

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 27

Healing the Ancient Dream

Section I

The Picture of Crucifixion

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

Overview of Section I

Surprise! You may have thought that in starting a new chapter we might leave behind the subject of “unfairly treated.” But no! The term “unfair” occurs five times in the first three paragraphs. And the rest of the 12 paragraphs present an intriguing and challenging discussion that ties in seeing oneself as unfairly treated with sickness and the body. Happily, it ends with a presentation of a simple solution.

Paragraph 1

The wish to be unfairly treated is a compromise attempt that would combine attack and innocence.¹ ²Who can combine the wholly incompatible and make a unity of what can never join? ³Walk you the gentle way, and you will fear no evil and no shadows in the night.² ⁴But place no terror symbols on the path,³ or you will weave a crown of thorns from which your brother and yourself will not escape. ⁵You cannot crucify yourself alone, and if you are unfairly treated, he must suffer the unfairness that you see. ⁶You cannot sacrifice yourself alone, for sacrifice is total. ⁷If it could occur at all, it would entail the whole of God's creation, and the Father with the sacrifice of His beloved Son.

¹ As the section later makes clear, when you believe you have been unfairly treated, you not only feel innocent, you also feel justified in condemning your attacker, and this condemnation is an attack.

² Psalm 23:4 (KJV): “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.” In the Course's allusion, we walk without fear of evil or shadows when we walk the gentle way and do not wish to be unfairly treated.

³ “Terror symbols” seems to refer to brothers who appear to be treating you unfairly.

Continuing the discussion of unfair treatment, we are told that wishing to be unfairly treated is an attempt on the part of our ego to compromise with innocence by *combining* attack and innocence (1:1). We have to keep in mind that we actually *wish* to be unfairly treated in order to make ourselves feel innocent by projecting the guilt outside ourselves.

We cannot truly combine attack with innocence, however; they are incompatible (1:2). Instead, we are called to “walk...the gentle way.” Recall the lines from the preceding chapter that describe this “gentle way”:

Regard him gently. Look with loving eyes on him who carries Christ within him, that you may behold his glory and rejoice that Heaven is not separate from you. (T-26.IX.1:5–6).

We’ll be looking at that gentle way in more detail later. For now, it’s enough to know that if we walk in this way, we “will fear no evil and no shadows in the night” (1:3). It isn’t foolproof; we can “place...terror symbols on the path,” and inflict suffering on both our brother and ourselves (1:4). What is a “terror symbol”? I think from the context that it must refer to seeing ourselves as in any way unfairly treated. Suddenly there is a reason to be afraid of our brother; he has treated, or is treating, us unfairly. He has become a symbol of terror to us. We place “a crown of thorns” on our heads; we demonstrate how we have suffered.

And since we are all one, our brother suffers from it just as we do. We are inflicting the pain, crucifying ourselves, and we cannot do that alone; whatever we suffer our brother *must* suffer with us (1:5). “Sacrifice is total”; we are inextricably linked, and any sacrifice affects us both (1:6). In fact it affects “the *whole* of God’s creation, including God Himself (1:7). The good news is that sacrifice is an illusion; no real loss is possible, so sacrifice cannot really occur (1:7). That does not prevent us from experiencing it *as if* it were real.

Paragraph 2

2 In your release from sacrifice is his made manifest and shown to be his own. ²But every pain you suffer do you see as proof that *he* is guilty of attack. ³Thus would you make yourself to be the sign that he has lost his innocence, and need but look on you to realize that he has been condemned. ⁴And what to you has been unfair will come to him in righteousness. ⁵The unjust vengeance that you suffer now belongs to him, and when it rests on him are you set free. ⁶Wish not to make yourself the living symbol of his guilt, for you will not escape the death you make for him, and in his innocence you find your own.

The flip side of what we just said about sacrifice, however, is that we also simultaneously experience *release* from sacrifice together (2:1).

When we allow ourselves to suffer from pain (pain that we believe is caused by our brother or sister), we view our pain as proof that he or she “is guilty of attack” (2:2). We have become the sign of her guilt. As we see things, our pain proves her guilty, and if she

would look at us honestly and objectively, she would realize she has been condemned (2:3). We have chosen the reality of our pain *in order* to get her to accept her guilt.

You have been unfairly treated by her, but you believe that by placing the blame for your pain squarely on her, *she* will suffer, and her pain will be just and righteous (2:4). You think that you will be freed from your suffering when she finally suffers her just punishment (2:5). If you watch any of the true crime shows like Dateline or 48 Hours, time after time you've seen people who have lost a loved one to a murderer insist that they need closure, they want justice, they want someone to pay for what they have done. They believe their suffering will be alleviated if the murderer is caught and punished. Sometimes, if the main suspect is finally acquitted by a jury, the family will continue to believe in their guilt and complain about the verdict. They are suffering and they want someone else to pay for it.

The Course warns us not to get caught in any such trap. We may not have been impacted by a murderer, but we do the same thing in “crimes” of a lower order. We want to demonstrate by our suffering just how guilty the other person is. If we do that, the Course warns, we “will not escape the death you make for him” (1:6). How much more desirable to find your own innocence by seeing hers (1:6)! Forgiveness is releasing a prisoner from your judgment, only to find that the person being imprisoned was you.

The call for forgiveness is found all through the New Testament. For instance:

“Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger” (Ephesians 4:26 ESV)

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them.” (Romans 12:14 ESV)

Paragraph 3

3 Whenever you consent to suffer pain, to be deprived, unfairly treated, or in need of *anything*, you but accuse your brother of attack upon God's Son. ²You hold a picture of your crucifixion before his eyes, that he may see his sins are writ in Heaven in your blood and death, and go before him closing off the gate and damning him to hell. ³Yet this is writ in hell and not in Heaven, where you are beyond attack and prove his *innocence*. ⁴The picture of yourself you offer him you show yourself, and give it all your faith. ⁵The Holy Spirit offers you, to give to him, a picture of yourself in which there is no pain and no reproach at all. ⁶And what was martyred to his guilt becomes the perfect witness to his innocence.

The word “consent” here is likely to bother most of us. We don't realize that we are *consenting* in any way “to suffer pain, to be deprived, unfairly treated, or in need” (3:1). Just the opposite! We see it as coming from outside ourselves, out of our control, the action of persons who are not ourselves but separate from us. We insist, “They are attacking me, God's Son” (3:1)! Jesus is telling us that we *do* consent to every form of suffering, ranging from clear unfair treatment to simply feeling in need! It's important to

realize that he isn't talking just about sickness. What he says applies to every way we imagine ourselves to be suffering. All of it, he teaches, is a form of the ego's attempt to offload our guilt onto someone or something perceived as outside of us. (Of course, we must remember there *is nothing* outside of us!)

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. (T-16.II.1:1-2 (CE))

If that is true, any way we seem to suffer from some “outside” attack *must* be a form of self-inflicted pain. So when we suffer, we have made ourselves a crucifixion picture, laying the blame on our brothers and sisters. We want them to see their sins “writ in Heaven in your blood and death.” We want to run ahead of them to Heaven's gate and slam it shut in their face, “damning him to hell” (3:2). You may think, “Oh, I wouldn't go that far!” But remember, innocence is absolute: Either you are totally innocent or you are not innocent at all. One spot on the whiteness of innocence pollutes it entirely, and only total innocence belongs in Heaven. By blaming anyone for your suffering you *are* condemning them to hell. (Not that hell actually exists!)

There is no writing of sins in Heaven. If such were to exist at all it would be in hell. In Heaven you are “*beyond* attack,” free from all pain and suffering; therefore your condition will “prove his *innocence*,” not his guilt (3:3). Remember always that we are one; the other person is part of yourself. Therefore, “The picture of yourself you offer him you show yourself, and give it all your faith” (3:4). It's also true that the picture of *him* that you offer to him you are offering to yourself as well, with all the faith you are giving to seeing *him* that way, guilty or innocent.

You have a holy picture of yourself to offer to your brother or sister, one given to you by the Holy Spirit. In this picture there is no pain and no reproach of him or her at all (3:5). See yourself this way, without pain, without any reproach of your brother. Offer *this* picture, and your martyred, suffering self becomes instead “the perfect witness to his innocence” (3:6).

In Chapter 28 there is a succinct summary of this whole idea:

The body is released because the mind acknowledges, “This is not done to me, but I am doing this.” (T-28.I.12:5 (CE), T-28.II.12:5 (FIP))

Paragraph 4

4 The power of witness is beyond belief, because it brings conviction in its wake. ²The witness is believed because he points beyond himself to what he represents. ³A sick and suffering you but represents your brother's guilt; the witness which you send lest he forget the injuries he gave, from which you swear he never will escape.⁴ ⁴This sick and sorry picture you accept, if only it can serve to punish him. ⁵The sick are merciless to everyone, and in contagion do they seek to kill. ⁶Death seems an easy price if they can say, "Behold me, brother, at your hand I die." ⁷For sickness is the witness to his guilt, and death would prove his errors must be sins.

The first sentence compares the simple belief in something to a person who can *bear witness* to that something. A belief has no supporting evidence; a witness comes with the foundation of *experience*. If you hear or see a witness, you go beyond belief to conviction (being convinced) (4:1–2). The point is that when you are sick and suffering, you are being a witness to your brother's guilt (4:3). Generally we are not conscious that we are doing this. But sometimes we are. Sometimes people will say things like, "You make me sick." "You give me a headache." "You turn my stomach."

It is hard to accept the idea that all sickness is something we are responsible for, chosen to make someone else feel guilty, to remind them that you have not let them off the hook (4:3). Yet that is what the Course is saying here. We are willing to accept "this sick and sorry picture" as long as it serves to punish our brother or sister, that is, make them feel guilty (4:4).

The following two sentences paint a very dark picture of our egos. We are "merciless," and we "seek to kill," perhaps by infecting our partner with our disease (possible interpretation of "in contagion") (4:5). In our egos we are actually willing to *die* if we can lay the guilt for our suffering at our brother's feet (4:6). We are so blinded by the need to project our guilt that "death seems an easy price." Instead of realizing that I am doing this to myself, we "consent to suffer" (3:1) and insist that "*you* are doing this to me."

How does our sickness point an accusing finger at our brothers? Because our sickness (and every other form of suffering) "is the witness to his guilt." How can we possibly be willing to die? Because it would demonstrate that our brother's "errors *must* be" more than errors, they must be "sins." The Bible teaches that, "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23), so if the result of what he has done is our death, it proves that the cause must be sin.

⁴ In other words, we mentally cause sickness in our bodies in order to show our brother concrete proof of "the injuries he gave."

Paragraph 5

5 Sickness is but a “little” death; a form of vengeance not yet total. ²Yet it speaks with certainty for what it represents. ³The bleak and bitter picture you have sent your brother you have looked upon in grief. ⁴And everything that it has shown to him have you believed because it witnessed to the guilt in him, which you perceived and loved. ⁵Now, in the hands made gentle by His touch, the Holy Spirit lays a picture of a different you. ⁶It is a picture of a body still, for what you really are cannot be seen nor pictured. ⁷But this one has not been used for purpose of attack, and therefore never suffered pain at all. ⁸It witnesses to the eternal truth that you cannot be hurt, and points beyond itself to both your innocence and his.

We may not take it to the ultimate conclusion of actual death, but “Sickness is but a ‘little death’” (5:1), merely an indicator of what is to inevitably come. It is a temporary stand-in for death, quite clearly and certainly (5:2). It is a picture you are sending to your brother with the caption, “Look at what you’ve done to me! See how guilty you are!” You have actually *loved* being able to torment your brother this way, showing him the guilt which you, with such profound and wise discernment, have perceived in him (5:3–4).

Deep within we have believed that *we* were sinners, guilty of stealing our life away from God. And we have believed God was our ultimate enemy, waiting to exact vengeance on us for our sin. This is why we’ve been so strongly motivated to see the guilt *elsewhere*. Accepting our responsibility for our experience seems terrifying. “Am I the source of my own suffering?” We can become stricken with terrible guilt over such a thought, and we avoid it like the plague. When it begins to break through it can bring a moment of utter terror.

The Workbook, in Lesson 196, contains a passage describing that moment. I quote it at length:

9 Salvation’s song can certainly be heard in the idea we practice for today. If it can but be you you crucify, you did not hurt the world, and need not fear its vengeance and pursuit. Nor need you hide in terror from the deadly fear of God projection hides behind.⁵ The thing you dread the most is your salvation. You are strong, and it is strength you want. And you are free, and glad of freedom. You have sought to be both weak and bound, because you feared your strength and freedom. Yet salvation lies in them.

10 There is an instant in which terror seems to grip your mind so wholly that escape appears quite hopeless. When you realize, once and for all, that it is you you fear, the mind perceives itself as split. And this had been concealed while you believed attack could be directed outward and returned from outside to within. It

⁵ The fear of God, in other words, is not a response to objective reality. Hiding behind it is its real source: your own projection. You have projected onto God your fear of the thing in your own mind that has been crucifying you—what paragraph 11 calls the “murderer perceived within you.”

seemed to be an enemy outside you had to fear. And thus a god outside yourself became your mortal enemy, the source of fear.

11 Now, for an instant, is a murderer perceived within you, eager for your death, intent on plotting punishment for you until the time when it can kill at last. Yet in this instant is the time as well in which salvation comes. For fear of God has disappeared, and you can call on Him to save you from illusions in His love, calling Him Father and yourself His Son. Pray that the instant may be soon—today! Step back from fear and make advance to love. (W-196.9:1-11:5 (CE))

That transitional moment of terror can, if you allow it, be replaced by “a picture of a *different* you” (5:5). It isn’t yet the final picture of what you really are because that cannot be perceived nor pictured (5:6). It’s still you apparently in a body, but it is a body that has never been used for attack, and “therefore never suffered pain at all” (5:7). To me, this seems to imply that our actual body will be free of all pain. It is a symbol of “the eternal truth that you cannot *be* hurt, and points *beyond* itself to both *your* innocence and *his*”, that is, your brother’s (5:8). For a body to symbolize your invulnerability and innocence, it has to be free from sickness of any kind.

Paragraph 6

6 Show *this* unto your brother, who will see that every scar is healed and every tear is wiped away in laughter and in love.⁶ ²And he will look on his forgiveness there, and with healed eyes will look *beyond* it to the innocence that he beholds in you. ³Here is the proof that he has never sinned; that nothing that his madness bid him do was ever done or ever had effects of any kind; that no reproach he laid upon his heart was ever justified, and no attack can touch him with the poisoned sting of fear. ⁴Attest his innocence and *not* his guilt. ⁵Your healing is his comfort and his health, because it proves illusions were not true.

This physical symbol of innocence and invulnerability is what we want to show to our brothers and sisters. They will realize that they were never guilty, nor were you. Tears are replaced with laughter and love (6:1–2). What you can now show him is that he has *never* sinned, and that none of his mad actions ever had any real effects. None of the self-directed guilt he felt was *ever* justified. He can be totally free from fear (6:3).

In a nutshell: Do not show your brother his guilt; show him his innocence (6:4). You can do this by accepting your own healing, which will prove to him that his illusions were not true (6:5).

⁶ Revelation 21:4 (RSV): “He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” Isaiah 25:8 (RSV): “He will swallow up death for ever, and the Lord GOD will wipe away tears from all faces, and the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth; for the LORD has spoken.”

Paragraph 7

7 It is not will for life but wish for death that is the motivation for this world. ²Its only purpose is *to prove guilt real*. ³No worldly thought or act or feeling has a motivation other than this one. ⁴These are the witnesses that are called forth to be believed, and lend conviction to the system they speak for and represent. ⁵And each has many voices, speaking to your brother and yourself in different tongues. ⁶And yet to both the message is the same. ⁷Adornment of the body seeks to show how lovely are the witnesses for guilt. ⁸Concerns about the body demonstrate how frail and vulnerable is your life; how easily destroyed is what you love. ⁹Depression speaks of death and vanity of real concern with anything at all.⁷

The first 3 sentences are crystal clear: The *only* motivation for this world is “the wish for death,” in order to “prove guilt real” (7:1–3). Worldly thoughts, acts, and feelings all are aimed at convincing us of the reality of the worldly system (7:4). They come to us in a myriad of seemingly pleasing forms:

- adornment of the body, which attempts to make guilt’s witness a lovely thing;
- concerns about the body, showing us that our lives are frail and vulnerable, and how easily destroyed;
- depression, which “speaks of death and vanity of real concern with anything at all” (7:5–9).

These are unpleasant thoughts, to be sure. Although we certainly need to keep in mind that our experience here, in this world, can become something very different from this grotesque motivation — a world transfigured in light, radiant in God’s love — it’s crucial that we not attempt to skip over the dark side of things. If we refuse to look at the darkness and to own it, it will persist. That instant of perceiving your own mind as the murderer is essential because it liberates the rest of the universe, including God, from any blame. It leaves you open to God’s mercy and love. It becomes the moment of salvation.

There is a marvelous image in one of C. S. Lewis’s fantasy novels about Narnia. One boy has succumbed to the enemy and betrayed his brother and sisters. As a result he has been transformed into a giant toad. He approaches the Christ-figure in the story, Aslan the lion, who tells him that he can be liberated from his toadish prison. The boy pleads for Aslan’s help. So Aslan, the lion, leaps on him and begins clawing him down his back, tearing away the toadish flesh. The boy screams in pain, “Ow! Ow! Ow! You’re hurting me!” To which Aslan replies, “I never said it wouldn’t hurt.”

Deliverance from our ego can be like that. That self-perception of realizing we’ve been our own worst enemy all along — in fact, our only enemy — is usually very painful. It hurts. But it is the only way out.

⁷ “Vanity” here means futility or uselessness. In other words, depression speaks of the uselessness of concern with anything at all. This passage may be a reference to Ecclesiastes 1:2 (KJV): “Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.”

Paragraph 8

8 The strongest witness to futility, which bolsters all the rest and helps them paint the picture in which sin is justified, is sickness in whatever form it takes. ²The sick have reason for each one of their unnatural desires and strange needs. ³For who could live a life so soon cut short and *not* esteem the worth of passing joys? ⁴What pleasures could there be that will endure? ⁵Are not the frail entitled to believe that every stolen scrap of pleasure is their righteous payment for their little lives? ⁶Their death will pay the price for all of them, if they enjoy their benefits or not.⁸ ⁷The end of life must come, whatever way that life be spent. ⁸And so take pleasure in the quickly passing and ephemeral.

Of all the witnesses to the futility of life in this world, sickness is the master. It lends support to all the other forms of illusion that justify sin (8:1). It justifies many “unnatural desires and strange needs” (8:2). We are entitled to seek physical and material pleasures because we experience physical disability and pain. As Jesus put the words into the mouth of the rich man in Luke 12, “Eat, drink, and be merry,” and as Isaiah adds in Is. 22:13, “for tomorrow we die.” Passing joys are worthwhile because life itself is so short (8:3). No pleasure lasts (8:4). We are so frail and vulnerable that we must be entitled to “every stolen scrap of pleasure” (8:5). We’re going to die no matter what we do, so we may as well get what enjoyment we can get (8:6–7). For such reasons, the sick “take pleasure in the quickly passing and ephemeral” (8:8)

Paragraph 9

9 These are not sins, but witnesses unto the strange belief that sin and death are real, and innocence and sin will end alike within the termination of the grave. ²If this were true, there *would* be reason to remain content to seek for passing joys and cherish little pleasures where you can. ³But in this picture is the body not perceived as neutral and without a goal inherent in itself. ⁴For it becomes the symbol of reproach, the sign of guilt whose consequences still are there to see, so that the cause can never be denied. ⁵Your function is to prove to him⁹ that sin can *have* no cause. ⁶How futile must it be to see yourself a picture of the proof that what your function is can never be!

The ephemeral pleasures of the world are not sinful, not at all, despite what some people assert. What they are is witnesses to the reality of sin and death, and addiction to these passing pleasures betrays a belief that whether we are sinful or innocent makes no difference: everyone dies and ends in a grave (9:1). If that were true — if it’s all over

⁸. Pronoun clarification: “Their [the sick people’s] death will pay the price for all of them [the passing joys/scraps of pleasure], if they enjoy their [those things’] benefits or not.”

⁹. “Him” refers to your brother, the one you perceived as treating you unfairly.

when the body dies, no matter how we live — then “eat, drink and be merry” would be a reasonable philosophy of life (9:2).

Seeing the body in this way certainly isn't seeing it as neutral, “*without* a goal inherent in itself” (9:3). Rather, it is a “symbol of reproach” and “a sign of guilt,” proof that sin is real, the inescapable and undeniable cause of the inevitable and unsparing consequence, death (9:4).

As messengers of God, our function is the exact opposite. We are here to prove to our brothers and sisters that sin has no reality and no consequence (9:5). If that is indeed our function, nothing can be more futile and debilitating than seeing ourselves as a picture of the exact opposite, proof that our function is impossible (9:6).

Paragraph 10

10 The Holy Spirit's picture changes not the body into something it is not. ²It only takes away from it all signs of accusation and of blamefulness. ³Pictured without a purpose, it is seen as neither sick nor well, nor bad nor good. ⁴No grounds are offered that it may be judged in any way at all. ⁵It has no life, but neither is it dead. ⁶It stands apart from all experience of fear or love. ⁷For now it witnesses to nothing yet, its purpose being open and the mind made free again to choose what it is for. ⁸Now is it not condemned, but waiting for a purpose to be given, that it may fulfill the function that it will receive.

When the Holy Spirit works in our ives He does not change our bodies at all, making them into something other than what they are. He simply removes all the ways in which the body speaks of accusation and blamefulness (10:1–2), ways that certainly include sickness. He shifts our perception of the body is realize it *has* no particular purpose. It isn't sick, it isn't well, it's not bad or good. There are no criteria by which is can be judged; it just *is*. It has no life but it isn't dead, either (10:3–5).¹ As Lesson 294 states, “My body is a wholly neutral thing.”

Seen through the eyes of the Holy Spirit, we do not love our bodies, but we do not fear them, either. The body is neutral, not one nor the other (10:6). It is a witness to nothing, or rather, it does not witness to anything — *yet* (10:7). That “yet” is crucial, for it indicates that this “wholly neutral” thing is a transitional phase we must go through on the way from perceiving our bodies as witnesses to sin and death to perceiving them as having some other purpose, something else they can witness to. During this phase, the body's purpose is “open and the mind is made free again to choose what it is *for*” (10:7). It isn't good or bad. We don't judge it. It is waiting to be given a new purpose, so as to fulfill the new function that it will receive (10:8). While it isn't clearly stated here, I think that new function will be given to the body *by the Holy Spirit*. I think that is clearly implied in 12:6, below.

Paragraph 11

11 Within this empty space, from which the goal of sin has been removed, is Heaven free to be remembered. ²Here its peace can come, and perfect healing take the place of death. ³The body can become a sign of life, a promise of redemption, and a breath of immortality to those grown sick from breathing in the fetid scent of death. ⁴Let it have healing as its purpose. ⁵Then will it send forth the message it received, and by its health and loveliness proclaim the truth and value that it represents. ⁶Let it receive the power to represent an endless life, forever unattacked. ⁷And to your brother let its message be, “Behold me, brother, at your hand I live.”

What we are called on to do is to create this empty space, this view of the body as neutral. We are to stop seeing it as having any purpose at all, to come to a place of divine ignorance. As the Workbook says in one place, “I do not know what anything is for” (Lesson 25). We’re clearing the decks for the Holy Spirit to take over this purpose thing. We remove “the *goal* of sin” (that is, trying to prove that sin is real, that some attacks are justified), no longer seeing our brothers as guilty, and thus making it possible for the memory of Heaven to return (11:1). The emptiness also enables the peace of Heaven to enter, “and perfect healing take the place of death” (11:2).

By releasing the body from the purpose we have given it, to be a sign of guilt, it can now become a sign of life instead. We have become healers and liberators, bringing people redemption. Our bodies, instead of witnessing to death, now witness to immortality. Not that the body will become immortal, at least not in my understanding of things. Rather, in our detachment from the body, it can be an indicator of what we truly *are*, spirit or mind, and not a body. We can become a breath of fresh air to those still caught in the miasma of death (11:3).

Jesus says, “Let it [the body] have healing as its purpose” (11:4). That’s the goal, after we pass through the “body is neutral” phase. Sentence 5 seems to me to be a clear statement that, when we abandon the “sin and guilt” purpose we’ve laid on our bodies, they will become healthy and lovely, which will proclaim the truth and value that the body represents (11:5). That indicates that the body will be seen as a symbol of a higher, non-physical, eternal life; it will represent the truth of you. And the next sentence confirms that: “Let it receive the power to represent an endless life, forever unattached” (11:6). You will be announcing to your brothers and sisters that you live because of their lives, and that nothing they have ever said or done has tarnished or diminished your eternal life in any way (11:7).

Paragraph 12

12 The simple way to let this be achieved is merely this: to let the body have no purpose from the past, when you were sure you knew its purpose was to foster guilt. ²For this insists your crippled picture is a lasting sign of what it represents. ³This leaves no space in which a different view, another purpose, can be given it. ⁴You do not know its purpose. ⁵You but gave *illusions* of a purpose to a thing you made to hide your function from yourself. ⁶This thing without a purpose cannot hide the function that the Holy Spirit gave. ⁷Let, then, *its* purpose and *your* function both be reconciled at last and seen as one.

How can this occur? The simple answer involves something we “let” happen; the word “let” is used twice. We “let this be achieved,” that is, we do not *do* anything, but we *let* it happen. We step back and let God be God in us.

Second, we “let the body have no purpose from the past, when you were sure you *knew* its purpose was to foster guilt” (12:1). We stop playing the guilt game. We forgive. We abandon all attempts to foster guilt in anyone.

We have to do that. We have to do something, but what that something is, is to *stop* doing something else. Stop blaming. Stop projecting your guilt. Stop making anything outside of yourself the cause of your suffering and pain. You must create a space for a different view, and another purpose. Stop thinking you know what the body’s purpose is (12:1–4). Let your mind become a clean slate on which the Holy Spirit can write (W-65.6:4).

Up till now we really have had no purpose at all for the body, just an *illusion* of a purpose, given to something we made to hide our real function from our minds (12:5). The body cannot truly hide the function given us by the Holy Spirit (12:6). Therefore, we must “let...*its* purpose and *your* function be brought together as one, as it was in the beginning (12:7).

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.