for which you made it: to prove your special separate existence is real, and to blame someone else for it.

This body, purposeless within itself, holds all your memories and all your hopes. You use its eyes to see, its ears to hear, and let it tell you what it is it feels. It does not know. It tells you but the names you [the Son as the decision maker] gave to it to use, when you call forth the witnesses to its reality. You cannot choose among them which are real, for any one you choose is like the rest. This name or that, but nothing more, you choose. (R12 p580 VI.3.1-6)

Suffering is an emphasis upon all that the world has done to injure you. Here is the world's demented version of salvation clearly shown. Like to a dream of punishment, in which the dreamer is unconscious of what brought on the attack against himself, he sees himself attacked unjustly and by something not himself. He is the victim of this "something else," a thing outside himself, for which he has no reason to be held responsible. He must be innocent because he knows not what he does, but what is done to him. Yet is his own attack upon himself apparent still, for it is he who bears the suffering. And he cannot escape because its source is seen outside himself. (R13 p581 VII.1)

We cannot resolve our suffering because we have projected its cause onto others: germs, viruses, our family, friends, intimate others, society, culture, governments, religions, God and evil doers around the world; the world's dream. To resolve our suffering we must go back to our minds and wake up from the original secret dream; the belief in separation from God. We must understand cause and effect to be free of suffering.

The "reasoning" by which the world is made, on which it rests, by which it is maintained, is simply this: "You are the cause of what I do. Your presence justifies my wrath, and you exist and think apart from me. While you attack I must be innocent. And what I suffer from is your attack." No one who looks upon this "reasoning" exactly as it is could fail to see it does not follow and it makes no sense. Yet it seems sensible, because it looks as if the world were hurting you. And so it seems as if there is no need to go beyond the obvious in terms of cause. (R14 p582 VII.3)
To suffer and play the role of victim you must remain ignorant of the true cause of suffering, and project the cause onto everyone and everything outside of your own mind.

Otherwise is the avenger's knife in his own hand, and pointed to himself. (R15 p582 VII.4.7)

This is the purpose of the world he sees. And looked at thus, the world provides the means by which this purpose seems to be fulfilled. The means attest the purpose, but are not themselves a cause. (R16 p582 VII.5.1-3)

The purpose of the world I made is to prove the avenger is outside of me, and I am innocent.

Of one thing you were sure: Of all the many causes you perceived as bringing pain and suffering to you, your guilt was not among them. Nor did you in any way request them for yourself. This is how all illusions came about. The one who makes them does not see himself as making them, and their reality does not depend on him. Whatever cause they have is something quite apart from him, and what he sees is separate from his mind. He cannot doubt his dreams' reality, because he does not see the part he plays in making them and making them seem real.

No one can waken from a dream the world is dreaming for him. He becomes a part of someone else's dream. He cannot choose to waken from a dream he did not make. Helpless he stands, a victim to a dream conceived and cherished by a separate mind. Careless indeed of him this mind must be, as thoughtless of his peace and happiness as is the weather or the time of day. It loves him not, but casts him as it will in any role that satisfies its dream. So little is his worth that he is but a dancing shadow, leaping up and down according to a senseless plot conceived within the idle dreaming of the world. (R17 p583 VII.7.4-9;VII.8)

There is no salvation for you in the world you made to prevent your salvation. To the ego, salvation is death. The miracle facilitates a shift in identity from the character in the dream to the dreamer of the dream, and ultimately to our true Identity as Christ in Spirit.

Identity [Christ] and function [Creating] are the same, and by your function do you know yourself. And thus, if you confuse your function with the function of Another [God], you must be confused about yourself and who you are. What is the separation but a wish to take God's function from Him and deny that it is His? Yet if it is not His it is not yours, for you must lose what you would take away.

In a split mind, identity must seem to be divided. Nor can anyone perceive a function unified which has conflicting purposes and different ends. Correction, to a mind so split, must be a way to punish sins you think are yours in someone else. And thus does he become your victim, not your brother, different from you in that he is more guilty, thus in need of your correction, as the one more innocent than he. This splits his function off from yours, and gives you both a different role. And so you cannot be perceived as one, and with a single function that would mean a shared identity with but one end. (R18 p571 II.10.6-9;II.11)

The ego's wrong minded function is to maintain its special separate existence at another's expense and God's. The ego has split its function from God's and everyone else's, making the world a battleground of opposing purposes.

From an idea of self as two, there comes a necessary view of function split between the two. And what you would correct is only half the error, which you think is all of it. Your brother's sins become the central target for correction, lest your errors and his own be seen as one. Yours are mistakes, but his are sins and not the same as yours. His merit punishment, while yours, in fairness, should be overlooked. (R19 p571 II.13.2-6)

We love all the evil doers in the world because we made them to prove our relative innocence.

Who has been injured by his brother, and could love and trust him still? He has attacked and will attack again. Protect him not, because your damaged body shows that you must be protected from him. To forgive may be an act of charity, but not his due. He may be pitied for his guilt, but not exonerated. And if you forgive him his
transgressions, you but add to all the guilt that he has really earned. (R20 p568 II.1.5-10)

Sin is illusory. True forgiveness sees no sin and no sinner. The ego's forgiveness sees sin and sinners as real; and the innocent, holy ego forgives the guilty, selfish sinners!

**Good cannot be returned for evil, for forgiveness does not first establish sin and then forgive it.** Who can say and mean, "My brother, you have injured me, and yet, because I am the better of the two, I pardon you my hurt." His pardon and your hurt cannot exist together. One denies the other and must make it false. To witness sin and yet forgive it is a paradox that reason cannot see. For it maintains what has been done to you deserves no pardon. And by giving it, you grant your brother mercy but retain the proof he is not really innocent. (R21 p568-569 II.2.7-9;II.3.13)

Forgiveness cannot be for one and not the other. (R22 p569 II.3.9)

There are two ways the ego attempts to prove sin is real; one is to seek revenge and punish it; the other is to believe sin is real and to forgive it. The Holy Spirit sees sin is illusory and forgives the illusion.

* The ego's goal is to make sin, guilt, fear, the world and itself appear real. Every question the ego asks is based on the false premise that it and its world are real. The ego is not really interested in truth, but in maintaining the lie of its special separate existence along with the world it made.

The world can only ask a double question. One with many answers can have no answers. None of them will do. It does not ask a question to be answered, but only to restate its point of view. All questions asked within this world are but a way of looking, not a question asked. A question asked in hate cannot be answered, because it is an answer in itself. A double question asks and answers, both attesting the same thing in different form. (R23 p575 IV.3.5-8;IV.4.1-3)

It asks but to establish sin is real, and answers in the form of preference. "Which sin do you prefer?" (R24 p575 IV.4.9-10)

A pseudo-question has no answer. It dictates the answer even as it asks. Thus is all questioning within the world a form of propaganda for itself. (R25 p575 IV.5.1-3)

* And now we will address the process of ego dissolution. Between complete identification with the ego, and the complete undoing of the ego is the gentle step of forgiveness.

Yet true undoing must be kind. And so the first replacement for your picture is another picture of another kind. As nothingness cannot be pictured, so there is no symbol for totality. Reality is ultimately known without a form, unpictured and unseen. Forgiveness is not yet a power known as wholly free of limits. Yet it sets no limits you have chosen to impose. Forgiveness is the means by which the truth is represented temporarily. It lets the Holy Spirit make exchange of pictures possible, until the time when aids are meaningless and learning done. No learning aid has use that can extend beyond the goal of learning. When its aim has been accomplished it is functionless. Yet in the learning interval it has a use that now you fear, but yet will love. (R26 p573-574 III.4.7-8;III.5)

The ego's terror is of its own dissolution. Forgiveness offers a gentle step the ego can accept without fear of total annihilation. The ego's purpose for its special relationships is gently shifted from being depositories of sin and guilt, to facilitating acceptance of the Atonement through forgiveness.

Now in the hands made gentle by His touch, the Holy Spirit lays a picture of a different you. It is a picture of a body still, for what you really are cannot be seen nor pictured. Yet this one has not been used for purpose of attack, and therefore never suffered pain at all. It witnesses to the eternal truth that you cannot be hurt, and points beyond itself to both your innocence and his. Show this unto your brother, who will see that every scar is healed, and every tear is wiped away in laughter and in love. And he will look on his forgiveness there, and with healed eyes will look beyond it to the innocence that he beholds in you. Here is the proof that he has never sinned; that nothing which his madness bid him do was ever done, or ever had effects of any kind. That no reproach he laid upon his heart was ever justified,
and no attack can ever touch him with the poisoned and relentless sting of fear. Attest his innocence and not his guilt. Your healing is his comfort and his health because it proves illusions are not true. (R27 p566 I.5;1.6.1-2)

It is crucial to allow the Holy Spirit to complete its function of forgiveness in all of your special relationships, and in every nook and cranny of your mind. Without complete forgiveness you will continue to suffer. Many people hear the statement, "The world is an illusion, God is the only reality," and do not take the step of allowing the Holy Spirit to complete its process of helping them to forgive all of their illusions of sin and guilt; and then they wonder why they are still suffering. Citing metaphysical truths is not proof of understanding. Proof rests in the experience of perfect peace, unconditional love, and the absence of suffering.

Your function is to show your brother sin can have no cause. How futile must it be to see yourself a picture of the proof that what your function is can never be! The Holy Spirit's picture changes not the body into something it is not. It only takes away from it all signs of accusation and of blamefulness. Pictured without a purpose, it is seen as neither sick nor well, nor bad nor good. No grounds are offered that it may be judged in any way at all. It has no life, but neither is it dead. It stands apart from all experience of love or fear. For now it witnesses to nothing yet, its purpose being open, and the mind made free again to choose what it is for. Now is it not condemned, but waiting for a purpose to be given, that it may fulfill the function that it will receive.

Into this empty space, from which the goal of sin has been removed, is Heaven free to be remembered. Here its peace can come, and perfect healing take the place of death. The body can become a sign of life, a promise of redemption, and a breath of immortality to those grown sick of breathing in the fetid scent of death. Let it have healing as its purpose. Then will it send forth the message it received, and by its health and loveliness proclaim the truth and value that it represents. Let it receive the power to represent an endless life, forever unattacked. And to your brother let its message be, "Behold me, brother, at your hand I live."

Forgiveness is in your mind, not in the world. Forgiveness has nothing to do with the behavior of the body in the world. Forgiveness, salvation, the Atonement, the miracle, and Self Knowledge all refer to a state of mind; the realization of oneness in the mind; the realization that separation from God never happened; the realization that the body and world are projections of mind and are not separate from your mind —they have nothing to do with the actions or behaviors of the body in the world.

The simple way to let this be achieved is merely this; to let the body have no purpose from the past, when you were sure you knew its purpose was to foster guilt. For this insists your crippled picture is a lasting sign of what it represents. This leaves no space in which a different view, another purpose, can be given it. You do not know its purpose. You but gave illusions of a purpose to a thing you made to hide your function from yourself. This thing without a purpose cannot hide the function that the Holy Spirit gave. Let, then, its purpose and your function both be reconciled at last and seen as one. (R28 p567-568 I.9-11)

Forgiveness is not real unless it brings a healing to your brother and yourself. You must attest his sins have no effect on you to demonstrate they are not real. How else could he be guiltless? And how could his innocence be justified unless his sins have no effect to warrant guilt? (R29p569II.4.1-4)

To fully benefit from forgiveness you cannot say, "I forgive but will never forget." True forgiveness says, "You have not sinned, you are eternally innocent."

A broken body shows the mind has not been healed. A miracle of healing proves that separation is without effect. What you would prove to him you will believe. The power of witness comes from your belief. And everything you say or do or think but testifies to what you teach to him. Your body can be means to teach that it has never suffered pain because of him. And in its healing can it offer him mute testimony of his innocence. It is this testimony that can speak with power greater than a thousand tongues. For here is his forgiveness proved to him.

A healed mind does not perceive a body as broken regardless of the appearance of symptoms. Healing is
of the mind's perception, not the physical body. Your invulnerability is proof of your brother's innocence. Innocence is for everyone or no one. There can be no exceptions. To condemn one of your brothers is to condemn yourself and the whole Sonship. To proclaim the innocence of one is to proclaim the innocence of all. Innocence or guilt applies to all or none.

A miracle can offer nothing less to him than it has given unto you. So does your healing show your mind is healed, and has forgiven what he did not do. And so is he convinced his innocence was never lost, and healed along with you. Thus does the miracle undo all things the world attests can never be undone. And hopelessness and death must disappear before the ancient clarion call of life. This call has power far beyond the weak and miserable cry of death and guilt. The ancient calling of the Father to His Son, and of the Son unto His Own, will yet be the last trumpet that the world will ever hear. Brother, there is no death. And this you learn when you but wish to show your brother that you had no hurt of him. He thinks your blood is on his hands, and so he stands condemned. Yet it is given you to show him, by your healing, that his guilt is but the fabric of a senseless dream. (R30 p569-570 II.5-6)

This is the law the miracle obeys; that healing sees no specialness at all. It does not come from pity but from love. And love would prove all suffering is but a vain imagining, a foolish wish with no effects. (R31 p570 II.7.4-6)

Yet you can show him that his suffering is purposeless and wholly without cause. Show him your healing, and he will consent no more to suffer. For his innocence has been established in your sight and his. And laughter will replace your sighs, because God's Son remembered that he is God's Son. (R32 p570 II.8.6-9)

Suffering is a choice we make to prove our special separate existence; until we choose again for peace and wholeness with the help of the Holy Spirit through healing in the holy instant.

Such is the holy instant. It is here that all your problems should be brought and left. Here they belong, for here their answer is. And where its answer is, a problem must be simple and be easily resolved. It must be pointless to attempt to solve a problem where the answer cannot be. Yet just as surely it must be resolved, if it is brought to where the answer is. Attempt to solve no problems but within the holy instant's surety. For there the problem will be answered and resolved. Outside there will be no solution, for there is no answer there that could be found. (R33 p575 IV.2.4-9;IV.3.1-3)

Peace, love, salvation and wholeness are in your mind, not in the world. You made the world to maintain your separate existence in suffering, conflict, hate and fear; this is why you cannot find love and peace in the world you made. The Holy Spirit helps lead us out of the world we made, back to the truth of our Identity as Christ in Heaven. The ego keeps us buried in our self made hell; until we choose again.

Therefore, attempt to solve no problems in a world from which the answer has been barred. But bring the problem to the only place that holds the answer lovingly for you. Here are the answers that will solve your problems because they stand apart from them, and see what can be answered; what the question is. Within the world the answers merely raise another question, though they leave the first unanswered. In the holy instant, you can bring the question to the answer, and receive the answer that was made for you.

The only way to heal is to be healed. The miracle extends without your help, but you are needed that it can begin. Accept the miracle of healing, and it will go forth because of what it is. It is its nature to extend itself the instant it is born. And it is born the instant it is offered and received. No one can ask another to be healed. But he can let himself be healed, and thus offer the other what he has received. Who can bestow upon another what he does not have? And who can share what he denies himself? (R34 p576 IV.7;V.1.1-9)

The extension of forgiveness and the Atonement are functions of the Holy Spirit. Our function is not to save the world, but only to accept the Atonement and forgiveness for ourselves with the help of Jesus or the Holy Spirit.

The holy instant is the miracle's abiding place. From there, each one is born into this world as
Notes on Chapter Twenty-Seven – The Healing of the Dream

witness to a state of mind that has transcended conflict, and has reached to peace. It carries comfort from the place of peace into the battleground, and demonstrates that war has no effects. For all the hurt that war has sought to bring, the broken bodies and the shattered limbs, the screaming dying and the silent dead, are gently lifted up and comforted. (R35 p577 V.3)

The graphic symbols in the passage above contrast two thought systems; those of the Holy Spirit and the ego.

Come to the holy instant and be healed, for nothing that is there received is left behind on your returning to the world. And being blessed you will bring blessing. Life is given you to give the dying world. And suffering eyes no longer will accuse, but shine in thanks to you who blessing gave. (R36 p577-578 V.6.1-4)

Thus is your healing everything the world requires, that it may be healed. It needs one lesson that has perfectly been learned. (R37 p578 V.7.1-2)

The one lesson learned is that there is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is one problem; the belief in separation. And there is one solution; the separation from God's love never happened.

Problems are not specific but they take specific forms, and these specific shapes make up the world. And no one understands the nature of his problem. If he did, it would be there no more for him to see. Its very nature is that it is not. And thus, while he perceives it he can not perceive it as it is. But healing is apparent in specific instances, and generalizes to include them all. This is because they really are the same, despite their different forms. All learning aims at transfer, which becomes complete within two situations that are seen as one, for only common elements are there. Yet this can only be attained by One Who does not see the differences you see. The total transfer of your learning is not made by you. But that it has been made in spite of all the differences you see, convinces you that they could not be real. (R38 p578 V.8)

Leave, then, the transfer of your learning to the One Who really understands its laws, and Who will guarantee that they remain unviolated and unlimited. Your part is merely to apply what He has taught you to yourself, and He will do the rest. And it is thus the power of your learning will be proved to you by all the many different witnesses it finds. Your brother first among them will be seen, but thousands stand behind him, and beyond each one of them there are a thousand more. (R39 p579 V.10.1-4)

Our purpose in the world is to ask Jesus or the Holy Spirit for help each time we become aware of thoughts of anger, guilt, blame or conflict in our special love and hate relationships. Sharing forgiveness, the Atonement and healing through us is the function of the Holy Spirit, not us. The Course Workbook is a great help in learning to apply the principles we are learning in the Text in our daily lives.

Yet a miracle speaks not but for itself, but what it represents. Love, too, has symbols in a world of sin. The miracle forgives because it stands for what is past forgiveness and is true. (R40 p580 V1.5.10;V1.6.1-2)

The miracle is an illusion that returns the power of the dream character back to the dreamer and allows us to observe the thought system of the ego from outside the dream so we can awaken from the nightmare of separation that never happened.

Yet to the One Who sends forth miracles to bless the world, a tiny stab of pain, a little worldly pleasure, and the throes of death itself are but a single sound; a call for healing, and a plaintive cry for help within a world of misery. It is their sameness that the miracle attests. It is their sameness that it proves. The laws that call them different are dissolved, and shown as powerless. The purpose of a miracle is to accomplish this. And God Himself has guaranteed the strength of miracles for what they witness to. (R41 p581 VI.6.6-11)

Problems appear to be many, but they are one. There is one problem, and one solution.

The resurrection of the world awaits your healing and your happiness, that you may demonstrate the healing of the world. The holy instant will replace all sin if you but carry its effects with you.
And no one will elect to suffer more. What better function could you serve than this? Be healed that you may heal, and suffer not the laws of sin to be applied to you. And truth will be revealed to you who chose to let love's symbols take the place of sin. (R42 p581 VI.8)

Resurrection is in the mind because crucifixion is in the mind. The world is healed in my mind because the unhealed world exists only in my mind. When my mind is healed, the world is healed. The world is my mind.

Now you are being shown you can escape. All that is needed is you look upon the problem as it is, and not the way that you have set it up. How could there be another way to solve a problem that is very simple, but has been obscured by heavy clouds of complication, which were made to keep the problem unresolved? Without the clouds the problem will emerge in all its primitive simplicity. The choice will not be difficult, because the problem is absurd when clearly seen. No one has difficulty making up his mind to let a simple problem be resolved if it is seen as hurting him, and also very easily removed. (R43 p581-582 VII.2)

The way the ego set up the problem in the world's dream is to say that sin is real, but it is not in me, it is in the world; and sin is resolved through punishment or attack. The Holy Spirit leads us back to the secret dream in the mind in which we believe we committed the original sin by separating from God. True escape is in awakening to the secret dream of original sin.

Look, then, beyond effects. It is not here the cause of suffering and sin must lie. And dwell not on the suffering and sin, for they are but reflections of their cause. The part you play in salvaging the world from condemnation is your own escape. Forget not that the witness to the world of evil cannot speak except for what has seen a need for evil in the world. (R44 p582 VII.5.6-8; VII.6.1-2)

And it is this the world bears witness to. Seek not another cause, nor look among the mighty legions of its witnesses for its undoing. They support its claim on your allegiance. What conceals the truth is not where you should look to find the truth. (R45 p582-583 VII.6.5-8)

The truth is not in the world we made. Truth is known in the realization of the Atonement through forgiveness of the world of illusions.

This is the only picture [the illusory world of sin and guilt] you can see; the one alternative that you can choose, the other possibility of cause, if you be not the dreamer of your dreams. And this is what you choose if you deny the cause of suffering is in your mind. Be glad indeed it is, for thus are you the one decider of your destiny in time. The choice is yours to make between a sleeping death and dreams of evil or a happy wakening and joy of life. (R46 p583 VII.9)

Salvation is in your own mind. Bondage is in your own mind.

Yet if the choice is really given you, then you must see the causes of the things you choose between exactly as they are and where they are. (R47 p583-584 VII.10.7)

How willing are you to escape effects of all the dreams the world has ever had? Is it your wish to let no dream appear to be the cause of what it is you do? Then let us merely look upon the dream's beginning, for the part you see is but the second part, whose cause lies in the first. No one asleep and dreaming in the world remembers his attack upon himself. No one believes there really was a time when he knew nothing of a body, and could never have conceived this world as real. He would have seen at once that these ideas are one illusion, too ridiculous for anything but to be laughed away. How serious they now appear to be! And no one can remember when they would have met with laughter and with disbelief. We can remember this, if we but look directly at their cause. And we will see the grounds for laughter, not a cause for fear.

Let us return the dream he gave away unto the dreamer, who perceives the dream as separate from himself and done to him. Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea, at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh. In his forgetting did the thought become a serious idea, and possible of both accomplishment and real effects. Together, we can laugh them both away, and understand that time cannot intrude upon eternity. It is a joke to think that time can
come to circumvent eternity, which means there is no time. (R48 p586-587 VIII.5-6)

Our problem is not what is happening in the world, but the eyes through which we interpret what is happening in the world. Seeing through the eyes of the ego, the world is a dangerous, frightful battleground. From above the battleground, looking with the vision of the Holy Spirit, the world is a passing show, a harmless comedy.

How childish is the petulant device to keep your innocence by pushing guilt outside yourself, but never letting go! It is not easy to perceive the jest when all around you do your eyes behold its heavy consequences, but without their trifling cause. Without the cause do its effects seem serious and sad indeed. Yet they but follow. And it is their cause that follows nothing and is but a jest.

In gentle laughter does the Holy Spirit perceive the cause, and looks not to effects. How else could He correct your error, who have overlooked the cause entirely? He bids you bring each terrible effect to Him that you may look together on its foolish cause and laugh with Him a while. You judge effects, but He has judged their cause. And by His judgment are effects removed. Perhaps you come in tears. But hear Him say, "My brother, holy Son of God, behold your idle dream, in which this could occur." And you will leave the holy instant with your laughter and your brother's joined with His.

The secret of salvation is but this: that you are doing this unto yourself. No matter what the form of the attack, this still is true. Whoever takes the role of enemy and of attacker, still is this the truth. Whatever seems to be the cause of any pain and suffering you feel, this is still true. For you would not react at all to figures in a dream you knew that you were dreaming. Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream. This single lesson learned will set you free from suffering, whatever form it takes. (R49 p587-588 VIII.8.3-6; VIII.9-11.1)

And you will understand that miracles reflect the simple statement, "I have done this thing, and it is this I would undo." Bring, then, all forms of suffering to Him Who knows that every one is like the rest. He sees no differences where none exists, and He will teach you how each one is caused. None has a different cause from all the rest, and all of them are easily undone by but a single lesson truly learned. (R50 p588 VIII.11.6; VIII.12.1-3)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is no hierarchy of illusions.

How differently will you perceive the world when this is recognized! When you forgive the world your guilt, you will be free of it. Its innocence does not demand your guilt, nor does your guiltlessness rest on its sins. This is the obvious; a secret kept from no one but yourself. And it is this that has maintained you separate from the world, and kept your brother separate from you. Now need you but to learn that both of you are innocent or guilty. The one thing that is impossible is that you be unlike each other; that they both be true. This is the only secret yet to learn. And it will be no secret you are healed. (R51 p588 VIII.13)

We are crucified together. We are resurrected together.

Below is a beautiful summary of this chapter.

You are the dreamer of the world of dreams. No other cause it has, nor ever will. Nothing more fearful than an idle dream has terrified God's Son, and made him think that he has lost his innocence, denied his Father, and made war upon himself. So fearful is the dream, so seeming real, he could not waken to reality without the sweat of terror and a scream of mortal fear, unless a gentler dream preceded his awaking, and allowed his calmer mind to welcome, not to fear, the Voice that calls with love to waken him; a gentler dream, in which his suffering was healed and where his brother was his friend. God willed he waken gently and with joy, and gave him means to waken without fear.

Accept the dream He gave instead of yours. It is not difficult to change a dream when once the dreamer has been recognized. Rest in the Holy Spirit, and allow His gentle dreams to take the place of those you dreamed in terror and in fear
of death. He brings forgiving dreams, in which the choice is not who is the murderer and who shall be the victim. In the dreams He brings there is no murder and there is no death. The dream of guilt is fading from your sight, although your eyes are closed. A smile has come to lighten up your sleeping face. The sleep is peaceful now, for these are happy dreams.

Dream softly of your sinless brother, who unites with you in holy innocence. And from this dream the Lord of Heaven will Himself awaken His beloved Son. Dream of your brother's kindnesses instead of dwelling in your dreams on his mistakes. Select his thoughtfulness to dream about instead of counting up the hurts he gave. Forgive him his illusions, and give thanks to him for all the helpfulness he gave. And do not brush aside his many gifts because he is not perfect in your dreams. He represents his Father, Whom you see as offering both life and death to you.

Brother, He gives but life. Yet what you see as gifts your brother offers represent the gifts you dream your Father gives to you. Let all your brother's gifts be seen in light of charity and kindness offered you. And let no pain disturb your dream of deep appreciation for his gifts to you. (R52 p584-585 VII.13-16)

End Chapter Twenty-Seven
CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT
THE UNDOING OF FEAR

Main Theme: Cause and effect.

Introduction: Cause and effect are inextricably intertwined. If there is a cause there must be an effect; and if there is an effect there must be a cause. In the Course, the corollary idea is "ideas leave not their source," which means effects leave not their cause; the world and the mind are one.

If demonstrated that a thing is not a cause, then it does not exist. To prove a thing is not a cause, demonstrates that it has no effects. This rule applies to the ego and the Holy Spirit.

In Heaven, God is the Cause and Christ is His effect. Cause and effect are one; ideas leave not their source; effects leave not their cause; therefore, Father and Son are one. The Atonement principle is the reflection of Their oneness, as the Atonement principle states that the separation from God never happened.

In the ego's thought system ideas do leave their source, effects do leave their cause, and the Son has left the Father. And the Son, having separated from his Creator, believes he is a separate ego, and that he has created himself. By separating cause from effect, the ego denies God is a cause and therefore God does not exist. The ego uses that argument to attest to its own separate existence, and that the ego is its own cause, and the Son of God is the ego's effect.

In the ego's wrong mind, the belief in separation from God is the cause; the effect is the world, the body, pain, suffering, and death. More simply, the split mind is the cause, the world is the effect. Or again, the ego's secret dream of separation from God being a sin demanding punishment is the cause in the mind; the world's dream that we are bodies living in a physical universe is the effect.

The ego seeks to prove the separation from God is a real cause by demonstrating the body and world are real effects. If the world is real, its cause (separation from God) in the mind must be real. If the separation from God is real, God cannot be real.

The true Cause and Effect is the inseparable unity of Father and Son. If the Cause and Effect relationship between God and Christ is true, then the ego's cause and effect relationship between the belief in separation (cause) and the world (effect) cannot be true. If the ego's cause and effect theory is true, then the Cause and Effect relationship of God and Christ in Heaven would be an illusion. The ego uses the body (effect) as its proof that the separation from God is a real cause.

Once the ego establishes that the separation from God is a real cause, and the body and world are real effects, it reverses its own cause and effect theory. Once the ego is identified with the body in the world, it forgets that the mind is the cause of the body; it then appears that the world has caused the separate ego-body-self; which makes the ego-body-self the effect of the world.

The Holy Spirit facilitates the correction of the ego's reversal of cause and effect through forgiveness. By demonstrating to our brothers that their perceived sin against us has had no effect, their sin is not a cause and therefore does not exist. This is true forgiveness.

The ego seeks to prove sin is real by demonstrating to our brothers their sin against us has had an effect; "Look at me brother, it is by your hands that I die." Because sin had an effect it is a real cause.

We begin with a look at the Cause and Effect relationship as it exists in Heaven.

Without a cause there can be no effects, and yet without effects there is no cause. The cause a cause is made by its effects; the Father is a Father by His Son. Effects do not create their cause, but they establish its causation. Thus, the Son gives Fatherhood to his Creator, and receives the gift that he has given Him. It is because he is God's Son that he must also be a father, who creates as God created him. The circle of creation has no end. Its starting and its ending are the same. But in itself it holds the universe of all creation, without beginning and without an end. Fatherhood is creation. Love must be extended. Purity is not confined. It is the nature of the innocent to be forever uncontained, without a barrier or limitation. (Reference 1 p592 II.1-2.1-4)
God and His Creation are an eternal oneness, the one reality, prior to the split mind's illusion of separation and fragmentation.

You who have sought to lay a judgment on your own Creator cannot understand it is not He Who laid a judgment on His Son. You would deny Him His Effects, yet have They never been denied. There was no time in which His Son could be condemned for what was causeless and against His Will. What your remembering would witness to is but the fear of God. He has not done the thing you fear. No more have you. And so your innocence has not been lost. You need no healing to be healed. In quietness, see in the miracle a lesson in allowing Cause to have Its Own Effects, and doing nothing that would interfere.

(R2 p591 I.10)

All of our suffering is caused by the belief that we have separated from God's eternal love, peace and innocence, and we feel we will never get it back. We fear going back Home to God because we believe He is angry at us for leaving Him. Yet the separation never happened; the Effect never left its Cause. The Son never left His Father.

A space where God is not, a gap between the Father and the Son is not the Will of Either, Who have promised to be One. God's promise is a promise to Himself, and there is no one who could be untrue to what He wills as part of what He is. The promise that there is no gap between Himself and what He is cannot be false. What will can come between what must be One, and in Whose Wholeness there can be no gap?

(R3 p604 VII.1.5-8)

The gap represents the belief there is a separation between God and His Son.

The separation started with the dream the Father was deprived of His Effects, and powerless to keep them since He was no longer their Creator. In the dream, the dreamer made himself. But what he made has turned against him, taking on the role of its creator, as the dreamer had. And as he hated his Creator, so the figures in the dream have hated him. His body is their slave, which they abuse because the motives he has given it have they adopted as their own. And hate it for the vengeance it would offer them. It is their vengeance on the body which appears to prove the dreamer could not be the maker of the dream. Effect and cause are first split off, and then reversed, so that effect becomes a cause; the cause, effect. This is the separation's final step...

(R4 p594-595 II.8-9.1)

Once we believe we are separate from God, we become the dreamer of the dream. And in our dream of the world we have become a victim of the world's dream, as if the world is dreaming us. This is the reversal of cause and effect in our dream; first in the secret dream of separation from God, then in the world's dream.

In our dream of the world, we make ourselves the innocent victim of a separate world. In our secret dream, we make ourselves the innocent victim of a separate God. Our dream of the world is a projection of our secret dream. We wake up from the world's dream by waking up to our secret dream; by realizing the original sin of separation from God never happened. The original Cause never left His Effect. The Father never left His Son.

The ego uses the memory of past abuses and hurts to prove it is an innocent victim of a separate world, and claim all the ego's attacks are merely defenses against a sinful, vicious world.

Memory holds the message it receives, and does what it is given it to do. It does not write the message, nor appoint what it is for. Like to the body, it is purposeless within itself. And if it seems to serve to cherish ancient hate, and gives you pictures of injustices and hurts that you were saving, this is what you asked its message be and that it is. Committed to its vaults, the history of all the body's past is hidden there. All of the strange associations made to keep the past alive, the present dead, are stored within it, waiting your command that they be brought to you, and lived again. And thus do their effects appear to be increased by time, which took away their cause.

(R5 p590 I.5.3-9)

Memory is used by the ego to reinforce the belief in separation by recalling past hurts; the Holy Spirit uses memory to recall our true Identity as Christ by remembering our oneness with God. The purpose of memory is given by the teacher we have chosen, as memory is neutral in itself. Memories of the past
have no meaning, value or purpose apart from those we assign to them in the present. Purpose is assigned by the teacher we choose; the ego or the Holy Spirit; suffering or healing.

Now we look at the purpose the ego assigns to the body; proof that separation and suffering are real.

You have conceived a little gap between illusions and the truth to be the place where all your safety lies, and where your Self is safely hidden by what you have made. Here is a world established that is sick, and this the world the body's eyes perceive. Here are the sounds it hears; the voices that its ears were made to hear. Yet sights and sounds the body can perceive are meaningless. It cannot see nor hear. It does not know what seeing is; what listening is for. It is as little able to perceive as it can judge or understand or know. Its eyes are blind; its ears are deaf. It can not think, and so it cannot have effects.

The body and the world are effects not a cause. The mind determines meaning, value and purpose. The body follows orders given by the mind. The body and world have no meaning in themselves.

What is there God created to be sick? And what that He created not can be? Let not your eyes behold a dream; your ears bear witness to illusion. They were made to look upon a world that is not there; to hear the voices that can make no sound. Yet are there other sounds and other sights that can be seen and heard and understood. For eyes and ears are senses without sense, and what they see and hear they but report. It is not they that hear and see, but you [the Son as the decision maker], who put together every jagged piece, each senseless scrap and shred of evidence, and make a witness to the world you want. Let not the body's ears and eyes perceive these countless fragments seen within the gap that you imagined, and let them persuade their maker his imaginings are real. (R6 p601-602 V.4-5)

We want the world that proves the ego and body are real, and God is not. The next several passages address the role of the body relative to the mind.

Who punishes the body is insane. For here the little gap is seen, and yet it is not here. It has not judged itself, nor made itself to be what it is not. It does not seek to make of pain a joy and look for lasting pleasure in the dust. It does not tell you what its purpose is and cannot understand what it is for. It does not victimize, because it has no will, no preferences and no doubts. It does not wonder what it is. And so it has no need to be competitive. It can be victimized, but cannot feel itself as victim. It accepts no role, but does what it is told, without attack.

It is indeed a senseless point of view to hold responsible for sight a thing that cannot see, and blame it for the sounds you do not like, although it cannot hear. It suffers not the punishment you give because it has no feeling. It behaves in ways you want, but never makes the choice. It is not born and does not die. It can but follow aimlessly the path on which it has been set. And if that path is changed, it walks as easily another way. It takes no sides and judges not the road it travels. It perceives no gap, because it does not hate. It can be used for hate, but it cannot be hateful made thereby.

The thing you hate and fear and loathe and want, the body does not know. You send it forth to seek for separation and be separate. And then you hate it, not for what it is, but for the uses you have made of it. You shrink from what it sees and what it hears, and hate its frailty and littleness. And you despise its acts, but not your own. It sees and acts for you. It hears your voice. And it is frail and little by your wish. It seems to punish you, and thus deserve your hatred for the limitations that it brings to you. Yet you have made of it a symbol for the limitations that you want your mind to have and see and keep.

The body represents the gap between the little bit of mind you call your own and all the rest of what is really yours. You hate it, yet you think it is your self, and that, without it, would your self be lost. This is the secret vow that you have made with every brother who would walk apart. This is the secret oath you take again, whenever you perceive yourself attacked. No one can suffer if he does not see himself attacked, and losing by attack. Unstated and unheard in consciousness is every pledge to sickness. Yet it is a promise to another to be hurt by him, and to attack him in return.
Sickness is anger taken out upon the body, so that it will suffer pain. It is the obvious effect of what was made in secret, in agreement with another's secret wish to be apart from you, as you would be apart from him. Unless you both agree that is your wish, it can have no effects. Whoever says, "There is no gap between my mind and yours" has kept God's promise, not his tiny oath to be forever faithful unto death. And by his healing is his brother healed. (R7 p602 VI.1-5)

Now we look at the ego's purpose for sickness of the body.

The miracle does nothing just because the minds are joined, and cannot separate. Yet in the dreaming has this been reversed, and separate minds are seen as bodies, which are separated and which cannot join. Do not allow your brother to be sick, for if he is, have you abandoned him to his own dream by sharing it with him. He has not seen the cause of sickness where it is, and you have overlooked the gap between you, where the sickness has been bred. Thus are you joined in sickness, to preserve the little gap unhealed, where sickness is kept carefully protected, cherished, and upheld by firm belief, lest God should come to bridge the little gap that leads to Him. Fight not His coming with illusions, for it is His coming that you want above all things that seem to glisten in the dream.

To understand the whole theory of the Course you must detach from your identity with the body and rise above the battleground of the body and world, and look back down upon it. Sickness is not of the body or world at all. Sickness is in the mind and based on the decision to be separate. It takes two to separate. The Atonement principle is true because God does not believe in the separation which means it never happened. It is imperative to the ego that God sees the separation and that He reacts to it. The entire Bible rests on the insane idea that God saw the original sin as real and reacted to it. From the beginning in Genesis to the end in Revelations, God responds to sin which means sin is real.

It takes two to have sin; it takes two to have separation. The Atonement heals because it says there is no separation; God knows there is no split of Cause and Effect. Only the ego believes in separation, and desperately strives to prove it is separate by getting someone else to witness to it. That is why the ego needs special love and hate relationships because we each witness to the reality of the other's sin of separation, and of suffering and happiness, of pain and pleasure. It takes two to witness to separation and sickness. It only takes one for Atonement and healing. Sickness and healing, separation and Atonement are of the mind, and have nothing to do with the body, the world, or behavior of the body in the world. The body is neither sick nor healthy. The mind is the dreamer of sickness and health.

The end of dreaming is the end of fear, and love was never in the world of dreams. The gap is little. Yet it holds the seeds of pestilence and every form of ill, because it is a wish to keep apart and not to join. And thus it seems to give a cause to sickness which is not its cause. The purpose of the gap is all the cause that sickness has. For it was made to keep you separated, in a body which you see as if it were the cause of pain. The cause of pain is separation, not the body, which is only its effect. Yet separation is but empty space, enclosing nothing, doing nothing, and as unsubstantial as the empty place between the ripples that a ship has made in passing by.

What is the world except a little gap perceived to tear eternity apart, and break it into days and months and years? And what are you who live within the world except a picture of the Son of God in broken pieces, each concealed within a separate and uncertain bit of clay?

The body and world are projections of the mind's belief in separation from the wholeness of God.

God is the Alternate to dreams of fear. Who shares in them can never share in Him. But who withdraws his mind from sharing them is sharing Him. There is no other choice. Except you share it, nothing can exist. And you exist because God shared His Will with you, that His creation might create.

It is the sharing of the evil dreams of hate and malice, bitterness and death, of sin and suffering and pain and loss, that makes them real. Unshared, they are perceived as meaningless. The
fear is gone from them because you did not give them your support. Where fear has gone there love must come, because there are but these alternatives. Where one appears, the other disappears. And which you share becomes the only one you have. You have the one that you accept, because it is the only one you wish to have. (R10 p600-601 V.1.6-11;V.2)

Now we turn to the miracle. The ego's final step is reached once it has separated from God, projected the body and world from the mind, and then reversed cause and effect making itself a victim of a separate world. It is there at the ego's final step that the miracle begins. The miracle corrects the ego's mistaken reversal of cause and effect by returning the cause back to its true source in the mind, and then showing that the world is also an illusory effect.

The miracle does nothing. All it does is to undo. And thus it cancels out the interference to what has been done. It does not add, but merely takes away. And what it takes away is long since gone, but being kept in memory appears to have immediate effects. This world was over long ago. The thoughts that made it are no longer in the mind that thought of them and loved them for a little while. The miracle but shows the past is gone, and what has truly gone has no effects. Remembering a cause can but produce illusions of its presence, not effects.

The miracle undoes the ego's mistaken belief in the sin of separation and guilt, thereby undoing the blocks to the truth of our Identity with the wholeness of God. The miracle facilitates our awakening from the nightmare of separation. The miracle does not create the real world or the truth of our Identity with Christ, but removes the obstacles to our experience of the real world and our awareness of the love of God.

All the effects of guilt are here no more. For guilt is over. In its passing went its consequences, left without a cause. Why would you cling to it in memory if you did not desire its effects? Remembering is as selective as perception, being its past tense. It is perception of the past as if it were occurring now, and still were there to see. Memory, like perception, is a skill made up by you to take the place of what God gave in your creation. And like all the things you made, it can be used to serve another purpose, and to be the means for something else. It can be used to heal and not to hurt, if you so wish it be. (R11 p589 I.1-2)

The Holy Spirit is the present memory of our Identity as God's one Son.

The Holy Spirit can indeed make use of memory, for God Himself is there. Yet this is not a memory of past events, but only of a present state. You are so long accustomed to believe that memory holds only what is past, that it is hard for you to realize it is a skill that can remember now. The limitations on remembering the world imposes on it are as vast as those you let the world impose on you. There is no link of memory to the past. If you would have it there, then there it is. But only your desire made the link, and only you have held it to a part of time where guilt appears to linger still. (R12 p589-590 I.4)

Memories of the past have no power apart from the power we give them in the present.

What you remember never was [the separation]. It came from causelessness which you confused with cause. It can deserve but laughter, when you learn you have remembered consequences that were causeless and could never be effects. The miracle reminds you of a Cause forever present, perfectly untouched by time and interference. Never changed from what It is. And you are Its Effect, as changeless and as perfect as Itself. Its memory does not lie in the past, nor waits the future. It is not revealed in miracles. They but remind you that It has not gone. When you forgive It for your sins, It will no longer be denied. (R13 p591 I.9)

By returning to the holy instant more and more throughout your day, you are able to rise above the battleground you call your body and world, and realize the truth of your eternal Self; that is the miracle and the purpose of this Course.

How instantly the memory of God arises in the mind that has no fear to keep the memory away! Its own remembering has gone. There is no past to keep its fearful image in the way of glad awakening to present peace. The trumpets of eternity [the Atonement] resound throughout the
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stillness, yet disturb it not. And what is now remembered is not fear, but rather is the Cause that fear was made to render unremembered and undone. The stillness speaks in gentle sounds of love the Son of God remembers from before his own remembering came in between the present and the past, to shut them out. (R14 p592 I.13)

Forgiveness of our brothers facilitates the memory of our Identity with God coming back to our awareness by showing us the face of Christ in our brother.

Nothing at all has happened but that you have put yourself to sleep, and dreamed a dream in which you were an alien to yourself, and but a part of someone else's dream. The miracle does not awaken you, but merely shows you who the dreamer is. It teaches you there is a choice of dreams while you are still asleep, depending on the purpose of your dreaming. Do you wish for dreams of healing, or for dreams of death? A dream is like a memory in that it pictures what you wanted shown to you.

Your world is the outward picture of your inward wish.

An empty storehouse, with an open door, holds all your shreds of memories and dreams. Yet if you are the dreamer, you perceive this much at least: that you have caused the dream, and can accept another dream as well. But for this change in content of the dream, it must be realized that it is you who dreamed the dreaming that you do not like. It is but an effect that you have caused, and you would not be cause of this effect. In dreams of murder and attack are you the victim in a dying body slain. But in forgiving dreams is no one asked to be the victim and the sufferer. These are the happy dreams the miracle exchanges for your own. It does not ask you make another; only that you see you made the one you would exchange for this.

This world is causeless, as is every dream that anyone has dreamed within the world. No plans are possible, and no design exists that could be found and understood. What else could be expected from a thing that has no cause? Yet if it has no cause, it has no purpose. You may cause a dream, but never will you give it real effects. For that would change its cause, and it is this you cannot do. The dreamer of a dream is not awake, but does not know he sleeps. He sees illusions of himself as sick or well, depressed or happy, but without a stable cause with guaranteed effects. The miracle establishes you dream a dream, and that its content is not true. This is a crucial step in dealing with illusions. No one is afraid of them when he perceives he made them up. (R15 p593-594 II.4-7.1-3)

The miracle is the first step in giving back to cause the function of causation, not effect. For this confusion has produced the dream, and while it lasts will wakening be feared. Nor will the call to wakening be heard, because it seems to be the call to fear. (R16 p595 II.9.3-5)

The mind is the cause; the world is the effect.

The miracle returns the cause of fear to you who made it. But it also shows that, having no effects, it is not cause, because the function of causation is to have effects. And where effects are gone, there is no cause. Thus is the body healed by miracles because they show the mind made sickness, and employed the body to be victim, or effect, of what it made. Yet half the lesson will not teach the whole. The miracle is useless if you learn but that the body can be healed, for this is not the lesson it was sent to teach. The lesson is the mind was sick that thought the body could be sick; projecting out its guilt caused nothing, and had no effects.

The body is irrelevant in healing. Healing is of the belief in separation in the mind. The ego will continue to look to the body for proof of healing or sickness which keeps us asleep in our nightmare. The miracle facilitates the shift from body identification to identification with the observer and dreamer in the mind of the Son, above the illusory battleground where sickness or health of the body are both seen to be illusory.

This world is full of miracles. They stand in shining silence next to every dream of pain and suffering, of sin and guilt. They are the dream's alternative, the choice to be the dreamer, rather than deny the active role in making up the dream. They are the glad effects of taking back the consequence of sickness to its cause. The body is released because the mind acknowledges "this is not done to me, but I am doing this." And thus
the mind is free to make another choice instead. Beginning here, salvation will proceed to change the course of every step in the descent to separation, until all the steps have been retraced, the ladder gone, and all the dreaming of the world undone. (R17 p595 II.11-12)

Accepting the Atonement for yourself means not to give support [in the mind] to someone's dream of sickness and of death. It means that you share not his wish to separate, and let him turn illusions on himself. Nor do you wish that they be turned, instead, on you. Thus have they no effects. And you are free of dreams of pain because you let him be. Unless you help him, you will suffer pain with him because that is your wish. And you become a figure in his dream of pain, as he in yours. So do you and your brother both become illusions, and without identity. (R18 p598 IV.1.1-8)

The statement "not to give support to someone's dream of sickness and death" in the passage above does not mean you do not seek medical treatment for the body. The statement refers to the belief in the sin of separation and sickness in the mind. To cite metaphysical principles as a reason to avoid medical treatment for the body is a mistake because it makes the body important, again missing the purpose of the teachings of the Course. This Course has nothing to do with the body, except to take us beyond it. To avoid treatment for the body is to deal in the realm of effect. This is a Course in cause and not effect. (R19 p598-599 IV.3)

Like you, your brother thinks he is a dream. Share not in his illusion of himself, for your Identity depends on his reality. Think, rather, of him as a mind in which illusions still persist, but as a mind which brother is to you. He is not brother made by what he dreams, nor is his body, "hero" of the dream, your brother. It is his reality that is your brother, as is yours to him. Your mind and his are joined in brotherhood. His body and his dreams but seem to make a little gap, where yours have joined with his. (R19 p598-599 IV.3)

With our brothers we share the same illusory identity as separate egos, and we share the same real Identity as God's one Son.

The Holy Spirit is in both your minds, and He is One because there is no gap that separates His Oneness from Itself. The gap between your bodies matters not, for what is joined in Him is always one. (R20 p599 IV.7.1-2)

The Holy Spirit's function is to take the broken picture of the Son of God and put the pieces into place again. This holy picture, healed entirely, does He hold out to every separate piece that thinks it is a picture in itself. (R21 p599 IV.8.1-2)

Forgiveness facilitates the healing of the broken fragments of the Sonship. With the help of the Holy Spirit, forgiveness is our function in the world of broken pieces.

I thank You, Father, knowing You will come to close each little gap that lies between the broken pieces of Your holy Son. Your Holiness, complete and perfect, lies in every one of them. And they are joined because what is in one is in them all. How holy is the smallest grain of sand, when it is recognized as being part of the completed picture of God's Son! The forms the broken pieces seem to take mean nothing. For the whole is in each one. And every aspect of the Son of God is just the same as every other part. (R22 p600 IV.9)

The Sonship is the whole, infinite, eternal, universal Being. Nothing exists apart from the Sonship of universal spirit.

The seeds of sickness come from the belief that there is joy in separation, and its giving up would be a sacrifice. But miracles are the result when you do not insist on seeing in the gap what is not there. Your willingness to let illusions go is all the Healer of God's Son requires. He will place the miracle of healing where the seeds of sickness were. And there will be no loss, but only gain. (R23 p600 IV.10.6-10)

You who believe there is a little gap between you and your brother, do not see that it is here you are as prisoners in a world perceived to be existing here. The world you see does not exist, because the place where you perceive it is not real. The gap is carefully concealed in fog, and misty pictures rise to cover it with vague uncertain forms and changing shapes, forever unsubstantial and unsure. Yet in the gap is
nothing. And there are no awesome secrets and no darkened tombs where terror rises from the bones of death. Look at the little gap, and you behold the innocence and emptiness of sin that you will see within yourself, when you have lost the fear of recognizing love. (R24 p602 V.7)

Our problem is not in the illusory world, but in the belief that separation, the body and world are real.

Let this be your agreement with each one; that you be one with him and not apart. And he will keep the promise that you make with him, because it is the one that he has made to God, as God has made to him. God keeps His promises; His Son keeps his. In his creation did his Father say, "You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me." His Son remembers not that he replied "I will," though in that promise he was born. Yet God reminds him of it every time he does not share a promise to be sick, but lets his mind be healed and unified. His secret vows are powerless before the Will of God. Whose promises he shares. And what he substitutes is not his will, who has made promise of himself to God. (R25 p603-604 VI.6)

God's promise is unity. The ego's promise is separation.

The next series of passages address the effects of identifying with the body.

The beautiful relationship you have with all your brothers is a part of you because it is a part of God Himself. Are you not sick, if you deny yourself your wholeness and your health, the Source of help, the Call to healing and the Call to heal? Your savior [your brother] waits for healing, and the world waits with him. Nor are you apart from it. For healing will be one or not at all, its oneness being where the healing is. What could correct for separation but its opposite? There is no middle ground in any aspect of salvation. You accept it wholly or accept it not. What is unseparated must be joined. And what is joined cannot be separate.

Either there is a gap between you and your brother, or you are as one. There is no in between, no other choice, and no allegiance to be split between the two. A split allegiance is but faithlessness to both, and merely sets you spinning round, to grasp uncertainly at any straw that seems to hold some promise of relief. Yet who can build his home upon a straw, and count on it as shelter from the wind? The body can be made a home like this, because it lacks foundation in the truth. And yet, because it does, it can be seen as not your home, but merely as an aid to help you reach the home where God abides.

With this as purpose is the body healed. It is not used to witness to the dream of separation and disease. Nor is it idly blamed for what it did not do. It serves to help the healing of God's Son, and for this purpose it cannot be sick. It will not join a purpose not your own, and you have chosen that it not be sick. All miracles are based upon this choice, and given you the instant it is made. No forms of sickness are immune, because the choice cannot be made in terms of form. The choice of sickness seems to be of form, yet it is one, as is its opposite. And you are sick or well, accordingly.

But never you alone. This world is but the dream that you can be alone, and think without affecting those apart from you. To be alone must mean you are apart, and if you are, you cannot but be sick. This seems to prove that you must be apart. Yet all it means is that you tried to keep a promise to be true to faithlessness. Yet faithlessness is sickness. It is like the house set upon straw. It seems to be quite solid and substantial in itself. Yet its stability cannot be judged apart from its foundation. If it rests on straw, there is no need to bar the door and lock the windows and make fast the bolts. The wind will topple it, and rain will come and carry it into oblivion.

What is the sense in seeking to be safe in what was made for danger and for fear? Why burden it with further locks and chains and heavy anchors, when its weakness lies, not in itself, but in the frailty of the little gap of nothingness whereon it stands? What can be safe that rests upon a shadow? Would you build your home upon what will collapse beneath a feather's weight?

This final passage is an excellent summary of this chapter.
Your home is built upon your brother's health, upon his happiness, his sinlessness, and everything his Father promised him. No secret promise you have made instead has shaken the Foundation of his home. The winds will blow upon it and the rain will beat against it, but with no effect. The world will wash away and yet this house will stand forever, for its strength lies not within itself alone. It is an ark of safety, resting on God's promise that His Son is safe forever in Himself. What gap can interpose itself between the safety of this shelter and its Source? From here the body can be seen as what it is, and neither less nor more in worth than the extent to which it can be used to liberate God's Son unto his home. And with this holy purpose is it made a home of holiness a little while, because it shares your Father's Will with you.

(R26 p604-605 VII.2-7)

End Chapter Twenty-Eight
CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE
THE AWAKENING

Main Theme: The idols of specialness as substitutes for God's love. And awakening from the dream of separation.

We start by looking at the Atonement principle.

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There is no time, no place, no state where God is absent. There is nothing to be feared. There is no way in which a gap could be conceived of in the Wholeness that is His. The compromise the least and littlest gap would represent in His eternal love is quite impossible. For it would mean His Love could harbor just a hint of hate, His gentleness turn sometimes to attack, and His eternal patience sometimes fail.

(Reference 1 p606 I.1.1-5)

This is the Atonement principle: God is constant. Love is constant. Truth is constant, and truth is whole. There is no compromise at all in God. It is impossible for even a tiny mad idea to arise in the mind of perfect wholeness and oneness. God's oneness and wholeness are represented in the perfect non-dual thought system of the Course. God in His perfection has nothing at all to do with the world. Heaven and the world represent two mutually exclusive states. Imperfection has no place in God's perfection. Fear and hate have no place in God's love. Separation has no place in non-duality.

There is a place [in the right mind] in you where this whole world has been forgotten; where no memory of sin and of illusion lingers still. There is a place in you which time has left, and echoes of eternity are heard. There is a resting place so still no sound except a hymn to Heaven rises up to gladden God the Father and the Son. Where Both abide are They remembered, Both. And where They are is Heaven and is peace.

Think not that you can change Their [God and Christ's] dwelling place. For your Identity abides in Them, and where They are, forever must you be. The changelessness of Heaven is in you, so deep within that nothing in this world but passes by, unnoticed and unseen. The still infinity of endless peace surrounds you gently in its soft embrace, so strong and quiet, tranquil in the mighty of its Creator, nothing can intrude upon the sacred Son of God within. (R2 p614V.1-2)

The tiny mad idea that separation from God is possible does not change God's perfect oneness. The world of change "passes by" the eyes of God unnoticed and unseen. It is crucial to understand that God has absolutely nothing to do with the world. The ego needs to somehow involve God in the world, as God's acknowledgment verifies the existence of the ego and its world. If God gives reality to the illusory world, He is as insane as we are. If God is insane, to whom can we turn for salvation? And that is why the ego tries to involve God in the world; to keep us identified with the body, imprisoned in the world with no way back to the love, wholeness and sanity of the true God.

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Now we will look at the ego's introduction of idols as substitutes for God's love and wholeness.

Such is the promise of the living God; His Son have life and every living thing be part of him, and nothing else have life. What you have given "life" is not alive, and symbolizes but your wish to be alive apart from life, alive in death, with death perceived as life, and living, death.

(R3 p609 II.6.1-2)

The ego's supreme idol is the body. The body is not life, but a symbol of the ego's desire for separate existence. Life is infinite, eternal, universal spirit; life is not limited to a body. God is eternal life. By choosing to believe we are separate from God's eternal life, we have chosen to identify with the symbol of death.

Where is an idol? Nowhere! Can there be a gap in what is infinite, a place where time can interrupt eternity? A place of darkness set where all is light, a dismal alcove separated off from what is endless, has no place to be. An idol is beyond where God has set all things forever, and has left no room for anything to be except His Will. Nothing and nowhere must an idol be, while God is everything and everywhere. (R4 p621 VIII.7)

God has not many Sons, but only One. Who can have more, and who be given less? In Heaven
would the Son of God but laugh, if idols could intrude upon his peace. It is for him the Holy Spirit speaks, and tells you idols have no purpose here. For more than Heaven can you never have. If Heaven is within, why would you seek for idols that would make of Heaven less, to give you more than God bestowed upon your brother and on you, as one with Him? God gave you all there is. And to be sure you could not lose it, did He also give the same to every living thing as well. And thus is every living thing a part of you, as of Himself. No idol can establish you as more than God. But you will never be content with being less. (R5 p621 VIII.9)

Before the beginning we are whole and complete as God's one Son in Heaven; but that was not good enough, we wanted more than everything. And here we find ourselves in the world we made trying to find everything in nothing.

Why would you not perceive it as release from suffering to learn that you are free? Why would you not acclaim the truth instead of looking on it as an enemy? Why does an easy path, so clearly marked it is impossible to lose the way, seem thorny, rough and far too difficult for you to follow? Is it not because you see it as the road to hell instead of looking on it as a simple way, without a sacrifice or any loss, to find yourself in Heaven and in God? (R6 p608 II.1.1-4)

The path from the hell we made to our true Home in Heaven is the path of Atonement through forgiveness.

He [God] must sacrifice your self, and in His sacrifice are you made more and He is lessened by the loss of you. And what is gone from Him becomes your god, protecting you from being part of Him. The body that is asked to be a god will be attacked, because its nothingness has not been recognized. And so it seems to be a thing with power in itself. As something, it can be perceived and thought to feel and act, and hold you in its grasp as prisoner to itself. And it can fail to be what you demanded that it be. And you will hate it for its littleness, unmindful that the failure does not lie in that it is not more than it should be, but only in your failure to perceive that it is nothing. Yet its nothingness is your salvation, from which you would flee.

Being identified as an ego in a separate body, every day is a life and death battle with others in the world, and ultimately with God. Believing we are separate from God, we have made our lives a living hell; until we choose again. We have made ourselves a prisoner, locked behind the bars of the body, at the mercy of a vicious and brutal jail keeper we call the world.

As "something" is the body asked to be God's enemy, replacing what He is with littleness and limit and despair. It is His loss you celebrate when you behold the body as a thing you love, or look upon it as a thing you hate. For if He be the sum of everything, then what is not in Him does not exist, and His completion is its nothingness. (R7 p610 II.8.7-8;II.9-10)

The separate body and world are nothing. Believing the body and world are something, we suffer. It is that simple; and it is our choice.

The slave of idols is a willing slave. For willing he must be to let himself bow down in worship to what has no life, and seek for power in the powerless. What happened to the holy Son of God that this could be his wish; to let himself fall lower than the stones upon the ground, and look to idols that they raise him up? Hear, then, your story in the dream you made, and ask yourself if it be not the truth that you believe that it is not a dream.

A dream of judgment came into the mind that God created perfect as Himself. And in that dream was Heaven changed to hell, and God made enemy unto His Son. How can God's Son awaken from the dream? It is a dream of judgment. So must he judge not, and he will waken. For the dream will seem to last while he is part of it. Judge not, for he who judges will have need of idols, which will hold the judgment off from resting on himself. Nor can he know the Self he has condemned. Judge not, because you make yourself a part of evil dreams, where idols are your "true" identity, and your salvation from the judgment laid in terror and in guilt upon yourself.

All figures in the dream are idols, made to save you from the dream. Yet they are part of what they have been made to save you from. Thus does an idol keep the dream alive and terrible, for who could wish for one unless he were in terror and
despair? And this the idol represents, and so its worship is the worship of despair and terror, and the dream from which they come. (R8 p622 IX.1-3.1-4)

There can be no salvation in the dream as you are dreaming it. For idols must be part of it, to save you from what you believe you have accomplished [separation from God], and have done to make you sinful and put out the light within you. Little child, the light is there. You do but dream, and idols are the toys you dream you play with. Who has need of toys but children? They pretend they rule the world, and give their toys the power to move about, and talk and think and feel and speak for them. Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them. But they are eager to forget that they made up the dream in which their toys are real, nor recognize their wishes are their own.

Nightmares are childish dreams. The toys have turned against the child who thought he made them real. Yet can a dream attack? Or can a toy grow large and dangerous and fierce and wild? This does the child believe, because he fears his thoughts and gives them to the toys instead. And their reality becomes his own, because they seem to save him from his thoughts. Yet do they keep his thoughts alive and real, as when he plays with them. But they are eager to forget that they made up the dream in which their toys are real, nor recognize their wishes are their own.

We prefer our dreams of idols (special love and hate relationships) because in the presence of God's love we believe we would disappear.

The fear of God! The greatest obstacle that peace must flow across has not yet gone. The rest are past, but this one still remains to block your path, and make the way to light seem dark and fearful, perilous and bleak. You had decided that your brother is your enemy. Sometimes a friend, perhaps, provided that your separate interests made your friendship possible a little while. But not without a gap perceived between you and him, lest he turn again into an enemy. Let him come close to you, and you jumped back; as you approached, did he but instantly withdraw. A cautious friendship, and limited in scope and carefully restricted in amount, became the treaty that you had made with him. Thus you and your brother but shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point you both agreed to keep intact. And violating this was thought to be a breach of treaty not to be allowed.

The gap between you and your brother is not one of space between two separate bodies. And this but seems to be dividing off your separate minds. It is the symbol of a promise made to meet when you prefer, and separate till you and he elect to meet again. And then your bodies seem to get in touch, and thereby signify a meeting place to join. But always is it possible for you and him to go your separate ways. (R10 p606-607 I.3-4.1-5)

There is no love between two people; there is no peace between two countries; there is no salvation in the world of bodies that was made to solidify and guarantee we all remain separate, fearful and in conflict. We were born in the thought of separation and conflict with God, and the world is a perfect projection of our separation and conflict. There is no love, no peace, no happiness, and no salvation in the world. There is no love in hate. There is no joy in suffering. There is no Truth in illusion. There is no Heaven in hell.

The body could not separate your mind from your brother's unless you wanted it to be a cause of separation and of distance seen between you and him. Thus do you endow it with a power that lies not within itself. (R11 p607 I.5.1-2)

The mind is the cause of separation. The body and world are effects. To heal the belief in separation and return to wholeness and love, we must let go of the illusory effects and get back to the real cause in the mind. Wholeness, love, peace and joy are of the mind; not the world of special relationships.

You do not fear its [the body's] weakness, but its lack of strength or weakness [its nothingness]. Would you know that nothing stands between you and your brother? Would you know there is no gap behind which you can hide? There is a shock that comes to those who learn their savior [their brother] is their enemy no more. There is a
wariness that is aroused by learning that the body is not real. And there are overtones of seeming fear around the happy message, "God is Love."

Yet all that happens when the gap is gone is peace eternal. Nothing more than that, and nothing less. Without the fear of God, what could induce you to abandon Him? What toys or trinkets in the gap could serve to hold you back an instant from His Love? Would you allow the body to say "no" to Heaven's calling, were you not afraid to find a loss of self in finding God? Yet can your self be lost by being found? (R12 p608 I.8.2-7;I.9)

Our fear of finding the wholeness and love of God is that we will lose ourselves. What is this self we fear we will lose?

Seek not outside yourself. For it will fail, and you will weep each time an idol falls. Heaven cannot be found where it is not, and there can be no peace excepting there. Each idol that you worship when God calls will never answer in His place. There is no other answer you can substitute, and find the happiness His answer brings. Seek not outside yourself. For all your pain comes simply from a futile search for what you want, insisting where it must be found. What if it is not there? Do you prefer that you be right or happy? Be you glad that you are told where happiness abides [in your mind], and seek no longer elsewhere. You will fail. But it is given you to know the truth, and not to seek for it outside yourself. No one who comes here [makes a world] but must still have hope, some lingering illusion, or some dream that there is something outside of himself that will bring happiness and peace to him. (R13 p617 VII.1-2.1)

This is the purpose he bestows upon the body; that it seek for what he lacks, and give him what would make himself complete. And thus he wanders aimlessly about, in search of something that he cannot find, believing that he is what he is not. The lingering illusion will impel him to seek out a thousand idols, and to seek beyond them for a thousand more. And each will fail him, all excepting one; for he will die, and does not understand the idol that he seeks is but his death. Its form appears to be outside himself. Yet does he seek to kill God's Son within, and prove that he is victor over him. This is the purpose every idol has, for this the role that is assigned to it, and this the role that cannot be fulfilled. (R14 p617-618 VII.2.4-5;VII.3)

The ego uses the death of the body as proof the separation from God is real, but the body was never alive. God's life is eternal life and the only life. There is no life apart from God. The original death was in the belief in separation from God which is the original sin. God's Son never died and never sinned. You are God's Son. You were never born and will never die.

Seek not outside yourself. The search implies you are not whole within and fear to look upon your devastation, but prefer to seek outside yourself for what you are. (R15 p618 VII.4.5-6)

All idols of this world were made to keep the truth within from being known to you, and to maintain allegiance to the dream that you must find what is outside yourself to be complete and happy. (R16 p618 VII.6.1)

The world's dream is made to veil the mind's secret dream of separation from God. The idols of the world are the body and our special relationships, and were made to veil the idol in our mind which is the special separate ego.

The fear of God is but the fear of loss of idols. It is not the fear of loss of your reality. But you have made of your reality an idol, which you must protect against the light of truth. And all the world becomes the means by which this idol can be saved. Salvation thus appears to threaten life and offer death. (R17 p619 VII.9.6-10)

You do not want salvation because you believe you are dissolved by love and peace. You love fear and conflict because without them you die. You will do anything to remain in hell.

What is an idol? Do you think you know? For idols are unrecognized as such, and never seen for what they really are. That is the only power that they have. Their purpose is obscure, and they are feared and worshipped, both, because you do not know what they are for, and why they have been made. (R18 p619 VIII.1.1-5)
It is crucial to be fully aware of and understand the purpose your special love and hate relationships serve.

Let not their form deceive you. Idols are but substitutes for your reality. In some way, you believe they will complete your little self, for safety in a world perceived as dangerous, with forces massed against your confidence and peace of mind. They have the power to supply your lacks, and add the value that you do not have. (R19 p619 VIII.2.1-4)

An idol is a false impression, or a false belief; some form of anti-Christ [the ego], that constitutes a gap between the Christ and what you see. An idol is a wish, made tangible and given form, and thus perceived as real and seen outside the mind. Yet it is still a thought, and cannot leave the mind that is its source. Nor is its form apart from the idea it represents. All forms of anti-Christ oppose the Christ. And fall before His face like a dark veil that seems to shut you off from Him, alone in darkness. Yet the light is there. A cloud does not put out the sun. No more a veil can banish what it seems to separate, nor darken by one whit the light itself.

This world of idols is a veil across the face of Christ, because its purpose is to separate your brother from yourself. A dark and fearful purpose, yet a thought without the power to change one blade of grass from something living to a sign of death. Its form is nowhere, for its source abides within your mind where God abideth not. (R20 p620 VIII.3-4.1-3)

An idol is established by belief, and when it is withdrawn the idol "dies." This is the anti-Christ; the strange idea there is a power past omnipotence, a place beyond the infinite, a time transcending the eternal. Here the world of idols has been set by the idea this power and place and time are given form, and shape the world where the impossible has happened. Here the deathless come to die, the all-encompassing to suffer loss, the timeless to be made the slaves of time. Here does the changeless change; the peace of God, forever given to all living things, give way to chaos. And the Son of God, as perfect, sinless and as loving as his Father, come to hate a little while; to suffer pain and finally to die. (R21 p620 VIII.6)

What purpose has an idol, then? What is it for? This is the only question that has many answers, each depending on the one of whom the question has been asked. The world believes in idols. No one comes [to the illusory world he made] unless he worshipped them, and still attempts to seek for one that yet might offer him a gift reality does not contain. Each worshipper of idols harbors hope his special deities will give him more than other men possess. It must be more. It does not really matter more of what; more beauty, more intelligence, more wealth, or even more affliction and more pain. But more of something is an idol for. And when one fails another takes its place, with hope of finding more of something else. Be not deceived by forms the "something" takes. An idol is a means for getting more. And it is this that is against God's Will. (R22 p621 VIII.8)

Being one with everything as Christ in God was not enough for us; we wanted more than everything. And so we made a world of nothing, and wonder why we suffer.

The shift in the purpose we give to our relationships in the world helps us make the shift from the ego's dreams of idols to the forgiving dreams of the Holy Spirit.

The body does not change. It represents the larger dream that change is possible. To change is to attain a state unlike the one in which you found yourself before. There is no change in immortality, and Heaven knows it not. Yet here on earth it has a double purpose, for it can be made to teach opposing things. And they reflect the teacher who is teaching them. The body can appear to change with time, with sickness or with health, and with events that seem to alter it. Yet this but means the mind remains unchanged in its belief of what the purpose of the body is. (R23 p609-610 II.7)

The original change was from unity to separation in the secret dream of the ego's original separation from God. The Holy Spirit changes the nightmare of the ego to the happy dreams of forgiveness which facilitate our awakening from the dream completely. When given to the Holy Spirit, the body becomes the vehicle through which we learn to forgive.
How happy would your dreams become if you were not the one who gave the "proper" role to every figure which the dream contains. No one can fail but your idea of him, and there is no betrayal but of this. The core of dreams the Holy Spirit gives is never one of fear. The coverings may not appear to change, but what they mean has changed because they cover something else. Perceptions are determined by their purpose, in that they seem to be what they are for. A shadow figure who attacks becomes a brother giving you a chance to help, if this becomes the function of the dream. And dreams of sadness thus are turned to joy.

Perceptions are interpretations. As we are awakening from the dream, our perception changes, not necessarily the characters or behaviors in the dream. The purpose we assign to characters in our dream determines our perception of them. The characters remain the same, our purpose for them changes, and thus our perception and experience of them changes. With the Holy Spirit as our teacher the purpose of our whole world of special relationships is to serve as a classroom to learn forgiveness and acceptance of the Atonement. The Holy Spirit does not know or help the illusory dream figure in your dream world. The Holy Spirit helps you as the Son of God, the decision maker, the dreamer of the dream, to wake up from your nightmare and realize the truth of your Identity as Christ, the one Son of God.

Do not ask the Holy Spirit, or Jesus or God to help you as the dream figure; the ego-body. God knows nothing of dreams. It is the ego that tries desperately to bring God into its nightmare of suffering and ask Him to heal its illusory problems of the body in the world. If God were to come into your nightmare He would be a deluded dreamer just like you, and you would have no way out of your deluded dreams. Be thankful God is sane and offers you a way out of your insanity with the help of the Holy Spirit.

What is your brother for? You do not know, because your function is obscure to you. Do not ascribe a role to him that you imagine would bring happiness to you. And do not try to hurt him when he fails to take the part that you assigned to him, in what you dream your life was meant to be. He asks for help in every dream he has, and you have help to give him if you see the function of the dream as He perceives its function, who can utilize all dreams as means to serve the function given Him. Because He loves the dreamer, not the dream, each dream becomes an offering of love. For at its center is His Love for you, which lights whatever form it takes with love. (R24 p613 IV.5-6)

Nothing survives its purpose. If it be conceived to die, then die it must unless it does not take this purpose as its own. Change is the only thing that can be made a blessing here, where purpose is not fixed, however changeless it appears to be. Think not that you can set a goal unlike God's purpose for you, and establish it as changeless and eternal. You can give yourself a purpose that you do not have. But you can not remove the power to change your mind, and see another purpose there.

The ego's purpose for its world of special relationships is to maintain its special separate existence. When we choose the Holy Spirit as our Guide, the purpose of our idols is to facilitate the Atonement through forgiveness. When we choose to identify with the ego, we choose death. When we choose to identify with the Holy Spirit, we choose eternal life.

Change is the greatest gift God gave to all that you would make eternal, to ensure that only Heaven would not pass away. You were not born to die. You cannot change, because your function has been fixed by God. All other goals are set in time and change that time might be preserved, excepting one. Forgiveness does not aim at keeping time, but at its ending, when it has no use. Its purpose ended, it is gone. And where it once held seeming sway is now restored the function God established for His Son in full awareness. Time can set no end to its fulfillment nor its changelessness. There is no death because the living share the function their Creator gave to them. Life's function cannot be to die. It must be life's extension, that it be as one forever and forever, without end.

This world will bind your feet and tie your hands and kill your body only if you think that it was made to crucify God's Son. For even though it was a dream of death, you need not let it stand for this to you. Let this be changed, and nothing in the world but must be changed as well. For nothing here but is defined as what you see it for.
Everything in the world has one of two purposes; the ego's purpose is to keep us imprisoned in a body and sentenced to death; the Holy Spirit's purpose is to awaken us from the world's dream and to eternal life.

How lovely is the world whose purpose is forgiveness of God's Son! How free from fear, how filled with blessing and with happiness! And what a joyous thing it is to dwell a little while in such a happy place! Nor can it be forgot, in such a world, it is a little while till timelessness comes quietly to take the place of time.

(R25 p616 VI.3-6)

When our purpose in the world is to learn to forgive and awaken from the dream, we become happy learners, and our nightmares become happy dreams.

Do you believe that truth can be but some illusions? They are dreams because they are not true. Their equal lack of truth becomes the basis for the miracle, which means that you have understood that dreams are dreams; and that escape depends, not on the dream, but only on awaking. Could it be some dreams are kept, and others wakened from? The choice is not between which dreams to keep, but only if you want to live in dreams or to awaken from them. Thus it is the miracle does not select some dreams to leave untouched by its beneficence. You cannot dream some dreams and wake from some, for you are either sleeping or awake. And dreaming goes with only one of these. (R26 p612 IV.1)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is no hierarchy of illusions. There is no reality in dreams.

Within the dream of bodies and of death is yet one theme of truth; no more, perhaps, than just a tiny spark, a space of light created in the dark, where God still shines. You cannot wake yourself. Yet you can let yourself be wakened. You can overlook your brother's dreams. So perfectly can you forgive him his illusions he becomes your savior from your dreams. And as you see him shining in the space of light where God abides within the darkness, you will see that God Himself is where his body is. Before this light the body disappears, as heavy shadows must give way to light. (R27 p611 III.3.1-7)

Your perception of the body changes or disappears; not the physical body. Now you see your brother's body through the vision of the Holy Spirit's innocence; where before you saw him through the ego's eyes of sin and guilt.

Whom you forgive is given power to forgive you your illusions. By your gift of freedom is it given unto you. Make way for love, which you did not create, but which you can extend. On earth this means forgive your brother, that the darkness may be lifted from your mind. When light has come to him through your forgiveness, he will not forget his savior, leaving him unsaved. For it was in your face he saw the light that he would keep beside him, as he walks through darkness to the everlasting light.

(R28 p611-612 III.3.1-13; III.4-5.1-2)

How holy are you, that the Son of God can be your savior in the midst of dreams of desolation and disaster. See how eagerly he comes, and steps aside from heavy shadows that have hidden him, and shines on you in gratitude and love.

How willing are you to forgive your brother? How much do you desire peace instead of endless strife and misery and pain? These questions are the same, in different form. Forgiveness is your peace, for herein lies the end of separation and the dream of danger and destruction, sin and death; of madness and of murder, grief and loss. This is the "sacrifice" salvation asks, and gladly offers peace instead of this.

You cannot survive without conflict and fear; this is why you pretend to forgive your brothers, but refuse to forgive completely. Your brother's innocence means your guilt and your death.

Swear not to die [do not promise to die by identifying with the ego], you holy Son of God! You make a bargain that you cannot keep. The Son of Life cannot be killed. He is immortal as his Father. What he is cannot be changed. He is the only thing in all the universe that must be one. What seems eternal all will have an end. [Reference to Ecclesiastes:] The stars will disappear, and night and day will be no more. All things that come and go, the tides, the seasons and the lives of men; all things that change with time and bloom and fade will not return. Where time
has set an end is not where the eternal is. God's Son can never change by what men made of him. He will be as he was and as he is, for time appointed not his destiny, nor set the hour of his birth and death. Forgiveness will not change him. Yet time waits upon forgiveness that the things of time may disappear because they have no use. (R29 p615-616 VI.1-2)

The ego's world and linear time are the projection of sin, guilt and fear. Sin is the past. Guilt is the present. Fear is the future. As sin is forgiven, guilt and fear are dissolved; and the world and linear time are collapsed into the timeless holy instant of the real world.

It is vain to worship idols in the hope of peace. God dwells within [the mind], and your completion lies in Him. No idol takes His place. Look not to idols. Do not seek outside yourself. Let us forget the purpose of the world the past has given it. For otherwise, the future will be like the past, and but a series of depressing dreams, in which all idols fail you, one by one, and you see death and disappointment everywhere.

To change all this, and open up a road of hope and of release in what appeared to be an endless circle of despair, you need but to decide you do not know the purpose of the world. You give it goals it does not have, and thus do you decide what it is for. You try to see in it a place of idols found outside yourself, with power to make complete what is within by splitting what you are between the two. You choose your dreams, for they are what you wish, perceived as if it had been given you. Your idols do what you would have them do, and have the power you ascribe to them. And you pursue them vainly in the dream, because you want their power as your own.

Yet where are dreams but in a mind asleep? And can a dream succeed in making real the picture it projects outside itself? Save time, my brother; learn what time is for. And speed the end of idols in a world made sad and sick by seeing idols there. Your holy mind is altar unto God, and where He is no idols can abide. (R30 p618-619 VII.6.2-6; VII.7-9.1-5)

An idol cannot take the place of God. Let Him remind you of His Love for you, and do not seek to drown His Voice in chants of deep despair to idols of yourself. Seek not outside your Father for your hope. For hope of happiness is not despair. (R31 p619 VII.10.4-7)

The world is one loud, raucous shriek whose purpose is to drown out the still small Voice of the Holy Spirit who speaks softly of forgiveness and the Atonement.

What is an idol? Nothing! It must be believed before it seems to come to life, and given power that it may be feared. Its life and power are its believer's gift, and this is what the miracle restores to what has life and power worthy of the gift of Heaven and eternal peace. The miracle does not restore the truth, the light the veil between has not put out. It merely lifts the veil, and lets the truth shine unencumbered, being what it is. It does not need belief to be itself, for it has been created; so it is. (R32 p620 VIII.5)

All power to choose Heaven or hell is in the mind of the Son as the decision maker. When we choose the Holy Spirit, the Son realizes his Identity as Christ, God's one Son, and remembers His Home in Heaven. When we choose to identify with the ego, the Son becomes the son of the ego, and is imprisoned in his self-made hell, forgetting his true Home in Heaven.

There is a time when childhood should be passed and gone forever. Seek not to retain the toys of children. Put them all away, for you have need of them no more. The dream of judgment is a children's game, in which the child becomes the father, powerful, but with the little wisdom of a child. What hurts him is destroyed; what helps him, blessed. Except he judges this as does a child, who does not know what hurts and what will heal. And bad things seem to happen, and he is afraid of all the chaos in a world he thinks is governed by the laws he made. Yet is the real world unaffected by the world he thinks is real. Nor have its laws been changed because he does not understand. (R33 p623 IX.6)

Our toys are our beliefs in separation, sin, guilt, fear, judgment, hate, conflict, special relationships, the body and the entire world we made.

Forgiving dreams have little need to last. They are not made to separate the mind from what it
thinks. They do not seek to prove the dream is being dreamed by someone else. And in these dreams a melody is heard that everyone remembers, though he has not heard it since before all time began. Forgiveness, once complete, brings timelessness so close the song of Heaven can be heard, not with the ears, but with the holiness that never left the altar that abides forever deep within the Son of God. And when he hears this song again, he knows he never heard it not. And where is time, when dreams of judgment have been put away? (R34 p623-624 IX.8)

Forgiving dreams remind you that you live in safety and have not attacked yourself. So do your childish terrors melt away, and dreams become a sign that you have made a new beginning, not another try to worship idols and to keep attack. Forgiving dreams are kind to everyone who figures in the dream. And so they bring the dreamer full release from dreams of fear. He does not fear his judgment for he has judged no one, nor has sought to be released through judgment from what judgment must impose. And all the while he is remembering what he forgot, when judgment seemed to be the way to save him from its penalty. (R35 p624 IX.10)

The final passages below are a beautiful summary of this chapter.

This sacred Son of God [your brother] is like yourself; the mirror of his Father's Love for you, the soft reminder of his Father's Love by which he was created and which still abides in him as it abides in you. Be very still and hear God's Voice in him, and let It tell you what his function is. He was created that you might be whole, for only the complete can be a part of God's completion, which created you.

Forgiveness of our brother allows us to see the face of Christ in him and remember our shared Identity with God.

There is no gift the Father asks of you but that you see in all creation but the shining glory of His gift to you. Behold His Son, His perfect gift, in whom his Father shines forever, and to whom is all creation given as his own. Because he has it is it given you, and where it lies in him behold your peace. The quiet that surrounds you dwells in him, and from this quiet come the happy dreams in which your hands are joined in innocence. (R36 p614 V.4-5.1-4)

If you but knew the glorious goal that lies beyond forgiveness, you would not keep hold on any thought, however light the touch of evil on it may appear to be. For you would understand how great the cost of holding anything God did not give in minds that can direct the hand to bless, and lead God's Son unto his Father's house. Would you not want to be a friend to him, created by his Father as His home? If God esteems him worthy of Himself, would you attack him with the hands of hate? Who would lay bloody hands on Heaven itself, and hope to find its peace? Your brother thinks he holds the hand of death. Believe him not. But learn, instead, how blessed are you who can release him, just by offering him yours.

A dream is given you in which he is your savior, not your enemy in hate. A dream is given you in which you have forgiven him for all his dreams of death; a dream of hope you share with him, instead of dreaming evil separate dreams of hate. (R37 p615 V.6-7.1-2)

When dreams are shared they lose the function of attack and separation, even though it was for this that every dream was made. Yet nothing in the world of dreams remains without the hope of change and betterment, for here is not where changelessness is found. Let us be glad indeed that this is so, and seek not the eternal in this world. Forgiving dreams are means to step aside from dreaming of a world outside yourself. And leading finally beyond all dreams, unto the peace of everlasting life. (R38 p615 V.8.2-6)

End Chapter Twenty-Nine
CHAPTER THIRTY
THE NEW BEGINNING

Main Theme: The original "beginning" of the ego is the instant we believe in the original separation from God. The "new beginning" is the holy instant in which we realize our mistake and choose to identify with the Holy Spirit instead of the ego. An important theme in this chapter and throughout the Course is the power of our mind to choose.

Introduction: We begin again by looking at the Atonement. The Atonement principle is the Holy Spirit's Answer to the ego's separation principle.

Do you not understand that to oppose the Holy Spirit is to fight yourself? He tells you but your will; He speaks for you. In His Divinity is but your own. And all He knows is but your knowledge, saved for you that you may do your will through Him. God asks you do your will. He joins with you. He did not set His Kingdom up alone. (Reference I p629 II.1.1-7)

When we choose to identify with our special ego-self, we are choosing against our true Self.

God but ensured that you would never lose your will when He gave you His perfect Answer [the Holy Spirit]. Hear It now, that you may be reminded of His Love and learn your will. God would not have His Son made prisoner to what he does not want. He joins with you in willing you be free. And to oppose Him is to make a choice against yourself, and choose that you be bound. (R2 p629 II.2.6-10)

Choosing to identify with the ego has no affect on reality, but does affect our experience of ourselves as we lose awareness of God's love.

Nothing that God knows not exists. And what He knows exists forever, changelessly. For thoughts endure as long as does the mind that thought of them. And in the Mind of God there is no ending, nor a time in which His Thoughts were absent or could suffer change. Thoughts are not born and cannot die. They share the attributes of their creator, nor have they a separate life apart from his. The thoughts you think are in your mind, as you are in the Mind which thought of you. And so there are no separate parts in what exists within God's Mind. It is forever One, eternally united and at peace. (R3 p631-632 III.6)

Nothing exists separate from God. God knows nothing of an ego separate from Him because nothing separate from Him exists. God is perfect, eternal oneness.

The Thought God holds of you is perfectly unchanged by your forgetting. It will always be exactly as it was before the time when you forgot, and will be just the same when you remember. And it is the same within the interval when you forgot. (R4 p632 III.7.6-8)

Our Identity as Christ is eternally unchanged, regardless of our experience of ourselves as separate egos.

Idols are quite specific. But your will is universal, being limitless. And so it [your will] has no form, nor is content for its expression in the terms of form. Idols are limits. They are the belief that there are forms that will bring happiness, and that, by limiting, is all attained. It is as if you said, "I have no need of everything. This little thing I want, and it will be as everything to me."
(R5 p630 III.1.1-7)

Idols are anything we use to attempt to take the place of God's love and wholeness, and reinforce our separate special existence. In the original separation we chose to be a tiny little fragment of the infinite wholeness of God's Kingdom.

Behind the search for every idol lies the yearning for completion. Wholeness has no form because it is unlimited. To seek a special person or a thing to add to you to make yourself complete, can only mean that you believe some form is missing. And by finding this, you will achieve completion in a form you like. This is the purpose of an idol; that you will not look beyond it, to the source of the belief that you are incomplete. Only if you had sinned could this be so. For sin is the idea you are alone and separated off from what is whole. (R6 p631 III.3.1-7)
You will attack what does not satisfy, and thus you will not see you made it up. You always fight illusions. For the truth behind them is so lovely and so still in loving gentleness, were you aware of it you would forget defensiveness entirely, and rush to its embrace. The truth could never be attacked. And this you knew when you made idols. They were made that this might be forgotten. You attack but false ideas, and never truthful ones. All idols are the false ideas you made to fill the gap you think arose between yourself and what is true. And you attack them for the things you think they represent. What lies beyond them cannot be attacked.

The wearying, dissatisfying gods you made are blown-up children's toys. A child is frightened when a wooden head springs up as a closed box is opened suddenly, or when a soft and silent woolly bear begins to squeak as he takes hold of it.

The gap that is not there is filled with toys in countless forms. (R7 p633 IV.1-2.1-2)

What is temptation but a wish to make illusions real? It does not seem to be the wish that no reality be so. Yet it is an assertion that some forms of idols have a powerful appeal that makes them harder to resist than those you would not want to have reality. Temptation, then, is nothing more than this; a prayer the miracle touch not some dreams, but keep their unreality obscure and give to them reality instead.

Our temptation is to identify with the special separate ego rather than the Holy Spirit. As we turn to the Holy Spirit, the purpose of the world shifts from specialness to forgiveness which facilitates the Atonement.

Would God have left the meaning of the world to your interpretation? If He had, it has no meaning. For it cannot be that meaning changes constantly, and yet is true. The Holy Spirit looks upon the world as with one purpose, changelessly established. And no situation can affect its aim, but must be in accord with it.

Only a constant purpose can endow events with stable meaning. But it must accord *one* meaning to them all. If they are given different meanings, it must be that they reflect but different purposes. And this is all the meaning that they have.

(R11 p641 VII.3.1-4)

Escape from judgment simply lies in this; all things have but one purpose, which you share with all the world. And nothing in the world can be opposed to it, for it belongs to everything, as it belongs to you. In single purpose is the end of all ideas of sacrifice, which must assume a different purpose for the one who gains and him who loses. There could be no thought of sacrifice apart from this idea. And it is this idea of different goals that makes perception shift and meaning change.

(R12 p641 VII.5.1-5)

The Holy Spirit's goal gives one interpretation, meaningful to you and to your brother. Thus can you communicate with him, and he with you. In symbols that you both can understand the sacrifice of meaning is undone.

(Forgiveness and Atonement are the symbols we each can understand. We can only get home together. Forgiveness and Atonement are in the mind, and have nothing to do with behavior or communication between people in the world.

Look not to separate dreams for meaning. Only dreams of pardon [forgiveness] can be shared. They mean the same to both of you.

(R14 p642 VII.6.16-18)

The ego's purpose of the world is to form special relationships with people who can meet our needs, fulfill our desires and keep us identified with and attached to the body. The Holy Spirit's purpose of the world is to use our special relationships as a classroom to learn forgiveness and to facilitate the acceptance of the Atonement for ourselves so we will remember our true Identity as Christ in Spirit, the one Son of God.

The following section entitled "Rules for Decision" is a practical guide that is given to facilitate our choice for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego in our daily lives. Once we realize our mistake of choosing to identify with the ego, we have made the "new
beginning" in our lives, and the rules for decision help us continue on the path back Home with the Holy Spirit as our teacher.

The new beginning now becomes the focus of the curriculum. The goal is clear, but now you need specific methods for attaining it. The speed by which it can be reached depends on this one thing alone; your willingness to practice every step. Each one will help a little, every time it is attempted. And together will these steps lead you from dreams of judgment to forgiving dreams and out of pain and fear. They are not new to you, but they are more ideas than rules of thought to you as yet. So now we need to practice them awhile, until they are the rules by which you live. We seek to make them habits now, so you will have them ready for whatever need.

There are seven rules for decision that are all really only one; throughout the day we actively choose to be guided by the Holy Spirit rather than the ego.

**Rules for Decision**

Decisions are continuous. You do not always know when you are making them. But with a little practice with the ones you recognize, a set [mind set] begins to form which sees you through the rest. It is not wise to let yourself become preoccupied with every step you take. The proper set [mind set], adopted consciously each time you wake, will put you well ahead. And if you find resistance strong and dedication weak, you are not ready. *Do not fight yourself.* But think about the kind of day you want, and tell yourself there is a way in which this very day can happen just like that. Then try again to have the day you want.

**[Rules for Decision - One]**

(1) The outlook starts with this:

*Today I will make no decisions by myself* [as the ego].

This means that you are choosing not to be the judge of what to do. (R15 p625 in.1; 1.1-2.1-3)

Our first mistake is that generally we determine what our problem is and then ask God for help in resolving it. "Please help me get a job; cure my cancer; or find a partner."

This is your major problem now. You still make up your mind, and then decide to ask what you should do. (R16 p626 I.3.1-2)

**[Rules for Decision - Two]**

(2) Throughout the day, at any time you think of it and have a quiet moment for reflection, tell yourself again the kind of day you want; the feelings you would have, the things you want to happen to you, and the things you would experience, and say:

*If I make no decisions by myself, this is the day that will be given me.* (R17 p626 1.4.1-2)

But there will still be times when you have judged already. Now the answer will provoke attack, unless you quickly straighten out your mind to want an answer that will work. Be certain this has happened if you feel yourself unwilling to sit by and ask to have the answer given you. This means you have decided by yourself, and can not see the question. Now you need a quick restorative before you ask again.

**[Rules for Decision - Three]**

(3) Remember once again the day you want, and recognize that something has occurred that is not part of it. Then realize that you have asked a question by yourself, and must have set an answer in your terms. Then say:

*I have no question. I forgot what to decide.*

This cancels out the terms that you have set, and lets the answer show you what the question must have really been. Try to observe this rule without delay, despite your opposition. For you have already gotten angry. (R18 p626 1.5-7.1-2)

**[Rules for Decision - Four]**

(4) If you are so unwilling to receive you cannot even let your question go, you can begin to change your mind with this:

*At least I can decide I do not like what I feel now.*
This much is obvious, and paves the way for the next easy step.

[Rules for Decision - Five]

(5) Having decided that you do not like the way you feel, what could be easier than to continue with:

And so I hope I have been wrong.

This works against the sense of opposition, and reminds you that help is not being thrust upon you but is something that you want and that you need, because you do not like the way you feel. This tiny opening will be enough to let you go ahead with just a few more steps you need to let yourself be helped.

Now you have reached the turning point, because it has occurred to you that you will gain if what you have decided is not so. Until this point is reached, you will believe your happiness depends on being right. But this much reason have you now attained; you would be better off if you were wrong.

[Rules for Decision - Six]

(6) This tiny grain of wisdom will suffice to take you further. You are not coerced, but merely hope to get a thing you want. And you can say in perfect honesty:

I want another way to look at this.

Now you have changed your mind about the day, and have remembered what you really want. Its purpose has no longer been obscured by the insane belief you want it for the goal of being right when you are wrong. Thus is the readiness for asking brought to your awareness, for you cannot be in conflict when you ask for what you want, and see that it is this for which you ask.

[Rules for Decision - Seven]

(7) This final step is but acknowledgment of lack of opposition to be helped. It is a statement of an open mind, not certain yet, but willing to be shown:

Perhaps there is another way to look at this. What can I lose by asking? (R19 p627-628 I.8-12.1-4)

It must be clear that it is easier to have a happy day if you prevent unhappiness from entering at all. But this takes practice in the rules that will protect you from the ravages of fear. When this has been achieved, the sorry dream of judgment has forever been undone. But meanwhile, you have need for practicing the rules for its undoing. Let us, then, consider once again the very first of the decisions which are offered here.

The first rule, then, is not coercion, but a simple statement of a simple fact. You will not make decisions by yourself whatever you decide. For they are made with idols or with God. And you ask help of anti-Christ [the ego] or Christ, and which you choose will join with you and tell you what to do. (R20-R21 p628 I.13-14.6-9)

The second rule as well is but a fact. For you and your adviser [the ego or the Holy Spirit] must agree on what you want before it can occur. It is but this agreement that permits all things to happen. Nothing can be caused without some form of union, be it with a dream of judgment or the Voice for God. Decisions cause results because they are not made in isolation. They are made by you and your adviser, for yourself and for the world as well. The day you want you offer to the world, for it will be what you have asked for, and will reinforce the rule of your adviser in the world. Whose kingdom is the world for you today? What kind of day will you decide to have?

Once we choose for the Holy Spirit, the purpose of our special relationships shifts to forgiveness and Atonement; from blame, conflict, specialness and separation.

It needs but two [you join with the Holy Spirit and one brother in your mind] who would have happiness this day to promise it to all the world. It needs but two to understand that they cannot decide alone, to guarantee the joy they asked for will be wholly shared. For they have understood the basic law that makes decision powerful, and gives it all effects that it will ever have. It needs but two. These two are joined before there can be a decision. Let this be the one reminder that you keep in mind, and you will have the day you want,
and give it to the world by having it yourself. Your judgment has been lifted from the world by your decision for a happy day. And as you have received, so must you give. (R22 p628-629 I.16-17)

Look once again upon your enemy, the one you chose to hate instead of love. For thus was hatred born into the world, and thus the rule of fear established there. Now hear God speak to you, through Him Who is His Voice and yours as well, reminding you that it is not your will to hate and be a prisoner to fear, a slave to death, a little creature with a little life. Your will is boundless; it is not your will that it be bound.

(R23 p629-630 II.3.1-4)

As we see our brothers with the vision of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness, we begin to see ourselves with the vision of the Holy Spirit's forgiveness. As our brother's are forgiven we realize the reality of our oneness through forgiveness of the illusion of separation.

It never is the idol that you want. But what you think it offers you, you want indeed and have the right to ask for. Nor could it be possible it be denied. Your will to be complete is but God's Will, and this is given you by being His. God knows not form. He cannot answer you in terms that have no meaning. And your will could not be satisfied with empty forms, made but to fill a gap that is not there. It is not this you want. Creation gives no separate person and no separate thing the power to complete the Son of God. What idol can be called upon to give the Son of God what he already has? Completion is the function [acceptance of the Atonement] of God's Son. He has no need to seek for it at all. Beyond all idols stands his holy will to be but what he is. For more than whole is meaningless. (R24 p631 III.4-5.1-4)

The ego tells us we can be complete by joining with other egos outside of ourselves. The Holy Spirit tells us we can be complete by remembering our oneness with God within ourselves (in our mind).

Reality observes the laws of God, and not the rules you set. It is His laws that guarantee your safety. All illusions that you believe about yourself obey no laws. They seem to dance a little while, according to the rules you set for them. But then they fall and cannot rise again. They are but toys, my child, so do not grieve for them. Their dancing never brought you joy. But neither were they things to frighten you, nor make you safe if they obeyed your rules. They must be neither cherished nor attacked, but merely looked upon as children's toys without a single meaning of their own. See one [meaning] in them and you will see them all. See none in them and they will touch you not. (R25 p634 IV.4)

Look calmly at its toys, and understand that they are idols which but dance to vain desires. Give them not your worship, for they are not there. Yet this is equally forgotten in attack. God's Son needs no defense against his dreams. His idols do not threaten him at all. His one mistake is that he thinks them real. What can the power of illusions do?

Appearances can but deceive the mind that wants to be deceived. And you can make a simple choice that will forever place you far beyond deception. You need not concern yourself with how this will be done, for this you cannot understand. But you will understand that mighty changes have been quickly brought about, when you decide one very simple thing; you do not want whatever you believe an idol gives. For thus the Son of God declares that he is free of idols. And thus is he free. Salvation is a paradox indeed! What could it be except a happy dream? It asks you but that you forgive all things that no one ever did; to overlook what is not there, and not to look upon the unreal as reality.

(R26 p634-635 IV.5.9-15; IV.6-7.1-3)

With the help of the Holy Spirit we observe the ego in action, and learn to choose forgiveness instead of blame and guilt.

Here does the dream of separation start to fade and disappear. For here the gap that is not there begins to be perceived without the toys of terror that you made. No more than this is asked. Be glad indeed salvation asks so little, not so much. It asks for nothing in reality. And even in illusions it but asks forgiveness be the substitute for fear. Such [forgiveness] is the only rule for happy dreams. The gap is emptied of the toys of fear, and then its unreality is plain. (R27 p635 IV.8.1-8)
Anger is *never* justified. Attack has *no* foundation. It is here [in my mind's perception] escape from fear begins, and will be made complete. Here is the real world given in exchange for dreams of terror. For it is on this forgiveness rests, and is but natural. You are not asked to offer pardon where attack is due, and would be justified. For that would mean that you forgive a sin by overlooking what is really there. This is not pardon. For it would assume that, by responding in a way which is not justified, your pardon will become the answer to attack that has been made. And thus is pardon inappropriate, by being granted where it is not due. (R28 p638 VI.1)

This is the false forgiveness which the world employs to keep the sense of sin alive. And recognizing God is just, it seems impossible His pardon could be real. Thus is the fear of God the sure result of seeing pardon as unmerited. No one who sees himself as guilty can avoid the fear of God. But he is saved from this dilemma if he can forgive. (R29 p638-639 VI.4.1-5)

True forgiveness sees no sin and no separation at all.

Forgiveness recognized as merited will heal. It gives the miracle its strength to overlook illusions. This is how you learn that you must be forgiven too. There can be no appearance that can not be overlooked. For if there were, it would be necessary first there be some sin that stands beyond forgiveness. There would be an error that is more than a mistake; a special form of error that remains unchangeable, eternal, and beyond correction or escape. There would be one mistake that had the power to undo creation, and to make a world that could replace it and destroy the Will of God. (R30 p639 VI.5.1-7)

There is no sin, not even one, that cannot be forgiven; otherwise forgiveness is not complete, and you hold yourself condemned, apart from the love of God, outside the wholeness of Heaven.

It must be true the miracle can heal all forms of sickness, or it cannot heal. Its purpose cannot be to judge which forms are real, and which appearances are true. If one appearance must remain apart from healing, one illusion must be part of truth. And you could not escape all guilt, but only some of it. You must forgive God's Son entirely. Or you will keep an image of yourself that is not whole, and will remain afraid to look within and find escape from every idol there. (R31 p639 VI.7.1-6)

There is no order of difficulty in miracles. There is no hierarchy of illusions. There is no power greater than omnipotence.

Look on your brother with the willingness to see him as he is. And do not keep a part of him outside your willingness that he be healed. To heal is to make whole. And what is whole can have no missing parts that have been kept outside. Forgiveness rests on recognizing this, and being glad there cannot be some forms of sickness which the miracle must lack the power to heal.

Forgiveness is the reflection in the world of the love of God in Heaven. Forgiveness is all inclusive.

God's Son is perfect, or he cannot be God's Son. Nor will you know him, if you think he does not merit the escape from guilt in all its consequences and its forms. There is no way to think of him but this, if you would know the truth about yourself.

*I thank You, Father, for Your perfect Son, and in his glory will I see my own.*

Here is the joyful statement that there are no forms of evil that can overcome the Will of God; the glad acknowledgment that guilt has not succeeded by your wish to make illusions real. And what is this except a simple statement of the truth? (R32 p640 VI.8-9)

The reality of our identity as the Son of God is unchanged by our belief in separation, sin, guilt and our mistaken identity with an ego in a body. The miracle reminds us of the truth of who we are as Christ.

Reality is changeless. Miracles but show what you have interposed between reality and your awareness is unreal, and does not interfere at all. (R33 p643 VIII.4.1-2)

*Because* reality is changeless is a miracle already there to heal all things that change, and offer them to you to see in happy form, devoid of fear. It will be given you to look upon your brother
thus. But not while you would have it otherwise in some respects. For this but means you would not have him healed and whole. The Christ in him is perfect. Is it this that you would look upon? Then let there be no dreams about him that you would prefer to seeing this. And you will see the Christ in him because you let Him come to you. And when He has appeared to you, you will be certain you are like Him, for He is the changeless in your brother and in you. [Reference to John's First Letter]

This will you look upon when you decide there is not one appearance you would hold in place of what your brother really is. Let no temptation to prefer a dream allow uncertainty to enter here. Be not made guilty and afraid when you are tempted by a dream of what he is. But do not give it power to replace the changeless in him in your sight of him. There is no false appearance but will fade, if you request a miracle instead. There is no pain from which he is not free, if you would have him be but what he is. Why should you fear to see the Christ in him? You but behold yourself in what you see. As he is healed are you made free of guilt, for his appearance is your own to you. (R34 p643-644 VIII.5-6)

The real world is the state of mind in which the only purpose of the world is seen to be forgiveness. Fear is not its goal, for the escape from guilt becomes its aim. The value of forgiveness is perceived and takes the place of idols, which are sought no longer, for their "gifts" are not held dear. No rules are idly set, and no demands are made of anyone or anything to twist and fit into the dream of fear. Instead, there is a wish to understand all things created as they really are. And it is recognized that all things must be first forgiven, and then understood. (R35 p635 V.1)

The world becomes a place of hope, because its only purpose is to be a place where hope of happiness can be fulfilled. And no one stands outside this hope, because the world has been united in belief the purpose of the world is one which all must share, if hope be more than just a dream. Not yet is Heaven quite remembered, for the purpose of forgiveness still remains. (R36 p636 V.2.7-8;V.3.1)

The passage above refers to the world you make in your mind (the only world there is) where no one is excluded from forgiveness. It takes only one to heal the world; that one is you.

The final step is God's, because it is but God Who could create a perfect Son and share His Fatherhood with him. No one outside of Heaven knows how this can be, for understanding this is Heaven itself. Even the real world has a purpose still beneath creation and eternity. But fear is gone because its purpose is forgiveness, not idolatry. (R37 p636 V.4.1-4)

The real world is the state of mind that realizes the body and world are illusory projections of mind whose only purpose is forgiveness and Atonement which lead us beyond the world to the oneness of Heaven.

The real world is a state in which the mind has learned how easily do idols go when they are still perceived but wanted not. How willingly the mind can let them go when it has understood that idols are nothing and nowhere, and are purposeless. For only then can guilt and sin be seen without a purpose, and as meaningless.

Thus is the real world's purpose gently brought into awareness, to replace the goal of sin and guilt. And all that stood between your image of yourself and what you are, forgiveness washes joyfully away. Yet God need not create His Son again, that what is his be given back to him. The gap between your brother and yourself was never there. And what the Son of God knew in creation he must know again.

When brothers join in purpose in the world of fear, they stand already at the edge of the real world. Perhaps they still look back, and think they see an idol that they want. Yet has their path been surely set away from idols toward reality. For when they joined their hands it was Christ's hand they took, and they will look on Him Whose hand they hold. The face of Christ is looked upon before the Father is remembered. For He must be unremembered till His Son has reached beyond forgiveness to the Love of God. Yet is the Love of Christ accepted first. And then will come the knowledge They are One. (R38 p636-637 V.5.2-4;V.6-7)
An ancient hate is passing from the world. And with it goes all hatred and all fear. Look back no longer, for what lies ahead is all you ever wanted in your heart. Give up the world! But not to sacrifice. You never wanted it. (R39p637 V.9.1-6)

The "ancient hate" is the original sin of belief in separation.

Do not look back except in honesty. And when an idol tempts you, think of this:

*There never was a time an idol brought you anything except the "gift" of guilt. Not one was bought except at cost of pain, nor was it ever paid by you alone.*

Be merciful unto your brother, then. And do not choose an idol thoughtlessly, remembering that he will pay the cost as well as you. For he will be delayed when you look back, and you will not perceive Whose loving hand you hold. Look forward, then; in confidence walk with a happy heart that beats in hope and does not pound in fear.

The Will of God forever lies in those whose hands are joined. Until they joined, they thought He was their enemy. But when they joined and shared a purpose, they were free to learn their will is one. And thus the Will of God must reach to their awareness. Nor can they forget for long that it is but their own. (R40 p637-638 V.10-11)

And we close with this beautiful summary.

The Thoughts of God are far beyond all change, and shine forever. They await not birth. They wait for welcome and remembering. The Thought God holds of you is like a star, unchangeable in an eternal sky. So high in Heaven is it set that those outside of Heaven know not it is there. Yet still and white and lovely will it shine through all eternity. There was no time it was not there; no instant when its light grew dimmer or less perfect ever was.

Who knows the Father knows this light, for He is the eternal sky that holds it safe, forever lifted up and anchored sure. Its perfect purity does not depend on whether it is seen on earth or not. The sky embraces it and softly holds it in its perfect place, which is as far from earth as earth from Heaven. It is not the distance nor the time that keeps this star invisible to earth. But those who seek for idols cannot know the star is there.

Beyond all idols is the Thought God holds of you. Completely unaffected by the turmoil and the terror of the world, the dreams of birth and death that here are dreamed, the myriad of forms that fear can take; quite undisturbed, the Thought God holds of you remains exactly as it always was. Surrounded by a stillness so complete no sound of battle comes remotely near, it rests in certainty and perfect peace. Here is your one reality kept safe, completely unaware of all the world that worships idols, and that knows not God. In perfect sureness of its changelessness and of its rest in its eternal home, the Thought God holds of you has never left the Mind of its Creator Whom it knows, as its Creator knows that it is there.

Where could the Thought God holds of you exist but where you are? Is your reality a thing apart from you, and in a world which your reality knows nothing of? Outside you there is no eternal sky, no changeless star and no reality. The mind of Heaven's Son in Heaven is, for there the Mind of Father and of Son joined in creation which can have no end. You have not two realities, but one. Nor can you be aware of more than one. An idol or the Thought God holds of you is your reality. Forget not, then, that idols must keep hidden what you are, not from the Mind of God, but from your own. The star shines still; the sky has never changed. But you, the holy Son of God Himself, are unaware of your reality. (R41 p632-633 III.8-11)

End Chapter Thirty
CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE
THE FINAL VISION

Main Theme: This final chapter brings together all the major themes of the Course. The predominant theme is of our choosing to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and identify with Him.

Introduction: At the end of the Text are the words, "The journey closes, ending at the place where it began." The journey began in the one insane moment when we believed we separated from God and joined with the ego. In Chapter Thirty we saw that the New Beginning is when we realize our mistake in identifying with the ego and we choose again for the Holy Spirit instead. The journey begins and ends in the mind of the Son of God as the decision maker. It begins when we choose to identify with the ego, and culminates in the making of the body and world. Through the miracle we return to the decision making part of our mind and choose irrevocably for the Holy Spirit.

We start again by looking at the Atonement principle which states that we are never separate from the love of God; we are eternally His one Son in Spirit — Christ.

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Is this a little Voice [the Holy Spirit], so small and still It cannot rise above the senseless noise of sounds that have no meaning? God willed not His Son forget Him. And the power of His Will is in the Voice that speaks for Him. (Ref 1 p646 I.6.1-3)

The ego's strategy is to keep us identified with the body and distracted by the world so we will not get back to the decision making part of our mind where we will choose for the Holy Spirit which means the end of the ego. That is the ego's terror. The first part of the ego's strategy is the secret dream of separation from God in the mind. The secret dream of separation is the original sin which evokes guilt and fear of God's revenge. The second part of the ego's strategy is the world's dream in which it makes the body and world, and then projects its sin and guilt onto others in the world in order to maintain its own face of innocence in the eyes of God, the world and itself.

You never hate your brother for his sins, but only for your own. Whatever form his sins appear to take, it but obscures the fact that you believe them to be yours, and therefore meriting a "just" attack. Why should his sins be sins, if you did not believe they could not be forgiven in you? Why are they real in him, if you did not believe that they are your reality? And why do you attack them everywhere except you hate yourself? Are you a sin? You answer "yes" whenever you attack, for by attack do you assert that you are guilty, and must give as you deserve. (R2 p651 III.1.5-6;III.2.1-5)

To retain our face of innocence we project our sin and guilt onto other people in the world we made, and blame them for what we secretly believe we have done to God. In fact, we made other people and the world as a dumping ground for our secret sin and guilt.

[From the ego's point of view:] Sins are in bodies. They are not perceived in minds. They are not seen as purposes, but actions. Bodies act, and minds do not. And therefore must the body be at fault for what it does. It is not seen to be a passive thing, obeying your commands, and doing nothing of itself at all. If you are sin you are a body, for the mind acts not. And purpose must be in the body, not the mind. The body must act on its own, and motivate itself. If you are sin you lock the mind within the body, and you give its purpose to its prison house, which acts instead of it. A jailer does not follow orders, but enforces orders on the prisoner.

Yet is the body prisoner, and not the mind. The body thinks no thoughts. It has no power to learn, to pardon, nor enslave. It gives no orders that the mind need serve, nor sets conditions that it must obey. It holds in prison but the willing mind that would abide in it. It sickens at the bidding of the mind that would become its prisoner. And it grows old and dies, because that mind is sick within itself. Learning is all that causes change. And so the body, where no learning can occur, could never change unless the mind preferred the body change in its appearances, to suit the purpose given by the mind. For mind can learn, and there is all change made.
The mind that thinks it is a sin has but one purpose; that the body be the source of sin, to keep it in the prison house it chose and guards and holds itself at bay, a sleeping prisoner to the snarling dogs of hate and evil, sickness and attack; of pain and age, of grief and suffering. Here are the thoughts of sacrifice preserved, for here guilt rules, and orders that the world be like itself; a place where nothing can find mercy, nor survive the ravages of fear except in murder and in death. For here are you made sin, and sin cannot abide the joyous and the free, for they are enemies which sin must kill. In death is sin preserved, and those who think that they are sin must die for what they think they are. (R3 p652 III.3-5)

Wholeness and salvation are in the mind only. The ego wants to keep us out of the mind, identified with the body and world to maintain the ego's separate special existence.

There is a tendency to think the world can offer consolation and escape from problems that its purpose is to keep. Why should this be? Because it is a place where choice among illusions seems to be the only choice. And you are in control of outcomes of your choosing. Thus you think, within the narrow band from birth to death, a little time is given you to use for you alone; a time when everyone conflicts with you, but you can choose which road will lead you out of conflict, and away from difficulties that concern you not. (R4 p653 IV.1.1-5)

When we are identified with the body we see the world as the source of peace, love and salvation; and we live our lives struggling to control and manipulate other people and our external life situation. But we made the world to keep us burdened with conflict, fear and bondage; it cannot give us peace, love or happiness.

Real choice is no illusion. But the world has none to offer. All its roads but lead to disappointment, nothingness and death. There is no choice in its alternatives. Seek not escape from problems here. The world was made that problems could not be escaped. Be not deceived by all the different names its roads are given. They have but one end. And each is but the means to gain that end, for it is here that all its roads will lead, however differently they seem to start; however differently they seem to go. (R5 p653 IV.2.1-9)

In the world we made, all roads to happiness lead to suffering and death.

The ego convinces us we have separated from God, which was a sin demanding punishment. It makes a world and projects its sin and guilt onto the world to maintain its separate existence and its face of innocence; and that is the purpose of the world you made.

The learning of the world is built upon a concept of the self adjusted to the world's reality. It fits it well. For this an image is that suits a world of shadows and illusions. Here it walks at home, where what it sees is one with it. The building of a concept of the self is what the learning of the world is for. This is its purpose; that you come without a self, and make one as you go along. (R6 p656 V.1.1-6)

In our eyes the special separate self we made is a glorious, innocent victim of a sinful, guilty world.

It [the ego-self] is an idol, made to take the place of your reality as Son of God. The concept of the self the world would teach is not the thing that it appears to be. For it is made to serve two purposes, but one of which the mind can recognize. The first presents the face of innocence, the aspect acted on. It is this face that smiles and charms and even seems to love. It searches for companions and it looks, at times with pity, on the suffering, and sometimes offers solace. It believes that it is good within an evil world. (R7 p656 V.2.3-9)

The first face is the face of innocence. I am an innocent victim of a sinful world. Behind the face of innocence is its true face which is its true purpose; to make somebody else the guilty sinner deserving punishment, not me.

Beneath the face of innocence there is a lesson that the concept of the self was made to teach. It is a lesson in a terrible displacement, and a fear so devastating that the face that smiles above it must forever look away, lest it perceive the treachery it hides. The lesson teaches this: "I am the thing you
made of me, and as you look on me, you stand condemned because of what I am." (R8 p656 V.5.1-3)

We love playing the victim because it proves we are innocent and the world is sinful and guilty. As a victim we maintain our special selfish murderous self, and blame everybody else for it.

If you can be hurt by anything, you see a picture of your secret wishes. Nothing more than this. And in your suffering of any kind you see your own concealed desire to kill. (R9 p659 V.15.8-9)

Our original sin was the murder of God so we could have our own special separate existence apart from Him. We denied and buried the sin and guilt by making a world and projecting it onto everybody else so we could maintain our claim to innocence, and walk the world with the face of an innocent victim.

On this conception of the self the world smiles with approval, for it guarantees the pathways of the world are safely kept, and those who walk on them will not escape. Here is the central lesson that ensures your brother is condemned eternally. For what you are has now become his sin. For this is no forgiveness possible. No longer does it matter what he does, for your accusing finger points to him, unwavering and deadly in its aim. It points to you as well, but this is kept still deeper in the mists below the face of innocence. (R10 p656-657 V.5.4;V.6.1-5)

Our two faces are concepts of ourselves in the mind: one of innocence, the other of hidden sin and guilt.

Concepts are learned. They are not natural. Apart from learning they do not exist. They are not given, so they must be made. Not one of them is true, and many come from feverish imaginations, hot with hatred and distortions born of fear. What is a concept but a thought to which its maker gives a meaning of his own? Concepts maintain the world. But they can not be used to demonstrate the world is real. For all of them are made within the world, born in its shadow, growing in its ways and finally "maturing" in its thought. They are ideas of idols, painted with the brushes of the world, which cannot make a single picture representing truth. (R14 p665 VII.12.1-5)

A concept of the self is meaningless, for no one here can see what it is for, and therefore cannot picture what it is. Yet is all learning that the world directs begun and ended with the single aim of teaching you this concept of yourself, that you will choose to follow this world's laws, and never seek to go beyond its roads nor realize the way you see yourself. (R11 p657 V.7-8.1-2)

The concept of yourself that now you hold would guarantee your function here remain forever unaccomplished and undone. And thus it dooms you to a bitter sense of deep depression and futility. (R12 p663 VII.6.1-2)

Defending your ego-self is never ending, exhausting and fruitless; no wonder we get anxious and depressed; until we choose again.

The concept of the self stands like a shield, a silent barricade before the truth, and hides it from your sight. All things you see are images, because you look on them as through a barrier that dims your sight and warps your vision, so that you behold nothing with clarity. The light is kept from everything you see. At most, you glimpse a shadow of what lies beyond. At least, you merely look on darkness, and perceive the terrified imaginings that come from guilty thoughts and concepts born of fear. And what you see is hell, for fear is hell. (R13 p663-664 VII.7.1-6)

You made the face of innocence to cover your face of sin and guilt. You made your world of special relationships to defend against the wholeness of God's love in Heaven.

Whatever form temptation seems to take, it always but reflects a wish to be a self that you are not. And from that wish a concept rises, teaching that you are the thing you wish to be. It will remain your concept of yourself until the wish that fathered it no longer is held dear. But while you cherish it, you will behold your brother in the likeness of the self whose image has the wish begot of you. For seeing can but represent a wish, because it has no power to create. (R14 p665 VII.12.1-5)

And now we turn to the heart of this chapter which is the power of our mind to learn and choose. Learning is really the unlearning of what the ego taught us.
about who we are. Who we are as Christ is not learned, but remembered when we unlearn who we are not.

Learning is change. Salvation does not seek to use a means as yet too alien to your thinking to be helpful, nor to make the kinds of change you could not recognize. Concepts are needed while perception lasts, and changing concepts is salvation's task. For it must deal in contrasts, not in truth, which has no opposite and cannot change. In this world's concepts are the guilty "bad"; the "good" are innocent. And no one here but holds a concept of himself in which he counts the "good" to pardon him the "bad." Nor does he trust the "good" in anyone, believing that the "bad" must lurk behind. This concept emphasizes treachery, and trust becomes impossible. Nor could it change while you perceive the "bad" in you. You could not recognize your "evil" thoughts as long as you see value in attack. You will perceive them sometimes, but will not see them as meaningless. (R15 p662 VII.1-2.1-2)

We love evil doers in the world, because without them we would have to face the evil within ourselves, and realize it does not exist. Without evil, sin and guilt, the ego is killed dead on the spot. We would rather kill the evil doers in the world, than have our special separate ego-self be dissolved. We will not kill all the evil doers in the world, because we put them in the world so we can "live." We made the world as a projection of the evil we believe is in us. Without evil you will be melted in the eternal love of God.

You cannot give yourself your innocence, for you are too confused about yourself. But should one brother dawn upon your sight as wholly worthy of forgiveness, then your concept of yourself is wholly changed. (R16 p662 VII.2.4-5)

Forgiveness of your brother forgives the sin in you, and dissolves the ego-self which cannot live without evil, sin and guilt. That is why you would rather kill the evil doers than forgive them. Without an evil enemy, you are dead. Evil doers are your savior and your salvation; and you love to hate them so!

How simple is salvation! All it says is what was never true is not true now, and never will be. The impossible has not occurred, and can have no effects. And that is all. Can this be hard to learn by anyone who wants it to be true? Only unwillingness to learn it could make such an easy lesson difficult. How hard is it to see that what is false can not be true, and what is true can not be false? You can no longer say that you perceive no differences in false and true. You have been told exactly how to tell one from the other, and just what to do if you become confused. Why, then, do you persist in learning not such simple things? There is a reason. But confuse it not with difficulty in the simple things salvation asks you learn. (R17 p645 1.1-2.1-2)

You do not want to learn what this Course is teaching because you will have to face your hidden belief in sin and guilt which are based on the illusion of separation from God. The separation from God never happened which means your special separate identity never happened. "You," the special separate ego-self, do not exist; why would you learn a Course that strips off the veil of your special, illusory self? Learning the ego's complex and distorted thought system was a tremendous accomplishment of a powerful mind. Your mind made the world and the whole universe. You will learn exactly what you want to learn.

What you have taught yourself is such a giant learning feat it is indeed incredible. But you accomplished it because you wanted to, and did not pause in diligence to judge it hard to learn or too complex to grasp.

No one who understands what you have learned, how carefully you learned it, and the pains to which you went to practice and repeat the lessons endlessly, in every form you could conceive of them, could ever doubt the power of your learning skill. There is no greater power in the world. The world was made by it, and even now depends on nothing else. The lessons you have taught yourself have been so over-learned and fixed they rise like heavy curtains to obscure the simple and the obvious. Say not you cannot learn them. For your power to learn is strong enough to teach you that your will is not your own, your thoughts do not belong to you, and even you are someone else.

Who could maintain that lessons such as these are easy? Yet you have learned more than this. You
have continued, taking every step, however difficult, without complaint, until a world was built that suited you. And every lesson that makes up the world arises from the first accomplishment of learning; an enormity so great the Holy Spirit's Voice seems small and still before its magnitude. The world began with one strange lesson, powerful enough to render God forgotten, and His Son an alien to himself, in exile from the home where God Himself established him. You who have taught yourself the Son of God is guilty, say not that you cannot learn the simple things salvation teaches you!

Learning is an ability you made and gave yourself. It was not made to do the Will of God, but to uphold a wish that it could be opposed, and that a will apart from it was yet more real than it. And this has learning sought to demonstrate, and you have learned what it was made to teach.

(R18 p645-646 I.2.7-8; I.3-5.1-3)

The reason you are not learning what this Course teaches (in this form or another) is that you do not want to learn it.

And now we turn to the "You" who is your Self as the Son of God, and is referred to as the decision maker or the dreamer who makes your ego-self, the body and the world. The Son of God as the decision maker is the "You" to whom the whole Course is addressed; the "You" who chooses the ego or the Holy Spirit.

Who is, then, the "you" who made it [your face of innocence]? Yet who was it that did the choosing first? ...someone must have first decided on the one to choose, and let the other go. Something must have gone before these concepts of the self. And something must have done the learning which gave rise to them.

(R19-R20ABCp658-659V.10.4; V.12.6-7; V.13.2-3)

It is the Son of God as the decision maker who chooses between the ego's guilt and the Holy Spirit's innocence. Your world arises out of the choice you make: the illusory world of separation, sin and guilt; or the real world of wholeness, forgiveness and innocence.

The lessons to be learned are only two. Each has its outcome in a different world. And each world follows surely from its source. The certain outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guilty is the world you see. It is a world of terror and despair. Nor is there hope of happiness in it. There is no plan for safety you can make that ever will succeed. There is no joy that you can seek for here and hope to find. Yet this is not the only outcome which your learning can produce. However much you may have over-learned your chosen task, the lesson that reflects the Love of God is stronger still. And you will learn God's Son is innocent, and see another world.

Your world is your state of mind. In the state of forgiveness and innocence, your world is the real world. In the state of sin and guilt, your world is the illusory world.

The outcome of the lesson that God's Son is guiltless is a world in which there is no fear, and everything is lit with hope and sparkles with a gentle friendliness. Nothing but calls to you in soft appeal to be your friend, and let it join with you. And never does a call remain unheard, misunderstood, nor left unanswered in the selfsame tongue in which the call was made. And you will understand it was this call that everyone and everything within the world has always made, but you had not perceived it as it was. And now you see you were mistaken. You had been deceived by forms the call was hidden in. And so you did not hear it, and had lost a friend who always wanted to be part of you. The soft eternal calling of each part of God's creation to the whole is heard throughout the world this second lesson brings. (R21 p646-647 I.7-6)

Every one in the world is either expressing love or calling for love. Expressions of hate are really expressions of the fear of loss of the special separate ego-self, which is ultimately a desperate call for the wholeness and love of God. Some people express fear in socially acceptable ways; others in socially unacceptable ways. But all of us are either expressing love or calling for love.

What is temptation but a wish to make the wrong decision on what you would learn, and have an outcome that you do not want? (R22 p647 I.11.1)
Notes on the Text of *A Course in Miracles*

The temptation is to believe the ego's story that peace, love and happiness are to be gained through maintaining our separate existence.

There is no choice where every end is sure. Perhaps you would prefer to try them all, before you really learn they are but one. The roads this world can offer seem to be quite large in number, but the time must come when everyone begins to see how like they are to one another. (R23 p653 IV.3.1-3)

All roads to love and peace in the world lead to death. For love and peace we must go to the source of the world which is our own mind; where we can choose again.

All must reach this point, and go beyond it. It is true indeed there is no choice at all within the world. But this is not the lesson in itself. The lesson has a purpose, and in this you come to understand what it is for. Why would you seek to try another road, another person or another place, when you have learned the way the lesson starts, but do not yet perceive what it is for? Its purpose is the answer to the search that all must undertake who still believe there is another answer to be found. Learn now, without despair, there is no hope of answer in the world. But do not judge the lesson that is but begun with this. Seek not another signpost in the world that seems to point to still another road. No longer look for hope where there is none. Make fast your learning now, and understand you but waste time unless you go beyond what you have learned to what is yet to learn. For from this lowest point will learning lead to heights of happiness, in which you see the purpose of the lesson shining clear, and perfectly within your learning grasp. (R24 p654 IV.3.7-10;IV.4)

The purpose of the world is to learn there is no separate world apart from the mind.

For while he sees a choice where there is none, what power of decision can he use? The great release of power must begin with learning where it really has a use. And what decision has power if it be applied in situations without choice? (R25 p654 IV.5.3-5)

Our choices in the world are between hell and hell. Heaven is only found through forgiveness and acceptance of the Atonement in the mind.

To you who seem to find this course to be too difficult to learn, let me repeat that to achieve a goal you must proceed in its direction, not away from it. And every road that leads the other way will not advance the purpose to be found. If this be difficult to understand, then is this course impossible to learn. But only then. For otherwise, it is a simple teaching in the obvious.

There is a choice that you have power to make when you have seen the real alternatives. Until that point is reached you have no choice, and you can but decide how you would choose the better to deceive yourself again. This course attempts to teach no more than that the power of decision cannot lie in choosing different forms of what is still the same illusion and the same mistake. All choices in the world depend on this; you choose between your brother and yourself, and you will gain as much as he will lose, and what you lose is what is given him. How utterly opposed to truth is this, when all the lesson's purpose is to teach that what your brother loses you have lost, and what he gains is what is given you. (R26 p654-655 IV.7.3-7;IV.8)

You see the flesh or recognize the spirit. There is no compromise between the two. If one is real the other must be false, for what is real denies its opposite. There is no choice in vision but this one. What you decide in this determines all you see and think is real and hold as true. On this one choice does all your world depend, for here have you established what you are, as flesh or spirit in your own belief. (R27 p660 VI.1.1-6)

If you choose to see the body, you behold a world of separation, unrelated things, and happenings that make no sense at all. This one appears and disappears in death; that one is doomed to suffering and loss. (R28 p660 VI.2.2-3)

Salvation is undoing of all this. (R29 p660 VI.2.6)

 Salvation undoes the identification with the ego and body, and facilitates the realization of our true Identity as Christ in Spirit.
Salvation does not ask that you behold the spirit and perceive the body not. It merely asks that this should be your choice. For you can see the body without help, but do not understand how to behold a world apart from it. It is your world salvation will undo, and let you see another world your eyes could never find. Be not concerned how this could ever be. You do not understand how what you see arose to meet your sight. For if you did, it would be gone. The veil of ignorance is drawn across the evil and the good, and must be passed that both may disappear, so that perception finds no hiding place.

How is this done? It is not done at all. What could there be within the universe that God created that must still be done? (R30 p661 VI.3)

Forgiveness facilitates salvation as it undoes the projection of sin and guilt, and leads us back to the decision making part of our mind where we can choose for the Holy Spirit rather than the ego. God does not do anything. Jesus does not do anything. The Holy Spirit does not do anything. They are symbols that represent love, wholeness, eternal life and truth in our mind so we can choose for Them rather than the ego.

Be vigilant against temptation, then, remembering that it is but a wish, insane and meaningless, to make yourself a thing that you are not. And think as well upon the thing that you would be instead. It is a thing of madness, pain and death; a thing of treachery and black despair, of failing dreams and no remaining hope except to die, and end the dream of fear. This is temptation; nothing more than this. Can this be difficult to choose against? Consider what temptation is, and see the real alternatives you choose between. There are but two. Be not deceived by what appears as many choices. There is hell or Heaven, and of these you choose but one. (R31 p665 VII.14)

Temptation has one lesson it would teach, in all its forms, wherever it occurs. It would persuade the holy Son of God he is a body, born in what must die, unable to escape its frailty, and bound by what it orders him to feel. It sets the limits on what he can do; its power is the only strength he has; his grasp cannot exceed its tiny reach. Would you be this, if Christ appeared to you in all His glory, asking you but this:

Choose once again if you would take your place among the saviors of the world, or would remain in hell, and hold your brothers there.

For He has come, and He is asking this. How do you make the choice? How easily is this explained! You always choose between your weakness and the strength of Christ in you. (R32 p666 VIII.1-2.1-3)

Trials are but lessons that you failed to learn presented once again, so where you made a faulty choice before you now can make a better one, and thus escape all pain that what you chose before has brought to you. In every difficulty, all distress, and each perplexity Christ calls to you and gently says, "My brother, choose again."

(R33 p666 VIII.3.1-2)

Be never fearful of temptation, then, but see it as it is; another chance to choose again, and let Christ's strength prevail in every circumstance and every place you raised an image of yourself before. For what appears to hide the face of Christ is powerless before His majesty, and disappears before His holy sight. (R34 p667 VIII.4.2-3)

Every time you choose the selfishness of the ego and suffer, it is an opportunity to choose again for the Holy Spirit, wholeness, forgiveness and healing. This is how we practice and benefit from this Course.

Learn, then, the happy habit of response to all temptation to perceive yourself as weak and miserable with these words:

_I am as God created me. His Son can suffer nothing. And I am His Son._

Thus is Christ's strength invited to prevail, replacing all your weakness with the strength that comes from God and that can never fail. And thus are miracles as natural as fear and agony appeared to be before the choice for holiness was made. For in that choice are false distinctions gone, illusory alternatives laid by, and nothing left to interfere with truth.

You are as God created you, and so is every living thing you look upon, regardless of the images you see. What you behold as sickness and as pain, as
weakness and as suffering and loss, is but
temptation to perceive yourself defenseless and in
hell. Yield not to this, and you will see all pain, in
every form, wherever it occurs, but disappear as
mists before the sun. A miracle has come to heal
God's Son, and close the door upon his dreams of
weakness, opening the way to his salvation and
release. Choose once again what you would have
him be, remembering that every choice you make
establishes your own identity as you will see it and
believe it is. (R35 p667 VIII.5-6)

Awakening from the ego's nightmare happens over
time; otherwise the fear of loss of identity, the
"death" of your ego-self, would be too great to bear.
Our nightmares first turn to the happy dreams of
forgiveness as the ego-self is unlearned.

Now must the Holy Spirit find a way to help you
see this concept of the self must be undone, if any
peace of mind is to be given you. Nor can it be
unlearned except by lessons aimed to teach that
you are something else. For otherwise, you would
be asked to make exchange of what you now
believe for total loss of self, and greater terror
would arise in you. Thus are the Holy Spirit's
lesson plans arranged in easy steps, that though
there be some lack of ease at times and some
distress, there is no shattering of what was
learned, but just a re-translation of what seems to
be the evidence on its behalf.
(R36 p657-658 V.8.3-5;V.9.1)

The concept of the self has always been the great
preoccupation of the world. And everyone
believes that he must find the answer to the riddle
of himself. Salvation can be seen as nothing more
than the escape from concepts. It does not
concern itself with content of the mind, but with
the simple statement that it thinks. And what can
think has choice, and can be shown that different
thoughts have different consequence. So it can
learn that everything it thinks reflects the deep
confusion that it feels about how it was made and
what it is. And vaguely does the concept of the self
appear to answer what it does not know.

Seek not your Self in symbols. There can be no
concept that can stand for what you are. What
matters it which concept you accept while you
perceive a self that interacts with evil, and reacts
to wicked things? Your concept of yourself will
still remain quite meaningless. And you will not
perceive that you can interact but with yourself.
(R37 p659 V.14-15.1-5)

The learning and unlearning of the conceptual ego-
self is a process that happens over time. The truth of
who you are cannot be learned, as you are eternally
one with God, but can be blocked from your
awareness by the conceptual ego-self. Salvation is
from the conceptual ego-self you made.

You will make many concepts of the self as
learning goes along. Each one will show the
changes in your own relationships, as your
perception of yourself is changed. There will be
some confusion every time there is a shift, but be
you thankful that the learning of the world is
loosening its grasp upon your mind.
(R38 p659 V.16.1-3)

The world can teach no images of you unless you
want to learn them. There will come a time when
images have all gone by, and you will see you
know not what you are. It is to this unsealed and
open mind that truth returns, unhindered and
unbound. Where concepts of the self have been
laid by is truth revealed exactly as it is. When
every concept has been raised to doubt and
question, and been recognized as made on no
assumptions that would stand the light, then is the
truth left free to enter in its sanctuary, clean and
free of guilt. There is no statement that the world
is more afraid to hear than this:

I do not know the thing I am, and therefore do not
know what I am doing, where I am, or how to look
upon the world or on myself.

Yet in this learning is salvation born. And What
you are will tell you of Itself. (R39 p660 V.17)

The fundamental concept from which the whole
universe arises is: "I am a separate individual self
apart from God and apart from the world." That is
the concept that must be unlearned so the truth of
who we are can reveal Itself to a free and open mind.

Let us be still an instant, and forget all things we
ever learned, all thoughts we had, and every
preconception that we hold of what things mean
and what their purpose is. Let us remember not
our own ideas of what the world is for. We do not
know. Let every image held of everyone be loosened from our minds and swept away.

Be innocent of judgment, unaware of any thoughts of evil or of good that ever crossed your mind of anyone. Now do you know him not. But you are free to learn of him, and learn of him anew. Now is he born again to you, and you are born again to him, without the past that sentenced him to die, and you with him. Now he is free to live as you are free, because an ancient learning passed away, and left a place for truth to be reborn. (R40 p648 I.12-13)

The "ancient learning" is the belief in the original separation from God. By unlearning this original, ancient idea, we are born again to the truth of our Identity with Christ in Spirit. Forgiveness facilitates the unlearning of the ancient learning of separation. As we hear in our brothers either an expression of love or a call for love, we see the face of Christ in him, and remember our Identity with God.

But if he [your brother] calls for death or calls for life, for hate or for forgiveness and for help, is not the same in outcome. Hear the one, and you are separate from him and are lost. But hear the other, and you join with him and in your answer is salvation found. The voice you hear in him is but your own. What does he ask you for? And listen well! For he is asking what will come to you, because you see an image of yourself and hear your voice requesting what you want.

Before you answer, pause to think of this:

The answer that I give my brother is what I am asking for. And what I learn of him is what I learn about myself.

Then let us wait an instant and be still, forgetting everything we thought we heard; remembering how much we do not know. (R41 p649 II.5.8-14;II.6.1-4)

Be still and listen. Think not ancient thoughts. Forget the dismal lessons that you learned about this Son of God who calls to you. (R42 p650 II.7.2-4)

Be very still an instant. Come without all thought of what you ever learned before, and put aside all images you made. The old will fall away before the new without your opposition or intent. (R43 p650 II.8.1-3)

Forgive your brother all appearances, that are but ancient lessons you have taught yourself about the sinfulness in you. Hear but his call for mercy and release from all the fearful images he holds of what he is and of what you must be. (R44 p650 II.9.1-2)

Thus it is a way you go together, not alone. And in this choice is learning's outcome changed, for Christ has been reborn to both of you. An instant spent without your old ideas of who your great companion is and what he should be asking for, will be enough to let this happen. And you will perceive his purpose is the same as yours. He asks for what you want, and needs the same as you. It takes, perhaps, a different form in him, but it is not the form you answer to. He asks and you receive, for you have come with but one purpose; that you learn you love your brother with a brother's love. And as a brother, must his Father be the same as yours, as he is like yourself in truth. (R45 p651 II.9.6-7;II.10)

Behold your role within the universe! To every part of true creation has the Lord of Love and life entrusted all salvation from the misery of hell. And to each one has He allowed the grace to be a savior to the holy ones especially entrusted to his care. And this he learns when first he looks upon one brother as he looks upon himself, and sees the mirror of himself in him. Thus is the concept of himself laid by, for nothing stands between his sight and what he looks upon, to judge what he beholds. And in this single vision does he see the face of Christ, and understands he looks on everyone as he beholds this one. For there is light where darkness was before, and now the veil is lifted from his sight.

The veil across the face of Christ, the fear of God and of salvation, and the love of guilt and death, they all are different names for just one error; that there is a space between you and your brother, kept apart by an illusion of yourself that holds him off from you, and you away from him. (R46 p664 VII.8-9.1)
As one brother is forgiven with the vision of Christ, the whole Sonship is forgiven along with you. Forgiveness of one is forgiveness of all with absolutely no exceptions. If even one is guilty, all are guilty including you.

What is temptation but the wish to stay in hell and misery? And what could this give rise to but an image of yourself that can be miserable, and remain in hell and torment? Who has learned to see his brother not as this has saved himself, and thus is he a savior to the rest. To everyone has God entrusted all, because a partial savior would be one who is but partly saved. The holy ones whom God has given you to save are but everyone you meet or look upon, not knowing who they are; all those you saw an instant and forgot, and those you knew a long while since, and those you will yet meet; the unremembered and the not yet born. For God has given you His Son to save from every concept that he ever held. (R47 p664 VII.10)

This is the savior's vision; that he see his innocence in all he looks upon, and see his own salvation everywhere. He holds no concept of himself between his calm and open eyes and what he sees. He brings the light to what he looks upon, that he may see it as it really is. (R48 p665 VII.11.5-7)

The savior's vision is as innocent of what your brother is as it is free of any judgment made upon yourself. It sees no past in anyone at all. And thus it serves a wholly open mind, unclouded by old concepts, and prepared to look on only what the present holds. It cannot judge because it does not know. And recognizing this, it merely asks, "What is the meaning of what I behold?" Then is the answer given. And the door held open for the face of Christ to shine upon the one who asks, in innocence, to see beyond the veil of old ideas and ancient concepts held so long and dear against the vision of the Christ in you. (R49 p665 VII.13)

Can you to whom God says, "Release My Son!" be tempted not to listen, when you learn that it is you for whom He asks release? And what but this is what this course would teach? And what but this is there for you to learn? (R50 p666 VII.15.5-7)

And now we turn to Jesus' grand finale written in the first person.

Deny me not the little gift I ask, when in exchange I lay before your feet the peace of God, and power to bring this peace to everyone who wanders in the world uncertain, lonely, and in constant fear. For it is given you to join with him, and through the Christ in you unveil his eyes, and let him look upon the Christ in him.

My brothers in salvation, do not fail to hear my voice and listen to my words. I ask for nothing but your own release. There is no place for hell within a world whose loveliness can yet be so intense and so inclusive it is but a step from there to Heaven. To your tired eyes I bring a vision of a different world, so new and clean and fresh you will forget the pain and sorrow that you saw before. Yet this a vision is which you must share with everyone you see, for otherwise you will behold it not. To give this gift is how to make it yours. And God ordained, in loving kindness, that it be for you.

Let us be glad that we can walk the world, and find so many chances to perceive another situation where God's gift can once again be recognized as ours! And thus will all the vestiges of hell, the secret sins and hidden hates be gone. And all the loveliness which they concealed appear like lawns of Heaven to our sight, to lift us high above the thorny roads we travelled on before the Christ appeared. Hear me, my brothers, hear and join with me. God has ordained I cannot call in vain, and in His certainty I rest content. For you will hear, and you will choose again. And in this choice is everyone made free.

I thank You, Father, for these holy ones who are my brothers as they are Your Sons. My faith in them is Yours. I am as sure that they will come to me as You are sure of what they are, and will forever be. They will accept the gift I offer them, because You gave it me on their behalf. And as I would but do Your holy Will, so will they choose. And I give thanks for them. Salvation's song will echo through the world with every choice they make. For we are one in purpose, and the end of hell is near.
In joyous welcome is my hand outstretched to every brother who would join with me in reaching past temptation, and who looks with fixed determination toward the light that shines beyond in perfect constancy. Give me my own, for they belong to You. And can You fail in what is but Your Will? I give You thanks for what my brothers are. And as each one elects to join with me, the song of thanks from earth to Heaven grows from tiny scattered threads of melody to one inclusive chorus from a world redeemed from hell, and giving thanks to You.

And now we say "Amen." For Christ has come to dwell in the abode You set for Him before time was, in calm eternity. The journey closes, ending at the place where it began. No trace of it remains. Not one illusion is accorded faith, and not one spot of darkness still remains to hide the face of Christ from anyone. Thy Will is done, complete and perfectly, and all creation recognizes You, and knows You as the only Source it has. Clear in Your likeness does the light shine forth from everything that lives and moves in You. For we have reached where all of us are one, and we are home, where You would have us be. (R51 p667-669 VIII.7-12)