

# Study Guide and Commentary ACIM® Text, Chapter 2, Section II

## The Atonement as Defense

### Overview of the Section

This section deals with how the Atonement can be used to defend our minds against fear. Normally we defend ourselves by attacking the perceived external source of our fear. The Course sees the Atonement as our true defense against fear. We simply deny the power of anything not of God to hurt us (1:11). As we have seen, the principle of the Atonement is that our errors never really occurred. Such “true denial” (2:1) is our ultimate defense against fear, as the last section pointed out (T-2.I.4:1–4). Thus, the true denial talked about in this section is just another way of describing the acceptance of the Atonement.

I would like to quote here something Unity author Hypatia Hasbrouck wrote about “denials,” which are very much the same thing as what the Course calls “true denial.”

...there is one denial that can be easily adapted to help you quickly deal positively with almost any negative appearance or challenge the moment it arises. I call it *the all-purpose denial*...Here is the basic form: (This) is powerless to take or keep my good from me. In place of the word *this*, you can substitute a phrase describing the negative appearance or challenge. (*Handbook of Positive Prayer*, page 39)

As you can see, the Course’s instruction to deny “the power of anything not of God to affect you” (1:11) is identical to what Hasbrouck has us say: “This is powerless to take or keep my good from me.” Try it the next time some “negative appearance or challenge” comes up.

### Paragraph 1

1.           <sup>1</sup>You can do anything I ask. <sup>2</sup>I have asked you to perform miracles, and have made it clear that miracles are natural, corrective, healing and universal. <sup>3</sup>There is nothing [Ur: good] they cannot do, but they cannot be performed in the spirit of doubt or fear. [Ur: Remember my own question, before you ask yours “Oh ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou *doubt*.” (Reference to Christ and the apostles walking on water.)] <sup>4</sup>When you are afraid of anything, you are acknowledging its power to hurt you. <sup>5</sup>Remember that where your heart is, there is your treasure also. <sup>6</sup>You believe in what you

value. <sup>7</sup>If you are afraid, you are valuing wrongly [*valuing wrong*]. <sup>8</sup>Your understanding will then inevitably value wrongly, and by endowing all thoughts with equal power will inevitably destroy peace. <sup>9</sup>That is why the Bible speaks of “the peace of God which passeth [Ur: (human)] understanding.” <sup>10</sup>This peace is totally incapable of being shaken by errors of any kind. <sup>11</sup>It denies the ability of anything not of God to affect you [Ur: in any way]. <sup>12</sup>This is the proper [*proper*] use of denial. <sup>13</sup>It is not used to hide [*hide*] anything, but to correct error. <sup>14</sup>It brings all [*all*] error into the light, and since error and darkness are the same, it corrects error automatically.

I like the notion that I can do anything Jesus asks of me. Come to think of it, if Jesus is an enlightened being who can speak of his “complete awareness of the whole plan” (T-1.III.8:4), he would not ask us to do anything unless he were certain we could do it. A bit later in the Text, he says:

I would not ask you to do things you cannot do...nothing can prevent you from doing exactly what I ask (T-8.IX.8:2–3).

When he asks me to perform miracles, he is absolutely sure that I am capable of doing so. Therefore, I have no excuse. I cannot say, “Sorry, Jesus, you ask too much of me.” What he asks for is, as he says, natural (1:2)—consistent with my nature. I do not need to be afraid of the obstacles to my performing miracles. This applies equally well to anything Jesus asks me to do, not just to miracles. It applies to daily spiritual practice, for instance. If he asks it, I can do it.

Fear acknowledges that I am vulnerable and that what I fear has the power to injure me in some way (1:3). When I give such power to the obstacles, my ability to perform miracles is blocked (1:3–4). That is the main subject of this section: how fear blocks the extension of miracles through us, and how the Atonement is our defense against such fears. The obstacles this paragraph deals with are, I believe, the same three varieties of lack of love talked about in the preceding paragraph: from myself toward others, from others to me, and from myself with others (T-2.I.5:7)—in other words, my own ego, other people’s egos, and our shared ego faults.

All of these originate as thoughts in mind. We mistakenly think our ego thoughts have as much power as the thoughts we think with God. We think that our mistaken valuing of the things of this world, or of specialness, is as powerful as our desire for the peace of God. All thoughts are not equal! The fact is that “anything not of God” has absolutely zero effect. Our ego thoughts are not fearful; they are nothing.

Let me try to put this into my own words: When you value (or treasure) the wrong things, you believe in their reality, which means their power to hurt you. That naturally leads to fear, because fear arises from the belief that something has power to hurt you. Thus, the reason we give such power to our ego thoughts and fear them is because we value them. That fear of the ego (in ourselves or in others) is what blocks the expression of the miracle through us.

NOTE: In 1:5, Jesus quotes himself from the Gospels (Luke 12:34): “Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” He actually misquotes it here as, “Where your heart is, there is your treasure also.” He reverses it; presumably it works both ways. He interprets this to mean: We believe in what we value, and it is our valuing things that gives them power. If we want to stop fearing their power, we have to stop valuing them.

So what keeps me from performing miracles? Mixed motivation. Perhaps I value doing miracles, but I mistakenly give equal value to the ego, and thus believe in its power to prevent miracles.

Sentence 8 basically means that being afraid limits our understanding. Our peace of mind is shattered when we think our mistaken thoughts are as powerful as our real thoughts. According to Jesus, when the Bible speaks of “the peace of God which passeth understanding” (Phillipians 4:7), it means that God’s peace is incomprehensible to our crippled understanding, our understanding limited by fear. When our understanding tells us to be afraid, God’s peace passes that limited understanding. It denies the power of anything not of God to affect us. The peace of God is not inherently incomprehensible to the human mind. You need not abandon your understanding in order to find peace. On the contrary, God’s peace brings understanding with it, and heightened understanding can bring peace. As Jesus explains in Chapter 14:

Peace and understanding go together and never can be found alone. Each brings the other with it, for it is the law of God they be not separate. They are cause and effect, each to the other, so where one is absent the other cannot be (T-14.XI.12:4–6).

When our understanding is crippled by fear, we need not abandon understanding, but we must be willing to open up to God’s peace even when understanding is telling us peace is impossible. When we let it in, God’s peace will elevate our understanding. How do we do this? The recommended cure for the mental sickness of fear is “the proper use of denial” (12), which means to deny “the ability of anything not of God to affect you” (11). This form of denial does not hide or cover up; it actually brings error into the light where it can be corrected. Instead of denying the existence of the error, it denies the power of that error to hurt me. True denial negates my fear the ego’s madness (in others or in myself), and happily brings it to the light.

True denial is the same as bringing our fearful thoughts into contact with the truth, or bringing the darkness to the light, which I spoke of in the commentary on T-1.VI.5.. True denial “brings all error into the light” (14), which is how it gets corrected. We expose our fears to the truth that we cannot be hurt by anything not of God. Our willingness to submit our beliefs to this practice dispels the darkness of fear, just as light dispels physical darkness.

## Paragraph 2

2. <sup>1</sup>True denial is a powerful protective device. <sup>2</sup>You can and should deny any belief that error can hurt you. <sup>3</sup>This kind of denial is not *[not]* a concealment [Ur: device] but a correction [Ur: device]. <sup>4</sup>Your right mind [The “Right Mind” of the mentally healthy] depends *[depends]* on it. [We have slowly been shifting the emphasis from the negative to the positive use of denial.] <sup>5</sup>Denial of error is a strong *[very powerful]* defense of truth, but denial of truth results in miscreation, the projections of the ego. [Ur: That is the way the mentally ill *do* employ it. But remember a very early thought of your own, “Never underestimate the power of denial.”] <sup>6</sup>In the service of the right mind the denial of error *[error]* frees the mind, and re-establishes the freedom of the will. <sup>7</sup>When the will is really *[really]* free it cannot *[cannot]* miscreate, because it recognizes only truth *[only truth]*.

### • Study Question •

1. *As you read this paragraph, what specific injunction (something to do) is being given to you? Make a few notes about how you might carry out this instruction today and in the next week.*
2. *Make two short lists, side by side, comparing the things said about true denial and false denial (“denial of truth”).*

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“True denial is a powerful protective device” (1) and “a strong defense of truth” (5)—“a very powerful defense” in the Urtext. This paragraph is explaining this section's topic: how to apply the Atonement as a defense. We do so by denying “any belief that error can hurt [us]” (2). This is a specific practice, something we are meant to actually do. The Workbook contains many examples of this kind of practice, for instance in regard to sickness:

Give instant remedy, should this occur, by not allowing your defensiveness to hurt you longer. Do not be confused about what must be healed, but tell yourself:

I have forgotten what I really am, for I mistook my body for myself. Sickness is a defense against the truth. But I am not a body. And my mind cannot attack. So I can not be sick (W-pI.136.20:1–7).

The practice of true denial is pivotal in the Course: “Your right mind depends on it” (4), with emphasis on *depends*. This is what can undo, or correct, the steps outlined in Section I that lead to projection, because when the mind is freed from its errors it has no need to project. When we believe that we have distorted God’s creation, including ourselves, we are driven to project something to fill up our emptiness and lack. True denial counteracts that and reminds us we have not changed ourselves because God’s

creations cannot be distorted; that eliminates the cause for our projection entirely. This is exactly the same process that was outlined in T-2.I.4:1–4. True denial and accepting the Atonement are different sides of the same coin.

The phrase from the Urtext, “Never underestimate the power of denial,” can refer to both negative and positive denial. Denial of the truth and psychological denial that hides thoughts, emotions, and memories that we don’t want to look at, is *incredibly* powerful. I have been repeatedly amazed at the way people are able to build walls in their minds to hide some unpleasant thought, feeling, or memory—and I’m speaking of *myself* in particular! The Course talks about some powerful beliefs that most of us harbor, unknowingly, in our minds. When we read the words, we tend to discount them. “Maybe other people believe that, but I don’t,” or, “I would *never* think that!” But we do, *we do!* We are underestimating the power of denial.

But the same can affect the other kind of denial. We can underestimate just how powerful and effective *positive denial* or *true denial* can be, and so we neglect to use it. Simple, frequent repetition of an idea such as, “This national financial crisis is powerless to affect me in any way,” can have amazingly positive effects upon our lives.

### Paragraph 3

**Note:** See the appendix to this commentary for a long section of the Urtext which comes between paragraphs 2 and 3, and that deals with Freud and various psychological terminology.

3. <sup>1</sup>You can defend truth as well as error [Ur: and in fact, much better].  
<sup>2</sup>The means are easier to understand after the value of the goal is firmly established. <sup>3</sup>It is a question of what it is *for*. <sup>4</sup>Everyone defends his treasure, and will do so automatically. <sup>5</sup>The real questions are, what do you treasure, and how much do you treasure it? <sup>6</sup>Once you have learned to consider these questions and to bring them into all [all] your actions [Ur: as the true criteria for behavior], you [Ur: I] will have little difficulty in clarifying the means. <sup>7</sup>The means are available whenever you ask [are available whenever you do ask]. <sup>8</sup>You can, however, save [a lot of] time if you do not [need to] protract this step unduly. <sup>9</sup>The correct focus will shorten it immeasurably.

#### • Study Question •

3. *Paragraph 3 talks about our “treasure,” which obviously is something we value. There is a connection here to thoughts from 1:5–6. Why are the questions, “What is it for?”, and “What do you treasure, and how much do you treasure it?”, such important questions?*

When we believe we are lacking, we value what we think will fill us up. When we value the ego, we also value the external things that preserve the ego. The Text will show

us later that, beside what we think of as pleasure or riches, this also includes errors such as guilt, victimhood and sickness. In our ego mind we defend error. But we can learn to be just as vigilant in defense of the truth.

“Everyone defends his treasure” (4). What, then, are you defending? It can show you what you value. There are two ways in which I think this questioning can help to wake us up. First, in recognizing what purpose the problem serves (that purpose is the true problem); second, in becoming clear about what we really want.

First, we see our false goals and realize we do not want them. The first paragraph showed us that when we value wrongly, we believe in what we value (1:5–8). We give power to it and fear it (or fear its loss). Therefore, learning to constantly ask ourselves, “What is this thing for?” or “What do I treasure here?” can be a fruitful way to stimulate self-investigation. Another way to phrase the question would be, “What am I trying to get out of this?” or “Why do I value this?”

These are interesting questions to ask yourself when “obstacles” arise, such as sickness, any kind of suffering, adverse situations, or hard-to-break habits and addictions. Sickness, for instance, can be a great way to make someone guilty who has hurt us (see T-27.I.4:1–4). Perhaps I need to look at what I value about having a messy desk, or what I get out of it. Maybe you need to ask yourself what you get out of your relationship difficulties or what you value in being overweight.

This paragraph implies that when we get clear about what hidden ego purpose the apparent problem is serving, we will realize we actually do not want that purpose. We will see that we are valuing the wrong things, and that is really our problem.

Second, to ask what we treasure will lead us to realize we really treasure the truth. That being clear, the means for defending truth in our mind will become clear. I sometimes ask myself, “What am I defending here? My body? My ego? Or the peace of God in my mind?” As we bring this kind of self-awareness “into all [our] actions” (6), we will understand “the means” (2, 6) for achieving our real goal. Throughout the Course we will find this concept: The means flow naturally from the desire for the goal. The means, of course, is a miracle, an application of the Atonement, which is the recognition that our errors never really occurred—and therefore, have no power to harm us. The Atonement is the means by which our fear can be cured, the means by which our errors can be corrected and the peace of God restored to us.

• **Study Question** •

4. *One final thought on this paragraph: What do you suppose “this step” refers to in sentence 8? We all want to save time in our spiritual growth. What step are we advised not to protract “unduly”? (“Protract” means “To draw out or lengthen in time; prolong,” according to the American Heritage Dictionary.)*



## Paragraph 4 & 5

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| 4. <sup>1</sup> The Atonement is the only <i>[only]</i> defense that cannot be used |
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destructively because [, while everyone must eventually join it,] it is not a device you made [a device generated by man]. <sup>2</sup>The Atonement *principle* was in effect long before the Atonement [itself] began. <sup>3</sup>The principle was love and the Atonement [itself] was an *act* of love. <sup>4</sup>Acts were not necessary before the separation, because belief in space and time did not exist. <sup>5</sup>It was only after the separation that the Atonement and the conditions necessary for its fulfillment were planned. [Ur: It became increasingly apparent that all of the defenses which man can choose to use constructively or destructively were not enough to save him.] <sup>6</sup>Then a defense so splendid was needed that it could not be misused, although it could be refused. [It was therefore decided that he needed a defense which was so splendid that he could not misuse it, although he COULD refuse it.] <sup>7</sup>Refusal [His will] could not, however, turn it into a weapon of attack, which is the inherent characteristic of other defenses. <sup>8</sup>The Atonement thus becomes the only defense that is not a two-edged sword. <sup>9</sup>It can only heal.

[T 2 B 43. The Atonement actually began long before the Crucifixion. Many Souls offered their efforts on behalf of the Separated Ones but they could not withstand the strength of the attack, and had to be brought back. Angels came, too, but their protection was not enough, because the Separated ones were not interested in peace. They had already split themselves, and were bent on dividing rather than reintegrating. The levels they introduced into themselves turned against each other, and they, in turn, turned against each other. They established differences, divisions, cleavages, dispersion, and all the other concepts related to the increasing splits they produced.

T 2 B 44. Not being in their Right Minds, they turned their defenses from protection to assault, and acted literally insanely. It was essential to introduce a split-proof device which could be used ONLY to heal, if it was used at all. T(81) 81]

5. <sup>1</sup>The Atonement was built into the space-time belief to set a limit on the need for the belief itself, and ultimately to make learning complete. <sup>2</sup>The Atonement is the final lesson. <sup>3</sup>Learning itself, like the classrooms in which it occurs, is temporary. [Ur: Let all those who overestimate human intelligence remember this.] <sup>4</sup>The ability to learn has no value when change [Ur: of understanding] is no longer necessary. <sup>5</sup>The eternally creative have nothing to learn. [Ur: Only after the Separation was it necessary to direct the creative force to learning, because changed behavior had become mandatory.] <sup>6</sup>You can learn to improve your perceptions, and can become a better and better learner. [Ur: Human beings can learn to improve their behavior, and can also learn to become better and better learners.] <sup>7</sup>This will bring you into closer and closer accord with the Sonship; but the Sonship itself is a perfect creation and perfection is not

a matter of degree. <sup>8</sup>Only while there is a belief in differences [Ur: Only when there are different degrees] is learning meaningful.

• **Study Question** •

5. *In 4:2–3, it refers to a specific “act of love,” something that occurred after the separation, in space and time. What do you suppose may be referred to here? (Compare this with C-5.3:5.)*
6. *Atonement is linked to learning here; it is the final lesson in the learning process. Both learning and Atonement are temporary. Can you explain why?*

Although the Atonement was planned as a defense—a response to the separation—it was not an attack on separation. All other defenses are attacks as well; we have immortalized that in the saying, “The best defense is a good offense,” which simply means, “Attack them before they attack you.” The ego’s style of defense is to attack whatever external thing it perceives as the cause of its upset. The Atonement, although it is a defense, cannot be misused as a weapon of attack. “It can only heal” (4:9).

Why is that? I skipped right over the reason given for years: “because it is not a device you made” (4:1). What we have made is not perfect; it is subject to misuse because it is lacking (T-1.VI.1:3). The Atonement is based on an eternal principle, a principle that predates the Atonement. That principle is love. The Atonement cannot be used for destruction because it is an extension of God’s love. Its expression in the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, the act of love that demonstrated Atonement to the world, was “built into the space-time belief” (5:1), but it is not native to space and time.

{I’m not going to comment here on the two omitted paragraphs about “many Souls” and “angels” failing in their attempts to rescue “the Separated Ones.” Intriguing, but I think it is useless to speculate on what it all means.}

Space and time is something we made, and we did not make the Atonement. It is, in fact, the thing that will bring space and time to an end. (That is what is meant by, “set a limit on the need for the belief itself,” in 5:1.) Thus, because it comes into space-time as an extension of God’s Love from outside of space-time, it cannot be misused. God's creations cannot be changed.

The Atonement completes learning; it brings the classroom to an end. (Note that the classroom which ends must refer to our material existence within time.) And when learning has achieved its purpose, we don’t need it any longer. The same is true for the Atonement (although the principle behind it, Love, will go on forever). Within time, “You can learn to improve your perceptions, and can become a better and better learner” (5:6). You experience yourself moving closer and closer to some kind of perfection, but “perfection is not a matter of degree” (5:7). You cannot actually become more and more perfect; either you are perfect or you are not. What you are really doing, then, is gradually acquiring the readiness to know perfection. When you are fully ready, your mind will all at once flip into its original state of total perfection. And you will no longer believe in



differences, degrees or various other forms of imperfection. You will only know perfection.

**Note:** The term “Sonship” (5:7) has been used several times previously (T-I.I.19:2; 1.II.4:6; 1.II.6:2; 1.V.2:6; 1.V.3:8; 1.V.4:6; and 1.VII.3:14), and appears in 86 paragraphs, sometimes more than once per paragraph. Its basic meaning is, “The sum of all that God created; all the parts of the Son of God; the collectivity which includes the minds of all living things” (A Course Glossary, page 72).

## Paragraph 6

6. <sup>1</sup>Evolution is a process in which you seem to proceed from one degree to the next. <sup>2</sup>You correct your previous missteps by stepping forward. <sup>3</sup>This process is actually incomprehensible in temporal terms, because you return as you go forward. <sup>4</sup>The Atonement is the device by which you can free yourself from the past as you go ahead. <sup>5</sup>It undoes your past errors, thus making it unnecessary for you to keep retracing your steps without advancing to your return. <sup>6</sup>In this sense the Atonement saves time, but like the miracle it serves, does not abolish it. <sup>7</sup>As long as there is need for Atonement, there is need for time. <sup>8</sup>But the Atonement as a completed plan has a unique relationship to time. <sup>9</sup>Until the Atonement is complete, its various phases will proceed in time, but the whole Atonement stands at time's end. <sup>10</sup>At that point the bridge of return has been built.

### • Study Question •

7. *Spend a little time just appreciating how much it will mean to you to “correct your previous missteps” (2) and “free yourself from the past” (4), and actually undo “your past errors” (5). The Atonement will give you this gift. Think of specific past mistakes you wish you could undo, and thank God for the possibility that you actually can undo them. Ask Him to show you how.*



The Course seems to be giving the word “evolution” its own special slant here; we do not normally think of evolution as correcting our past as we go forward. Notice the word “seem” in sentence 1; we only seem to proceed from one degree to another just as we only seem to be learning. Thus, evolution is only apparent; the real picture does not include evolving from one degree to the next, but we see it as degrees of progress because we are seeing from within the space-time continuum. In reality, the Atonement already stands completed at the end of time (9). In reality, we are not evolving at all. We are outside of time, already perfect, only dreaming that we are on an evolutionary journey. That is an enormous encouragement to me, especially when my own growth seems so slow at times. It helps me to know that my slowly evolving spiritual progress is

not the whole picture, that, from a more advanced perspective, I am already whole, already healed, already complete.

And yet, from our point of view within space and time, our passage towards full Atonement is an evolution. That is how we see and experience it, just as we experience learning as a process, as the preceding paragraph discussed. Learning, or accepting the Atonement, is a process of “quantitative change.” However, when you reach the end of the road, you shift all at once into a place where you know everything and there is nothing to learn. You shift into knowing perfection, which is not a matter of degree.

According to the Course, the Atonement is the “device” by which our evolution works (compare

6:4 with 6:1–2). Remember, the Atonement is a correction; it shows us that our errors never really occurred (T-2.I.4:4). So our progress or spiritual growth—our “evolution”—is actually accomplished by undoing the past. When the paragraph says this is “actually incomprehensible in temporal terms” (3), what it means is this:

Time is one-dimensional; we view it as a straight line from past to future. On a straight line, you can't go backwards and forwards at the same time. In terms of time, then, you can't depict the dual forward-backward motion of our growth.

However, if you add a second dimension you can portray this concept. If you depict your journey as beginning at the top left of a page, then your journey takes a U-shape, dipping toward the bottom as you move to the right. Then, as you end it, you are retracing your steps (you are returning to the top of the page) and going forward (from left to right) at the same time. (Thanks to Robert for the illustration!) Thus, as we “move forward” towards our awakening, we are at the same time moving “backward” to our original union with God.

What a relief it is to think that we can correct our past missteps, and undo our past errors! We do not have to keep repeating the same mistakes over and over (5). We will have all the time we need to completely undo everything that needs undoing; as long as Atonement is needed there will be time to do it in (7). It seems to happen in stages. As we pass through time, God's Atonement builds our bridge back to our original state. At time's end, says the Course, “the bridge of return has been built” (10). The means for our transition from duality to unity, from perception to knowledge, has been “constructed.” And in that moment, we will be home. I take this to be a reference to the last step, in which we all at once are “atoned,” reconciled with God completely.

## Paragraph 7

7. <sup>1</sup>[Ur: Note to HS: The reason this is upsetting to you is because] The Atonement is a total commitment. <sup>2</sup>You may still think this is associated with loss, a mistake all the separated Sons of God make in one way or another. <sup>3</sup>It is hard to believe a defense that cannot attack is the best defense. <sup>4</sup>This is what is meant by “the meek shall inherit the earth.” <sup>5</sup>They will literally take it over because of their strength. <sup>6</sup>A two-way defense is inherently weak precisely

because it has two edges, and can be turned against you very unexpectedly. <sup>7</sup>This possibility cannot be controlled except by miracles. <sup>8</sup>The miracle turns the defense of Atonement to your real protection [Ur: the protection of the inner self], and as you become more and more secure you assume your natural talent of protecting others, knowing yourself as both a brother and a Son. [Ur: The inner self knows itself as both a brother *and* a son.]

• Study Question •

8. *8. Accepting Atonement as your defense means giving up the ego's idea of defense, which means giving up attack. Everyone, we are told, views giving up the ego's defenses as a loss of some kind (see 7:1–3). In what way does it seem like a loss to you?*

The kind of self-defense the Course advocates seems to be quite similar to non-resistance or non-violence. The Atonement cannot attack (3); it does not do violence to anyone. Those who practice this kind of defense—true denial that any expression of lack of love can bring harm, and refusal to attribute blame and to judge—are harmless. We might tend to think they are helpless as well, and at the mercy of whoever attacks them, but that would be to believe that the so-called attack can bring about true harm. We have to admit, though—it is very hard to entirely give up attack as a means of defense. It seems a great loss. It seems to turn us into dishrags, doormats, or cowards.

Yet, “The Atonement is a total commitment” (1). If we do not give up attack entirely, we have not given it up at all. That sort of half-hearted effort is just the sort of practice of the Atonement that won't work. If you hold on to attack in any way, it can be turned against you (6). If you hold onto attack in any way, it will be turned against you. The defense that was supposed to protect your peace of mind will end up attacking your peace of mind. How? Your attack will make you feel guilty and make you fear the punishment you now think you deserve.

To take the Atonement as our defense is to be meek. The meek are those who defend their peace through the Atonement and through true denial, rather than by attacking the people outside them who seem to cause the upset. Our usual picture of a meek person is a timid weakling. The Greek word for “meek” used in the New Testament, *proates*, does not denote a weakling. It means “gentle yet strong” (according to Marcus Borg in *The Lost Gospel Q: The Original Sayings of Jesus*, Ulysses Press, Berkeley, California, 1996). The meek are strong, because they defend their peace with a one-edged sword that cannot turn and attack them. If they defended their peace by attacking others, they would be weak, and they could not take over the earth.

The meek offer miracles. They return blessing for cursing (W-pI.137.13.1; see also Luke 6:28, Bible). As they offer miracles, declining to “protect” their false identity as bodies and egos, their true Identity is uncovered. They become more and more secure in

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that Identity, and as they do, they assume their real function of protecting the minds of others from fear and doubt. They become saviors to their brothers, and true Sons to God.

## Answer Key

1. We are instructed to “deny any belief that error can hurt you.” I could apply this to my own errors of thought, for example: My mistaken belief that I want to be an independent ego cannot hurt me. My fear of dying cannot hurt me. I could apply this to error in others: When my spouse reacts to me with her ego, it cannot hurt me. When someone denies my rights or treats me shabbily, it cannot hurt me.

2. Comparison of true and false denial (unstated but implied qualities are in parentheses):

TRUE DENIAL	FALSE DENIAL
Protective device	(Perpetuates the error)
Corrects error	Conceals error
Right mind depends on	(Ego mind depends on)
Frees the mind	(Imprisons the mind)

3. What we value, and the purpose we assign to things, is important because we defend what we value; if we value wrongly we will adopt the wrong defenses to defend the wrong things. Choosing the correct values and the correct means of defense can save us time.
4. The step we are advised not to protract (prolong) is indicated in the sentence just before sentence 8: "The means are available whenever you ask" (3:7). In plain English, "You'll save time if you don't put off asking for a miracle." The next sentence tells us that “the correct focus will shorten” the time (9); by that, I think the author means focusing on the whole process he has just outlined, and in particular, clarifying the goal and understanding the means, so that we can ask for them. We protract the process whenever we engage in improper denial and attempt to hide our problems. We hasten the process when we quickly bring our fears into the light of truth, examine what we value, recognize our true goal, and ask for a miracle.
5. The “act of love” appears to be the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, which occurred in space and time:

He [Jesus] offered you a final demonstration that it is impossible to kill God's Son; nor can his life in any way be changed by sin and evil, malice, fear or death (C-5.3:5).

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6. As I understand it, the “Atonement principle” (T-2.II.4:2) refers to love itself, which has always existed. When the separation (seemed to have) occurred, a problem existed to which love needed to respond. That response was the demonstration Jesus made that “his life” could not “in any way be changed by sin and evil, malice, fear or death.” In the words of T-2.I.5:6, he was “perfectly unaffected by all expressions of lack of love.” He demonstrated that to us; he showed us that what is not of God has no power to hurt us. His “act of love” (4:3) was “the final lesson” (5:2), the “final demonstration that it is impossible to kill God’s Son” (C-5.3:5).
7. Both Atonement and learning are temporary because once they have achieved their purpose they are no longer needed. Once belief in differences has been corrected they serve no further purpose.
8. No written response is necessary.
9. The answer given to this question will vary from person to person. Some possible answers follow. Giving up attack as a defense seems like a loss to me:
  - because it seems to leave me defenseless.
  - because Atonement or non-judgment seems weak and wimpy.
  - because I think I have a right to retribution.
  - because my enemy gets away with it.



## Appendix

### Urtext, remarks on Freud and psychological terms

**T 2 B 16.** Projection arises out of FALSE DENIAL. Not out of its proper use. My own role in the Atonement IS one of true projection, i.e., I can project to YOU the affirmation of truth. If you project error to me (or to yourself) you are interfering with the process. My use of projection, which can also be yours, is NOT based on faulty denial. But it DOES involve the very powerful use of the denial of error.

**T 2 B 17.** The miracle worker is one who accepts my kind of denial and projection, unites his own inherent abilities to deny and project with mine, and imposes them back on himself and others. This establishes the total lack of threat anywhere. Together we can then work for the real time of peace, which is Eternal.

**T 2 B 18.** I inspired Bob (ref. to elevator man who took HS down from her apt.) to make that remark to you, and it is a pity that you heard only the last part. But you can still use that. His remark ended with: "Every shut eye is not asleep." Since your own vision is much improved at the moment, we will go on a while.

**T 2 B 19.** Freud's identification of mechanisms was quite correct, as was his recognition of their creative ability. They can INDEED create man's perception, both of himself and his surroundings. **T(77) -77**

**T 2 B 20.** But Freud's limitations induced inevitable limits on his own perception. He made two kinds of errors.

**T 2 B 21.** The first is that he saw only how the mechanisms worked in the mentally ill.

**T 2 B 22.** The second is his own denial of the mechanism of the Atonement.

**T 2 B 23.** Let us take up the first, because a clear understanding of the second depends on it.

**T 2 B 24.** Denial should be directed only to error, and projection should be limited to truth. You should truly give as you have truly received. The Golden Rule[110] can work effectively only on this basis.

**T 2 B 25.** Intellectualization is a poor word, which stems from the brain-mind confusion. "Right-Mindedness" is better. This device defends the RIGHT MIND, and gives it control over the body. "Intellectualization" implies a split, whereas "Right-Mindedness" involves healing.

**T 2 B 26.** Withdrawal is properly employed in the service of withdrawing from the desert. It is NOT a device for escape, but for consolidation. There IS only One Mind.

**T 2 B 27.** Dissociation is quite similar. You should split yourself off from error, but only in defense of integration.

**T 2 B 28.** Detachment is essentially a weaker form of dissociation. This is one of the major areas of withholding that both you and B. are engaging in.

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**T 2 B 29.** Flight can be undertaken in whatever direction you choose, but note that the concept itself implies flight FROM something. Flight from error is perfectly appropriate.. **T(78) -78**

**T 2 B 30.** Distantiation is a way of putting distance between yourself and what you SHOULD fly from.

**T 2 B 31.** Regression is a real effort to return to your own original state. In this sense, it is utilized to RESTORE, not to go back to the less mature.

**T 2 B 32.** Sublimation should be associated with the SUBLIME.

**T 2 B 33.** There are many other so-called “dynamic” concepts which are profound errors due essentially to the misuse of defenses. Among them is the concept of different levels of aspiration, which results from real level confusion.

**T 2 B 34.** However, the main point to be understood from these notes is that you can defend truth as well as error, and in fact, much better.

**T 2 B 35.** So far we have concentrated on ends rather than means because unless you regard an end as worth achieving, you will not devote yourself to the means by which it can BE achieved. Your own question enabled me to shift the emphasis from end to means. (Question asked was “how can we incorporate this material?”) You and B. HAVE accepted the end as valuable, thus signifying your willingness to use defenses to ensure it.

**T 2 B 36.** The means are easier to clarify after the true worth of the goal itself is firmly established.

**T 2 B 37.** Everyone defends his own treasure. You do not have to tell him to do this, because HE will do so automatically. The real question still remains WHAT do you treasure, and HOW MUCH do you treasure it?