

# Study Guide and Commentary

## ACIM® Text, Chapter 23

### The Escape From Conflict

#### Section II

### *The War against Yourself*

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary.

#### Overview of Section II

This section was Section I, “The Irreconcilable Beliefs,” in the FIP edition; the CE changed the title and the section number. There are some differences in the paragraph breaks

Just a reminder of what I said as we began this chapter: It is one of the most challenging in the entire Text, particularly in Section III, “The Laws of Chaos.”

Section II, deals with what the Course calls the ego’s war with God, showing that it is really a war against ourselves. The idea of a war against ourselves was first mentioned in the previous section, in 2:1: “How strange indeed becomes this war against yourself!” There, a belief in enemies brings with it a belief in our own weakness, which is not God’s will; as something opposed to God’s will, we imagine we and God are enemies, and therefore we fear God. This strange self-denigration is what is termed a “war against yourself” (T-23.I.1:5–8; 2:1).

Since everything is part of me, any appearance of conflict, any concept of attack or of being attacked, is a conflict between two illusions of myself, a war against myself. When conflict ceases, the mind becomes quiet, and the memory of God returns, bringing peace that can never be disturbed. The section begins and ends with this “memory of God.”

#### Paragraph 1

The memory of God comes to the quiet mind. <sup>2</sup>It cannot come where there is conflict, for a mind at war against itself remembers not eternal gentleness. <sup>3</sup>The means of war are not the means of peace, and what the warlike would remember is not love. <sup>4</sup>War is impossible unless belief in victory is cherished. <sup>5</sup>Conflict within you must imply that you believe the ego has the power to be victorious. <sup>6</sup>Why else would you identify with it? <sup>7</sup>Surely you realize the ego is at war with God. <sup>8</sup>Certain it is it has no enemy. <sup>9</sup>But just as certain is its fixed belief it has an enemy that it must overcome, and will succeed.

1. *If our minds remain in conflict, what does that imply; what is the reason behind our clinging to the conflict?*
  - A. *It implies that we are clinging to the conflict because we do not want to remember love.*
  - B. *It implies that we are clinging to the conflict because we believe the ego has the power to be victorious over God.*
  - C. *It implies that our minds are too corrupt to remember eternal gentleness.*

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That first line, in my opinion, could be the subject of an entire book. Even a good book title. The words, “be still,” occur forty times in the Course, most of them in the Workbook, where the lessons frequently emphasize quiet meditation. The exact phrase, “memory of God,” occurs 22 times in the Course, and there are multiple variations such as “the remembrance of God” (6x) and “remember God” (10x) and “God’s memory” (3x). It is a key concept in the Course. Robert Perry, in his glossary of Course terms, writes as follows:

### ***memory of God***

Our memory of the heavenly state of oneness with God; our awakening to that state. Not a memory of past events, but of a present state which is still within us but is denied (see T-28.I.4:1-2). This memory can be experienced in holy instants of **revelation** (see T-28.I.11:4-12:2), and begins to rise in our minds as we near the end of the journey (see T-19.IV(D).1:3-5). But it fully and permanently comes only in the **final step** (see W-pI.168.3), after we have looked on the **face of Christ**.

Robert refers twice to Chapter 28, and once to Chapter 19. Here are those quotations:

“The Holy Spirit can indeed make use of memory, for God Himself is there. Yet this is not a memory of past events, but only of a present state.”  
" (T-28.Int.4:1-2 (CE)).

“Born out of sharing, there can be no pause in time to cause the miracle delay in hastening to all unquiet minds and bringing them an instant’s stillness where the memory of God returns to them. <sup>5</sup>Their *own* remembering is quiet now, and what has come to take its place will not be wholly unremembered afterwards.

“ He to Whom time is given offers thanks for every quiet instant given Him. <sup>2</sup>For in that instant is God’s memory allowed to offer all its treasures to the Son of God, for whom they have been kept.” (T-28.I.11:4-12:2 (CE))

<sup>3</sup>Very simply, you would remember your Father. <sup>4</sup>The Creator of life, the Source of everything that lives, the Father of the universe and of the universe of universes and of everything that lies even beyond them, would you remember. <sup>5</sup>And as this memory rises in your mind, peace must still surmount a final obstacle, after which is salvation completed and the Son of God entirely

: He and Him refer to the Holy Spirit.

restored to sanity.” (T-19.IV.1:3–5 (CE))

Notice how the idea of stilling the mind so that the memory of God can return is repeated here. There is clearly the implication that this is a holy instant, a “quiet instant given” to God. The memory of God returns, but there is an “afterwards,” in which that memory “will not be wholly unremembered.” So there are snatches of remembering on the way to full remembrance. As we grow, the memory “rises in your mind,” although full peace still awaits our surmounting of the final obstacle, the fear of God. As we shall see, that fear is addressed quite directly in “The Laws of Chaos.”

The memory of God cannot come to a mind in which there is conflict (1:2). That should be obvious. How can there be peace where there is conflict? The two are total opposite states. This is why one of the ego’s goals is to sustain conflict in every way possible, in order to distract us from the memory of God that is always seeking to break through to our awareness. The Course often speaks of the ego’s raucous shrieks, its attack thoughts, its fears. All of these are meant to prevent the state of quietness that brings with it the memory of God.

So, the memory of God is not simply some pleasant thoughts about God that arise during meditation, although holy instants are surely foretastes of that memory, brief flashes of recall. The pleasant thoughts may also be intimations of the memory of God, they may be that buried memory peeking through the cobwebs of our minds, but far beyond that, the memory of God is the ultimate end of the spiritual journey. It follows our vision of the face of Christ, and comes to fullness in the “final step” of God. “The memory of God comes to the quiet mind” is a profound statement. It indicates what kind of mental transformation we must undergo before we can once again deeply and permanently know our oneness with God. We must grow out of chaos into stillness, out of conflict into peace. That is the subject of this section, and indeed, the entire chapter. This is why the chapter has been titled, “The Escape from Conflict.”

Conflict is the content of war, and the means of war. It cannot possibly foster peace. If your mind is occupied with thoughts of conflict, thoughts of attack, the memory that will come to you is not the memory of love (1:3)!

Why do people go to war? Or, on a personal level, why do we ever choose to engage in any kind of conflict? There can only be one reason: We believe that we can win, and we want to win (1:4). When we have an *inner* conflict, between what we think of as two parts of ourselves such as body and spirit, or ego and God, our willingness to engage in conflict must mean that “you believe the ego has the power to *be* victorious” (1:5). “Why else would you identify with it?” (1:6). Think about that for a moment.

Very often, maybe most of the time, we *do* identify with our egos. Would we do that at all if we knew that the ego could never win any battles? “Surely,” Jesus says, “you realize the ego is at war with God” (1:7) Reason would tell us that in a battle between the ego and God, the ego doesn’t have a chance. But we don’t listen to reason; we identify with our ego because we *do* believe that it can win the battle with God. That belief in the power of the separated will is, I believe, at the very core of what the ego *is*. Of course, God is not the ego’s *enemy*; God does not engage in conflict or warfare, so it is absolutely “certain [that the ego] has no enemy” (1:8).

?T-25.V.3:7 (CE), T-27.VII.1:12 (CE), T-21.IV.2:45 (CE)

Nevertheless, it is equally certain that the ego *does believe* it has an enemy in God, an enemy it *must overcome*, an enemy it believes it will *succeed* in overcoming (1:9).

And you and I *identify* with that ego and its insane beliefs. We identify with it because we share its belief in its eventual victory.

Now, I know that you are probably thinking, “No, not really. I already know that the outcome is as certain as God, that God will prevail in the end.” I think Jesus’ point here, and in the pages that follow, is that the amount of time we spend acting out of our egos *proves* that we *do* believe in the ego’s power to overcome God, despite our claims to the contrary.

## Paragraph 2

2 Do you not realize a war against yourself would *be* a war on God?  
Is victory conceivable? And if it were, is this a victory that you would want? The death of God, if it were possible, would be *your* death. Is this a victory? The ego always marches to defeat, because it thinks that triumph over you is possible, and God thinks otherwise. This is no war—only the mad belief the will of God can be attacked and overthrown. You may identify with this belief, but never will it be more than madness. And fear will reign in madness, and will seem to have replaced love there. This is the conflict’s purpose. And to those who think that it is possible, the means seem real.

### • Study Question •

2. *The ego believes it can overcome God because it believes it can “triumph” over us. “God thinks otherwise” (2:7). What do you think this means?*
  - A. *God thinks that the ego’s victory over our true nature is impossible.*
  - B. *God thinks that we really do want to have victory over Him.*
  - C. *God thinks that the ego can replace love with fear in our minds only if we are willing for that to happen.*

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“A war against yourself would *be* a war on God”? (2:1) Why is that? It should be obvious. If you are one with God.... The only way to think you have a conflict with God is to assume you are separate. And you’re not.

But if you are in a war with God, “Is victory conceivable?” (2:2). Again, it’s obvious the answer is, “No.”

Continuing with the examination of the absurd, Jesus asks, “But supposing even victory over God were somehow possible, is that something you would *want*?” (2:3) Here, in case we might think that vanquishing God could somehow actually be desirable, he pauses awhile to consider the implication of a victory over God, to make it abundantly clear that it is wholly *undesirable*.

If it were somehow possible for us to kill God (This is a *war*, not arm-wrestling), it would result in our own death, because God is the life with which we live (2:4). There’s no way anyone would consider *that* to be a victory (2:5). The insane wishes of the ego always bring about its own defeat. The ego believes that it can conquer *you* and survive. “The ego wants you dead, but not itself” (T-15.I.3:3 (FIP), T-15.I 3:5 (CE)). That cannot happen! The ego may believe it can vanquish you, but “God thinks otherwise” (2:6).

“God thinks otherwise.” What great news! I know that there have been times I’ve been pretty certain that my ego was going to win; that I was going to become dominated by it, and never free from it. But “God thinks otherwise.” If God thinks that the ego cannot defeat me, then *the ego can’t defeat me!* Yay!

In fact—that is, in *reality*—there is no war at all. There is nothing but “the mad belief that the Will of God can be attacked and overthrown” (2:7). How can we be at war with the ego?

“The ego is nothing more than a part of your belief about yourself” (T-4.VIII.7:1 (CE), T-4.VI.1:6 (FIP)).

“The authority problem remains the only source of perceived conflict, because the ego was made out of the wish of God’s Son to father Him. The ego, then, is nothing more than a delusional system in which you made your own father” (T-11.I.2:3–4 (CE), (T-11.Int.2:3-4 (FIP))).

“...the ego is nothing whether you invite it or not” (T-11.III.4:4 (CE), T-11.II.7:6 (FIP)).

The ego is “nothing more than a part of your belief about yourself,” “nothing more than a delusional system,” and putting it succinctly, “the ego is nothing.” How can you be at war with *nothing*? In fact, the ego *does not exist*<sup>1</sup>! It’s a phantom, a delusion, a mistaken, mad belief: nothing more. So it cannot possibly triumph over you.

Now, “you may *identify* with this belief, but never will it be more than madness” (2:8). You may—and probably still do—think that you *are* your ego, but that does not make it so. But it can cause all kinds of trouble in your life! “Fear will reign in madness, and will *seem* to have replaced love there” (2:9). Note that fear only *seems* to replace love, but when we are identified with our ego, fear seems very real. It not only seems *possible* that the ego might win, it seems like it has *already* won.

The whole purpose of this imaginary conflict, this war with ourselves, is to replace love with fear (2:10). And if we buy in to the ego’s madness, and think it is *possible* that the ego can achieve its purpose, then the *means* the ego uses—the conflict between us and our ego, or our ego and God—seems very real (2:11).

### Paragraph 3

3 Be certain that it is impossible God and the ego, or yourself and it, will ever meet. <sup>2</sup>You *seem* to meet and make your strange alliances on grounds that have no meaning, for your beliefs converge upon the body, the ego’s chosen home, which you believe is yours. <sup>3</sup>You meet at a mistake, an error in your self-appraisal. <sup>4</sup>The ego joins with an *illusion* of yourself you share with it. <sup>5</sup>And yet illusions cannot join. <sup>6</sup>They are the same, and they are nothing. <sup>7</sup>Their joining lies in nothingness; two are as meaningless as one or as a thousand. <sup>8</sup>The ego joins with nothing, *being* nothing. <sup>9</sup>The victory it seeks is meaningless as is itself.

<sup>1</sup> “...the ego does not exist” (T-4.V.16:1 (CE), T-4.III.9:3 (FIP)). “By steadily and consistently canceling out all its effects, everywhere and in all respects, He [the Holy Spirit] teaches that the ego does not exist and proves it. (T-9.IV.6:4 (CE), T-9.IV.5:6 (FIP))

• Study Question •

3. *We and the ego do seem to meet in the body, which we both believe is our home. If we can meet, battle between the ego and our true Self is possible. But we do not meet in reality. Why is this so?*
  - A. *Because our beliefs converge with the ego's on our bodies, which are meaningless.*
  - B. *Because the ego is nothing, and the body is nothing, and nothing plus nothing is still nothing.*
  - C. *Because both the ego and myself are illusions.*

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That conflict is impossible! We need to be convinced that the ego cannot encounter God, and in fact, *we* cannot meet our egos either (3:1). As I said above, how could that even be possible if the ego does not exist? Oh, we *seem* to meet our egos and bargain with them. We *seem* to meet through the body, which we have identified with, and which the ego has claimed as its home (3:2). Our bodies seem to prove that we are separate beings—egos. But that's just another form of illusion. Our bodies are not who we are, and the belief that the body is a real part of us is “a mistake, an error in your self-appraisal” (3:3). We share an illusion with our egos, the illusion that we are the body. That's the only way we (seem to) meet (3:4).

But “illusions cannot join” (3:5). Both the ego and the body are illusions. Therefore, it is impossible that they could join in any way. They are both the same—“they are nothing” (3:6). Here again the Course is insisting that the ego is nothing, and including the body as nothing as well. It doesn't matter how many nothings “join,” the total is still nothing (3:7). The body and the ego are intimately connected in their nothingness (3:8):

What is the ego? <sup>2</sup>Nothingness, but in a form that seems like something. <sup>3</sup>In a world of form the ego cannot be denied, for it alone seems real (C-6.2:1-3 (CE), C-2.2:1-3 (FIP)).

Because the ego is a meaningless nothing, any victory it seeks is equally meaningless (3:9).

## Paragraph 4 (4:1–7 (FIP))

4 Brother, the war against yourself is almost over. <sup>2</sup>The journey's end is at the place of peace. <sup>3</sup>Would you not now accept the peace offered you here? <sup>4</sup>This enemy you fought as an *intruder* on your peace is here transformed before your sight into the *giver* of your peace. <sup>5</sup>Your “enemy” was God Himself, to Whom all conflict, triumph, and attack of any kind are all unknown. <sup>6</sup>He loves you, perfectly, completely, and eternally. <sup>7</sup>The Son of God at war with his Creator is a condition as ridiculous as nature roaring at the wind in anger and proclaiming that it is part of itself no longer.

• Study Question •

4. *What is the primary thought about the ego's war with God that is set forth in this paragraph?*
  - A. *It is a hopeless war because we cannot ever defeat God.*

- B. *It is a war that is almost over because we have exhausted our means of warfare.*
- C. *It is a ridiculous war because God is not our enemy; He loves us, and we are permanently part of Him and of one another.*

Let's step back a moment and remind ourselves why Jesus seems to keep switching back and forth from calling this thing he is talking about "the war against yourself" and "a war on God." In a nutshell: it's both (2:1). But also, it's neither; it's a war that cannot really exist (3:1). So, when he now says, "the war against yourself is almost over," is it really *the war* that is almost over, or is it our *belief* in the war? The war never really was. We feel at times as though we are at war with our egos, but the ego is nothing, so we can't really be at war with it. "You are not two selves in conflict," Jesus says in T-16.III.6:2 (CE), 6:1 in FIP. Nor can the ego be at war with God, same reason.

For us, the illusory war is over the instant we recognize the unreality of the war and the reality of peace, and *accept* that peace (4:2–3). God, whom we believed was threatening our peace by what we imagined to be His harsh judgment, is now transformed into the *giver* of peace (4:4). God cannot be the enemy of anyone. "All conflict, triumph, and attack of any kind are all unknown" to God (4:5). How could this God be an enemy? All *conflict* is unknown to God: God does not oppose anyone. "God's Will does not oppose. It merely is." (W-166.10:1–2). All *triumph* is unknown: God never tries to "get the best of" anyone or need to be "better than" anyone. All *attack of any kind* is unknown: God does not and cannot even conceive of attack! He has never been an enemy. The picture of God given in the Bible's Old Testament, vengeful, punishing, even vindictive, is a reflection of the level of human consciousness at that time, and was never the truth about God.

Instead, "He loves you, perfectly, completely, and eternally" (4:6). I believe it was Hafiz (the Sufi poet) who wrote that God doesn't just love you, He *adores* you. Marcus Borg, the late, great biblical scholar and author, wrote:

For just a moment think of the difference in your life if you knew that at the deepest level of your being that God is besotted with you, that God yearns for you, yearns that you turn and be in relationship with God as the beloved of God.

That's what the Course is trying to get us to see. God is never *against* you, but always *for* you. This is an eternal love. A war between you and God is as impossible as nature rejecting the wind as part of itself (4:7)! It is literally impossible for God to reject us.

## Paragraph 5 (4:8–5:5 (FIP))

5 Could nature possibly establish this, and make it true? <sup>2</sup>Nor is it up to you to say what shall be part of you and what is kept apart. <sup>3</sup>The war against yourself was undertaken to teach the Son of God that he is not himself, and not his Father's Son. <sup>4</sup>For this, the memory of his Father must be forgotten. <sup>5</sup>It is forgotten in the body's life, and if you think you are a body, you will believe you *have* forgotten it. <sup>6</sup>But truth can never be forgotten by itself, and you have not forgotten what you are. <sup>7</sup>Only a strange illusion of yourself, a wish to triumph over what you are,

remembers not.

**• Study Question •**

5. *The war against ourselves is designed to teach us that we are not the Son of God, and to accomplish that, we must also forget that God is our Father. Have we forgotten? Which of the following answers is correct, according to this paragraph? (Indicate all that are correct.)*
- A. Yes, we believe we have forgotten God when we identify with the strange illusion of ourselves as a body.
  - B. No, we have not forgotten God.
  - C. Yes, we have forgotten God and must strive to remember Him.
  - D. All of the above.

It's *that* impossible that God could reject you. You are, literally, part of God. We toss around the words, "one with God," far too lightly. That oneness is not just being buds with God, not just agreeing with God or being *like* God. There is *no distinction* between us and God!

God shares His Fatherhood with you who are His Son, for He makes no distinctions in what is Himself and what is still Himself. What He creates is not apart from Him, and nowhere does the Father end, the Son begin as something separate from Him. (W-132.12:3-4)

There's no way nature can reject the wind; it's part of nature. There is no way for God to reject you; you are part of God (5:1). And just as God cannot reject you or anyone, neither can you—or at least, not in any way to make it true. It's not up to you. Imagine deciding that your big toe isn't part of your body. You can't. Even if you cut it off, it is still yours (5:2).

The ego led us to undertake a war with God, and a war against our Self, to convince us that we are not the inseparable extensions of God, and that we are not the Self as God created us (5:3). The only way to convince us that we are not the Son of the Father is to erase the memory of the Father from our minds (5:4). How can that be done? By convincing us we are bodies! "If you think you are a body, you will believe you have forgotten" the memory of God (5:5). You'll see that is true if you stop to think about it. Almost no one spontaneously remembers their oneness with God. There are stories about very young children who seem to remember, although I don't know if they are true or made up. I tend to believe we don't wind up in this illusory world unless we've already pushed down the memory of God; we come here to forget.

This whole business of our forgetting the memory of God and our true identity through war with God or others we do not recognize as part of ourselves was presented once before (at least), in Chapter 10, Section II, Paragraphs 4 and 5:

Whenever you attack, you are denying *yourself*. You are specifically teaching yourself that you are *not* what you are. Your denial of reality precludes acceptance of God's gift, because you have accepted something else in its place. If you understand that the misuse of defenses always constitutes an attack on truth, and truth is God, you will realize why this is always fearful. If you further recognize that you

are *part of God*, you will also understand why it is that you always attack yourself first.

All attack is self-attack. It cannot be anything else. Arising from your own decision not to be what you are, it is an attack on your identification. Attack is thus the way in which your identification is lost, because when you attack you must have forgotten what you are. Your reality *cannot* attack, and if your reality is God's, when you attack you are not remembering Him. This is not because He is gone, but because you are actively willing *not* to remember Him.

There is a whole constellation of ideas here: attack or conflict; war on the true Self; war on God; Oneness vs separation; identifying with the body; the memory of God. We can get distracted thinking about these individual elements, missing the forest for the trees, or missing the configuration of the constellation because of fascination with an individual star or two. But the meaning is in the whole. All of these things are related to one another, and affect one another.

The central point, I believe, is the Oneness: "You are *part of God*." A war against yourself would be a war on God. "...nowhere does the Father end, the Son begin as something separate from Him." If this is true, conflict isn't possible because there is only One of us here. Bodies cannot be the truth of us *because* they appear to be separate; they are the symbol of separation. Conflict assumes separation; therefore, the mind must be free of conflict for the memory of God, the realization of Oneness, to return.

We simply are not used to thinking and functioning from the basis of Oneness. Separate minds, separate bodies, separate interests are the basic assumptions by which we live. And that has to end. Because our minds are ruled by belief in separateness, we *think* that we have forgotten God. In reality, we are just *masking the memory*; it is still there. "Truth can never be forgotten by *itself*, and you have not forgotten what you are" (5:6). The only thing that does *not* remember God is the ego, "a strange illusion of yourself" (5:7).

The next section on "The Laws of Chaos" is, I believe, an attempt to unpack this constellation of concepts, in an effort to expose both the insanity of the ego and the degree to which it has infected our minds. Most people find this in-depth examination of the ego to be distressing, but it is necessary. We almost always underestimate the extent of the ego's hold on us, and Jesus warns us not to let that continue:

This is the insane world which you perceive, and do not underestimate the actual extent of its insanity. There is no area of your perception that it has not touched, and your dream *is* sacred to you. (T-14.I.3:6-7 (CE), T-14.I.2:6-7 (FIP))

## Paragraph 6

6 The war against yourself is but the battle of two illusions, struggling to make them different from each other in the belief the one which conquers will be true.<sup>2</sup> There is no conflict between them and the truth.<sup>3</sup> Nor are they different from each other. Both are not true, and so it matters not what form they take.<sup>4</sup> What made them is insane, and they remain part of what made them.<sup>5</sup> Madness holds out no menace to reality, and has no influence upon it.<sup>6</sup> Illusions cannot triumph over truth, nor can they threaten it in any way.<sup>7</sup> And the reality which they deny is not a part of them.

### • Study Question •

6. This paragraph speaks of “two illusions,” both of which are the same (illusions and not true). Try to identify what these two illusions are. It will be helpful to read T-23.I.6:1–2 and T-23.II.8:3–5 (T-23.In.6:1–2 and T-23.I.8:3–5 (**FIP**)).
  - A. My “good self” and my “bad self.”
  - B. The ego and Christ.
  - C. Myself as separate and whatever I seem to be in conflict with.

Jesus has referred to this battle of illusions (6:1) before (paragraph 3). There, it spoke of the ego and the body as parallel illusions, both equally meaningless. Here, it seems different. In his footnote on 6:1, Robert Perry identifies the two illusions as “your illusion of yourself and your illusion of another.” He points out that both are illusions of yourself because the other person is “part of you.” So, with that in mind, we can realize that the war we’re talking about in this paragraph consists of all the conflict with sense or feel or engage in with other people, or with God. Everything we imagine is outside of us is really a part of us. We may think we are at war with some awful person, but in reality we are at war with ourselves.

The goal of the warfare is to make the two illusions different from one another (6:1). Our egos are trying to substantiate themselves by defeating other egos. We want to be better than, wiser than, smarter than, holier than, richer than, even sicker than, unluckier than...there are a myriad of ways in which we try to validate our egos by comparing them favorably with other egos.

The Truth, which includes our True Self, has no conflict with these illusions (6:2). Truth needs no defense:

<sup>3</sup>For the truth needs no defense, and therefore no attack is possible.  
<sup>4</sup>Illusions can be brought to truth to be corrected. <sup>5</sup>But the truth stands far beyond illusions, and cannot be brought to them to turn them into truth. (W-107.5:3–5 (CE), W-pl.107.5:2–4 (FIP))

. The “two illusions,” which are not identified here, are hinted at in paragraph 4 (“This enemy you fought as an intruder on your peace is here transformed before your sight into the giver of your peace”) and are overtly identified in paragraph 8: “There is nothing you could attack that is not part of you. And by attacking it, you make two illusions of yourself in conflict with each other. And this occurs whenever you look on anything that God created with anything but love.” These lines imply that the “two illusions” are your illusion of yourself and your illusion of another. They are both “illusions of yourself” because this other person is “part of you.” By battling against a part of you, you are waging a war against yourself and also against your Creator.

The Truth does not engage with illusions to try to “correct” them. Doing so would grant them a reality they do not possess. The Truth simply stands and quietly waits. “God’s Will does not oppose. It merely is” (W-pI.166.10:1-2).

So, the illusions aren’t in conflict with the Truth (although they may think they are), nor are they really different from one another; both are simply *not true* (6:3–4). You as a separate self is an illusion; your brother or sister as a separate self is an illusion; and neither one is true! Therefore, it does not really matter what form these illusions take. You cannot make one illusion any more true than another illusion, no matter the form.

He goes on to refer to “what made them” (the two illusions), which is clearly the ego (6:5), stating once again that the ego is insane. It’s a bit confusing, because we are speaking of both the ego *and* an illusion of myself that I think is me, *and* an illusion of myself that I have projected onto another! Ken Wapnick suggests that the two illusions are “sinless victim” (that would be me, of course) and “sinful victimizer” (that would be the other person). Thinking of it that way helps me understand it a bit better. Both of these illusions “remain part of what made them” (the ego), so the ego contains both illusions. There aren’t three different things; they are all the ego, just different aspects of it. So, since the ego is insane, so are both illusions!

Reality cannot be affected by madness (6:6). The truth remains the truth no matter how madly our minds try to twist it. “I still remain as God created me,” and so do you. The ego is not a threat to our Reality, and the illusions are completely *devoid of* reality (6:7–8). Since *we* are real, the ego cannot be a part of us, because there is no reality in it.

## Paragraph 7

7 What you remember *is* a part of you. <sup>2</sup>For you must be as God created you. <sup>3</sup>Truth does not fight against illusion, nor do illusions fight against the truth. <sup>4</sup>Illusions battle only with themselves. <sup>5</sup>Being fragmented, they fragment. <sup>6</sup>But truth is indivisible, and far beyond their little reach. <sup>7</sup>You will remember what you know when you have learned you cannot be in conflict. <sup>8</sup>One illusion about yourself can battle with another, yet the war of two illusions is a state where nothing happens. <sup>9</sup>There is no victor and there is no victory. <sup>10</sup>And truth stands radiant, apart from conflict, untouched and quiet in the peace of God.

### • Study Question •

7. *What we remember, the reality of our oneness with God and one another, is a part of us (cf. 6:9 and 5:4). In the context of our relationships, what does this paragraph seem to be asking us to recognize?*
  - A. *That any apparent conflict with another is really an illusory battle between two illusions, both untrue, where nothing happens.*
  - B. *That we need not fight against our illusions.*
  - C. *Truth cannot be affected by our illusions.*
  - D. *That we cannot really be in conflict, and should learn this.*
  - E. *All of the above.*

•

On the other hand, “What you remember *is* a part of you” (7:1). The italics make it clear that this statement is being made in contrast to those at the end of Paragraph 6.

Reality is not a part of the ego, but the reality you remember *is* a part of *you*. “You have not forgotten what you are” (5:6). The illusion of you does not remember it, but *you* do. Of course you do, you have to, because “you *must* be as God created you” (7:2).

There is no need to struggle to remember; you *do* remember, beneath the ego’s madness. The memory of God *is there*. “Under the ego’s dark foundation is the memory of God” (T-13.III.3:1). Hidden, muddied over, drowned out by the ego’s insane caterwauling, but still there. The Truth does not need to fight against illusions, and illusions cannot affect the Truth. Illusions battle only with other illusions (7:3–4). The ego’s motivation for these illusions of ourselves, internalized or projected, is to separate, to fragment. So the illusions enter into conflict, competition, and war (7:5).

None of this has any effect on the truth; truth is “indivisible” (7:6). It “stands radiant, *apart* from conflict, untouched and quiet in the peace of God” (7:10). The illusions strut and posture, but when two illusions are at war, nothing really happens. No one wins; no one loses (7:7–8). Think about conflicts you’ve been in. Does anyone *really* win? You argue; sometimes one of you “wins” the argument; sometimes, literally, no one wins. You just arrive at a stand-off. But even when one person prevails, they don’t completely win. Maybe they feel guilty for brow-beating the other. They often learn the undying enmity of the “loser.” What was a friendship becomes a long-festered wound instead.

Beneath all that, the Course asserts, the truth stands unaffected, indivisible, radiant, and quiet in the peace of God. Sentence 7 declares: “You will remember what you know when you have learned you *cannot* be in conflict.” The memory of God returns to the quiet (unconflicted) mind. When conflict looms, we need to heed Lesson 34 in the Workbook: “I could see peace instead of this.”

## Paragraph 8

8 Conflict must be between two forces. <sup>2</sup>It cannot exist between one power and nothingness. <sup>3</sup>There is nothing you could attack that is not part of you. <sup>4</sup>And by attacking it, you make two illusions of yourself in conflict with each other. <sup>5</sup>And this occurs whenever you look on anything that God created with anything but love. <sup>6</sup>Conflict is fearful, for it is the birth of fear. <sup>7</sup>Yet what is born of nothing cannot win reality through battle. <sup>8</sup>Why would you fill your world with conflicts with yourself? <sup>9</sup>Let all this madness be undone for you, and turn in peace to the remembrance of God, still shining in your quiet mind.

### • Study Question •

8. Based on this paragraph, how would you describe or define attack or conflict?
  - A. Anything other than love.
  - B. The birth of fear.
  - C. A battle with a part of myself.
  - D. Madness.
  - E. All of the above.

This paragraph expands on the idea from 8:7 that “you *cannot* be in conflict.”

Here, clearly, the two illusions are the ego and its illusion who you are, and of who someone else (or *something* else) is. The illusion lies in the two-ness, making conflict possible.

Some of you may remember the slogan that became famous during the Viet Nam war: “Suppose they gave a war and nobody came?” That is essentially the core thought of Paragraph 8, which starts by saying that it takes two *forces* to have a conflict (8:1). The Truth is a force, but the ego is nothingness, and conflict “cannot exist between one power and nothingness” (8:2).

So it comes back to the realization that everyone and everything is *part of you*. The Course has stated this over and over and over:

"You can encounter only part of yourself because you are part of God, Who is everything" (T-8.III.7:1 (FIP)).

"Everyone God created is part of you and shares His Glory with you" (T-9.VI.3:9 (FIP)).

"Nothing around you but is part of you" (T-23.Int.6:1 (FIP)).

"And thus is every living thing a part of you, as of Himself" (T-29.VIII.9:9 (FIP)).

When we realize, and accept, that everything is part of us, we will have realized that there is nothing “out there” to be in conflict *with*. “There is nothing you *could* attack that is not part of you” (8:3). So when we *do* attack one another — when we attack *anything* — we have made up two illusions of ourselves *in conflict* with each other (8:4). This does not require us to become overtly hostile; it’s enough simply to “look on *anything* that God created with anything but love” (8:5). Our made-up images of ourselves are constantly in conflict with made-up images of everyone else, images that *we* have made up! “Anything but love” is attack.

I remembered that there was a line in the Course that began, “What is not love...,” so I searched on my computer for it. I did not find one. I found three, with three different ways of completing the thought! They are compelling. And when you realize that every living thing is a part of you, they make sense:

"What is not love is always fear, and nothing else" (T-15.X.1:5 (CE), T-15.X.4:5 (FIP)).

"What is not love is murder" (T-23.IV.8:4 (CE), T-23.IV.1:10 (FIP)).

"For here is everything perceived as one, and no one loses that each one may gain.

"Test everything that you believe against this one requirement, and understand that everything that meets this one demand is worthy of your faith. But nothing else. What is not love is sin" (T-25.VII.6:6-7:3 (CE), T-25.VII.5:4-6:3 (FIP)).

God *is* love, and if it’s not love, it’s not God. Living from love and perceiving all as One are intimately connected. The more I study the Course, the more I realize the transforming our minds from separated thinking to Oneness thinking is absolutely key to everything the Course teaches. Any thought that fails to recognize another person or thing as part of the One Self, part of *us*, misses the mark entirely.

So, "What is not love is always fear." In the current paragraph we find a similar statement: "Conflict is fearful, for it is the birth of fear" (8:6). If I believe I am in conflict with you, fear is the eventual outcome. There has to be an other, an opponent, and if there is, that gives birth to fear. But fear is not justified if we realize that the image of an opponent is an illusion created by our own minds (8:7). The ego is nothing, and the illusions of ourselves that it gives birth to cannot achieve reality through conflict with our internal self illusion. There is no enemy. It's all a distorted reflection of the battle within our mind.

We are filling the world with conflicts with ourselves. Jesus asks us why on earth we want to do such a thing (8:8)! The Holy Spirit waits within our minds to undo all the madness, enabling us to "turn in peace to the remembrance of God, still shining in your quiet mind" (8:9).

Think of some of the early Workbook lessons, and see how they are designed to help us put these teachings into practice.

"I can escape from the world I see by giving up attack thoughts."

"I am never upset for the reason I think."

"I see nothing as it is now."

"My thoughts are images I have made."

"I am determined to see things differently."

"What I see is a form of vengeance."

"My attack thoughts are attacking my invulnerability."

All of these lessons, and many others, now seem to me to be directly linked to the concepts we are studying in this section. *Of course* we have to give up attack thoughts (either giving or receiving attack), because it posits separateness, separateness which is not the truth. This lesson, and all these lessons, now seem to make so much more sense to me!

## Paragraph 9 (9:1–10:1 (FIP))

9 See how the conflict of illusions disappears when it is brought to truth! <sup>2</sup>For it seems real only as long as it is seen as war between conflicting truths—the conqueror to be the truer, the more real, the vanquisher of the illusion that was less real, made an illusion by defeat. <sup>3</sup>For conflict is the choice between illusions, one to be crowned as real, the other vanquished and despised. <sup>4</sup>Here will the Father never be remembered. <sup>5</sup>Yet no illusion can invade His home and drive Him out of what He loves forever. <sup>6</sup>And what He loves must be forever quiet and at peace, because it is His home. <sup>7</sup>And you who are beloved of Him are no illusion, being as true and holy as Himself.

### • Study Question •

9. When the "conflict of illusions" is "brought to truth" the illusion of conflict disappears. What phrase below best describes how conflict disappears?
  - A. We realize that the issue over which we are in conflict is meaningless.
  - B. We realize that the two parties to the conflict are in themselves both illusions.
  - C. We realize that whichever party wins the conflict is the most real.

Now, we are asked to apply all this, to "see how the conflict of illusions

disappears" (9:1). (Remember, this is talking about all the very real-seeming conflicts in your life, and for that matter, in the whole world. He is asking us to see *all of it* disappear!) How can that happen? "...when it is brought to truth" (9:1). Conflict seems real to us "only as long as it is seem as war between *conflicting truths*" (9:2). I have my truth, you have your truth, and they are in disagreement, so there is conflict. Our differing truths go to war, and the one that conquers, that wins the battle, has *vanquished* the other truth and made it (shown it to be) an illusion by defeating it (9:2). One truth is proven to be more real, more true, than the other. Our lives seem to be made up of such disputations.

But wait a minute! If my "truth" is going to war, it is based on separateness. Therefore, it can't be truth at all! What we have here is "the choice *between* illusions, one to be crowned as real, the other vanquished and despised" (9:3). And if my life consists of battles between illusions, I'm never going to remember the Father, never going to find God, never going to enjoy unitive consciousness (9:4). I have to stop giving central stage to all the battles in my life.

But you and I are the Father's home. "No illusion can invade His home and drive Him out of what He loves forever" (9:5). It's absurd to even *think* that God could be driven out, or *eased* out, of His own home, as the clever mnemonic for the ego ("Easing God Out") would have it. There can be no conflict in the home of God; it must be "forever quiet and at peace," and that is talking about *you and me* (9:6). We are God's home. The reality of us, the truth of us, is *forever* quiet and at peace. This is no illusion (9:7). If you or I perceive ourselves as a self that is separate from *anything or anyone*, and somehow in conflict with that "other," both perceptions — the perceptions of selves that are separate — are illusions. But "you who are beloved of Him," the "one Son" begotten of God (T-26.III.1:1-4; W-pI.99.9:2-4; W-pI.187.10:2-3), "are no illusion, being as true and holy as Himself" (9:7).

The following passage from Chapter 9 shows how this teaching runs all through the Text:

If your brothers are part of you, will you accept them? Only they can teach you what you are, and your learning is the result of what you taught them. What you call upon in them you call upon in yourself, and as you call upon it in them, it becomes real to you. God has but one Son, knowing them all as one. Only God Himself is more than they, but they are not less than He is. Would you know what this means?

4       If what you do to my brother you do to me, and if you do everything for yourself because we are part of you, everything we do belongs to you as well. Every Son God created is part of you and shares His glory with you. His glory belongs to Him, but it is equally yours. You cannot, then, be less glorious than He is. (T-9.VI.3:2-4:4 (CE), T-9.VI.3:1-11 (FIP)).

Here, you can see both the unity and the plurality of the Sonship. "God has but one Son" (unity), "knowing them all as one" (plurality *and* unity). And in the second paragraph, "Every Son God created" (plurality) "is part of you" (unity).

## Paragraph 10 (10:2–7 (FIP))

10 The stillness of your certainty of Him and of yourself is home to Both of You, Who dwell as one and not apart. <sup>2</sup>Open the doors of His most holy home and let forgiveness sweep away all trace of the belief in sin that keeps God homeless and His Son with Him. <sup>3</sup>You are not a stranger in the house of God. <sup>4</sup>Welcome your brother to the home where God has set him in serenity and peace, and dwells with him. <sup>5</sup>Illusions have no place where love abides, protecting you from everything that is not true. <sup>6</sup>You dwell in peace as limitless as its Creator, and everything is given those who would remember Him.

### • Study Question •

10. *We are God's home which He loves forever; He cannot be driven out. Yet something seems to keep God homeless; something seems to keep us out of this home with Him. What is that thing?*
- A. *The belief in sin*
  - B. *Illusions of conflict*
  - C. *The choice between illusions*
- 

Here, in 10:1, God's home is not simply "you" (as in the preceding paragraph, where "what God loves," which is "you," is His home), nor is your home simply "God" (as in T-8.IV.9:1 (CE) / T-8.V.5:4 (FIP), which speaks of "God who is our Home"). Instead it is a combination: The home is your "certainty of Him and of yourself," a profound certainty of our Oneness with God and all God's creation. This is home to *both* God and us, because God and we are One. It is interesting that the word "You" is capitalized, implying that in the "stillness of...certainty" of Oneness there is a realization that "You cannot...be less glorious than He is" (see last sentence of quotation above from Chapter 9). Not only is "You" capitalized; "Both" is also capitalized, as is "Who." This is a "Both...Who dwell as one and *not* apart" (10:1). Once again, One-ness and Both-ness.

When we try with our two-dimensional, Flatlander minds to think about God and God's creation, it seems as though we are either one or we are not one. And as living beings, either we are independent and separate, or we are a monolithic corporate being of some kind. We think from an "either-or" consciousness. But clearly, in the Course, it is not "either-or." It is "both-and." *Both* God and You share a home, and we dwell as one and *not* apart. We are somehow independent, and yet *not* independent.

I can't explain it. I don't believe we *can* understand it as long as our minds are ruled by the ego thought system, an ingrained belief in separateness. Yet I also believe that, when we have fully awakened to Oneness, the concept of separateness will be equally impossible for us to grasp.

. In the Old Testament, the most holy place is the inner sanctuary of the house of God (first the Tabernacle in the wilderness and later the Temple in Jerusalem), a sanctuary which could be entered only once a year by the High Priest, and where it was believed the presence of God literally dwelled. This paragraph and the next, with their references to the house of God, to opening the doors of God's most holy home, and to the temple of the Holy One (all referring to Heaven), are clearly drawing upon that imagery.

Having [accepted the Atonement for yourself], you will begin to learn and understand why, when you have met someone else, you have thought he *was* someone else. <sup>2</sup>And every holy encounter in which you enter fully will teach you that this is not so. <sup>3</sup>You can encounter only part of yourself, because you are part of God, Who is everything. (T-8.II.10:1–3 (CE), T-8.III.6:7-7:1 (FIP))

Who'd have ever thought of God as being homeless? The Course says we keep God homeless! How? When Jesus asks us to “Open the doors of His most holy home” (10:2), what do you think he is asking you to do? From the second phrase of the sentence, it seems to be allowing forgiveness to enter our minds and hearts. It is unforgiveness, based on a belief in sin, that keeps us apart, separate from one another and from God. Rejecting our Oneness is what “keeps God homeless” (10:2)! It keeps us homeless, too. Simply put, you will never realize your oneness with a person against whom you are holding a grudge, or refusing to include in your love. And since our home, and God’s, is the stillness of utter certainty of our Oneness, break the Oneness and you’ve become homeless and taken God with you! (Not in reality, but in our conception of God.)

We are not strangers in this house, and neither is our brother or sister. Through forgiveness, we can welcome him or her into the serenity and peace in which we dwell with God (10:3–4). The illusions of separate selves have no place here, a place saturated with the love of God (10:5). In this place of limitless peace, remembering our common Creator, everything is given to us (10:6).

The Hebrew Scriptures often spoke of God’s house or home, as Robert notes in Footnote 5 on page 711 of the CE. In Psalm 132, for instance, there is a striking passage that mirrors what the Course says here about how this is the home God loves and longs for, and the closing thought that “everything is given to those who would remember Him”:

For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation: “This is my resting place forever; here I will reside, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless its provisions; I will satisfy its poor with bread. Its priests I will clothe with salvation, and its faithful will shout for joy.”

(Psalms 132:13–16 NRSV)

## Paragraph 11 (10:8–11:6 (FIP))

11 Over His home the Holy Spirit watches, sure that its peace can never be disturbed. <sup>2</sup>How can the resting place of God turn on itself and seek to overcome the One Who dwells there? <sup>3</sup>And think what happens when the house of God perceives itself divided. <sup>4</sup>The altar disappears, the light grows dim, the temple of the Holy One becomes a house of sin and nothing is remembered except illusions. <sup>5</sup>Illusions *can* conflict, because their forms are different. <sup>6</sup>And they do battle only to establish which form is true.

### • Study Question •

11. *The second sentence is rhetorical; its real meaning is that it is impossible that God's resting place turn on itself and seek to evict God. But we can, and do, perceive the house of God (our Self) to be divided whenever we enter into conflict, and look on any part of God's creation with anything but love. In three or four sentences, describe what happens when we do this; try to interpret the figures of speech here—altar, light, and temple.*

Continuing to speak of God's home, Jesus assures us that the Holy Spirit watches over it, in certainty that the peace of this home can never be disturbed (11:1). Remember once again that our *true* Self is God's home, as He is ours, and thus our certainty of unity with God is the home we share together. The peace of this home *cannot* be disturbed, because there is only the One here, and nothing outside that Oneness with which to be in conflict.

Sometimes we seem to experience a split mind. We know there is something in us that wants to be the perfect expression of love and light, but doing so seems somehow beyond our reach. We may think we are experiencing a conflict between our egos and our true Self, but that cannot be! Because if we are identified with the true Self there *is* no ego with which to be in conflict. That experience of two selves in conflict is still only two illusions of ourselves. In the true Self “peace can never *be* disturbed.”

As indicated in the study question #11, the second sentence is rhetorical. Simply replace the words “how can” with “It is impossible that,” and you can see what the question implies. As God's resting place we cannot *truly* turn on ourselves and enter a conflict with the God within (11:2). But we can *perceive* ourselves that way (11:3), divided against ourselves.

What happens when we adopt that false perception of ourselves (as we all have done, and constantly continue to do) is expressed through the imagery of the altar, the temple, and the light. The altar, as we have seen before, represents the devotion of our

. Matthew 12:24-25 (RSV): But when the Pharisees heard it they said, It is only by Be-elzebul, the prince of demons, that this man casts out demons. Knowing their thoughts, he said to them, Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. This may also be a reference to a famous 1858 speech by (eventual) US President Abraham Lincoln in which he said, A house divided against itself cannot stand. I believe this government cannot endure, permanently, half slave and half free.

. A house of sin is of course a brothel, although that meaning should not be literally applied here. See also Luke 19:46 (KJV): Saying unto them, It is written, My house is the house of prayer: but ye have made it a den of thieves.

minds to God. When we adopt a divided consciousness, “the altar disappears” (11:4). Our devotion to God, our inner alignment with the omnipotent love within, vanishes, and we seem to become a body containing an ego, looking out for its own interests.

“The light grows dim.” The light is the wisdom and reason of the Holy Spirit within us. It dwindles as we begin to perceive ourselves as divided and in conflict with God.

“The temple of the Holy One becomes a house of sin.” Beside the biblical references in the footnote, I am also reminded of Jesus’ declaration when he drove the money-changers out of the temple in Jerusalem, saying they were turning his Father’s house into a den of robbers, which is much like a “house of sin.” A divided consciousness causes us to forget, or fail to experience, ourselves as God’s home, and instead to become a place that harbors grievances and judgments, seeing sin in others and ourselves.

Finally, when a divided consciousness takes over deeply, “nothing is remembered except illusions.” We completely forget the truth of our being, the image of God we are. We seem to *become* the two illusions, the good and bad self, and they *can* conflict “because their forms are different” (11:5). Sometimes the two are both with us. Other times one or the other, the good or the bad, is seen to be outside of us as someone else. They “battle only to establish which form is true” (11:6). The conflicting selves are never more than illusions.

## Paragraph 12

**12** Illusion meets illusion; truth, itself. <sup>2</sup>The meeting of illusions leads to war. <sup>3</sup>Peace, looking on itself, *extends* itself. <sup>4</sup>War is the condition in which fear is born and grows and seeks to dominate. <sup>5</sup>Peace is the state where love abides and seeks to share itself. <sup>6</sup>Conflict and peace are opposites: where one abides the other cannot be; where either goes the other disappears. <sup>7</sup>So is the memory of God obscured in minds that have become illusions’ battleground. <sup>8</sup>Yet far beyond this senseless war it shines, ready to be remembered when you side with peace.

### • Study Question •

12. This paragraph sums up the teaching of the section. It identifies the “irreconcilable beliefs” of conflict (war, fear) and peace (love). In the list below, indicate with a “C” or a “P” which items are true of conflict, and which are true of peace.
- A. Looks on itself and extends itself.
  - B. Fear is born in it.
  - C. Conflict cannot abide.
  - D. Peace cannot abide.
  - E. Seeks to dominate.
  - F. Seeks to share itself.

The contrasts between illusion and truth can perhaps be seen most clearly in a small table:

TRUTH	ILLUSION
Meets only itself	Meets only other illusions
Extends itself	Leads to war & conflict
Love abides and seeks to share itself	Fear is born, grows, seeks to dominate

Truth has nothing but itself to encounter, because nothing else exists (12:1). “Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists” (T-In.2:2–3). Therefore, there can be no conflict. There is nothing to conflict *with*.

Illusion, by contrast, can and does meet other illusions, and the result is always war (12:2).

Remember, the illusions we are talking about here are false self-concepts, perceptions of separate selves. When two egos meet, there is always conflict of some kind, because egos have conflicting interests and goals.

Peace (which seems to be used almost as a synonym for truth), seeing only itself, *extends* itself (12:3). In other words, when you and I are both identified with the One, we bring peace to our encounter, and the peace *increases* as a result of our loving encounter.

But when the friction of two egos produces war, that engenders fear (in both parties), which then grows and motivates both parties to attempt to dominate the other (12:4). By contrast, an encounter in which peace prevails (based on our Oneness) engenders love (instead of fear), which, instead of trying to dominate the other, seeks to *share itself* with the other (12:5).

Peace and conflict are total opposites, in every way. The presence of one excludes the other (12:6). This is why the consciousness of Oneness is so crucial. If we live from a consciousness of Oneness we exist in peace with all creation. If we live from a consciousness of separation we exist in conflict with all creation. You cannot have peace if you deny Oneness. The memory of God is “obscured” in us when we have identified with an illusion of a separate self that battles with other illusions (12:7).

Yet the memory of God persists, “beyond this senseless war.” As soon as we are willing to “side with peace,” the memory of God, alert for the opening, returns to our conscious minds (12:8).

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I would urge you, having gone through this section and this commentary with me, to pick up your book now, before attempting to answer the final study question, and read the entire section again at one sitting. I think you will find that it will be much less opaque, that its statements will begin to hang together for you, and the overall meaning will stand out clearly.

At least, I hope so.

### • Study Question •

**13. Summary:** *In three or four sentences, summarize what you believe to be the main message of this section.*

#### Legend:

Light underscoring indicates emphasis that appears in the Urtext or shorthand notes.

Text is taken from the Circle of Atonement's Complete and Annotated Edition (which I refer to as the "CE" for "Complete Edition" or "Circle Edition"). Please be aware that, even when the wording is exactly the same as the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often quite different in the CE, which restores the paragraph breaks found in the original notes. This results in different reference numbering as well. I will indicate for each paragraph the corresponding sentences in the FIP edition. You should be able to locate specific sentences in that edition if you need to, with a minimum of visual clutter in the commentary.

Passages that lie outside the current section will continue to have footnoted references. References to quotations are from the CE unless another version is being quoted, in which case that version is indicated.

Footnotes by the commentary author are shown in this font and size. Other footnotes come from the Complete Edition itself.

1. B
2. A
3. B
4. C
5. A and B
6. C
7. E
8. E
9. B
10. A

11. We lose our awareness of oneness with our Creator. Knowledge of reality disappears and we can no longer see. We believe that sin lives in us now, instead of God.

12. Conflict: B, D, E. Peace: A, C, F

13. **My summary:** The ego seeks to obscure the memory of God in our minds by causing us to see parts of ourself as separate and different. When we identify with this illusion of ourself, we come into conflict with the other “illusions” which are really parts of ourself. This induces fear and replaces love in our minds. The way out is by siding with peace instead of conflict; by forgiving and refusing to see sin in one another.