

Study Guide and Commentary ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 14, Section II

The Happy Learner

Legend:

blue text = Material from ACIM 3rd edition (FIP)
bold blue text = words emphasized in all caps in Urtext
red text = alternate or omitted material from the Urtext
light blue text = editorial comments
~~striketrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition

This section is basically a continuation of the previous section, discussing our resistance to the truth and the work of the Holy Spirit to teach us.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹The Holy Spirit needs a happy learner, in whom His mission can be happily accomplished. ²You who are steadfastly devoted to misery **must** first recognize that you **are** miserable and **not** happy. ³The Holy Spirit cannot teach **without** this contrast, for you believe that misery is happiness. ⁴This has so confused you that you have undertaken to learn to do what you can **never** do [see T-14.I.4:5-7], believing that **unless** you learn it you will **not** be happy. ⁵You do **not** realize that the foundation on which this most peculiar learning goal depends means **absolutely nothing**. ⁶Yet it may still make sense to you [**This does make sense to you**]. ⁷Have faith in nothing and you will **find** the “treasure” that you seek. ⁸Yet you will add another burden to your **already** burdened mind [**or you would not have sought another**]. ⁹You will believe that **nothing is of value**, and will **value** it. ¹⁰A little piece of glass, a speck of dust, a body or a war are one to you. ¹¹For 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.

• Study Question •

1. *What does it mean to say that you have pursued misery and nothing?*

The concept of “The Happy Learner” is a fascinating one. If you consider that the lesson we are learning is one of complete happiness, it makes sense that learning the lesson should involve being happy (1:1). A happy learner would be one who is “content with healing” (T-13.VIII.7:1), comfortable with being imperfect while being in the process of learning. Having a miserable time learning to be happy does not make any sense. Being unhappy is a clear indication that we are not getting the lesson.

Paradoxically, however, the preliminary step in *becoming* a happy learner is to “first recognize that you are miserable” (1:2). Although this may seem like an odd way to begin, and perhaps seeming in contradiction to being a happy learner, it isn't so strange. How can we hear and accept instruction in being happy if we do not realize we need it? If we think we *are* happy already, we won't bother listening to the Holy Spirit when He teaches us how to be happy. And that is our situation: We are mistaken about what comprises happiness (1:3). Identifying with the ego, we have come to believe that happiness lies in self-reliance, attacking others, and total independence, and we are devoted to achieving that impossible end, not recognizing that this is a devotion to misery (1:2,4).

If you glance back over the Introduction and Section I, the rather vague references here to the ego's learning goal (“what you can never do,” “this most peculiar learning goal”) become fairly clear; Jesus has referred to the same thing in a number of different ways before (Int.1:6–7; I.1:2–4; I.3:8; I.4:6; I.5:1) and is assuming here that we know what he is talking about (the ego's goal of autonomy); he has even referred to its foundation before (I.5:3 compared with II.1:5), which is, as you may recall, the premise that we are self-creating, or that we can fundamentally corrupt and change God's creation, an idea that is essential to give reality to the notion of sin.

Jesus says all this is sheer nonsense, but we may not think so yet (1:5–6). Sin may seem very real to us, along with the sense of separation from God that it generates. All that keeps that notion alive is our belief in it, and as long as we continue to believe in sin's reality we will experience what seem to be the effects of its existence (1:7); we will find pain and punishment because we are looking for them.

A potent side-effect of our belief in sin and guilt is that the physical world will appear to us as the final reality, and the only possible source of happiness, a mistaken view that can only increase our misery (1:8–9). Our value system, therefore, has become totally skewed; we no longer recognize true value or the lack of it (1:10–11). We have actually convinced ourselves of the ridiculous idea that we can “learn how to make the untrue true”(1:11). We think we can make our independence from God real, sustainable, and permanent, when in fact it does not even exist!

The first job of the Holy Spirit, therefore, is to make us aware of just how messed up our thinking is, so that we will seek and accept His offer of a replacement. We must come to realize that the ego's way of thinking does not lead to happiness but leads, instead, with deadly certainty, to abject misery.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹The Holy Spirit, **seeing** where you are but **knowing** you are elsewhere, begins His lesson in simplicity with the fundamental teaching that **truth is true**. ²This is the hardest lesson you will ever learn, and in the end the **only** one. ³Simplicity is very difficult for twisted minds. ⁴Consider 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. ⁵Nothing is so alien to you as the simple truth, and nothing are you

less inclined to listen to. ⁶The contrast between what is true and what is not is **perfectly** apparent, yet you do **not** see it. ⁷The 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.

• **Study Question** •

2. *What are these things you have woven out of nothing? (1:4).*

If the ego is attempting to convince us that we can make something untrue into something true, the Holy Spirit's lesson is the simple negation of that: "Truth is true"(2:1). That self-evident statement is the height of tautology, of course. Everyone knows that; right? Wrong! Learning the absolute and unvarying reality of that simple statement "is the hardest lesson you will ever learn, and in the end the only one" (2:2). The whole thrust of what the ego is doing is a denial of that simple and obvious truth. The ego is trying to make real our separation from God, which does not exist. The ego is trying to prove that it is our true self, but it is nothing but the mind's mistaken belief about itself. God created truth, and truth is all there is. The Holy Spirit *sees* our insane confusion of identity, but He *knows* the truth (2:1).

We may think we believe what the Holy Spirit teaches, but our minds are firmly entrenched in living by the opposite, living by the ego. Our minds, says Jesus, are "twisted"(a marvelously evocative word, hinting at distortion, perversity, and abnormality), and the very convolutedness of the ego's thought system is what makes the simplicity of the Holy Spirit seem so suspect to us (2:3). The words here are worth memorizing: "Simplicity is very difficult for twisted minds."

He asks us to "consider all the distortions you have made of nothing"(2:4). We should spend a few minutes doing just that. What does he mean by this? What is it he wants to call to our attention? First, let's remember that the "nothing" he refers to is our belief that the human mind can override and replace God's creation. What have we made out of that idea? He mentions four categories of things (2:4):

1. *Forms*. These would include, surely, our bodies, also the world and all creatures in it, sickness, wars, and every form of disaster.
2. *Feelings*. These include sorrow, loss, jealousy, lust, loneliness, envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness, and above all fear.
3. *Actions*. Clearly, this would include every action we have ever taken, or that anyone has taken that is based on fear or a belief in scarcity or a sense of competition.
4. *Reactions*. This would include all our responses to what we believe to be attack directed at us by others.

When our entire life is examined, we will see how much of it is motivated by and founded on the ego's illusory foundation. Our minds have been programmed by the ego so thoroughly that truth runs off our minds like water off a duck's back (2:5).

I once heard a Christian missionary speaking about trying to bring the message of God's Love to a stone-age tribe of Indians in South America. He was making the very point this passage in the Course is making: Our minds are programmed against the truth. He said that when he began to speak about God's Love to these Indians, they responded with something like, "Yes, our Father, the sun, shines His warmth on us every day and helps our crops to grow."

"I'm not speaking about the sun," the missionary said. "I'm speaking about God, Who created all living things."

"Yes," said the Indians, "our Father, the sun, is the source of all life."

It was as though there were an invisible grid in the minds of those Indians, and every time the missionary referred to God, they "sorted" that concept into the slot labeled "the sun." They thought they understood what the missionary said, but their preconceptions were completely distorting it to fit into their existing thought system. That same kind of mental filtering and refocusing goes on continually, and the ego uses it to block out the truth. The truth is "simple and obvious," according to the Course (2:6-7), but not to us.

The final illustration is a powerful one. Jesus compares us to seriously deluded people, the kind we normally put in asylums, who have convinced themselves they are "kings with golden crowns"(2:7) whereas they are powerless, penniless paupers. That, in effect, is what we are doing with our ego illusions. We are fabricating an identity from nothing, and the identity we have made does not, in reality, exist at all. When someone is in the grips of a deep-seated delusion, all evidence that contradicts the illusion is overlooked, rejected, or reinterpreted to agree with the delusion. That is the battle faced by the Holy Spirit in teaching us; He is dealing with people who have been brainwashed by their egos to the point that they don't recognize the truth when it stares them in the face.

Paragraph 3

3. ¹All this the Holy Spirit sees, and teaches, simply, that **all this is not true**. ²To those unhappy learners who would teach themselves nothing, and delude themselves into believing that it is **not** nothing, the Holy Spirit says, with steadfast quietness:

*³The truth is true. ⁴Nothing else matters, nothing else is real, and **everything** beside it is not there. ⁵Let Me make the one distinction **for** you that you **cannot** make, but **need** to learn. ⁶Your faith in nothing **is** deceiving you. ⁷Offer your faith to Me, and I will place it gently in the holy place where it belongs. ⁸You will find **no** deception there, but only the simple truth. ⁹And you will love it because you will **understand** it.*

• Study Question •

3. *The Holy Spirit helps us distinguish the truth from nothing. What is meant here by "the truth"?*

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Our mental blockage is perfectly apparent to the Holy Spirit, but it does not faze Him in the slightest. No matter how thoroughly we have convinced ourselves

that we are immune to the truth, we cannot convince Him (3:1). His message, which is the Course's message as well, is that "the truth is true"(3:3). As we pointed out in discussing T-11.VIII.1:1-3, this is like saying "Water is wet" or "Ice is ice-cold." But that section also pointed out that, as obvious as this message may be and as much as we may think we already know it, we do not know it. The ego is not true, but we believe in it. Nothing that was not created by God is real, but we believe in many things He didn't create. The reason this is the Course's main message is that we really, really *need* this message.

We may acknowledge the truth of God and Heaven, but we attribute great importance to many things besides. That is one manifestation of our great mistake (3:4). To the Course, all that matters are our eternal relationships with God and one another. All that matters is the realm of spirit. The body and the world don't *really* exist; they are fabrications of thought and nothing more than that, no more real than the figures on a movie screen.

We just can't tell what's real from what's not, but the Holy Spirit can, and He offers to help us to do so, if we will trust Him (3:5-7). To try, on our own, to "see the Christ" in people or to see the eternal reality that lies behind all appearances, is extremely frustrating. We can't do it. But with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can. It takes a conscious offering of our minds to Him (or to God), setting aside what we think we know and asking to be shown the truth as He sees it.

I like the line about the truth given here: "You will love it because you will understand it"(3:9). When we see the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit, it is incredibly lovely. It is not just truth about something beautiful; it is beautiful in its very essence, like the beauty of a musical masterpiece or an elegant mathematical proof. Nothing satisfies and pleases the mind like the truth.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹Like you, the Holy Spirit did **not** make truth. ²Like God, He **knows** it to be true. ³He brings the **light** of truth into the darkness, and **lets** it shine on you. ⁴And 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. ⁵They 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. ⁶The heavy chains that **seem** to bind them to despair they do **not** see as nothing, until **you** bring the light **to** them. ⁷And **then** they see the chains have disappeared, and so they *must* have been nothing. ⁸And **you** will see it **with** them. ⁹**Because** you taught them gladness and release, they will become **your** teachers in release and gladness.

• Study Question •

4. *Why do your brothers see more in you than you see in yourself?*

This paragraph sketches a process: The Holy Spirit brings light into your mind. This light then shines through you, releasing your brothers from bondage and thus proving that what bound them was really nothing. The power of their release is so great that they realize it must come from God, and thus, they see you

as a conduit of God's power—a more elevated view of you than the one you typically hold of yourself.

I've always loved the idea that other people can “see in you more than you see” (4:4). Have you ever experienced that: Someone who sees something more in you than you have believed was there? Someone who sees you as stronger or more capable than you think you are? Have you noticed, when that occurs, how that elevated perception of you by the other person can often draw out of you the very qualities you had overlooked or doubted? The Course returns to this kind of idea over and over.¹ It accords with the constant emphasis on the way that what we give to others—in this case, our gift of seeing our brothers in the light and releasing them from guilt—returns to us.

Nothing is more potent a teacher of guiltlessness than giving the gift of forgiveness to a brother and watching his liberation. We learn our own forgiveness by forgiving others (4:9). Often, when I have been feeling down and discouraged, my spirits are lifted by contact with someone who has been helped by something I have said or done, or written. If they can be so touched and so freed from fear or guilt by something that came from me, there must be something good and holy in me.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹When you teach **anyone** that truth is true, **you learn it with him**.
²And so you learn that what seemed hardest was the easiest. ³Learn to be a happy learner [happy learners]. ⁴You will **never** learn how to make nothing everything. ⁵Yet see that this **has been** your goal, and **recognize** how foolish it has been. ⁶Be glad it is undone, for when you look at it in simple honesty, it is undone. ⁷I said before, “Be not content with nothing” [T-12.VIII.6:1], for you **have** believed that nothing **could** content you. ⁸*It is not so.*

• Study Question •

5. *Please speculate, what is this “nothing” the section keeps talking about, and how have you tried to make it content you?*

As with everything the Course talks about, the way we learn to be happy learners is by giving release to others, who become happy learners of the lesson that “truth is true.” We learn the same lessons we teach. It's true in the practical sense as well as the spiritual sense. The first time I attended a national convention of a certain computer group, I was amazed at the diversity of the sessions that were presented. It was information overload. At the end of the week of meetings, I attended a planning session for the next convention. The chairman asked for suggestions for session topics, and I raised my hand to make a

¹ "Charity is a way of looking at another as if he had already gone far beyond his actual accomplishments in time" (T-2.V.10:1).

² "Does pain seem real in the perception? If it does, be sure the lesson is not learned. And there remains an unforgiveness hiding in the mind that sees the pain through eyes the mind directs" (W-pI.193.7:2-4).

suggestion, which was taken up by the chairman. He asked for a volunteer to do a presentation on that topic, but no one stepped forward. Then, he asked my name, and when I told him, he said, "Well, Allen, I guess the presentation will be up to you."

"But I don't know anything about it," I groaned. "That's why I asked for a session on it."

"Well, you have six months to learn," said the chairman.

So, I took the job, and by teaching that subject I learned it more thoroughly than I ever would have otherwise.

Spiritually, the lesson is even more profoundly true because we are all joined in a single mind, part of God's one creation. It isn't just that passing on the lesson to someone else ingrains it in our own minds; when we forgive someone else, we really *are* forgiving ourselves. There isn't really anyone else "out there." The guilt we perceive as being located in another person really originates in our shared mind, and so when I teach the lesson of innocence to anyone, I am teaching it to everyone including myself.

Back in 2:2, Jesus called learning that "truth is true" our hardest lesson, but now we "learn that what seemed hardest was the easiest" (5:2). We don't have to learn it directly; we can learn it indirectly, by teaching it to others—which we do by forgiving them, by seeing past their egos to the Christ within them, the Christ Who is their Reality.

We have been trying to satisfy ourselves with the rewards this world has to offer, which is an impossible task (5:5). Unfortunately, all of them are part of an illusion projected by our mind, an illusion that can never satisfy us (5:4).

When the Course attempts to wean us from the world, we may resist. We may feel that something is being taken away from us and feel saddened by the loss. To be happy while we learn our spiritual lessons, we need to realize that what we seem to be losing is really nothing; to seek such things is merely foolish (5:3,5). They cannot content us (5:7–8). When following our spiritual path undercuts or frustrates some worldly goal, instead of being upset, we need to see it clearly and "be glad" (5:6). Learning to detach from such things is part of what we are learning. As the Buddhists teach, we suffer because we grasp and crave things; therefore, happiness arises from letting them go.

How do these two lines of thought coincide? How is forgiving our brother related to detachment from the world? To me, it seems that what often makes forgiveness difficult is the perception of material loss of some kind. Someone has done something that has deprived me of a treasured possession, or that has prevented me from achieving some cherished goal. A co-worker has stabbed me in the back and robbed me of my promotion. My parents have blocked my chosen path for education and career. My spouse has been sexually unfaithful. Unless I can somehow detach myself from these perceptions of loss, unless I can realize that I am trying to "make nothing everything" (5:4), how am I going to forgive? How am I going to see that, whatever has been done, it has not injured me nor deprived me? How can I possibly teach the perpetrator of my pain that he or she is as innocent as God Himself? As long as the pain of loss seems real to me,

forgiveness will be out of reach.² I must come to realize that inner peace is of more value to me than any material possession, that identifying with the love within me is more important than vengeance. My goals must shift from the world of illusion to the realm of spirit. Living as a holy child of God must be more important to me than getting even or obtaining what I conceive of as justice.

Paragraph 6

6. ¹If you would be a happy learner, you must give **everything you** have learned to the Holy Spirit, to be **unlearned for** you. ²And **then** begin to learn the joyous lessons that come quickly on the firm foundation that truth is true. ³For what is builded there is true, and **built** on truth. ⁴The universe of learning will open up before you in all its gracious simplicity. ⁵With truth before you, you will not look back.³

• Study Question •

6. *There is a step that precedes the steps of the process outlined in this paragraph, a step that is mentioned as "first" very early in the section. What is that step?*

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This short paragraph outlines the process of becoming a happy learner, which has two basic steps:

1. *Give false learning to the Holy Spirit to be unlearned* (6:1). This includes the lessons of detachment from the world discussed in the last paragraph. We have learned to value the things of this world, and that is a large part of what needs to be unlearned. But it includes much more, things brought up all through the Course: we unlearn fear; we unlearn attack as a means of getting what we want; we unlearn the projection of guilt; we unlearn our belief in our own guilt. We need to let go of the entire ego thought system, and we can do so by bringing it to the Holy Spirit for correction. It requires a willingness to re-evaluate *everything*.⁴

2. *Learn the lessons based on truth* (6:2). Once we let go of the false lessons we have taught ourselves, we have, perhaps without realizing it, accepted the fact that only what God has created is real, and only what He declares to be true is indeed true. The thought system we construct on that foundation is a solid one, a house built on rock instead of on sand (6:3). Notice, however, that we are talking

² "Does pain seem real in the perception? If it does, be sure the lesson is not learned. And there remains an unforgiveness hiding in the mind that sees the pain through eyes the mind directs" (W-pI.193.7:2-4).

³ Possibly a reference to Lot's wife in the biblical book of Genesis, who (according to the story) looked back while God rained fire on Sodom and Gomorrah, and was turned into a pillar of salt.

⁴ "Simply do this: Be still, and lay aside all thoughts of what you are and what God is; all concepts you have learned about the world; all images you hold about yourself. Empty your mind of everything it thinks is either true or false, or good or bad, of every thought it judges worthy, and all the ideas of which it is ashamed. Hold onto nothing. Do not bring with you one thought the past has taught, nor one belief you ever learned before from anything. Forget this world, forget this course, and come with wholly empty hands unto your God" (W-pI.189.7:1-5).

about a radical reversal of the very foundation of our thought system. This is no trivial choice, nor is it an easy one for us to make. To accept the truthfulness of truth seems as though it should be, not simply easy, but effortless; but unless we go through the unlearning process first, our efforts to learn to think and perceive from a spiritual perspective will continually run aground on the hidden shoals of our false beliefs. The Course calls these buried beliefs “hidden warriors” that have more power to disrupt our peace than we imagine; it urges us not to treat them lightly.⁵

That twofold process—first unlearning, then learning—is the basis of the entire Course. We don't directly seek love; instead, first, we remove what blocks it. We don't try to turn up the light; we expose the darkness. We don't struggle to find truth; we overturn illusions. The undoing always precedes the doing, and when we undo illusions, truth is already there unbidden. It simply is. The way opens before us, drawing us onward with irresistible attraction (6:4–5).

Paragraph 7

7. ¹The happy learner meets the conditions of learning here, as he meets the conditions of knowledge in the Kingdom. ²All this lies in the Holy Spirit's plan to free you from the past, and open up the way to freedom **for** you. ³For truth is true. ⁴What else could ever be, or ever was? ⁵This simple lesson holds the key to the dark door that you believe is locked forever. ⁶You **made** this door **of** nothing, and behind it is nothing. ⁷The key is only the light that shines away the shapes and forms and fears of nothing. ⁸Accept this key to freedom from the hands of Christ Who gives it to you, that you may join Him in the holy task of bringing light [to darkness]. ⁹For, like your brothers, **you** do not realize the light has come and freed you from the sleep of darkness.

• Study Question •

7. *This paragraph employs an image of a key of light, which shines away a door of darkness. What is the key, and what is the door?*

This section further develops the image of a way opening before us as we unlearn our false lessons and begin to build on the solid foundation of truth. It speaks of a “dark door” that we believe blocks our path and of a key that does not merely unlock the door, but makes it disappear (7:5–7). The door represents the

⁵ "Beliefs will never openly attack each other because conflicting outcomes are impossible. But an unrecognized belief is a decision to war in secret, where the results of conflict are kept unknown and never brought to reason, to be considered sensible or not. And many senseless outcomes have been reached, and meaningless decisions have been made and kept hidden, to become beliefs now given power to direct all subsequent decisions. Mistake you not the power of these hidden warriors to disrupt your peace. For it is at their mercy while you decide to leave it there. 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" (T-24.I.2:1-8).

thought system of the ego that impedes the growth of our spiritual life; the key is the simple three-word lesson that is the central thought of this section: "truth is true" (7:3,5). Since the ego's entire system is based on a falsehood, this simple lesson just blows it away like smoke in the wind; it is nothing (7:6).

There is a clear reference in 7:1 to the preceding section. We said in our discussion of T-14.I.1 that until our minds have been rewired, we can't even begin to accept knowledge. Something has to happen to us before we can really learn the truth; we have to meet "the conditions of learning." We now are told that we *have* met those conditions when we become happy learners (7:1). It makes perfect sense and even seems obvious when you consider it: if we are unhappy about the learning process, we will resist the truth it offers. We must welcome the truth to receive it; we must be willing to learn it. As long as we value this world and what it seems to offer we *will* resist the truth, because the truth is that none of it is real and none of it is worth anything. What matters isn't matter; what matters is spirit. While we value the world's offerings, we won't like hearing that.

Once we accept only the truth, no obstacle remains between us and Heaven. The truth is that we are already free⁶; we are already awake (7:9). Christ, in the form of Jesus, is offering this truth to us, and is asking us to join him in offering it to our brothers who, like us, still believe in guilt (7:8). Offering freedom to others, as we have seen, is how we learn that we have it (8:1).

Paragraph 8

8. ¹Behold your brothers in their freedom, and learn of them how to be **free** of darkness. ²The light in you will waken them, and they will not leave **you** asleep. ³The vision of Christ is **given** the very instant that it is perceived. ⁴Where everything is clear, it is **all** holy. ⁵The quietness of its simplicity is so compelling that you will realize **it is impossible to deny the simple truth**. ⁶For there **is** nothing else. ⁷God is everywhere, and His Son is **in** Him **with** everything. ⁸Can he sing the dirge of sorrow when **this** is true?

• Study Question •

8. *In the context of this paragraph and section, how do others teach you and awaken you?*

It's all about how you see other people. When you see your brothers as free from guilt you learn that you, too, are free (8:1). You shine the light of forgiveness on them, which wakens them; in gratitude, they awaken *you* (8:2). That reciprocal interaction is the heart of the Course. When the Holy Spirit awakens your mind to the clarity of forgiveness the holiness of all things seems obvious and self-evident (8:4). It seems impossible that you could perceive your brother

⁶ "Only in dreams is there a time when he appears to be in prison, and awaits a future freedom, if it be at all. Yet in reality his dreams are gone, with truth established in their place. And now is freedom his already. Should I wait in chains which have been severed for release, when God is offering me freedom now?" (W-pII.279.1:2-5).

in any way *but* innocent (8:5–6), and that vision extends instantly to yourself. When you perceive a brother in the light of forgiveness you instantly transmit that light to him (8:3).

What is the truth that is true? What realization dawns upon us when we let go of our delusions and allow the Holy Spirit to reprogram our minds? “God is everywhere, and His Son is in Him with everything” (8:7). God encompasses all there is; there is nothing else. No more dirges! In the words of the traditional song:

My life flows on in endless song;
Above earth's lamentation
I hear the sweet though far off hymn
That hails a new creation:
Through all the tumult and the strife
I hear the music ringing;
It finds an echo in my soul—
How can I keep from singing?

What though my joys and comforts die?
The Lord my Savior liveth;
What though the darkness gather round!
Songs in the night He giveth:
No storm can shake my inmost calm
While to that refuge clinging;
Since Christ is Lord of heaven and earth,
How can I keep from singing?

I lift mine eyes; the cloud grows thin;
I see the blue above it;
And day by day this pathway smoothes
Since first I learned to love it:
The peace of Christ makes fresh my heart,
A fountain ever springing;
All things are mine since I am His—
How can I keep from singing?

—Robert Lowry

• **Study Question** •

9. *Based on this section, please describe in a paragraph what it means to be a happy learner? (Variations on the term "happy learner" occur in 1:1, 3:2, 4:5, 5:3, 6:1, 7:1.)*

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Answer Key

1. Consciously, you thought you were pursuing happiness and reality, but your pursuits were being driven by an unconscious attraction to misery and death.
2. It includes many things: Your inner fantasy life, which always imagines you in positions of special favor; your internal feelings, thoughts, and reactions; your outer life, including the roles you play; and even the physical world and universe.
3. Truth is reflected in accurate concepts, but in essence is the living ideas of formless, eternal spirit.
4. Because it is your shining effects that prove that the light is in you, and your brothers are the ones most directly experiencing those effects. Also, because they realize that you did not make this light and thus see that something in you transcends your own making. You, however, still see yourself as a being of your own making.
5. "Nothing" is separation, specialness, form, body, getting, idols, and special love. You have tried to make it everything, make it content you, by trying to derive all happiness from being a separate, special being who put all his blame onto the world and got all the world's special gifts.
6. You must first recognize that you are miserable and not happy.
7. The key is "truth is true" and the door is the thought system you have made out of nothing.
8. By seeing in you more than you see, once you have freed them from their chains.
9. A happy learner is:
 - Someone not devoted to learning his own miserable program, which is based on nothing.
 - Someone who lets the Holy Spirit make the distinction between truth and nothing for him.
 - Someone who receives the light of truth from the Holy Spirit and passes it on to others, letting that light teach him through the receiving and the giving.
 - Someone who lets the Holy Spirit show him how miserable he is (1:2) and then gives everything he has learned to the Holy Spirit to be unlearned for him, and then learns gladly the joyous lessons that are built on the foundation of "truth is true."
 - Someone who fulfills the conditions of learning by allowing the key of "truth is true" to shine away the dark door of his nothing-based thought system.