

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM[®] Text, Chapter 17, Section II

The Forgiven World

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
 - ~~strickethrough blue text~~ = Not in Urtext, in FIP edition
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Overview of the Section

Section II is a fantastically and beautifully lyric prose poem about “how beautiful those you forgive will look to you.” It comes as a welcome reprieve from the hard and harsh looking we have been doing at the machinations of the ego.

Paragraph 1

1. ¹Can you imagine how beautiful those you forgive will look to you? ²In no fantasy have you ever seen anything so lovely. ³Nothing you see here, sleeping or waking, comes near to such loveliness. ⁴And nothing will you value like unto this, nor hold so dear. ⁵Nothing that you remember that made your heart [seem to] sing with joy has ever brought you even a little part of the happiness this sight will bring you. ⁶**For you will see the Son of God.** ⁷You will behold the beauty the Holy Spirit loves to look upon, and which He thanks the Father for. ⁸He was created to see this **for you**, until you learned to see it for yourself. ⁹And all His teaching leads to seeing it and giving thanks with Him.

• Study Question •

1. *Try taking a moment to attempt to imagine your heart singing with a joy greater than you have ever known as you look on the beauty of those you have forgiven. Why do you suppose Jesus gets so rhapsodic about something we have not yet seen?*
 - a. *Jesus is a romantic.*
 - b. *Jesus wants to motivate us by telling us what the Holy Spirit now sees for us and is trying to teach us to see.*
 - c. *Jesus is trying to make us feel inferior to him.*
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To me, this paragraph inspires me to spend time, now and then, meditating on what the real world will look like, and what the people I know—or *seem* to know—in this world will appear to me when I see them through the eyes of Christ. I want to spend time imagining “how beautiful those [I] forgive will look to [me]” (1:1). What I will see, what you will see, is loveliness beyond the telling, loveliness beyond imagining! (1:2,3) Nothing in the world, not even in our dreams, even comes close (1:3)! The height of joy that we can remember, when our hearts seemed to sing, never gave us even “a little part of the happiness this sight will bring you” (1:4). The sight of our brothers and sisters will take our breath away.

When you look upon a brother or a sister and, instead of seeing their ego or their body, instead of seeing their past, instead of seeing them as a separate being, as an object of affection or an object of loathing—instead of all that, you see “*the Son of God*” (1:6), when that happens, the experience is incomparable and indescribable. It cannot be compared to anything you already know because nothing you already know is like it! The Course says the same thing about the peace of God “that passes understanding”:

Can you imagine what a state of mind without illusions is? How it would feel? Try to remember when there was a time, - perhaps a minute, maybe even less - when nothing came to interrupt your peace; when you were certain you were loved and safe. Then try to picture what it would be like to have that moment be extended to the end of time and to eternity. Then let the sense of quiet that you felt be multiplied a hundred times, and then be multiplied another hundred more.

And now you have a hint, not more than just the faintest intimation of the state your mind will rest in when the truth has come (W-pI.107.2:1-3:1).

Peace times 100 and then times 100 again! That’s multiplying your peace *ten thousand times!* So, if God’s peace is represented by a line stretching from Los Angeles to New York City, about 3000 miles, then the greatest peace you have ever known would be equal to a line that is about 528 yards long. Not quite two football fields in length. That isn’t *nothing*, but compared to the distance across the USA, it is surely insignificant. That’s like what he is saying here about the *joy* we will experience when we see the Son of God in another. Utter, mind-blowing bliss!

In the Workbook, Jesus tries to explain what it is like to see the Son of God in a brother or sister, and the nearest analogy he can find is one of awe and worship:

And in Christ's vision is his loveliness reflected in a form so holy and so beautiful that you could scarce refrain from kneeling at his feet. Yet you will take his hand instead, for you are like him in the sight that sees him thus (W-pI.161.9:3-4).

Have you ever been tempted to worship someone—*literally* worship them? Probably not. Yet that is what it feels like when you “behold the beauty the Holy Spirit loves to look upon” (1:7). That is what He sees in you, in me, in that annoying person you ran into recently and hope you never meet again...something so beautiful that your heart feels like it will burst with the joy of it. It’s what Peter, James, and John saw on the mount of

transfiguration, when Jesus appeared to them as a glorious being of pure light (Matt 17:1–2). It's why they wanted to build a tabernacle in his honor on the spot. Jesus would not let them do it, of course. They had not yet realized that what they were seeing was in every one of us, not just Jesus.

The Holy Spirit has one purpose: to see this beauty on your behalf until you have learned, through His teaching, to see it for yourself. And when you do, you will join with Him in thanksgiving to God for what you see (1:8–9).

The fact that the Holy Spirit sees this glory in everyone *for* us, to me means that I can draw on His perception to guide my responses to the people around me. Perhaps I cannot see the glory in them, but He can, and knowing that, I find I am open to words and actions that otherwise I would not be open to, if I were relying purely on my own limited perceptions.

Paragraph 2

2. ¹This loveliness is **not** a fantasy. ²It is the real world, bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun. ³Nothing is hidden here, for everything has **been** forgiven and there **are** no fantasies to hide the truth. ⁴The bridge between that world and this is **so** little and **so** easy to cross, that you could not believe it is the meeting place of worlds so different. ⁵Yet this little bridge is the strongest thing that touches on this world at all. ⁶This little step, so small it has escaped your notice, is a stride through time into eternity, beyond all ugliness into beauty that will enchant you, and will never cease to cause you wonderment at its perfection.

• Study Question •

2. Which sentence or two seems to you to state the major theme of the paragraph?
- a. 1–2: “This loveliness...open sun.”
 - b. 4: “The bridge...so different.”
 - c. 6: “This little step...perfection.”

Sometimes it seems fantastic to think of certain people in terms of holiness, light, and glory—fantastic in the literal sense of “seeming more appropriate to a fairy tale than to reality or practical use.” But “this loveliness is *not* a fantasy” (2:1)! No, this is the *real* world, not a fairy tale. This is who, and what, people are really like, even when they don't know it themselves, and even when they manifest something quite unlike a being of pure love!

In this real world, “nothing is hidden” (2:2), because whatever any of us might have *wanted* to hide has been erased by forgiveness, and every fantasy that might have hidden the truth has been relinquished (2:3). This is why, later in 5:1, it says, “The real world is attained simply by the complete forgiveness of the old.” The real world is just the

ordinary world seen with perfect forgiveness! We are called to forgive the world! In the final lessons of the Workbook, this goal is set before us:

Unto us the aim is given to forgive the world. It is the goal that God has given us. It is His ending to the dream we seek, and not our own. For all that we forgive we will not fail to recognize as part of God Himself (W-pII.360.3:2-5).

Being asked to forgive *the world* is no small assignment! This is why we need the help of the Holy Spirit, Who sees the world as forgiven *for us* until we have learned to see it that way ourselves. The paragraphs we are reading now are meant, I think, to motivate us toward this goal. "This is what you will see when you have forgiven the world." It is a "world, bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun" (2:2).

Try to imagine being in such a world, where nothing is hidden, a world where you recognize everything "as part of God Himself."

The bridge between this world and that one "is *so* little and *so* easy to cross, that you could not believe it is the meeting place of worlds so different" (2:4). You may recall that we have seen several different descriptions of what this bridge is. In commenting on T-16.VI.10, I wrote the following:

The symbol of "the bridge" referred to so often in this section symbolizes a variety of things: the transition from lack to wholeness, from incompleteness to completion, and from a fragmented self or split mind to the united Self that we are in Truth. Here, in 10:1, we are told that the bridge leads to "union *in yourself*," which to me has to do with a re-uniting of my fragmented self, the recognition that, as the Workbook lesson says, "I am one Self" (W-pI.95), not "two selves in conflict" (T-16.III.6:1). The bridge also, of necessity, leads to *knowledge* and to God (10:1). In fact, back in Chapter 5 of the Text, we are told that, "the Holy Spirit is the bridge for the transfer of perception to knowledge" (T-5.III.1:2). That is what is happening here: our perception of ourselves, and of one another, is being transformed, so that we come to know our true Self, which we share with our brothers and with our creations. Our completion is "*wholly* compatible with His [that is, with God's completion, which is God's creations].

The preceding paragraph told us that "Across the bridge is your completion" (T-16.IV.9:1), so the bridge leads to our completion as well. What completes us? Our creations, who are part of our Self, just as we are God's completion. This is the transition that each of us must go through, or "go across," using the bridge image. The bridge represents what appears to us as a journey, the distance we seem to travel in shifting our mental state from separation to union, from who we *think* we are [separate beings] to who we *truly* are [aspects of The One], the "journey without distance" across an imaginary gulf. And this *individual* transition is the catalyst that shifts an unholy relationship to a holy one.

How could it be otherwise, when the transition takes us from fragmentation to union?

Here, we are told that the bridge is so little and so easy to cross. As I said above, the bridge is “the distance we seem to travel in shifting our mental state from separation to union.” We could say that, in a nutshell, the bridge is forgiveness. I said above that forgiving the world is no small job, and yet here, Jesus says that the bridge is “so little and so easy.” I don’t think there is any contradiction here. In fact, the seeming contradiction fits right in to the context from the preceding section about orders of difficulty. To us, forgiving the world seems like an impossibly formidable task; from Jesus’ perspective, it is “so easy.” In Chapter 15, we read, “The reason this course is simple is that truth is simple” (T-15.IV.6:1). Crossing the bridge, or forgiveness, is simply recognizing that the truth is true. Therefore,

When you teach anyone that truth is true, you learn it with him. And so you learn that what seemed hardest was the easiest (T-14.II.5:1-2).

This little bridge, forgiveness, “is the strongest thing that touches on this world at all. This little step, so small it has escaped your notice, is a stride through time into eternity, beyond all ugliness into beauty that will enchant you, and will never cease to cause you wonderment at its perfection” (2:5–6). In the Course, forgiveness isn’t simply the most important thing; it is *everything*. “Forgiveness offers everything you want” (W-pI.122.13:1).

I don’t know about you, but I want to be enchanted by the beauty I see. I want to enjoy being in a state of constant, endless wonder at its perfection!

Paragraph 3

3. ¹This step, the smallest ever taken [by anything], is still the greatest accomplishment of all in God’s plan of Atonement. ²All else is learned, but **this** is **given**, complete and wholly perfect. ³No one but Him Who **planned** salvation could complete it thus. ⁴The real world, in its loveliness, **you** learn to reach. ⁵Fantasies are all undone, and no one and nothing remain still bound by them, and by **your own** forgiveness you are **free** to see. ⁶Yet [And] **what** you see is only what **you** [have] **made**, with the blessing of your forgiveness on it. ⁷And with this final blessing of God’s Son **upon himself**, the **real** perception, born of the new perspective he has learned, has served its purpose.

• Study Question •

3. *Examine the referents for “this little step” (in 2:6) and “This step” (in 3:1). It appears, at least in paragraph 2, to be referring to the step of crossing the bridge into the real world. Yet, is this what it refers to throughout? Compare 3:2 (where “this” obviously refers to “this step”) with 3:4. What do you think the “step” in 3:1 is?*
- A. *Crossing the bridge to the real world.*
- B. *God's last step for us, taking us from the real world to Heaven.*
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The “little step,” which in paragraph 2 clearly referred to crossing the bridge from this world into the real world, in paragraph 3 seems to switch meaning to refer to God's last step. The step here is a gift, not something we learn (3:2), yet 3:4 clearly says we learn to reach the real world. All we can say about the switch in the meaning of the “step” is that it is confusing, and there is no good reason I can see for it. So in this paragraph, just understand that the step means something different than it did in the preceding paragraph.

That being said, there is one way I can understand why the switch is made. When we truly cross the bridge—something we learn and “achieve” with the help of the Holy Spirit—the way is instantly open for God to take His last step (which has already been taken, as we read back in Chapter 7 and 11):

The "last step" that God will take was therefore true in the beginning, is true now, and will be true forever. What is timeless is always there, because its being is eternally changeless (T-7.I.7:8-9).

"When you perceive yourself without deceit, you will accept the real world in place of the false one you have made. And then your Father will lean down to you and take the last step for you, by raising you unto Himself" (T-11.VIII.15:4-5).

In a sense, then, our crossing the bridge and God's last step are simultaneous. Our “little step” across the bridge triggers God's last step, or at least, our experience of it.

So we must “learn” to reach the real world, allowing our fantasies to be undone, and allowing our brothers and sisters to be totally freed of bondage to our fantasies. We release them from all grievances, from all “obligation” to complete us, from all judgements we have held against them. Because of our forgiveness, we free ourselves to see with true perception (3:4–5). We come to see nothing more than “what *you have made*” transformed through forgiveness (3:6). This is our “final blessing” *upon ourselves*: by forgiving the world, *we have been liberated* (3:7). And when that happens, all this transformed perception has served its purpose. There is no further need for it! We are ready for perception to become *knowledge*, and that is where God steps in. In that instant, the world is over.

Paragraph 4

4. ¹The stars will disappear in light, and the sun that opened up the world to beauty will vanish. ²Perception will be meaningless when it has been perfected, for everything that has been used for learning will have no function. ³Nothing will ever change; no shifts nor shadings, no differences, no variations that made perception possible will still occur. ⁴The perception of the real world will be so short that you will barely have time to thank God for it. ⁵For God will take the last step swiftly, when you have reached the real world and have been made ready for Him.

• Study Question •

4. *This paragraph seems clearly to refer to the end of the world, beyond the stage of the real world (the stars and sun vanish). We often tend to think of this last step, taken by God, as purely a corporate thing, which happens all at once for everyone. What evidence, if any, is there in this paragraph that there is some kind of individual aspect to this last step?*



There is a passage in the Gospel of Matthew, in what has been called “The Little Apocalypse,” that many modern scholars believe was added to the narrative by later authors, and that were not actually words spoken by Jesus. One verse in particular provides an interesting contrast to this paragraph:

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken (Matthew 24:29 KJV).

In the biblical passage, the sun is darkened; in the Course, although it opened the world up to beauty, the sun will vanish. In the Bible the stars fall from heaven; in the Course, they disappear in light. Instead of ending in darkness, everything ends in light. Clearly, this is the end of the world as we know it. Equally clearly, this cannot be referring to the experience of just one individual. When you or I cross the bridge and perceive the real world, the stars don't disappear and the sun does not vanish. That is something that happens at the end of time. Evangelical Christians believe the Matthew passage refers to what happens at the time Jesus will return to the world in judgment, which seems to be the meaning of the following verse:

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. (Matthew 24:30 KJV)

What Jesus is referring to here in the Course must be the collective awakening of every part of the Sonship, something he makes clear in the Workbook:

The Second Coming is the time in which all minds are given to the hands of Christ, to be returned to spirit in the name of true creation and the Will of God (W-pII.9.3:2).

Christ's Second Coming gives the Son of God this gift: To hear the Voice for God proclaim that what is false is false, and what is true has never changed. And this the judgment is in which perception ends. At first you see a world that has accepted this as true, projected from a now corrected mind. And with this holy sight, perception gives a silent blessing and then disappears, its goal accomplished and its mission done.

The Final Judgment on the world contains no condemnation. For it sees the world as totally forgiven, without sin and wholly purposeless. Without a cause, and now without a function in Christ's sight, it merely slips away to nothingness. There it was born, and there it ends as well. And all the figures in the dream in which the world began go with it. Bodies now are useless, and will therefore fade away, because the Son of God is limitless (W-pI.pII.10.1:1-2:6).

“All minds are given to the hands of Christ,” that is, the collective awakening of the entire Sonship. When that occurs, we are ready for the last, final step by God. Perception ends. We see the real world, bless it, and perception disappears, as there is no more need of it. “Perception will be meaningless when it has been perfected, for everything that has been used for learning will have no function” (4:2). Perception won’t even be *possible*, because the differences and variations that it depends upon will be gone; “nothing will ever change” (4:3).

Once we, together, reach the real world, “God will take the last step swiftly”; we will barely have time to thank God for the real world before our perception of it is gone (4:4–5).

The Course does not spend a lot of time talking about “the last days” or the end of the world. Its focus is always on the present, here and now. But I find this picture of what the end will be like—totally free of all illusions and all bondage—to be inspiring. It motivates me to move in that direction, to do the work that is necessary for me, individually, to cross that bridge, to perceive, however intermittently, my small part of the real world.

Paragraph 5

5. ¹The real world is attained simply by the **complete** forgiveness of the old, the world you see **without** forgiveness. ²The Great Transformer of perception will undertake **with** you the careful searching of the mind that **made** this world, and uncover **to you** the **seeming** reasons for your making it. ³In the light of the **real** reason that He brings, as you follow Him, He will **show** you that there is **no** reason here at all. ⁴Each spot **His** reason touches grows alive with beauty, and what **seemed** ugly in the darkness of your **lack** of reason is

suddenly released to loveliness. ⁵Not even what the Son of God made in insanity could be without a hidden spark of beauty that gentleness could release.

• **Study Question** •

5. *The Holy Spirit (“the Great Transformer of perception” in 5:2) will assist us in uncovering “the seeming reasons” for the world. What do you think this phrase refers to?*
- The reasons we believe we have for acting as we do in the world.*
 - The reasons why God allowed this world to happen.*
 - The reasons we imagined for the original act of separation and the making of the world.*

The first sentence, to me, sums up the main thrust of this section. It clearly identifies forgiveness with the bridge, the little step we take to cross from this world to the real world. How do we experience the real world? Through forgiveness (5:1).

Early in the Course we are told that the Last Judgment is a process undertaken by the Sons of God (T-2.VIII.3:1–2) when they have attained the real world, a process which ends perception (W-pII.10.1:2) and eventually leads to the disappearance of the world (W-pII.10.2:1–2). This paragraph, from sentence 2 on, seems once again to be describing that Last Judgment.

“The Great Transformer of perception” is my favorite title given to the Holy Spirit by the Course (5:2). It’s what He does: transform our perceptions. The process outlined here, by which our perception is transformed, is fascinating:

- Searching our minds that made this world with the Holy Spirit
- Uncovering the *seeming* reasons for our making it
- Bringing the *real* reason for the world to light
- Perceiving that there is no reason here at all
- Transforming our perception of the world from ugliness to loveliness

Notice that, as always in the Course, the *first steps* in the process involve searching within our minds, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, for the darkness, the false beliefs, the *seeming* reasons we have for perceiving the world as we do. As we look at these thoughts with the Holy Spirit, it becomes evident that our seeming reasons are no reason at all! This opens the way to a totally new perception of everyone and everything in the world.

Later in the Text, Jesus returns to this theme, and more fully explains the “seeming reasons” he mentions here:

The “reasoning” by which the world is made, on which it rests, by which it is maintained, is simply this: “*You* are the cause of what I do. Your presence **justified** my wrath, and you exist and think **apart** from me. While **you** attack, I

must be innocent. And what I suffer from *is* your attack.” No one who looks upon this “reasoning” **exactly** as it is could fail to see it does **not** follow and it makes **no** sense. Yet it **seems** sensible, because it **looks** as if the world *were* hurting you. And so it seems as if there is no **need** to go beyond the obvious in terms of cause.

There is *indeed* a need. (T-27.VII.3:1-4:1).

When we are willing to abandon “the obvious in terms of cause,” and to recognize that we are doing it to ourselves, the miracle shifts our perception so radically that “what *seemed* ugly...is suddenly released to loveliness” (5:4). Even the insane manifestations of the ego are seen to harbor “a hidden spark of beauty” that gentleness can release (5:5).

Note: In the previous chapter Jesus spoke of the Great Rays and the little spark (16.VI.4 and 6), an image introduced in T-10.IV.8 and V.2. The little spark is referred to again here, and in the next section. Here it seems to refer to a remnant of beauty that remains in everything the Son of God has made, even that which he made in insanity (which includes the whole world).

Paragraph 6

6. ¹All this beauty will rise to bless your sight as you look upon the world with forgiving eyes. ²For forgiveness literally **transforms** vision, and lets you see the real world reaching quietly and gently across chaos, removing all illusions that had twisted your perception and fixed it on the past. ³The smallest leaf becomes a thing of wonder, and a blade of grass a sign of God's perfection.

• Study Question •

6. *What is it that enables us to see this real world of beauty and loveliness, in which leaves become a thing of wonder, and a blade of grass shows us God's perfection?*
- a. *Forgiveness*
 - b. *The Great Rays*
 - c. *Crossing the bridge*
 - d. *Understanding that God is a part of all nature*

When we look on everything with forgiving eyes, we see only the “spark of beauty,” the loving thoughts that went into the making of the world (6:1). Everything produced by our egos has been, in some fashion, a twisted distortion of those loving thoughts, because we cannot escape our true nature. And that true nature is all we will see, all we will choose to focus on, when we look with forgiving eyes. We will overlook all the hatred and insanity that made so much ugliness in the world. Forgiveness “literally *transforms* vision” (6:2). Our perceptions have been “twisted” to focus on the past instead of seeing

the present beauty. From this perspective, “The smallest leaf becomes a thing of wonder, and a blade of grass a sign of God’s perfection” (6:3).

I do not believe this is meant in the sense of pantheism, in which everything *is* God. I believe the Course falls more into the camp of *panentheism*, in which everything is *in* God; the universe contains God and is interpenetrated by God. The blade of grass isn’t God, but is “a sign of God’s perfection.” All the beauty, order, and perfection of nature and the universe originates in God, and has been imparted to the universe by means of the “little spark” or the “Great Rays” of divine Light that exist within all of us. No matter how twisted the ego may become, that spark cannot be extinguished, and always shows up.

Paragraph 7

7. ¹From the forgiven world the Son of God is lifted easily into his home. ²And there he knows that he has **always** rested there in peace. ³Even salvation will become a dream, and vanish from his mind. ⁴For salvation **is** the end of dreams, and with the closing of the dream will have no meaning. ⁵Who, awake in Heaven, could dream that there **could** ever be **need** of salvation?

• Study Question •

7. *Why will salvation vanish from our minds in Heaven? (Select all correct answers.)*
- a. *We will not even be able to conceive of the need for it.*
 - b. *Salvation ends our dream of separation, and once the dream is over, it will have no meaning.*
 - c. *We will not want to remember the painful process.*
 - d. *Knowing we have always been at peace, we will realize that salvation was part of the dream and can now be forgotten.*
 - e. *We will lose the ability to think coherently in Heaven.*

The last two paragraphs have, in the broadest interpretation, been referring to what the Course calls the Last Judgment. In Chapter 2 of the Text, it describes the Last Judgment as follows:

The Last Judgment is generally thought of as a procedure undertaken by God. Actually, it will be undertaken solely by the Sonship with my help. It is a final healing rather than a meting out of punishment, however much you may think punishment is deserved. Punishment as a concept is in total opposition to right-mindedness. The aim of the Final Judgment is to **restore** right-mindedness *to* you.

The Final Judgment might be called a process of right evaluation. It simply means that finally all minds must come to understand what is worthy and what is not. After this, their ability to choose can be reasonably directed. Unless this

distinction has been made, the vacillations between free and imprisoned will cannot but continue.

The first step toward freedom, then, **must** entail a sorting out of the false from the true. This is a process of division only in the constructive sense, and reflects the true meaning of the Apocalypse. Everyone will ultimately look upon what he has made and will to preserve only what is good, just as God Himself once looked upon what He had created and knew that it *was* good. At this point, the mind will begin to look with love on what it has made, because of its great worthiness. The mind will inevitably disown its miscreations, and having withdrawn belief from them, they will no longer exist.

(T-2.VIII.3:1-4:5)

The process of examining our minds with the Holy Spirit, “the Great Transformer of perception,” is the Last Judgment which brings us into a perception of the Real World.

“Lifted easily” in 7:1 again refers to God’s Last Step, which follows the Last Judgment and takes us as One from the real world to Heaven. Individually, we engage in our personal “last judgment,” looking on all we have made and preserving only the good. And, I think, we can individually experience at least a taste or reflection of heaven as a result, but the final step being described here—the Son of God being lifted easily into his home—can only occur when *every* mind has been returned to Christ.

When that final transition occurs, we will forget this world. We will forget salvation, because salvation ends the dream, and with the end of the dream salvation will no longer have meaning (7:3–4). In Heaven, the very idea of a need for salvation seems inconceivable (7:5).

Paragraph 8

8. ¹How much do you **want** salvation? ²It will **give** you the real world, trembling with readiness to **be** given you. ³The eagerness of the Holy Spirit to give you this is so intense He would not wait, although He waits in patience. ⁴**Meet** His patience with your **impatience** at delay in meeting Him. ⁵Go out in gladness to meet with your Redeemer, and walk with Him in trust out of this world, and into the real world of beauty and forgiveness.

• Study Question •

8. *Try to write a summary, no more than two sentences, of the message of this paragraph.*

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Although it is meaningless in Heaven, salvation has meaning here and now; “It will give you the real world” (8:2). How much, then, do you want *it*? It wants *you*! It is “trembling with readiness to *be* given you.” To me, although I believe that God is not “a person,” which is anthropomorphism and implies separation and duality, I believe there

is a sense in which the real world, and the Holy Spirit (which can be understood as an impersonal principle of knowledge and truth), are *eager* to give us the real world. We may think of God as an evolutionary impulse, a boundless creative energy that is constantly seeking to draw us “upward” to higher and better things. If it makes more sense to you, though, I believe it can be helpful to see God as personal *to us*, a consciously benevolent Presence that loves us and is eager to bless us.

Jesus says here that the Holy Spirit is *intensely eager* to give us the real world, and does not want to wait—but He *does* wait, because we are not yet ready to receive it (8:3). He isn't going to abruptly hurl us into reality, which would do more harm than good. So He waits.

Jesus counsels us to “meet His patience with your impatience at delay in meeting Him” (8:4). We need to “go out...to meet with your Redeemer, and walk with Him”: to nurture our desire for the real world, and help it to grow more intense, to match His. One way we can do this is in meditations in which we consciously seek deeper union with the Christ.

For example, in the Workbook, Jesus says:

Thus what you need are intervals each day in which the learning of the world becomes a transitory phase; a prison house from which you go into the sunlight and forget the darkness. Here you understand the Word, the Name Which God has given you; the one Identity Which all things share; the one acknowledgment of what is true. And then step back to darkness, not because you think it real, but only to proclaim its unreality in terms which still have meaning in the world that darkness rules (W-pI.184.10:1-3).

Answer Key

17.II. The Forgiven World

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. It says that God will take the step “swiftly” as soon as we have reached the real world (which is an individual attainment) and have been made ready. This seems to imply it happens to us individually.
5. C
6. A
7. A, B, and D
8. The Holy Spirit is intensely eager to give me salvation and bring me to the real world, yet He waits patiently for me to choose it. I need to respond to his eagerness with impatience at every delay I raise to meeting Him and walking out of this world into the real one.