

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 26

Holy Ground

Section VII

Review of the Laws of Healing

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

Special Note

Due to lack of time, I've omitted any study questions and answers from this particular commentary. I hope to put them into the version I publish on the web or in print.

Overview of Section VII

The section attempts to give a quick, clear review of everything the Text has taught up to this point about healing.

I find that the "laws" are not very clearly identified, so I have tried to pull them out. Here is my best shot:

1. *All* sickness comes from separation.
2. Guilt *asks for* punishment, and its request is granted.
3. Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but *seem* to be apart from them.
4. Our mind is the only place where the effects of our belief in sin can be "utterly undone."
5. Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but *seem* to be apart from them.
6. Perception's laws must be reversed, because they *are* reversals of the laws of truth.
7. Forgiveness *takes away* what stands between your brother and yourself. It is the wish that you be *joined* with him and *not* alone.
8. Let us consider what the error *is*, so it can be corrected, *not* protected. Sin is belief attack can be projected *outside* the mind where the belief arose.
9. each idea the mind conceives but *adds* to its abundance, *never* takes away.

10. The miracle is possible when cause and consequence are brought together, *not* kept separate.
11. The miracle but calls your ancient name, which you *will* recognize because the truth is in your memory.
12. A miracle can make no change at all, but it *can* make what always has been true be *recognized* by those who know it not.

My selection of the laws is arbitrary; you might prefer including something else or excluding one or more of my twelve. “Forgiveness is your only function here” (8:1) is another good candidate. But I hope reading through this list will be a helpful reminder of this section’s message.

Paragraph 1

This is a course in miracles. ²And as such, the laws of healing must be understood before the purpose of the course can be accomplished. ³Let us review the principles that we have covered, and arrange them in a way that summarizes all that must occur for healing to be possible. ⁴For when it once is possible, it must occur.

The first two sentences make a clear connection between miracles and healing. Because it is “a course in miracles,” to accomplish its purpose (enabling us to be miracle workers) we have to understand the laws of healing (1:1–2). To work miracles of healing, we have to understand the principles on which healing is based.

So, in this section, we will review these principles *in a logical order* that shows, step by step, what has to happen for healing even to be possible (1:3). And making it possible is all that is needed, because “once is possible, it *must* occur” (1:4).

That’s a great goal, but I’ll be frank: I don’t think Jesus does a very good job of it. He does not clearly identify what these “laws of healing” are. They are not laid out showing what follows what, and what depends on what. We will have to eke them out as we go. I hope I can do that in a way that helps clarify the healing process..

Paragraph 2

All sickness comes from separation. ²When the separation is denied, it goes. ³For it is gone as soon as the idea which brought it has been healed and been replaced by sanity. ⁴Sickness and sin are seen as consequence and cause, in a relationship kept hidden from awareness that it may be carefully preserved from reason’s light.

Clearly, the first sentence states the first law: “All sickness comes from separation” (2:1). So realizing that all sickness arises because we are separated from God and one another, or more properly, we believe we are separate, is the basis of true healing. And conversely, when we deny the separation, sickness goes (1:2).

You might be thinking, “Can it really be that simple? Deny separation and my sickness disappears? Well, hey! I’ll just deny the separation! Hmmm. Nothing changed.” That’s why the first paragraph talks about “all that must occur for healing to be possible” (1:3).

Yes; it really is that simple: deny separation and sickness disappears (2:2). However, there is a lot that must occur before it is possible for us to truly and fully deny separation.

To really deny separation means that, in our minds, that idea “has been healed and been replaced by sanity” (2:3). And that is not accomplished simply by our saying, “OK, no separation.” It is a multi-part process. Once we fully understand and believe that “sin” (separation) is the cause and sickness is its consequence, we will be healed. But that relationship between sin and sickness has been carefully hidden from our awareness by our ego so that we don’t see it (2:4) Just hearing the words isn’t enough. We have to see it in the light of reason. It has to become a given to us, not something we have to labor to believe.

Paragraph 3

Guilt asks for punishment, and its request is granted;¹ not in truth, but in the world of shadows and illusions built on sin. ²The Son of God perceives what he would see, because perception is a wish fulfilled. ³Perception changes, made to take the place of changeless knowledge. ⁴Yet is truth unchanged. ⁵It cannot be perceived, but only known. ⁶What is perceived takes many forms, but none has meaning. ⁷Brought to truth, its senselessness is quite apparent. ⁸Kept apart from truth, it seems to have a meaning and be real. ⁹Perception’s laws are opposite to truth, and what is true of knowledge is not true of anything that is apart from it.

You will have noticed that we have switched from talking about “separation” to talking about “sin.” Sin is the reason we believe we are separate from God. Isn’t that what our churches (most of them) have been teaching us since childhood? “You’re a bod girl/boy!” We learn very early that we are not good enough, whatever that means. To believe I am not good enough is to believe in sin and separation. Ultimately, it mean I’m not good enough to be accepted by God.

That brings us to the Second Law of Healing: “**Guilt asks for punishment, and its request is granted**” (3:1). We could add here, “or seems to be.” In the world of truth there is no punishment (3:1); sin “has no consequence”: “There is no sin; it has no consequence” (W-pI.101.6:7 (FIP). (W-101.7:5–6 (CE)). But we believe there *is* sin; therefore we feel guilt, and guilt “asks for punishment” (3:1). Because our minds are so powerful, we make a “world of shadows and illusions *built on sin*” (3:1). In my opinion we have here the Third Law of Healing: “**The Son of God perceives what he would see,**

¹. Combined with the previous paragraph’s discussion of sickness as a consequence of sin, this means that sickness is a manifestation of guilt. Our guilt asks for punishment and we grant its request by manifesting sickness in our bodies.

because perception is a wish fulfilled.” We see what we want to see; our perception is only the fulfillment of our wish (3:2). Since our guilt wants punishment, we get it.

Perception is changeable. Our egos *made* changeable perception to take the place of changeless knowledge (3:3). Truth does not change, regardless of what our senses perceive (3:4). In fact, “Truth cannot be perceived, but only known” (3:5). Think about that for a moment. You can’t see truth. If you are like me, you have always wanted to see the truth. It’s disconcerting to be told truth can’t be perceived. But the good side is that truth *can* be known.

None of the various forms perception sees mean anything. They are all projections of our thoughts and wishes (3:6). That’s why truth cannot be perceived. When we put our perceptions alongside of the truth, the senselessness of perception can clearly be seen (3:7). Only when we keep perception apart from truth it seems to have a meaning and be real (3:8). So, to be healed, we must learn to mistrust our perceptions, to realize they are projections of our wishes, and instead seek to know the truth. The laws that govern perception are diametrically opposed to the truth, and the truth of knowledge is “*not* truth of *anything* that is apart from it” (3:9).

I would summarize a Fourth Law of Healing like this: **All perceptions must be brought to truth, not kept apart.**

Paragraph 4

4 Yet has God given Answer to the world of sickness, Which applies to all its forms. 2God’s Answer is eternal, though It operates in time, where It is needed². 3But because It is of God, the laws of time do not affect Its workings. 4It is in this world but not a part of it.³ 5For It is real, and dwells where all reality must be. 6Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but seem to be apart from them. 7Ideas are of the mind. 8What is projected out and seems to be external to the mind is not outside at all, but an effect of what is in, and has not left its source. 9God’s Answer lies where the belief in sin must be, for only there can its effects be utterly undone and without cause.

² “God’s Answer” here, though not specified, is almost certainly the Holy Spirit, since a similar focus on God’s Answer is found two sections before this, and there the Answer is the Holy Spirit. For instance, note the similarities between these two sentences, one from that earlier section and one from the current section: 1) “This terrible illusion was denied in but the time it took for God to give His Answer to illusions for all time and every circumstance” (T-26.V.11:2). 2) “Yet has God given Answer to the world of sickness, Which applies to all its forms” (4:1 of this section).

³ This is a reference to the popular saying “Be in the world but not of it,” which is based on passages in the gospel of John, such as 17:11 and 17:16 (RSV): “And now I am no more in the world, but they are in the world....They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.”

God has given Answer to the sick projections of our minds, an answer that applies to *every* form projection may take (4:1). It is an *eternal* answer, but because it is needed in time, it operates there, yet remains completely unaffected by the laws of time (4:2–3). It is *in* the world but not a *part* of the world (4:4). God's Answer dwells in God, in eternity, not in the world (4:5).

The discussion seems to switch in the middle of this paragraph, and begins talking about ideas and the mind. It begins with the Fifth Law of Healing: “**Ideas leave not their source, and their effects but seem to be apart from them**” (4:6). This is one of the central ideas of the Course; the first five words appear in this exact form six times in the Text and Workbook. It's important that we understand it.

When we begin to learn that our thoughts can change the world, or that changing our mind can change our lives, we often encounter doubt in ourselves. “How can what I think affect the physical world?” we may ask ourselves. This idea from the Course can help us understand. When you or I think that our thoughts are in our mind and nowhere else, certainly not outside in the physical world, we are completely correct! Ideas never leave our minds; that's what this law of healing teaches. “Ideas are of the mind” (4:7) and that does not change. And yet, what about the teaching that we can be healed by changing our minds?

The answer to our question about how is it possible that our thoughts can change the outside world is this: There *is* no outside world. The effects of our ideas only *seem* to be apart from our minds; in fact, they are within them. Sentence 8 makes it clear:

What is projected out and seems to be external to the mind is not outside at all, but an effect of what is in, and has not left its source.

In other words, what you think of as the outside world is really *inside your mind* and nowhere else. There *is* no world outside your mind! T-12.III, paragraphs 6 & 7 (FIP), T-12.V, Paragraphs 1–3 (CE) explain this in more detail.⁴

Identifying with our egos causes profound inner anxiety because we believe we have done some kind of permanent evil, that we have sinned, but we cannot abide knowing that our belief that sin is real is the cause of our own anxiety. Instead, we project the cause outward, imagining that there is an outside world that is antagonistic toward us, that this outside world is the cause of our anxiety. Actually, there *is* no outside world. We make the world. It exists only within our minds, but we cannot unload our anxiety on something within ourselves. Seeing this world as outside of us is crucial to our self-deception. “Everything you perceive as the outside world represents your attempt to maintain your ego-identification, for everyone believes that identification is salvation.”

But consider what has happened, for thoughts have consequences to the thinker. You are at odds with the world as you perceive it because you think it is antagonistic to you. This is a necessary consequence of what you have done. You have projected outward what is antagonistic to what is inward, and therefore you would have to perceive it this way. That is why you must realize that your hatred is in your mind and not outside it before you can get rid of it, and why you must get rid of it before you can perceive the world as it really is. (see reference above).

So, when our current text in Chapter 26 says that God’s Answer lies where the problem is, it means the Answer is also within our minds. **Our mind is the only place where the effects of our belief in sin can be “utterly undone” (4:9).** That is the next “law of healing.”

⁴ To identify with the ego is to attack yourself and make yourself poor. ²That is why everyone who identifies with the ego feels deprived. ³What he experiences is then depression or anger, but what he did was to exchange his self-love for self-hate, making him afraid of himself. ⁴He does not realize this. ⁵Even if he is fully aware of anxiety, he does not perceive its source as his own ego-identification, and he always tries to handle it by making some sort of insane “arrangement” with the world. ⁶He always perceives this world as outside himself, for this is crucial to his adjustment. ⁷He does not realize that he makes this world, for there is no world outside him.

² If only the loving thoughts of God’s Son are the world’s reality, the real world must be in his mind. ²And everything else must be illusion. ³His insane thoughts, too, must be in his mind, but an internal conflict of this magnitude he cannot tolerate. ⁴For a split mind is endangered, and the recognition that it encompasses completely opposed thoughts within itself is intolerable. ⁵Therefore, the mind projects the split, not the reality. ⁶Everything you perceive as the outside world represents your attempt to maintain your ego-identification, for everyone believes that identification is salvation.

³ But consider what has happened, for thoughts have consequences to the thinker. ²You are at odds with the world as you perceive it because you think it is antagonistic to you. ³This is a necessary consequence of what you have done. ⁴You have projected outward what is antagonistic to what is inward, and therefore you would have to perceive it this way. ⁵That is why you must realize that your hatred is in your mind and not outside it before you can get rid of it, and why you must get rid of it before you can perceive the world as it really is.

Paragraph 5

5 Perception's laws must be reversed, because they *are* reversals of the laws of truth. ²The laws of truth forever will be true and cannot be reversed, yet can be seen as upside down. ³And this must be corrected where the illusion of reversal lies. ⁴It is impossible that one illusion be less amenable to truth than are the rest. ⁵But it is possible that some are given greater value, and less willingly offered to truth for healing and for help. ⁶No illusion has any truth in it. ⁷Yet it appears some are more true than others, although this clearly makes no sense at all. ⁸All that a hierarchy of illusions can show is preference, not reality.

All of this has to do with our perceptions. We do perceive a world outside of us. We do believe that perception works from outside in, that something external to us causes what we perceive and causes mental and emotional reactions in us. Someone speaks a harsh word and we feel attacked; the world's political situation causes us to be afraid. And so on. Those laws of perception must be reversed (5:1). I would call this the sixth law of healing: **Perception's laws must be reversed, because they *are* reversals of the laws of truth.**

We must come to understand that perception works from inside out, that something *internal* to us causes what we perceive as if it were outside. The mental and emotional states are not the *result* of our perception, they are its *cause*.

Truth and its laws are true *forever*. We cannot actually reverse them or undo them. All we can do is misperceive them and *see* them *as if* they are upside down (5:2). That happens in the mind. Therefore "...this must be corrected where the illusion of reversal lies" (5:3), that is, in the mind.

All illusions are equally correctable (5:4). "There is no order of difficulty in miracles" (see T-1:1). However, we may value one illusion more than another. This is the reason that it seems that some conditions are more difficult to correct. Some illusions seem to be more true than others (5:7), although it makes no sense to talk about an illusion having *more* truth than any other, because "*No*" illusion has *any* truth in it" (5:6). When we place more value on a particular illusion, we are less willing to allow the truth to correct it (5:5). Any seeming "hierarchy of illusions" is completely due to our *preference* for some illusions over others. In reality there is no hierarchy (5:8).

I would say this paragraph sets forth another law of healing: **All illusions are equally correctable. Any appearance of more or less difficulty is due purely to our mind's preferences.**

Paragraph 6

What relevance has preference to the truth? ²Illusions are illusions, and are false. ³Your preference gives them no reality. ⁴Not one is true in any way, and all must yield with equal ease to what God gave as Answer to them all. ⁵God's will is one, and any wish that seems to go against His will has no foundation in the truth. ⁶Sin is not error, for it goes beyond correction to impossibility.⁵ ⁷Yet the belief that it is real has made some errors seem forever past the hope of healing, and the lasting grounds for hell. ⁸If this were so would Heaven be opposed by its own opposite, as real as it.

Our preference for one illusion over another changes nothing in reality (6:1, 3).

Illusions are illusions, and are false (6:2). As paragraph 3 pointed out, Illusions change, but truth never changes. The fact that you prefer one illusion over another gives no more reality to that illusion than any other illusion has — which is precisely *none* (6:3). There is no sense in which an illusion can be real; therefore, all illusions dissipate when confronted with the Truth, God's Answer, given in and as the Holy Spirit (6:4).

Consider the things in this world that bug you or cause you to be fearful. Then, consider that those illusions are not *causing* anything in you; rather, you are causing *them*. I am not saying that you broke a leg because you somehow chose to do it, nor am I saying that any one of us is the cause of things like mass shootings. These things reflect the underlying belief in the value of our bodies that is held by the entire human race, or in the case of mass shootings, belief in the power of violence. But you *are* the cause of how you *react* to these things.

I ran across a very interesting passage from Ernes Holmes, the founder of Religious Science. It is taken from his little book, *Science of Mind Home Study Course*, and says much the same thing the Course is trying to get across here:

When we fret ourselves in the presence of an irritating circumstance, we are admitting the presence of something that is NOT a complete expression of God. Thus we perpetuate a false belief, which is bound to color our experiences. On the other hand, when we hold to the Truth, and persist in seeing God in every person or circumstance, then that which is truth is bound to come forth, and we find ourselves becoming conscious heirs of all the good in the universe. To close our eyes to the fact that God is in EVERYTHING in His universe is to give a false reality to something that is not so. Thus we tend to attract that to which we have given a reality, which in itself it does not have.

A proper understanding of this fundamental fact will wipe out any tendency toward complaining about anything that happens.

⁵. “Sin versus Error” (T-19.II) explains that sin is an error (an attack) seen as having real destructive effects and thus causing real and unalterable guilt: “To sin would be to violate reality and to succeed. Sin is the proclamation that attack is real and guilt is justified” (T-19.II.2:2-3). This is why sin is impossible, because reality cannot be violated.

Holmes, Ernest . Science of Mind Home Study Course. Kindle Edition.

When I react to anything as if it were “something that is NOT a complete expression of God,” I am giving in to a false belief. The belief is false because God is all there is; there is nothing that is not God in expression. On the other hand, when I see “God in every person or circumstance,” I am contributing to the manifestation of Truth.

Okay. I’m getting into things that are hard to understand or accept. How, you may ask, can a mass shooting be seen as “a complete expression of God”? That demented shooter is just as much a child of God as you are. I know that’s hard to accept; there seems to be no evidence of it. But when we choose to see that person as evil, as an expression of something that is not God, we are — as the Course puts it — making the error real. The shooter is a child of God caught in a profound and terrible error, but error is not “sin.” The error is not his reality. If we are following the Course, or Ernest Holmes, we must, and we *can*, choose to see God in that shooter. We must look for the Truth in every person and circumstance. Maybe we won’t be able to see it at once. Maybe never. But we always must affirm, “I am determined to see things differently” (W-21).

Let’s recall that we are discussing the laws of *healing*, and apply this to our illnesses. (It’s a bit easier than mass shootings!) We can look at our illnesses and infirmities, not as something beyond ourselves that is attacking us, but as something we are (at least partially²) responsible for. We can see God in them, and look for what they can teach us. At the same time, we can see *ourselves* as God’s expression, and not make the mistake of blaming ourselves or feeling guilty for being sick.

Things that seem to go against God’s will have “*no* foundation in the truth” (6:5). It’s okay to see things as errors, but not as sin. They are not the same thing. To view a thing as sin means that “it goes *beyond* correction to impossibility” (6:6).⁶ This belief that sin is somehow real is what sucks away all hope of healing, and causes us to see sin as “the lasting grounds for hell” (6:7).

We believe that God is all there is. As the Course puts it, “Nothing real can be threatened. Nothing unreal exists.” Unity teaches, “There is One Presence and One Power, God, the good, omnipotent.” Science of Mind declares, “There is only One Mind in the universe” and “God is all there is...there is nothing in the universe but God.” We contradict that when we view anything as sin, because it posits a power that is other than God. If sin is real, “Heaven (would) be opposed by its own opposite, as real as it.”

And if there really are two equal powers, Heaven and Hell, God and the devil, we are never going to get out of this mess. I choose to believe otherwise!

⁶ “Sin is the one thing in this world that cannot change. It is immutable, and on its changelessness the world depends.” (T-25.VI.1:2–3 (CE), T-25.VII.1:2-4 (FIP)).

Paragraph 7

Then would God's will be split in two and all creation be subjected to the laws of two opposing powers, until God becomes impatient, splits the world apart, and relegates attack unto Himself. ²Thus has He lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His love at last to vengeance's heels.⁷ ³For such an insane picture an insane defense can be expected, but cannot establish that the picture must be true. ⁴Nothing gives meaning where no meaning is, and truth needs no defense to make it true. ⁵Illusions have no witnesses and no effects. ⁶Who looks on them is but deceived.

Jesus goes on to carry the effects of the mistaken belief in sin to ludicrous lengths. Actually, the ludicrous lengths are pretty darn close to the teaching of fundamentalist Christianity with its belief in Armageddon, the Great Tribulation, and the last judgment. It's the viewpoint, frankly, of the book of Revelation in the Bible, if that book is taken as a picture of a future physical reality rather than our struggle to cleanse our consciousness of mistaken thoughts.

God's will split in two; all creation subjected to the laws of two opposing powers; that's what logically lies beneath any belief in sin's reality. And if this is so, eventually "God becomes impatient, splits the world apart, and relegates attack unto Himself" (7:1). That is exactly the picture the fundamentalists teach. God finally has had it with us sinners. Jesus appears as a figure of vengeance:

"Then I turned to see whose voice it was that spoke to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands I saw one like the Son of Man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash across his chest. His head and his hair were white as white wool, white as snow; his eyes were like a flame of fire, his feet were like burnished bronze, refined as in a furnace, and his voice was like the sound of many waters. In his right hand he held seven stars, and from his mouth came a sharp, two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining with full force" (Revelation 1:12–16 NRSV)

⁷ The idea in this sentence and the previous one is that, if Heaven were truly opposed by an equally real opposite, then all creation would be "subjected to the laws of two opposing powers"—with God as the good power and sin as the evil power, both of them exerting their influence on the realm of creation. This situation would persist indefinitely, until God becomes impatient and steps in to end the situation Himself. He assigns to Himself the function of attack ("relegates attack unto Himself") and defeats sin by bringing vengeance down upon it. Yet by utilizing the aggressive means of sin (attack), He has become possessed by the very evil He sought to defeat. "Thus has He lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His love at last to vengeance's heels." To bring His love to vengeance's heels is to force His love to obey vengeance (the literal meaning of to "bring to heel" is to order a dog to walk close behind you).

“When he opened the sixth seal, I looked, and there came a great earthquake; the sun became black as sackcloth, the full moon became like blood, and the stars of the sky fell to the earth as the fig tree drops its winter fruit when shaken by a gale. The sky vanished like a scroll rolling itself up, and every mountain and island was removed from its place. Then the kings of the earth and the magnates and the generals and the rich and the powerful, and everyone, slave and free, hid in the caves and among the rocks of the mountains, calling to the mountains and rocks, “Fall on us and hide us from the face of the one seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb; for the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?”” (Revelation 6:12–17 NRSV)

Later in Revelation it speaks of battles that leave ““blood ... as high as a horse’s bridle, for a distance of about two hundred miles.” (Revelation 14:20 NRSV). It truly is a horrible book, coming from a very low level on consciousness. If you have never read it, good! I’d say, don’t. There *have* been good metaphysical interpretations of it. Charles Fillmore, founder of Unity, had this to say about it:

...the whole book is the picture of a redeemed man; therefore there is no doubt that the 11th chapter is representative of an inner work, something that will take place in each one as he is being transformed into the perfect image and likeness of God.

Fillmore, Charles. Metaphysical Bible Dictionary (with linked TOC) (p. 707).

However, this takes advanced metaphysical interpretation. It’s not easy to get by the violence of the book. It is a picture, as ACIM says, of a God who has “lost His Mind, proclaiming sin has taken His reality from Him and brought His love at last to vengeance’s heels” (7:2). People do defend this notion of God’s final vengeance, but it is as insane as what it defends, and “cannot establish that the picture must be true” (7:3). You can’t give meaning to the meaningless, and “the vengeance of God” is a meaningless concept (7:4). People who entertain this idea are simply “deceived” (7:6).

Paragraph 8

Forgiveness is your only function here, and serves to bring the joy this world denies to every aspect of God’s Son where sin was thought to rule. ²Perhaps you do not see the role forgiveness plays in ending death and all beliefs that rise from mists of guilt. ³Sins are beliefs which you impose between your brother and yourself. ⁴They limit you to time and place, and give a little space to you, another little space to him.⁸ ⁵This separating off is symbolized in your perception by a body, which is clearly separate and a thing apart. ⁶Yet what this symbol represents is but your wish to *be* apart and separate.

⁸. Sin entails the belief that we are separate creatures, each fighting against the whole to meet our needs and each lost in our private sins. See T-30.III.3:6: “For sin is the idea you are alone and separated off from what is whole.”

We are not here to proclaim vengeance or point out people's failings; our only function in this insane world is forgiveness. By it, we bring joy to this world, joy that the world wants to withhold from those it considers "sinners" (8:1). We may not realize the power of forgiveness to end guilt and even death (8:2). So Jesus explains a bit.

Sins are beliefs that put up a barrier between you and your brother (8:3). They require a view of time and place that is not the truth. For instance, the past does not determine the future. Time itself is an illusion, but sin always involves some judgment on past behavior that brings guilt to a person in the present. They presuppose a limitation to a particular place, with you in one little space, the "sinner" in another little space (8:4). In other words, *separate*.

That separation is symbolized by our perception of bodies, which are "clearly separate and...apart" (8:5). The reason we perceive bodies is simply that we *wish* to be apart and separate. Remember: Perception is caused by our wishes (3:2).

Paragraph 9

9 Forgiveness takes away what stands between your brother and yourself. 2It is the wish that you be joined with him and not alone. 3We call it "wish" because it still conceives of other choices, and has not yet reached beyond the world of choice entirely. 4Yet is this wish in line with Heaven's state, and not in opposition to God's will. 5Although it falls far short of giving you your full inheritance, it does remove the obstacles which you have placed between the Heaven where you are and recognition of where and what you are. 6Facts are unchanged. 7But facts can be denied and thus unknown, though they were known before they were denied.

I'd call the first two sentences the seventh law of healing: **Forgiveness takes away what stands between your brother and yourself. 2It is the wish that you be joined with him and not alone.**

Forgiveness takes all this separation away (9:1)! Instead of wishing for separation and perceiving it, you wish for joining with your brother, and for not being alone (9:2). That wish produces its own perception. This isn't a perfect change of heart, because "wish" still implies that other things are possible (9:3). But the wish for joining lines up with the truth of Heaven and God's will, and does not oppose them (9:4).

Forgiveness is great and has abundant rewards (see Lesson 121, "Forgiveness offers everything I want"), but there is so much more to come! It gives us "everything [we] want" and yet "it falls far short of giving you your full inheritance" (9:5)! What forgiveness does is to remove all our blocks to the awareness of love's Presence, blocks to "*recognition of where and what [we] are*" (9:5). That full and complete recognition of our True Identity as expressions of God is the full inheritance that lies yet ahead of us. Meister Eckhart, in the 13th Century, once said:

"Here God's ground is my ground and my ground is God's ground. Here I live from my own as God lives from His own."

The Course calls us all the Son of God and then says, “What He creates is not apart from Him, and nowhere does the Father end, the Son begin as something separate from Him.” (W-132.12:4)

We may know this as a mental “fact,” and accept it, but the full “recognition” of it is still future. We still experience ourselves as separate beings, separate from one another and from God. That’s not the truth. But forgiveness has removed the barriers to our recognition of the truth.

The truth is, God’s ground and my ground are one ground. That has not changed (9:6). Once, we knew that, but since then we’ve denied it with forceful will and ingenious self-deception. So well have we done this that we no longer *know* the truth (9:7).

Paragraph 10

10 Salvation, perfect and complete, asks but a *little* wish that what is true be true, a *little* willingness to overlook what is not there, a *little* sigh that speaks for Heaven as a preference to this world which death and desolation seem to rule. ²In joyous answer will creation rise within you to replace the world you see with Heaven, wholly perfect and complete. ³What is forgiveness but a willingness that truth be true? ⁴What can remain unhealed and broken from a unity which holds all things within itself? ⁵There is no sin. ⁶And every miracle is possible the instant that the Son of God perceives his wishes and the will of God are one.

It begins with forgiveness. Then, our way home, back to what we once knew, called “salvation, perfect and complete,” only asks for a *little* wish that all this be true, a *little* willingness to look past “what is not there,” that is, the world itself and our bodies and the non-existent “sins” we have invented in ourselves and others, and “a *little* sigh that speaks for Heaven as a preference to this world which death and desolation seem to rule” (10:1). The repeated emphasis on the word “little” makes it clear that God isn’t asking much of us. He isn’t asking for a *complete* wish, a *complete* willingness, and a *complete* preference for Heaven. Just a little one. Just what Jesus elsewhere calls “a nod to God” (T-24.VI.12:4 (FIP), (T-24.VII.12:4 (CE)). What a blessing to know that! We don’t need to beat ourselves up for being imperfect spiritual practitioners. We can forgive ourselves. It’s enough if we exercise a little willingness, a little wish that all this be true.

If and when we can muster even that much, the divine creative power will surge up within us to replace our misguided perceptions of the world with “Heaven, wholly perfect and complete” (10:2). It’s similar to power steering in a car. We expend a little energy to turn the steering wheel, and the car’s system augments that with all the strength needed to actually turn the wheels of the automobile. (If you’re old enough to have driven cars without power steering you know just how much assistance power steering gives us. Or, try turning off the engine and turning your wheels!) We summon up a little willingness and creation is unleashed within us.

That's really all that forgiveness is: "A willingness that truth be true" (10:3). You look upon another person and find yourself *willing* to perceive them as without sin, innocent. Do that, and the Holy Spirit within will make it so for you.

If God is all there is, "a unity which holds all things within itself" (10:4), how could anything remain "unhealed and broken"? Because God is one, and we are one with God, "There is *no* sin" (10:5). None. For sin to exist, something would have to remain unhealed and broken, and that simply is not possible. On the contrary, "*every* miracle is possible" once we realize that we have aligned our wishes with God's will for unity (10:5). *No* sin is possible. *Every* miracle is possible.

Paragraph 11

11 What is the will of God? ²He wills His Son have everything. ³And this He guaranteed when He created him *as* everything. ⁴It is impossible that anything be lost if what you *have* is what you *are*. ⁵This is the miracle by which creation became your function, sharing it with God. ⁶It is not understood apart from Him, and therefore has no meaning in this world. ⁷Here does the Son of God ask not too much, but far too little. ⁸He would sacrifice his own identity with everything to find a little treasure of his own. ⁹And this he cannot do without a sense of isolation, loss, and loneliness. ¹⁰This is the treasure he has sought to find. ¹¹And he could only be afraid of it.

What is God's Will, this will to which we must align our wishes? That "His Son have everything" (11:1–2). Aligning with that sounds quite attractive, doesn't it?

Then Jesus declares that having everything is guaranteed because God created us *as* everything (11:3). What does it mean that we have been created "as everything"? It means that what we *have* is what we *are* (11:4). You are the entirety of God's creation; you are the universe! And there is nothing outside of you.

What is beyond God? If you who hold Him and whom He holds are the universe, all else must be outside, where nothing is. (T-9.V.6:3–4 (CE), T-16.III.6:2-3 (FIP))

There is nothing outside you. That is what you must ultimately learn, for it is in that realization that the Kingdom of Heaven is restored to you. For God created only this, and He did not depart from it nor leave it separate from Himself. (T-16.II.1:1–3 (CE), T-18.VI.1:1-3 (FIP))

The Course keeps emphasizing that our reality is invisible, non-material, and that what we deem "material reality" does not even exist anywhere but in our confused thoughts. "There is nothing outside you." We are so thoroughly brain-washed, by ourselves, that the assertion of this statement seems impossible to accept. The Kingdom of Heaven is within us, and that is all there is! Our difficulties arise in this conflict between two visions of reality, the outer, material world or the inner, non-material one. We still find it difficult to accept the total unreality of the material world. Our learning

process is just this: Learning that there is nothing outside of us, that what we have is what we are.

By creating us as everything, creation *for us and by us* became possible, because we exist in the inner world as part of the immortal, invisible God (11:5). As long as we believe we are apart from God, creation will have no meaning. Creation isn't possible for us until we realize that we live and move and have our being in God, and nowhere else (11:6).

Paragraph 12

12 Is fear a treasure? ²Can uncertainty be what you want? ³Or is it a mistake about your will and what you really are? ⁴Let us consider what the error is, so it can be corrected, not protected. ⁵Sin is belief attack can be projected *outside* the mind where the belief arose. ⁶Here is the firm conviction that ideas *can* leave their source made real and meaningful. ⁷And from this error does the world of sin and sacrifice arise.⁹ ⁸This world is an attempt to prove your innocence while cherishing attack. ⁹Its failure lies in that you still feel guilty, though without an understanding why. ¹⁰Effects are separated from their source. ¹¹They seem to be beyond you to control or to prevent.

Separation always causes fear. If there is no “other,” there is nothing to be afraid of, but if there is an “other,” fear is inevitable. Is that something you really want (12:1)? When we live in a world of separate identities we can never be certain what any of these other, separated beings will do: “Can uncertainty be what you want?” (12:2) Or is our cherished separateness really nothing but a mistake about our will (what we really want) and what we *really* are (12:3)?

Here we have the eighth law of healing: **Let us consider what the error *is*, so it can be corrected, *not* protected. Sin is belief attack can be projected *outside* the mind where the belief arose.**

Of course, that's what the Course has been telling us: that it our belief that we want separation is an unfortunate mistake with terrible consequences (This mistake produces hell!), and our belief that we are bodies containing a mind, a mind that often leads us astray (into “sin”), is a mistake about our true nature as God's perfect child. We are not inherently flawed or wicked beings; we are inherently good.

⁹ In other words, we think we can project attack outside our minds. The attack thus seems to leave our minds and truly injure people outside ourselves, and this seems to make us sinful. Because of this same projection of attack, the impulse of attack now seems to be in the world, not in our minds. And so we see an attacking world, a world that demands sacrifice from us. Yet attack has never left our minds, and so its destructive effects are felt only within our minds.

“God created human beings in his own image; in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. ... So it was; and God saw all that he had made, and it was very good.” (Genesis 1:27, 31 REB)

Human beings as God created them were “very good.” And nothing has changed that.

Jesus goes on to “consider what the error *is*, so it can be corrected, *not* protected” (12:4). We protect our mistakes; we don’t want to admit they are mistakes. How does it feel to consider the idea that in giving yourself to God you may lose what you think of as your separate identity, your ego?⁴ Probably not very good! In the gospels, Jesus puts it like this:

“In very truth I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains that and nothing more; but if it dies, it bears a rich harvest.” (John 12:24 REB)

What exactly, then, is our error, and how can we correct it? Correcting this, we’ve been told already, is the source of all healing. We believe that “attack can be projected *outside* the mind where the belief arose” (12:5). “Ideas can leave their source” (12:6). That is the fundamental error. It seems at first to be very abstract and maybe obscure. But we make this error seem “real and meaningful” when we project our own anger onto others, when we believe that something or someone outside of us is responsible for our anger, for our fear, for our pain. When we believe anything other than, “I am responsible for what I see. I choose the feelings I experience” (T-18.IV.2:3–4 (CE), T-21.II.2:3–4 (FIP)). That same paragraph tells us that the correction of this error is the only thing we need to do to experience complete healing from guilt and pain. This is the fundamental error: believing it is possible to locate the cause of our experience *outside* of ourselves.

Remember: There *is* no outside. And for that very reason, buying into this error produces “the world of sin and sacrifice” (12:7).

What if you recognized this world is a hallucination? 2What if you really understood you made it up? (T-17.V.5:1–2 (CE), T-20.VIII.7:3–4 (FIP))

We make up the world to have something to project *onto*. It is an “attempt to prove your innocence while cherishing attack” (12:8). We want to be able to attack and blame the results on “someone else.” “I am attacking them because they attacked me first,” or, “because they’ll attack me unless I get them first.”

Our attempt to avoid responsibility does not work, however, as evidenced by our continued feelings of guilt. We don’t know what we are feeling guilty *about* because we’ve denied our attack thoughts. The guilty feelings such as “i’m not good enough” persist nevertheless (12:9). Our guilt (and the projected world) is the effect of our thoughts, but we’ve separated the effects from their source (12:10). We cannot seem to control or prevent our guilt, nor can we stop the outside world from affecting us (12:13). “Of course I’m angry; anyone would be after what he did to me.”

Paragraph 13

13 What has been kept apart can never join. ²Cause and effect are one, not separate. ³God wills you learn what always has been true: that He created you as part of Him. ⁴And this must still be true *because* ideas leave not their source. ⁵Such is creation's law: that each idea the mind conceives but adds to its abundance, never takes away. ⁶This is as true of what is idly wished as what is truly willed, because the mind can wish to be deceived, but cannot make it be what it is not.¹⁰ ⁷And to believe ideas can leave their source is to invite illusions to be true, without success. ⁸Nor ever will success be possible in trying to deceive the Son of God.

If our effort is going into keeping cause and effect apart, we'll never see their connection (13:1). In fact they are not separate at all; they are one (13:2). I think we must be starting to realize at this point how this desire to place our mistakes outside of us is, in fact, a choice for separation. It flies in the face of the idea that God created us as part of Himself, which is what God wants us to learn (13:3). If we are all one with God then we are likewise one with each other, and there is no "outside," no "there" there. Insist on the reality of the outside world and you have denied your oneness with God!

Our oneness with God "always has been true" (13:3). We are not trying to *become* one with God, we were *created* one with God and, because ideas do not leave their source, oneness "must still be true" (13:4) Oneness is always, already true. What we are trying to do is to notice the ways we are denying it, to let go of those denials, and to allow its truth to become fully accepted in our minds.

Here we have the ninth law of healing: This is the law of creation, how creation works: "**each idea the mind conceives but adds to its abundance, never takes away**" (13:5). It always works this way, for gain or loss. The laws of mind work the same for everyone, all the time. The psalmist said, "I was envious of the arrogant; I saw the prosperity of the wicked" (Ps. 73:3). He wondered how it could be that wicked people could prosper. We wonder the same thing: Why do unholy men and women seem to get rich, and good people often don't? The answer is simple, but disturbing: The "wicked" are using the laws of mind more effectively than the good people. And some of us are holding ideas of lack and poverty, so that's what we manifest.

The Course goes on to say that the same thing is just as true for idle wishes as it is for "truly willed" thoughts (13:6). That's why it tells us elsewhere, "There are no idle

¹⁰. Pronoun clarification: "the mind can wish to be deceived, but cannot make it [what it wishes to be deceived about] be what it is not." In this case, the mind wishes to deceive itself into thinking that its ideas can leave it.

thoughts.”¹¹ It tells us we are much too tolerant of mind wandering. Those “idle thoughts” are producing form. We may be partially or completely unaware of our negative thoughts, but they are effective in producing form nevertheless. That’s why we are urged to watch our minds for any beliefs that would hinder the full expression of God within and through us, any temptations of the ego, or any scraps of fear.

On the plus side, however: Our mind may wish to be deceived, but it cannot change itself, and it cannot really project its thoughts outside itself (13:6). We can *believe* that our ideas can leave our minds, making illusions true, but we cannot actually do so (13:7). Although we may wish to deceive ourselves, and seem to succeed for a while, ultimately the Son of God within us cannot be deceived (13:8).

Paragraph 14

14 The miracle is possible when cause and consequence are brought together, not kept separate. ²The healing of effect without the cause can merely shift effects to other forms, and this is not release. ³God’s Son could never be content with less than full salvation and escape from guilt. ⁴For otherwise he still demands that he must make some sacrifice, and thus denies that *everything* is his, unlimited by loss of any kind. ⁵A tiny sacrifice is just the same in its effects as is the whole idea of sacrifice. ⁶If loss in any form is possible, then is God’s Son made incomplete and not himself. ⁷Nor will he know himself, nor recognize his will. ⁸He has foresworn his Father *and* himself, and made Them both his enemy in hate.

The tenth law of healing is this: **The miracle is possible when cause and consequence are brought together, *not* kept separate.** Again we are reminded that healing happens when the cause (our thoughts) and the consequence (the pain, sickness, loss, whatever) are brought together (14:1). Now, perhaps, the meaning is clearer and makes more sense. We can, and do, expend a great deal of effort trying to shoehorn the consequence into a different form, without dealing with the thought that is behind it. We may be able to “shift effects to other forms” but “this is *not* release” (14:2). Emotional

¹¹ The world is full of endless examples of how people have depreciated themselves because they are afraid of their own thoughts. In some forms of insanity, thoughts are glorified, but this is only because the underlying depreciation was too effective for tolerance.

⁷ The truth is that there are no “idle thoughts.” All thinking produces form at some level. (T-2.X.6:1-7:2 (CE), T-2.VI.9:10-14 (FIP))

The FIP version has been heavily edited. Here it is:

"You prefer to believe that your thoughts cannot exert real influence because you are actually afraid of them. This may allay awareness of the guilt, but at the cost of perceiving the mind as impotent. If you believe that what you think is ineffectual you may cease to be afraid of it, but you are hardly likely to respect it. There <are> no idle thoughts. All thinking produces form at some level!" (T-2.VI.9:10-14 (FIP)).

distress can be pushed down and become physical pain, for instance. Financial shortage can be alleviated by a temporary influx of cash, but the poverty consciousness that gave it birth will just pop out in another area of life.

Temporary fixes aren't enough and will never satisfy. We want "full salvation and *escape* from guilt," not limited salvation and diminished guilt feelings (14:3). As long as we have any sense of sacrifice or "settling for second best" we are still denying that "*everything* is [ours], unlimited by loss of any kind" (14:4). "A tiny sacrifice is just the same in its *effects* as is the *whole* idea of sacrifice" (14:5).

Visualize a pure white tablecloth, spotless, radiant in its perfect whiteness. Now, imagine a small drop of ink falling on it. The perfection of its whiteness is gone, and the perfect whiteness is destroyed just as much as if you'd spilled an entire bottle of ink. Little drop, big blotch, either way it is no longer *perfectly* white. It's the same with everything and sacrifice. If you have even a tiny loss, you don't have everything!

If sacrifice in any form, no matter how small, is possible, then we as God's Son are no longer complete; we are not our true Self any longer (14:6). Accepting sacrifice of any kind keeps us from knowing our true Self and from recognizing what we truly want, or will (14:7). The effect is that we have "foresworn [our] Father *and* [ourself], and made them both [our] enemy in hate" (14:8). "Foresworn" means to formally reject or disown. To accept sacrifice is to disown God and disown our True Self. Sacrifice isn't possible if God is God and we are God's offspring.

If we believe we are fragile egos, capable of loss, and cling to that false identify, God and Self appear to us as hated enemies who threaten our very existence, our separate existence (14:8).

Paragraph 15

15 Illusions serve the purpose they were made to serve, and *from* their purpose they derive whatever meaning that they seem to have. ²God gave to all illusions that were made another purpose that would justify a miracle, whatever form they took. ³In every miracle all healing lies, for God gave answer to them all as one,¹² and what is one to Him must be the same. ⁴If you believe what is the same is different, you but deceive yourself. ⁵What God made one will be forever one, not separate. ⁶His Kingdom *is* united; thus it was created, and thus will it ever be. ⁷The miracle but calls your ancient name, which you will recognize because the truth is in your memory. ⁸And to this name your brother calls for his release and yours. ⁹Heaven is shining on the Son of God. ¹⁰Deny him not, that you may be released.

If illusions were made to serve a purpose, what is that purpose? From what we've just seen, we made up the illusory world as a way of convincing ourselves that the cause of our anger and pain is outside of us, not within our own minds. Fulfilling that purpose

¹². "Them all" refers to "all illusions."

gives these illusions the only meaning that they have—that they *seem* to have, implying they really have no purpose (15:1).

Yet the illusions *do* have a real purpose, one given to them by God (15:2)! That purpose, for all illusions regardless of size or shape, is to justify a miracle (15:2). To God all illusions are the same, having only one purpose, and “what is one to Him must *be* the same” (15:3). The laws of healing are the same for everything. There is one answer to every problem.

Not just the illusions are one; we, too, as God’s creation, are “forever one, *not* separate” (15:5). As I said before, we are not trying to become one, we are awaking to the fact that we *are* and always have been one. That is how God created the Kingdom, and it will always be as He created it (15:6).

The eleventh law of healing is: **The miracle but calls your ancient name, which you *will* recognize because the truth is in your memory.**

A miracle does not really change anything. It just calls us by our true name, our ancient name, ours since creation, and something in us recognizes the call and *will* answer, because the truth of it still lives in our memory (15:7). Our brothers and sisters, in their mistaken words and behavior, are really calling to that name for help, for their own release and ours (15:8). What release? From our false identities, from our imagined bondage.

When the Course says, “Heaven is shining on the Son of God” (15:9), it is referring to your brother or sister. Everyone you know, everyone you meet. Heaven is shining on them now and always. Do not deny that truth about them, and you, too, will be released (15:10)

Paragraph 16

16 Each instant is the Son of God reborn, until he chooses not to die again. ²In every wish to hurt he chooses death, instead of what His Father wills for him. ³Yet every instant offers life to him, because His Father wills that he should live. ⁴In crucifixion is redemption laid, for healing is not needed where there is no pain or suffering. ⁵Forgiveness is the answer to attack of any kind. ⁶So is attack deprived of its effects, and hate is answered in the name of love. ⁷To you to whom it has been given to save the Son of God from crucifixion and from hell and death, all glory be forever.¹³ ⁸For you *have* power to save the Son of God, because His Father willed that it be so. ⁹And in your hand does *all* salvation lie, to be both offered and received as one.

¹³ Romans 11:36 (KJV): “For of him [God], and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen.” In the Bible verse, it is God “to whom be glory for ever.” In the above allusion, it is you who can save God’s Son (your brother) to whom “all glory be forever.”

We stumble and buy into the illusion of sin and death over and over, and over and over we are born again until we finally choose to end the insane cycle (16:1). How do we choose death? Every time you or I wish to hurt someone else, in any way, we are choosing to die, instead of the eternal life God wills for us (16:2). Yet in that identical¹⁴ instant God's Answer offers us life, because that is God's Will for us (16:3).

Salvation exists only because we need it. There is redemption in crucifixion, but only because pain and suffering calls for it (16:4). Death by crucifixion is an awful illusion, so God has given it a huge positive purpose — redemption. As we observed before, all illusions are one to God; therefore, "Forgiveness is the *answer* to attack of any kind" (16:5). This disperses any effects of hatred or attack, and answers them with love (16:6).

This is the power that has been given to every one of us. We have the power to save the Son of God from crucifixion, hell, and death through our forgiveness, and when we do so God gives us glory for fulfilling our function (16:7). Each of us has the power to save the Son of God because God "willed that it be so" (16:8). Again, this isn't a power we must somehow acquire through diligent effort; we *have* this power now. All salvation is in our hands, up to us, to receive as we give it, and to give it as we receive it (16:9).

Paragraph 17

17 To use the power God has given you as He would have it used is natural. ²It is *not* arrogant to be as He created you, or to make use of what He gave to answer all His Son's mistakes and set him free. ³But it *is* arrogant to lay aside the power that He gave, and choose a little, senseless wish instead of what He wills. ⁴The gift of God to you is limitless. ⁵There is no circumstance it cannot answer, and no problem which is not resolved within its gracious light. ⁶Abide in peace, where God would have you be. ⁷And be the means whereby your brother finds the peace in which *your* wishes are fulfilled. ⁸Let us unite in bringing blessing to the world of sin and death, for what can save each one of us can save us all. ⁹There is no difference among the Sons of God.

The line of thought continues from the preceding paragraph. We have this power, and it is God's will that we use it. Doing so is *natural*, not *arrogant* at all. We can and should use this power to set ourselves and our brothers and sisters free (17:1–2).

Often, the idea that we are supposed to "save" someone else *is* arrogant. This isn't me telling someone else how to live their life. In telling us that we can set another free, that we are responsible for the salvation of the world, that superior attitude is not what is being called for. All the the Course is asking us to do is to *forgive* our brother or sister, to perceive them as the holy child of God they are in Truth. What *is* arrogant is to refuse to

¹⁴ "Say to them, As I live, says the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from their ways and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 33:11 NRSV)

forgive, and hold on to our insignificant grievance that our specialness demands of us (17:3).

The power to forgive that has been given us is without limit. We can forgive *anything*; we can bring healing to *any* circumstance (17:4–5).

When forgiveness is welcomed into our minds, we experience the peace that God wills for us (27:6). When you forgive, what you do is to choose peace. Unforgiveness is a state of mind that rests on attack. To forgive is to let go of that desire to attack, to punish, to get even. It means that when you encounter this brother or even think of him, your peace of mind is not interrupted. We are asked to “abide in peace”; is that so onerous? Can you not see that this is, indeed, what you truly *want*?

When you abide in peace in face of your brother’s ego attacks, you become “the means whereby your brother finds the peace in which *your* wishes are fulfilled” (17:7). *A Course in Miracles* is calling us all to “unite in bringing blessing to the world” (17:8) through this practice. This one practice of forgiveness, which can “save” any person, can save us all. It does not matter what problem anyone presents because there is no difference among us (17:9). Forgiveness is the answer.

Paragraph 18

18 The unity that specialness denies will save them all, for what is one can *have* no specialness, and everything belongs to each of them. ²No wishes lie between a brother and his own. ³To get from one is to deprive them all. ⁴And yet to bless but one gives blessing to them all as one. ⁵Your ancient name belongs to everyone, as theirs to you. ⁶Call on your brother’s name and God will answer, for on Him you call. ⁷Could He refuse to answer when He has already answered all who call on Him? ⁸A miracle can make no change at all, but it can make what always has been true be recognized by those who know it not. ⁹And by this little gift is truth but let to be itself, the Son of God allowed to be himself, and all creation freed to call upon the Name of God as one.

Specialness depends on differences. Unity consists in absence of differences. What empowers the healing power of forgiveness is the fact that we are all the same; there are no differences. We are one. That makes specialness impossible. What one has, all have, so everyone has everything (18:1). No one is wishing for something he does not have because if it exists he already Has it (18:2). To take anything from one person takes it from them all, but conversely, to bless one is to bless them all (18:3–4).

The next few lines expand on something already mentioned in 15:7. We all share an “ancient name,” a mutual Identity. If we call on that name in another, acknowledging their divine nature (the Christ in them), God answers us, because the name we are using is His as well (18:5–6). God has already answered every call, so for Him to refuse is impossible. We call on the divine nature in another, and the answer is guaranteed because God answers, and He already has answered (18:7).

We are coming up on the twelfth law of healing: **A miracle can make no change at all, but it *can* make what always has been true be *recognized* by those who know it not.**

I even anticipated 18:8 in commenting on 15:7, that a miracle does not really change anything, it simply helps us recognize what has always been true. That simple gift, that recognition, allows truth to be truth. It allows God's Son (each of us) to be himself. It frees all of creation to join together as one in calling on the Name of God (18:9).

So having gone through all of this, we can now realize that healing does not really heal anything; it simply recognizes health. We understand that our physical being and our environment are projections of thoughts in our minds. We have come to know that all miracles, all healings, are the same. We have understood that through forgiveness of another, we call on God's name in them, and enable them to call upon the ancient Name of God in themselves.

Note: You may want to re-read my summary of the 12 "laws" of healing at the start of this commentary.

Legend:

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

The 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 identical to the FIP version, the division into paragraphs is often entirely 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.