

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 27

Healing the Ancient Dream

Section X

Laughing Away the Tiny, Mad Idea

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

Overview of Section X

This section continues showing the similarity of our lives in this world to dreaming. It focuses on what it calls the “hero” of your dream, that is, your body, and expands on the way our lives in the world consist entirely of our bodily identity. It then proceeds to drive home the lesson presented earlier: that our suffering filled life here is a dream generated by our primal guilt over separation. It ends by showing that if we focus on the cause and its impossibility, instead of the effects of that cause, we can laugh it all away.

Paragraph 1

The body is the central figure in the dreaming of the world. ²There is no dream without it, nor does it exist without the dream, in which it acts as if it were a person to be seen and be believed. ³It takes the central place in every dream, which tells the story of how it was made by *other* bodies, born into the world *outside* the body, lives a little while, and dies, to be united in the dust with other bodies dying like itself. ⁴In the brief time allotted it to live, it seeks for other bodies as its friends and enemies. ⁵Its safety is its main concern. ⁶Its comfort is its guiding rule. ⁷It tries to look for pleasure and avoid the things that would be hurtful. ⁸Above all, it tries to teach itself its pains and joys are different and can be told apart.

If we view this world as a dream, its central figures are bodies. For each of us, *our* body is the primary character in the dream (1:1). Every dream of this world has the body in it. In fact, the body exists only in the dream. Each of our bodies “acts as if it were a person to be seen and be believed” (1:2). The obvious implication of that is that the body is *not* a person and *cannot* be believed. Our bodies are like puppets of our minds. We pull

their strings and make them behave as if they were really *us*. We've become so engrossed in the puppet show we've forgotten that we are the puppeteers

When we tell the story of our life to someone, or when a biography is written, what does it talk about? The body. We talk about its parents and its birth, showing up in a world that already existed for millenia before it came.¹ After an all-too-short life, it dies and disintegrates into dust, joining the millions who have similarly disintegrated (1:3). During the body's lifetime it attempts to find other bodies who are friends; it avoids those it finds that are enemies (1:4). Our main concern as we live our bodily lives is keeping the body safe and well. We educate ourselves to learn the best ways to do so. We acquire a career or a job of some kind that brings us sustenance and pays for a secure place to live (if we are fortunate enough). We are constantly seeking physical comfort: clothing, furniture, automobiles, orthopedic shoes. Taking care of our bodies occupies almost all of our time (1:5–7).

And “above all,” the body “tries to teach itself its pains and pleasures are different and can be told apart” (1:8), a lesson the Course has vehemently contradicted in T-27.VII, “Sin’s Witnesses,” where it has informed us that both pain and pleasure have the identical purpose of validating the body’s reality, and therefore are essentially the same thing (27.VII.1–2).

Paragraph 2

² The dreaming of the world takes many forms, because the body seeks in many ways to prove it is autonomous and real. ²It puts things on itself that it has bought with little metal discs or paper strips the world proclaims as valuable and good. ³It works to get them, doing senseless things, and tosses them away for senseless things it does not need and does not even *want*. ⁴It hires *other* bodies, that they may protect it and collect more senseless things that it can call its own. ⁵It looks about for special bodies that can share its dream. ⁶Sometimes it dreams it is a conqueror of bodies weaker than itself. ⁷But in some phases of the dream, it is the slave of bodies which would hurt and torture it.

We have manifested an amazing variety of forms by which, acting in and through our bodies, as our bodies, we try to establish the reality and independence of our bodies (2;1). We decorate with attractive clothing and with functional clothing, not simply to provide it with comfort but also to improve its appearance. We use money, which is really nothing more than paper and metal discs whose value comes from a mutual agreement of minds (2:2). Our bodies work to get this money so they can buy things like clothing, toiletries,

¹ 4 The world is nothing in itself. Your mind must give it meaning. And what you behold upon it are your wishes, acted out so you can look on them and think them real. Perhaps you think you did not make the world, but came unwillingly to what was made already, hardly waiting for your thoughts to give it meaning. Yet in truth you found exactly what you looked for when you came. There is no world apart from what you wish, and herein lies your ultimate release. Change but your mind on what you want to see, and all the world must change accordingly. (W-132.4:1-4:7 (CE), W-pl.132.4:1-5:2 (FIP) My emphasis)

make-up, and hair styling, Sometimes we waste money to buy things we don't even need or want just to enjoy buying them (2:3).

Perhaps you don't think of yourself as someone who "hires other bodies" to protect you (2:4), but we all do. The police. the fire department. Doctors & dentists. The armed forces. We hire them all, and probably others I haven't thought of. To be honest, I'm mpt sure whether the verb "collect" belongs to those other bodies or to me, but the general idea is that we try not just to protect our physical selves, we try to amass property, things, "stuff," as George Carlin called it. I've been amazed at the proliferation of storage facilities where people store their stuff, all apparently things they don't need most of the time, but can't bear to get rid of. When I moved recently, downsizing from a 2400 square foot house to a 1400 square foot condo, I was appalled at how many things we'd acquired and kept over the years that we didn't really need. I think part of our sense of identity and self-value is vested in the quantity and quality of the stuff we hold on to.

And looking for other "special bodies" to share our dream? (2:5) We can all relate to that, I'm sure.

Paragraph 3

3 The body's serial adventures from the time of birth to dying are the theme of every dream the world has ever had.² ²The "hero" of this dream will never change, nor will its purpose. ³Though the dream itself takes many forms, and seems to show a great variety of places and events wherein its "hero" finds itself, the dream has but one purpose, taught in many ways. ⁴This single lesson does it try to teach again and still again and yet once more: that it is cause and not effect, and you are *its* effect and cannot be its cause. ⁵Thus are you not the dreamer, but the *dream*. ⁶And so you wander idly in and out of places and events that *it* contrives.

As I said: "Every dream the world has ever had" is all about bodies, from birth to dying (3:1). And the "hero" is always the body and always will be. That never changes, "nor will its purpose" (3:2). As we've seen, the purpose of the world, for the ego, is to prove the reality of the ego, to make the illusion of separation real by locating the cause of our suffering, the cause of our thinking and feeling, to be things and persons outside of us, not part of us, different from us. Shakespeare's "tale told by an idiot" gets played out

² This appears to be a reference to the film serials of the twentieth century. A film serial was an extended motion picture broken into a series of episodes, each episode being a short that would show in theaters before the feature films. Each episode would end with a "cliffhanger," in which the hero and heroine found themselves in a dire situation with little hope of escape. One of the most popular serials, for example, was *The Adventures of Captain Marvel* (1941). The above passage may also be a reference to serialized fiction, popular in the nineteenth century, in which a novel was published in serial form in a magazine or newspaper. The Course's allusion likens everyone's life story to a film serial, only in this case the hero is not an actual person, but merely a body.

in an endless variety of ways, literally billions of ways (3:3). No matter what form it takes, whether you play conqueror, victimizer, victim, lover, beloved, or enemy, the dream teaches a single lesson: the world has shaped and formed you; it is the cause and you are its effect, and in no way are you the cause, the world your effect (3:4). In this drama, you are the dream, not the dreamer (3:5). Nothing is really under your control. “You wander idly in and out of places and events that *it* contrives”(3:6). The best you can do is to learn to adapt and adjust as life throws itself at you. Maybe you surrender and “suffer the winds and arrows of outrageous fortune,” or maybe you “take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them” (Shakespeare, Hamlet, Act III Scene 1). You are always “at effect” of the world.

That’s the way the dream is set up. That’s “the way that you have set it up” (T-27.VIII.2:2).

Paragraph 4

4 That this is all the body does is true, for it is but a figure in a dream. ²But who reacts to figures in a dream unless he sees them as if they were real? ³The instant that he sees them as they are, they have no more effect on him, because he understands he gave them their effects by causing them and making them seem real. ⁴How willing are you to escape effects of all the dreams the world has ever had? ⁵Is it your wish to let no dream appear to be the cause of what it is you do? ⁶Then let us merely look upon the dream’s beginning, for the part you see is but the *second* part, whose cause lies in the first.

But the body is just “a figure in a dream” (4:1). Yes; it does all these things, but it is nothing more than a dream, not a reality. As the song says, “Row, row, row your boat, gently down the stream. Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily! Life is but a dream.” If that is true, if it is but a dream, why do we react to “them as if they were real?” (4:2). Because we “*see them* as if they were real”. That’s how we’ve set it up. But “the instant [we see] them as they are” and not as we’ve set them up, they cease to have any effect on us; they stop causing us because we understand that we “*gave them their effects by causing them and making them seem real*” (4:3).

Try this on for size! Read these last two sentences restating them in the first person. Make them “I” statements:

Why would I react to figures in a dream unless I see them as if they were real? The instant that I see them as they are, they have no more effect on me, because I understand I *gave* them their effects by causing them and making them seem real.

The real questions we must ponder are: How willing are we to escape all these effects? Do we want to stop allowing ourselves to see the cause of our problems as something outside of us, something in the dream? (4:4–5) It’s worth thinking about carefully, because our whole-hearted willingness is the key; that’s all it takes. Am I really

willing to stop blaming external things for my problems, and take full responsibility on myself?

If you are really willing to do this, you need to “merely look upon the dream’s beginning.” We have not done that yet, in this section. We’ve been looking at “the *second* part,” the secondary cause — that is, the world of dreams. But there is a “first” cause, that has caused this dream world (4:6).

Paragraph 5

5 No one asleep and dreaming in the world remembers his attack upon himself. ²No one believes there really was a time when he knew nothing of a body, and could never have conceived this world as real. ³He would have seen at once that these ideas are one illusion, too ridiculous for anything but to be laughed away. ⁴How serious they now appear to be! ⁵And no one can remember when they would have met with laughter and with disbelief. ⁶We can remember this, if we but look directly at their *cause*. ⁷And we will see the grounds for laughter, not a cause for fear. ⁸Let us return the dream he gave away unto the dreamer, who perceives the dream as separate from himself and done to him.

We are being asked to remember what we have totally forgotten, blocked from our minds by our own choice. We are all “asleep and dreaming in the world,” so none of us remember it. The Course says we attacked ourselves, or better, our Self. If you don’t have any sense of ever having done that you aren’t alone. None of us here remember it (5:1).

Before that attack, you “knew nothing of a body, and could never have conceived this world as real” (5:2). I don’t remember that, nor do you. Being alive and aware without a body, with the whole concept of a physical world something unimaginable, is not a state of awareness that exists even in my memory, no less in present awareness. We are not only unaware that ever was true for us, *we don’t believe it* when we are told about it.

In such a state of being, to be trapped in a body in a hostile world would have been an obvious delusion, “too ridiculous for anything but to be laughed away” (5:3). Our body and our world certainly don’t seem laughable *now!* (Well, sometimes my body...never mind!) They seem quite serious realities I must contend with. No one remembers a past state of being that would have reacted to the thought of bodies and a world with unbelieving laughter (5:5). I don’t and I’m sure you don’t either.

We don’t remember. *But we can* remember! Lift your eyes for a moment from the world and your body, and “look directly at their *cause*” (5:6). If we are willing to seriously consider what the Course identifies as their cause, and willing to accept what that says about our part in the fiasco that ensued, we will be able to recall that totally innocent state of mind that sees in it all “grounds for laughter, not a cause for fear” (5:7).

It’s interesting to realize that the sure sign we’ve become fully enlightened is the tendency to *laugh* at the whole concept of our body as us in a world outside of us. This truly would be a different state of mind, wouldn’t it?

What we are being led to do is to take back the dream, to acknowledge it as our dream, not something separate from us and being done to us (5:8). It is to say, “I am the dreamer of this dream.” So Jesus is going to paint us a picture of that “time of terror” which is really a big joke, and try to show us how absurd it would be to think it was real.

Paragraph 6

6 Into eternity, where all is one, there crept a tiny, mad idea at which the Son of God remembered not to laugh. ²In his forgetting did the thought become a serious idea, and possible of both accomplishment and real effects. ³The instant that the madness of the cause is recognized, it *can* have no effects. ⁴Together we can laugh them both away, and understand that time cannot intrude upon eternity. ⁵It is a joke to think that time can come to circumvent eternity, which *means* there is no time. ⁶A timelessness in which is time made real, a part of God which can attack itself, a separate brother as an enemy, a mind within a body, all are forms of circularity whose ending starts at its beginning, ending at its cause.

The first two sentences are some of those “key lines” I mentioned a while back; they are worth memorizing.

In eternity (which is always) “all is one.” But somehow, in a moment of insanity, “a tiny, mad idea” found a foothold in the mind of the Son of God when he *forgot to laugh at it* (6:1). If you’ve ever wondered just what precipitated “the Fall,” this is it: we forgot to laugh! We granted serious consideration to impossible madness. In doing so, the mad idea became a *serious* idea, one that could actually be accomplished and have real effects (6:2).

Why should we have laughed? Because the very idea that God’s own Oneness could be splintered into billions of separate parts is crazy. There is no other power beside

God that could subvert His Will for Oneness. The whole idea is *not* possible of accomplishment and therefore cannot have any effects! And the instant that we recognize how absurdly impossible the mad idea is, it ceases to have any effects (6:3)!

The next sentence begins with “Together” and includes the words “we” and “both,” making it unclear to me which word is the referent for “together” (6:4). It either means that we, together with the Holy Spirit, can laugh away both the cause and the effects, or it means that we can laugh away both cause and effects together. It does not really matter which way we read it, does it? The point is that if the cause is laughable, so are its effects.

Stop for a moment and just take a look at how often the word “laugh” and words related to laughing such as “joke” and “jest” occurs in this section. (Share Zoom screen with highlighted text.) In paragraphs 5 through 9 there are eleven occurrences! The Course in several other places says the same thing, that we can laugh at the terrible effects of the separation:

"Who understands what giving means must laugh at the idea of sacrifice. Nor can he fail to recognize the many forms which sacrifice may take. He laughs as well at

pain and loss, at sickness and at grief, at poverty, starvation and at death. He recognizes sacrifice remains the one idea that stands behind them all, and in his gentle laughter are they healed" (W-pl.187.6:2-5 (FIP)).

"It is sin's unreality that makes forgiveness natural and wholly sane, a deep relief to those who offer it; a quiet blessing where it is received. It does not countenance illusions, but collects them lightly, with a little laugh, and gently lays them at the feet of truth. And there they disappear entirely" (W-pl.134.6:1-3 (FIP)).

"This is the way salvation works. As you step back, the light in you steps forward and encompasses the world. It heralds not the end of sin in punishment and death. In lightness and in laughter is sin gone, because its quaint absurdity is seen. It is a foolish thought, a silly dream, not frightening, ridiculous perhaps, but who would waste an instant in approach to God Himself for such a senseless whim" (W-pl.156.6:1-5 (FIP)).

Those are just a few examples. Clearly, there is no implication here that sickness, poverty, starvation and death are *actually funny*! It is the seriousness with which we respond to their *unreality* that is laughable.

Jesus then points out how ridiculous it is "to think that time can come to circumvent eternity" (6:5). Eternity isn't a very long time, time stretched out like a rubber band of infinite length. Eternity "means there is no time." Eternity is timelessness, no past, no future, only now. The existence of time is a separation concept. What could be more separate than something that existed in the past, or that won't exist until the future? This is why the Course insists so often that there is no time, that salvation takes no time.

"You are as God created you. There is no place where you can suffer, and no time that can bring change to your eternal state. How can a world of time and place exist, if you remain as God created you" (W-pl.132.9:2-4 (FIP)).

"There was no time in which His Son could be condemned for what was causeless and against His will. What your remembering would witness to is but the fear of God. He has not done the thing you fear. No more have you." (T-28.I.10:3-6 (CE), T-28.Int.10:3-6 (FIP))

"There is no road to travel on and no time to travel through. For God waits not for His Son in time, being forever unwilling to be without him. And so it has always been." (T-13.I.11:3-5 (CE), T-13.I.7:3-5 (FIP))

"This lesson takes no time, for what is time without a past and future? It has taken time to misguide you so completely, but it takes no time at all to be what you are." (T-15.I.10:1-2 (CE), T-15.I.9:1-3 (FIP))

We have manufactured time, and filled it with a dream in which "a part of God ... can attack itself" (6:6). Imagine thinking that a part of God could attack itself! Absurd, isn't it? Yet that *is* what we have imagined. We've invented a brother separate from ourselves who can be our enemy. We've come to believe completely that we are minds inside of

bodies, when in reality the body is within the mind that made it up! ³ You and I are parts of a single Mind. We are not separate minds encased in bodies.

All of these things, the Course says, “are forms of circularity whose ending starts at its beginning, ending at its cause” (6:6). What we see now as the cause of our suffering is actually the effect of our mad belief in separation. The ego has done a masterful job of creating this illusion. It gives us the world as our scapegoat on which we can dump our guilt (or think we can), while at the same time it secretly maintains the gnawing inner guilt that the ego needs for its existence. a guilt that acts as the generating force behind the projected illusions.

Paragraph 7

7 The world you see depicts exactly what you thought *you* did. ²Except that now you think that what you did is being done to you. ³The guilt for what you thought is being placed outside yourself, and on a guilty world which dreams your dreams and thinks your thoughts instead of you. ⁴It brings *its* vengeance, not your own. ⁵It keeps you narrowly confined within a body, which it punishes because of all the sinful things the body does within its dream. ⁶You have no power to make the body stop its evil deeds because you did not make it, and cannot control its actions or its purpose or its fate.

That’s how it works. The world we think of as so terrible is actually the out-picturing of the terrible thing we think *we* did, “Except that now you think that what you did is being done to you” (7:1–2). We are intensely guilty for our thought of separation, but we project that guilt onto a guilty world. That world, which we have caused, then becomes our cause instead of our effect, dreaming our dreams and thinking our thoughts instead of us (7:3). When we imagine that some outside event or person has “made us” angry or afraid, has caused us to suffer, or even has made us happy, we are viewing this illusory outside world as cause, not effect.

And mostly it brings us suffering, because deep down we think we deserve it. We deserve to be punished for what we did, or thought we did. we never imagine that the attack that seems to come from outside is coming from inside, coming *from us* (7:4).

Somehow our infinite Self has been crammed into a body and trapped there, a body that has backaches, intestinal upsets, viruses, broken bones, failing hearts, and innumerable ways of punishing us for all the bad things we’ve done in our dream lifetimes (7:5). We so often feel there is nothing we can do about it all.

³. The body is a limit imposed on the universal communication which is an eternal property of mind. But the communication is internal. Mind reaches to itself. It is not made up of different parts which reach each other. It does not go out. Within itself it has no limits, and there is nothing outside it. It encompasses everything. It encompasses you entirely; you within it and it within you. There is nothing else, anywhere or ever. (T-18.VI.9:1–9 (CE), T-18.VI.8:4-11 (FIP))

Paragraph 8

8 The world but demonstrates an ancient truth: You will believe that others do to you exactly what you think you did to them. ²But once deluded into blaming them, you will not see the *cause* of what they do, because you want the guilt to rest on them. ³How childish is this petulant device to keep your innocence by pushing guilt outside yourself, but never letting go! ⁴It is not easy to perceive the jest when all around you do your eyes behold its heavy consequences, but without their trifling cause. ⁵Without the cause do its effects seem serious and sad indeed. ⁶Yet they but follow. ⁷And it is their *cause* that follows nothing, and is but a jest.

The Course's summary view of the world is still startling, even after all this explanation:

The world but demonstrates an ancient truth: You will believe that others do to you exactly what you think you did to them. (8:1)

The entire world is nothing but a mirror of our guilt. We see the world doing to us exactly what we think we did to them! Think what that tells us about the enormity of our buried guilt. It is the cause of all the awful things we see in the world! We, however, have been “deluded into blaming them.” Once that happens we become blind to the actual cause-effect relationship. We are trying to get rid of our guilt. No way are we willing to see the guilt in ourselves; we *want* it to be out there in the world (8:2).

Pushing guilt outside yourself, but never really letting go of it, is “childish.” It's “petulant” (8:3). Had to look up that last word. A few of the synonyms are “bad-tempered,” “in a bad mood,” “sulky,” and “petty.” To me it seems to be mean-spirited, too.

Admittedly, when we look at the world around us, even at our own lives, it's not easy to see it all as a bad joke. If we do not see the cause, the effects truly seem “serious and sad indeed” (8:5) That's because we are seeing the “heavy consequences,” but not their empty, imaginary cause (our primal guilt) (8:4). I'm glad the Course recognizes that we have difficulty in laughing at all the woes of the world! There are terrible things in this world, some of them horrors beyond imagining. Even God is not unaffected: “God weeps at the ‘sacrifice’ of His children, who believe they are lost to Him.” (T-5.X.5:2 (CE), T-5.VII.4:5 (FIP)) The trick is looking past the ugliness, refusing to let ourselves be sucked in by what is at root nothing more than a projection of our own dark thoughts about ourselves, and to remind ourselves of the truth of the universal innocence and wholeness of all of God's creation.

The Course is not asking us to laugh at the effects, the pain and the suffering. It's asking us to laugh at their cause, that baseless, primal guilt over a separation that never really happened (4:7).

Lesson 131 in the Workbook has a good advice to use in attempting to seek and find this truth behind the illusions. Its language echoes many of the themes of these recent sections in Chapter 27:

“Heaven remains your one alternative to this strange world you made and all its ways; its shifting patterns and uncertain goals, its painful pleasures and its tragic joys. God made no contradictions. What denies its own existence and attacks itself is not of Him. He did not make two minds, with Heaven as the glad effect of one, and earth the other’s sorry outcome, which is Heaven’s opposite in every way.

9 “God does not suffer conflict, nor is His creation split in two. How could it be His Son could be in hell, when God Himself established him in Heaven? Could he lose what the Eternal Will has given him to be his home forever? Let us try no longer to impose an alien will upon His single purpose. He is here because He wills to be, and what He wills is present now, beyond the reach of time.

10 “Today we will not choose a paradox in place of truth. How could the Son of God make time to take away the will of God? He thus denies himself and contradicts what has no opposite. He thinks he made a hell opposing Heaven, and believes that he abides in what does not exist, while Heaven is the place he cannot find. Leave foolish thoughts like these behind today, and turn your mind to true ideas instead.

11 “No one can fail who asks to reach the truth, and it is truth we ask to reach today.”

(W-131.8:1-11:1 (CE))

Paragraph 9

9 In gentle laughter does the Holy Spirit perceive the cause, and looks not to effects. ²How else could He correct your error, who have overlooked the cause entirely? ³He bids you bring each terrible effect to Him, that you may look together on its foolish cause, and laugh with Him a while.⁴ ⁴You judge effects, but *He* has judged their cause, and by His judgment are effects removed. ⁵Perhaps you come in tears. ⁶But hear Him say, “My brother, holy Son of God, behold your idle dream in which this could occur,” and you will leave the holy instant with your laughter and your brother’s joined with His.

We can find this altered vision with the aid of the Holy Spirit, Who perceives the cause and overlooks the effects. He laughs at the cause with “gentle laughter,” not mocking or ridiculing, but a light-hearted laugh that signals the insignificance of that

⁴ The “effect” is some event or situation in your life in which the world seems to be mistreating you. Its “cause” is the “tiny, mad idea” that time, separation, and form could intrude upon eternity. When the effect is seen by itself, it seems serious and sad. But when it is seen as a manifestation of its cause, which is just a foolish joke, then it becomes a source of laughter.

cause (9:1). We must ask ourselves in honesty questions such as are mentioned in Lesson 131:

- How could time possibly replace eternity?
- How could my will overcome God's Will for me?
- How could God's Oneness be splintered and destroyed by me?
- How could a body possibly contain me?
- How could life be housed in a body of death?

Looking at the cause and not effects is the only possible way the Holy Spirit can correct our dumb mistake (9:2). The Holy Spirit asks us to “bring each terrible effect to Him,” not so that we can wail about how terrible it is and lament our part in it, but so that, together with Him, we can look at the foolish cause of the effect, and laugh with Him a while” (9:3). When we encounter sickness, let the Holy Spirit connect it to its cause, that primal guilt within us, that deep-seated sense that we are not good enough, that we are afraid to look within ourselves for fear of what we'll discover there. And seeing that cause, realize that it is a *foolish* cause. How could God's perfect creation lose its perfection? It could not do so. Therefore, the guilt is unfounded. *I remain as God created me*, and the suffering of the world *has no cause* except in my nightmare.

When we absorb the Holy Spirit's judgment of the cause, the effects we thought stemmed from it vanish (9:4). We may come to Him in tears (9:5), crying about our pain, but He points us to the “idle dream in which this could occur” (9:6). Remember that list of synonyms for “idle” I shared in an earlier commentary?

empty, meaningless, aimless, pointless, worthless, useless, vain, in vain, insubstantial, futile, ineffective, ineffectual; groundless, without grounds, baseless, without/lacking foundation.

Our guilty dream of the world is without foundation. Our guilt is groundless, pointless, and ineffectual. *That* we can laugh at together with the Holy Spirit and with our brother.

These many references to the laughter of the Holy Spirit remind me of an essay I read years ago by Walter Lanyon, who was a writer (author of at least 17 books) and ecstatic mystic who, it seems to me, bridges the gap between traditional Christianity, New Thought, and full-blown mysticism. For your enjoyment, I'll quote just the opening paragraph here from his book titled, *The Laughter of God*, and I'll post the full four pages of the opening chapter along with this commentary on my website.

Deep in my soul I heard the laughter of God ringing in silvery cadences through the timbers of my being, breaking the human bonds and limitation as a strong yet gentle wind in the forest sweeping aside the strands of cobweb. The hard, fast knots that I had tied, slipped loose, and the snarls of beliefs broke free. The river of my human life, frozen by a thousand and one false ideas and teachings, broke joyously into expression and went bounding to the infinite sea of