

THE FINAL VISION

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A COURSE IN MIRACLES
CHAPTER 31

INTRODUCTION

This is a course in miracles. It is a required course. Only the time you take it is voluntary. Free will does not mean that you can establish the curriculum. It means only that you can elect what you want to take at a given time. The course does not aim at teaching the meaning of love, for that is beyond what can be taught. It does aim, however, at removing the blocks to the awareness of love's presence, which is your natural inheritance. The opposite of love is fear, but what is all-encompassing can have no opposite.

This course can therefore be summed up very simply in this way:

***Nothing real can be threatened.
Nothing unreal exists.***

Herein lies the peace of God.

THE FINAL VISION

The Simplicity of Salvation

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. It teaches but the very obvious. It merely goes from one apparent lesson to the next, in easy steps that lead you gently from one to another, with no strain at all. This cannot be confusing, yet you are confused. For somehow you believe that what is totally confused is easier to learn and understand. 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 overlearned 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. Now does your ancient overlearning stand implacable before the Voice of truth, and teach you that Its lessons are not true; too hard to learn, too

difficult to see, and too opposed to what is really true. Yet you will learn them, for their learning is the only purpose for your learning skill the Holy Spirit sees in all the world. His simple lessons in forgiveness have a power mightier than yours, because they call from God and from your Self to you.

Is this a little Voice, 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. Which lesson will you learn? What outcome is inevitable, sure as God, and far beyond all doubt and question? Can it be your little learning, strange in outcome and incredible in difficulty will withstand the simple lessons being taught to you in every moment of each day, since time began and learning had been made?

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 overlearned 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.

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.

There is no living thing that does not share the universal Will that it be whole, and that you do not leave its call unheard. Without your answer is it left to die, as it is saved from death when you have heard its calling as the ancient call to life, and understood that it is but your own. The Christ in you remembers God with all the certainty with which He knows His Love. But only if His Son is innocent can He be Love. For God were fear indeed if he whom He created innocent could be a slave to guilt. God's perfect Son remembers his creation. But in guilt he has forgotten what he really is.

The fear of God results as surely from the lesson that His Son is guilty as God's Love must be remembered when he learns his innocence. For hate must father fear, and look upon its father as itself. How wrong are you who fail to hear the call that echoes past each seeming call to death, that sings behind each murderous attack and pleads that love restore the dying world. You do not understand Who calls to you beyond each form of hate; each call to war. Yet you will recognize Him as you give Him answer in the language that He calls. He will appear when you have answered Him, and you will know in Him that God is 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? It is the recognition that it is a state of mind unwanted that becomes the means whereby the choice is reassessed; another outcome seen to be preferred. You are deceived if you believe you want disaster and disunity and pain. Hear not the call for this within yourself. But listen, rather, to the deeper call beyond it that appeals for peace and joy. And all the world will give you joy and peace. For as you hear, you answer. And behold! Your answer is the proof of what you learned. Its outcome is the world you look upon.

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 is he free to live as you are free, because an ancient learning passed away, and left a place for truth to be reborn.

Walking with Christ

An ancient lesson is not overcome by the opposing of the new and old. It is not vanquished that the truth be known, nor fought against to lose to truth's appeal. There is no battle that must be prepared; no time to be expended, and no plans that need be laid for bringing in the new. There *is* an ancient battle being waged against the truth, but truth does not respond. Who

could be hurt in such a war, unless he hurts himself? He has no enemy in truth. And can he be assailed by dreams?

Let us review again what seems to stand between you and the truth of what you are. For there are steps in its relinquishment. The first is a decision that you make. But afterwards, the truth is given you. You would establish truth. And by your wish you set two choices to be made, each time you think you must decide on anything. Neither is true. Nor are they different. Yet must we see them both, before you can look past them to the one alternative that *is* a different choice. But not in dreams you made, that this might be obscured to you.

What you would choose between is not a choice and gives but the illusion it is free, for it will have one outcome either way. Thus is it really not a choice at all. The leader and the follower emerge as separate roles, each seeming to possess advantages you would not want to lose. So in their fusion there appears to be the hope of satisfaction and of peace. You see yourself divided into both these roles, forever split between the two. And every friend or enemy becomes a means to help you save yourself from this.

Perhaps you call it love. Perhaps you think that it is murder justified at last. You hate the one you gave the leader's role when you would have it, and you hate as well his not assuming it at times you want to let the follower in you arise, and give away the role of leadership. And this is what you made your brother for, and learned to think that this his purpose is. Unless he serves it, he has not fulfilled the function that was given him by you. And thus he merits death, because he has no purpose and no usefulness to you.

And what of him? What does he want of you? What could he want, but what you want of him? Herein is life as easily as death, for what you choose you choose as well for him. Two calls you make to him, as he to you. Between these two *is* choice, because from them there is a different outcome. If he be the leader or the follower to you it matters not, for you have chosen death. But if he 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. This brother neither leads nor follows us, but walks beside us on the selfsame road. He is like us, as near or far away from what we want as we will let him be. We make no gains he does not make with us, and we fall back if he does not advance. Take not his hand in anger but in love, for in his progress do you count your own. And we go separately along the way unless you keep him safely by your side.

Because he is your equal in God's Love, you will be saved from all appearances and answer to the Christ Who calls to you. Be still and listen. Think not ancient thoughts. Forget the dismal

lessons that you learned about this Son of God who calls to you. Christ calls to all with equal tenderness, seeing no leaders and no followers, and hearing but one answer to them all. Because He hears one Voice, He cannot hear a different answer from the one He gave when God appointed Him His only Son.

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. There will be no attack upon the things you thought were precious and in need of care. There will be no assault upon your wish to hear a call that never has been made. Nothing will hurt you in this holy place, to which you come to listen silently and learn the truth of what you really want. No more than this will you be asked to learn. But as you hear it, you will understand you need but come away without the thoughts you did not want, and that were never true.

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. He is afraid to walk with you, and thinks perhaps a bit behind, a bit ahead would be a safer place for him to be. Can you make progress if you think the same, advancing only when he would step back, and falling back when he would go ahead? For so do you forget the journey's goal, which is but to decide to walk with him, so neither leads nor follows. 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.

Together is your joint inheritance remembered and accepted by you both. Alone it is denied to both of you. Is it not clear that while you still insist on leading or on following, you think you walk alone, with no one by your side? This is the road to nowhere, for the light cannot be given while you walk alone, and so you cannot see which way you go. And thus there is confusion, and a sense of endless doubting as you stagger back and forward in the darkness and alone. Yet these are but appearances of what the journey is, and how it must be made. For next to you is One Who holds the light before you, so that every step is made in certainty and sureness of the road. A blindfold can indeed obscure your sight, but cannot make the way itself grow dark. And He Who travels with you *has* the light.

The Self-Accused

Only the self-accused condemn. As you prepare to make a choice that will result in different outcomes, there is first one thing that must be overlearned. It must become a habit of response so typical of everything you do that it becomes your first response to all temptation, and to every situation that occurs. Learn this, and learn it well, for it is here delay of happiness is shortened by a span of time you cannot realize. 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. And what can you deserve but what you are? If you did not believe that you deserved attack, it never would occur to you to give attack to anyone at all. Why should you? What would be the gain to you? What could the outcome be that you would want? And how could murder bring you benefit?

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.

Let us be glad that you will see what you believe, and that it has been given you to change what you believe. The body will but follow. It can never lead you where you would not be. It does not guard your sleep, nor interfere with your awakening. Release your body from imprisonment, and you will see no one as prisoner to what you have escaped. You will not want to hold in guilt your chosen enemies, nor keep in chains, to the illusion of a changing love, the ones you think are friends.

The innocent release in gratitude for their release. And what they see upholds their freedom from imprisonment and death. Open your mind to change, and there will be no ancient penalty exacted from your brother or yourself. For God has said there *is* no sacrifice that can be asked; there *is* no sacrifice that can be made.

The Real Alternative

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. Yet they *are* your concern. How, then, can you escape from them by leaving them behind? What must go with you, you will take with you whatever road you choose to walk along.

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. Their end is certain, for there is no choice among them. All of them will lead to death. On some you travel gaily for a while, before the bleakness enters. And on some the thorns are felt at once. The choice is not what will the ending be, but when it comes.

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. Men have died on seeing this,

because they saw no way except the pathways offered by the world. And learning they led nowhere, lost their hope. And yet this was the time they could have learned their greatest lesson. 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.

Who would be willing to be turned away from all the roadways of the world, unless he understood their real futility? Is it not needful that he should begin with this, to seek another way instead? 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?

The learning that the world can offer but one choice, no matter what its form may be, is the beginning of acceptance that

there is a real alternative instead. To fight against this step is to defeat your purpose here. You did not come to learn to find a road the world does not contain. The search for different pathways in the world is but the search for different forms of truth. And this would *keep* the truth from being reached.

Think not that happiness is ever found by following a road away from it. This makes no sense, and cannot be the way. 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*.

He has not left His Thoughts! But you forgot His Presence and remembered not His Love. No pathway in the world can lead to Him, nor any worldly goal be one with His. What road in all the world will lead within, when every road was made to separate the journey from the purpose it must have unless it be but futile wandering? All roads that lead away from what you

are will lead you to confusion and despair. Yet has He never left His Thoughts to die, without their Source forever in themselves.

He has not left His Thoughts! He could no more depart from them than they could keep Him out. In unity with Him do they abide, and in their oneness Both are kept complete. There is no road that leads away from Him. A journey from yourself does not exist. How foolish and insane it is to think that there could be a road with such an aim! Where could it go? And how could you be made to travel on it, walking there without your own reality at one with you?

Forgive yourself your madness, and forget all senseless journeys and all goal-less aims. They have no meaning. You can not escape from what you are. For God is merciful, and did not let His Son abandon Him. For what He is be thankful, for in that is your escape from madness and from death. Nowhere but where He is can you be found. There *is* no path that does not lead to Him.

Self-Concept versus Self

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. And by the time you reach "maturity" you have perfected it, to meet the world on equal terms, at one with its demands.

A concept of the self is made by you. It bears no likeness to yourself at all. It 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.

This aspect can grow angry, for the world is wicked and unable to provide the love and shelter innocence deserves. And so this face is often wet with tears at the injustices the world accords to those who would be generous and good. This aspect never makes the first attack. But every day a hundred little things make small assaults upon its innocence, provoking it to irritation, and at last to open insult and abuse.

The face of innocence the concept of the self so proudly wears can tolerate attack in self-defense, for is it not a well-known fact the world deals harshly with defenseless innocence? No one who makes a picture of himself omits this face, for he has need of it. The other side he does not want to see. Yet it is here the learning of the world has set its sights, for it is here the world's "reality" is set, to see to it the idol lasts.

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." 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. And in these shrouded vaults are all his sins and yours preserved and kept in darkness, where they cannot be perceived as errors, which the light would surely show. You can be neither blamed for what you are, nor can you change the things it makes you do. Your brother then is symbol of your sins to you who are but silently, and yet with ceaseless urgency, condemning still your brother for the hated thing you are.

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.

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. 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. Let us consider, then, what proof there is that you are what your brother made of you. For even though you do not yet perceive that this is what you think, you surely learned by now that you behave as if it were. Does he react for you? And does he know exactly what would happen? Can he see your future and ordain, before it comes, what you should do in every circumstance? He must have made the world as well as you to have such prescience in the things to come.

That you are what your brother made of you seems most unlikely. Even if he did, who gave the face of innocence to you? Is this your contribution? Who is, then, the "you" who made it? And who is deceived by all your goodness, and attacks it so? Let us forget the concept's foolishness, and merely think of this; there are two parts to what you think yourself to be. If one were generated by your brother, who was there to make the other? And from whom must something be kept hidden? If the world be evil, there is still no need to hide what you are made of. Who is there to see? And what but is attacked could need defense?

Perhaps the reason why this concept must be kept in darkness is that, in the light, the one who would not think it true is you. And what would happen to the world you see, if all

its underpinnings were removed? Your concept of the world depends upon this concept of the self. And both would go, if either one were ever raised to doubt. The Holy Spirit does not seek to throw you into panic. So He merely asks if just a little question might be raised.

There are alternatives about the thing that you must be. You might, for instance, be the thing you chose to have your brother be. This shifts the concept of the self from what is wholly passive, and at least makes way for active choice, and some acknowledgment that interaction must have entered in. There is some understanding that you chose for both of you, and what he represents has meaning that was given it by you. It also shows some glimmering of sight into perception's law that what you see reflects the state of the perceiver's mind. Yet who was it that did the choosing first? If you are what you chose your brother be, alternatives were there to choose among, and someone must have first decided on the one to choose, and let the other go.

Although this step has gains, it does not yet approach a basic question. Something must have gone before these concepts of the self. And something must have done the learning which gave rise to them. Nor can this be explained by either view. The main advantage of the shifting to the second from the first is that you somehow entered in the choice by your decision. But this gain is paid in almost equal loss, for now you stand accused of guilt for what your brother is. And you must share his guilt, because you chose it for him in the image of your own. While only he was treacherous before, now must you be condemned along with him.

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. To see a guilty world is but the sign your learning has been guided by the world, and you behold it as you see yourself. The concept of the self embraces all you look upon, and nothing is outside of this perception. 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.

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. And be you sure and happy in the confidence that it will go at last, and leave your mind at peace. The role of the accuser will appear in many places and in many forms. And each will seem to be accusing you. Yet have no fear it will not be undone.

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.

Recognizing the Spirit

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. If you choose flesh, you never will escape the body as your own reality, for you have chosen that you want it so. But choose the spirit, and all Heaven bends to touch your eyes and bless your holy sight, that you may see the world of flesh no more except to heal and comfort and to bless.

Salvation is undoing. 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. And no one is exactly as he was an instant previous, nor will he be the same as he is now an instant hence. Who could have trust where so much change is seen, for who is worthy if he be but dust? Salvation is undoing of all this. For constancy arises in the sight of those whose eyes salvation has released from looking at the cost of keeping guilt, because they chose to let it go instead.

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?

Only in arrogance could you conceive that you must make the way to Heaven plain. The means are given you by which to see the world that will replace the one you made. Your will be done! In Heaven as on earth this is forever true. It matters not where you believe you are, nor what you think the truth about yourself must really be. It makes no difference what you look upon, nor what you choose to feel or think or wish. For God Himself has said, "Your will be done." And it is done to you accordingly.

You who believe that you can choose to see the Son of God as you would have him be, forget not that no concept of yourself will stand against the truth of what you are. Undoing truth

would be impossible. But concepts are not difficult to change. One vision, clearly seen, that does not fit the picture as it was perceived before will change the world for eyes that learn to see, because the concept of the self has changed.

Are you invulnerable? Then the world is harmless in your sight. Do you forgive? Then is the world forgiving, for you have forgiven it its trespasses, and so it looks on you with eyes that see as yours. Are you a body? So is all the world perceived as treacherous, and out to kill. Are you a spirit, deathless, and without the promise of corruption and the stain of sin upon you? So the world is seen as stable, fully worthy of your trust; a happy place to rest in for a while, where nothing need be feared, but only loved. Who is unwelcome to the kind in heart? And what could hurt the truly innocent?

Your will be done, you holy child of God. It does not matter if you think you are in earth or Heaven. What your Father wills of you can never change. The truth in you remains as radiant as a star, as pure as light, as innocent as love itself. And you *are* worthy that your will be done!

The Savior's Vision

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. And so they come in fearful form, with content still concealed, to shake your sorry concept of yourself and blacken it with still another “crime.” 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. Your “evil” thoughts have been forgiven with his, because you let them all affect you not. No longer do you choose that you should be the sign of evil and of guilt in him. And as you give your trust to what is good in him, you give it to the good in you.

In terms of concepts, it is thus you see him more than just a body, for the good is never what the body seems to be. The actions of the body are perceived as coming from the “baser” part of you, and thus of him as well. By focusing upon the good in him, the body grows decreasingly persistent in your sight, and will at length be seen as little more than just a shadow circling round the good. And this will be your concept of yourself, when you have reached the world beyond the sight your eyes alone can offer you to see. For you will not interpret what you see without the Aid That God has given you. And in His sight there *is* another world.

You live in that world just as much as this. For both are concepts of yourself, which can be interchanged but never jointly held. The contrast is far greater than you think, for you will love this concept of yourself, because it was not made for you alone. Born as a gift for someone not perceived to be yourself, it has

been given you. For your forgiveness, offered unto him, has been accepted now for both of you.

Have faith in him who walks with you, so that your fearful concept of yourself may change. And look upon the good in him, that you may not be frightened by your "evil" thoughts because they do not cloud your view of him. And all this shift requires is that you be willing that this happy change occur. No more than this is asked. On its behalf, remember what the concept of yourself that now you hold has brought you in its wake, and welcome the glad contrast offered you. Hold out your hand, that you may have the gift of kind forgiveness which you offer one whose need for it is just the same as yours. And let the cruel concept of yourself be changed to one that brings the peace of God.

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. Yet it need not be fixed, unless you choose to hold it past the hope of change and keep it static and concealed within your mind. Give it instead to Him Who understands the changes that it needs to let it serve the function given you to bring you peace, that you may offer peace to have it yours. Alternatives are in your mind to use, and you can see yourself another way. Would you not rather look upon yourself as needed for salvation of the world, instead of as salvation's enemy?

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. All that is given you is for release; the sight, the vision and the inner Guide all lead you out of hell with those you love beside you, and the universe with them.

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. The sword of judgment is the weapon that you give to the illusion of yourself, that it may fight to keep the space that holds your brother off unoccupied by love. Yet while you hold this sword, you must perceive the body as yourself, for you are bound to separation from the sight of him who holds the mirror to another view of what he is, and thus what you must be.

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.

Yet while you wish to stay in hell, how could you be the savior of the Son of God? How would you know his holiness while you see him apart from yours? For holiness is seen through holy eyes that look upon the innocence within, and thus expect to see it everywhere. And so they call it forth in everyone they look upon, that he may be what they expect of him. 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.

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. Yet it can look with love or look with hate, depending only on the simple choice of whether you would join with what you see, or keep yourself apart and separate.

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.

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.

Let not the world's light, given unto you, be hidden from the world. It needs the light, for it is dark indeed, and men despair because the savior's vision is withheld and what they see is death. Their savior stands, unknowing and unknown, beholding them with eyes unopened. And they cannot see until he looks on them with seeing eyes, and offers them forgiveness with his own. 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?

Choose Once Again

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. And what you choose is what you think is real. Simply by never using weakness to direct your actions, you have given it no power. And the light of Christ in you is given charge of everything you do. For you have brought your weakness unto Him, and He has given you His strength instead.

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." He would not leave one source of pain unhealed, nor any image left to veil the truth. He would remove all misery from you whom God created altar unto joy. He would not leave you comfortless, alone in dreams of hell, but would release your mind from everything that hides His face from you. His holiness is yours because He is the only Power that is real in

you. His strength is yours because He is the Self That God created as His only Son.

The images you make cannot prevail against what God Himself would have you be. 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. The saviors of the world, who see like Him, are merely those who choose His strength instead of their own weakness, seen apart from Him. They will redeem the world, for they are joined in all the power of the Will of God. And what they will is only what He wills.

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.

Jesus speaks:

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.

~ The Beginning ~

EPILOGUE

Forget not once this journey is begun the end is certain. Doubt along the way will come and go and go to come again. Yet is the ending sure. No one can fail to do what God appointed him to do. When you forget, remember that you walk with Him and with His Word upon your heart. Who could despair when Hope like this is his? Illusions of despair may seem to come, but learn how not to be deceived by them. Behind each one there is reality and there is God. Why would you wait for this and trade it for illusions, when His Love is but an instant farther on the road where all illusions end? The end *is* sure and guaranteed by God. Who stands before a lifeless image when a step away the Holy of the Holies opens up an ancient door that leads beyond the world?

You *are* a stranger here. But you belong to Him Who loves you as He loves Himself. Ask but my help to roll the stone away, and it is done according to His Will. We *have* begun the journey. Long ago the end was written in the stars and set into the Heavens with a shining Ray that held it safe within eternity and through all time as well. And holds it still; unchanged, unchanging and unchangeable.

Be not afraid. We only start again an ancient journey long ago begun that but seems new. We have begun again upon a road we travelled on before and lost our way a little while. And now we try again.

EPILOGUE

Our new beginning has the certainty the journey lacked till now. Look up and see His Word among the stars, where He has set your name along with His. Look up and find your certain destiny the world would hide but God would have you see.

Let us wait here in silence, and kneel down an instant in our gratitude to Him Who called to us and helped us hear His Call. And then let us arise and go in faith along the way to Him. Now we are sure we do not walk alone. For God is here, and with Him all our brothers. Now we know that we will never lose the way again. The song begins again which had been stopped only an instant, though it seems to be unsung forever. What is here begun will grow in life and strength and hope, until the world is still an instant and forgets all that the dream of sin had made of it.

Let us go out and meet the newborn world, knowing that Christ has been reborn in it, and that the holiness of this rebirth will last forever. We had lost our way but He has found it for us. Let us go and bid Him welcome Who returns to us to celebrate salvation and the end of all we thought we made. The morning star of this new day looks on a different world where God is welcomed and His Son with Him. We who complete Him offer thanks to Him, as He gives thanks to us. The Son is still, and in the quiet God has given him enters his home and is at peace at last.

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