

Study Guide and Commentary

ACIM® Text, Chapter 28

The Little Gap

Section I

Remembering the Present

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

Overview of Section I

This is a very long section; it has fifteen paragraphs. The subject is a close look at memory: what memory is, and what it isn't; how the ego uses it and how the Holy Spirit uses it. The discussion of memory is intermingled with the subject of cause and effect that we have studied in the last chapter, for what *we* remember is the past, in which we sinned, thus causing our guilt; what *the Holy Spirit* brings to our memory is the present, where we find God's eternal Cause that has never been replaced, and in which the past has never been.

In the end, the section is about "the memory of God," or in other words, enlightenment, the remembering of our eternally present Oneness with The All.

Paragraph 1

The miracle does nothing. ²All it does is to *undo*. ³And thus it cancels out the interference to what *has been* done.¹ ⁴It does not add, but merely takes away. ⁵And what it takes away is long since gone but, being kept in memory, appears to have immediate effects. ⁶This world was over long ago. ⁷The thoughts that made it are no longer in the mind that thought of them and loved them for a while. ⁸The miracle but shows the past is gone, and what has truly gone has no effects. ⁹Remembering a cause can but produce illusions of its presence, not effects.

This is a course in *miracles*. How odd that such a course should state flatly that its primary subject, the miracle, "does nothing" (1:1)! But wait! There is one thing a miracle *does* do: it *undoes* (1:2). A miracle is not additive, but subtractive. No new thing is brought into existence by a miracle. Rather, it removes things from our minds that never had any real existence in the first place. These mental illusions we cling to interfere with

¹ "What *has been* done" is God's creation.

the Truth, which “*has* been done” eternally. We are always already One with God and one another. We are always already innocent. A miracle simply cancels out or takes away the thoughts that have interfered with our recognition of God’s eternal creation (1:3–4).

The things that a miracle removes have actually been gone for a long, long time. God responded to our tiny, mad idea instantly, and annihilated it. However, we have kept that tiny, mad idea “in memory,” so that it “appears to have immediate [that is, current] effects” (1:5). The mad idea is past but appears to have present effects only because we give it seeming life by holding it in memory. This is why this section goes into such detail about how memory works.

As hard as it may be for us to believe, “this world was over long ago” (1:6)! It sure *seems to us* to be present, doesn’t it? How can that be? That’s what Jesus wants to explain. “The thoughts that made” the world, i.e. the tiny, mad idea, “are no longer in the mind that thought of them and loved them for a while” (1:7). If I understand this correctly, it is saying that we are no longer actively thinking these mad thoughts, but we are *remembering* that we did, according to 1:9. What a miracle does is to undo the past, to show us that it is “truly gone” so that it can no longer have any effects (1:8). We no longer actually are thinking that tiny, mad idea; we are just remembering it. That cannot have real effects, just “illusions of its presence, not effects” (1:9). So when he says the world was over long ago, we still think it is present only because we perceive an *illusion* of a world produced by an illusion or memory of the idea that made it.

Paragraph 2

²All the effects of guilt are here no more, for guilt is over. ²In its passing went its consequences, left without a cause. ³Why would you cling to it in memory if you did not *desire* its effects? ⁴Remembering is as selective as perception, being its past tense. ⁵It is perception of the past as if it were occurring now, and still were there to see. ⁶Memory, like perception, is a skill made up by you to take the place of what God gave in your creation. ⁷And like all the things you made, it can be used to serve another purpose and be means for something else. ⁸It can be used to heal and not to hurt, if so you wish.

“Guilt is over” because the tiny, mad idea has been cancelled out. There is nothing to be guilty *of*. And since guilt is gone, its effects are gone (2:1). Remove the cause and the effects are equally gone. No cause means no effects (2:2). This is how diseases are cured, for instance. Remove a virus and the symptoms it was causing are removed.

Why, then, would we “cling to it in memory”? Because we still want its *effects* to exist (2:3). We want the world to be real. Memory, says Jesus, is merely the past tense of perception, and therefore is just as selective as perception (2:4). Just as we see what we *want* to see, we remember what we *want* to remember (2:4). Memory is “perception of the past as if it were occurring now, and still there to see” (2:5).

We've been told very clearly that "perception is a choice and not a fact" (T-21.V.1:7 (FIP), (T-21.V.2:1 (CE)).² Since memory is simply the past tense of perception, we can also say that memory is a choice and not a fact. We are choosing to remember the tiny, mad idea that has caused our illusionary guilt. We are remembering an idea that is long gone, and it *seems* to result in guilt.

Both perception and memory are skills "made up by you." God did not create either one. We made them to replace "what God gave in your creation," which is a reference to the knowledge of God and our union with God (2:6).³ These tools, fabricated by the ego, will disappear when we have fully awakened (W-pI.193.2:3; W-pII.7.1:3-5; W-336.1:1-4).

Yet though they were made by us for the ego's nefarious ends, they "can be used to serve another purpose and be means for something else" (2:7). This is true of all things never created, but that we have made to support our illusion (T-7.IV.2:6-10 (FIP), (T-7.III.4:6-10 (CE); W-64.2:2). If we wish, memory, like perception, "can be used to heal and not to hurt" (2:8).⁴ We can remember the knowledge of our Oneness. He is about to show us just how that can work.

Paragraph 3

3 Nothing employed for healing represents an effort to do anything at all. ²It is a recognition that you have no needs that mean that something must be done. ³It is an unselective memory which is not used to interfere with truth. ⁴All things the Holy Spirit can employ for healing have been given Him without the content and the purposes for which they had been made. ⁵They are but skills without an application. ⁶They await their use. ⁷They have no dedication and no aim.

True remembering is effortless, which is true of everything "employed for healing" (3:1). It's like someone who made a small fortune, millions of dollars, and has deposited it in a safe bank account, but then suffers an accident that produces amnesia.

² I would invite you to read the context of this remark, which conveys a lot of how perception works: (T-21.V.1:1-2:7 (CE), T-21.V.1:1-2:2 (FIP))

³ See T-3.VII.3:8 (FIP), T-3.XI.6:5 (CE); W-158.1:1-2:3). Also:

"We have not lost the knowledge that God gave to us when He created us like Him. We can remember it for everyone, for in creation are all minds as one. And in our memory is the recall how dear our brothers are to us in truth, how much a part of us is every mind, how faithful they have really been to us, and how our Father's love contains us all." (W-139.11:1-3 (CE))

⁴ When you heal, you are remembering the laws of God and forgetting the laws of the ego. We said before that forgetting is merely a way of remembering better.¹ It is therefore not the opposite of remembering, when it is properly conceived. Perceived improperly, it induces a perception of conflict with something else, as all incorrect perception does. Properly perceived, it can be used as a way out of conflict, as all proper perception can. (T-7.III.4:6-10 (CE))

¹T-7.I.12:4-5: "We said before that He teaches remembering and forgetting, but the forgetting aspect is only to make the remembering consistent. You forget to remember better."

He has forgotten that he is a millionaire, and lives like a pauper. It takes no effort for him to “become” a millionaire again. He does not have to *do* anything to become a millionaire. He only need to recognize that he already *is* one; he has “no needs that mean that something must be done” (3:2).

We’ve seen this lesson of effortlessness presented at length in the section, “I Need Do Nothing” (T-18.VII (FIP), T-22.VII (CE)). It’s also clearly stated in Lesson 337:

”God has already done all things that need be done. And I must learn I need do nothing of myself, for I need but accept my Self, my sinlessness, created for me, now already mine, to feel God's Love protecting me from harm, to understand my Father loves His Son; to know I am the Son my Father loves” (W-p11.337.1:5-6).

Healing “is an unselective memory” (3:3). We read in 2:4 that “remembering is as selective as perception,” but this is *unselective* memory. There is no mental activity on our part, picking and choosing what to call to mind. Rather, it is a passive receptivity, accepting the Truth being conveyed to us by Spirit, without any attempt to sort out what we hear, as if we were the arbiters of truth.

Our ego has made a lot of things to serve its ends: the external; world, bodies, beings separate from one another, special relationships, the ability to learn, our physical senses and all our perceptions, and memory. In healing, all these are given to the Holy Spirit to use as He sees fit, stripped of the dark purposes for which the ego made them (3:4). They have become neutral skills, awaiting whatever purpose the Holy Spirit wishes to assign to them (3:5–7). But there is nothing that the ego made that He cannot use. Nothing is wasted if we are willing to let go of *our* purpose for these things.

Paragraph 4

4 The Holy Spirit can indeed make use of memory, for God Himself is there. ²But this is not a memory of past events, but only of a *present* state. ³You are so long accustomed to believe that memory holds only what is past that it is hard for you to realize it is a skill that can remember *now*. ⁴The limitations on remembering the world imposes on it are as vast as those you let the world impose on you. ⁵There is no link of memory to the past. ⁶If you would have it there, then there it is. ⁷But only your desire made the link, and only you have held it to a part of time where guilt appears to linger still. ⁸The Holy Spirit’s use of memory is quite apart from time. ⁹He does not seek to use it as a means to keep the past, but rather as a way *to let it go*.

So the Holy Spirit can, in fact, make use of our memory (4:1), just not in the way we are used to, which is remembering the past—usually past hurt, past wrongs done to us, and so on. That, we must let go of. The Holy Spirit’s use of memory is “only of a *present* state” (4:2). We have grown so used to the idea that memory is about the past that we have difficulty to realize “it is a skill that can remember *now*” (4:3). It is remembering what is the Truth now, which has always been true and always will be, eternally present. We need memory to be used in this way because we have *forgotten* what is always,

already so. In the immortal simplicity of the words of Alan Watts, “This is It.” We realize and remember that, “I need do nothing.”

Our egos’ purpose lies in linking memory only to the past, which is no longer here. We are giving up the present reality of God’s eternal creation for the emptiness of something that has never been.⁵ (4:4)

Forget the idea that memory is about the past (4:5), and be freed to remember the present:

The past is gone, and what is present, freed from its bequest of grief and misery, of pain and loss, becomes the instant in which time escapes the bondage of illusions where it runs its pitiless, inevitable course.

(W-194.5:2)

If we *want* to remember the past, that is what we will remember (4:6), but it does not have to be that way. The only thing linking memory to the past is our desire to hold on to a part of time where it seems that guilt exists. Our egos crave and need to see guilt in others in order to give us some illusion of relative innocence. It’s the way the ego tricks us into thinking we’ve gotten rid of our guilt (4:7).

The Holy Spirit’s use of memory has nothing to do with time (4:8). Rather it provides us a way to escape time, and especially to escape the past. The ego uses memory to keep the past; the Holy Spirit uses memory to let the past go (4:9)!

Paragraph 5

5 Memory holds a message it receives, and does what it is given it to do. ²It does not write the message nor appoint what it is for. ³Like to the body, it is purposeless within itself. ⁴And if it seems to serve to cherish ancient hates and offer you the pictures of injustices and hurts that you are saving, this is what you asked its message be, and this is what it is. ⁵Committed to its vaults, the history of all the body’s past is hidden there. ⁶All of the strange associations made to keep the past alive, the present dead, are stored within it, waiting your command that they be brought to you and lived again. ⁷And thus do their effects appear to be increased by time, which took away their cause.

Memory is just a skill, a tool, designed to receive a message and to hold it. It does that very well, regardless of what message is given to it (5:1). It does not originate the messages it holds, and it is indifferent to the *purpose* of the message (5:2). It is like the body in its purposelessness and neutrality (5:3). In a sense it is like a computer. It just takes the input given and follows its standard program, retaining in mind the information given and presenting it when we come looking for it.

For most of us, much of the time, memory coughs up “pictures of injustices and hurts” from our past (5:4). These are the raw material for the grievances we are holding onto. Memory holds onto them because we asked it to provide fodder for our grievances,

⁵ See T-10.IV.5 (FIP), T-10.IV.4:4–5:7 (CE).

so that's what it gives us. Notice again that *we asked for* what it offers us. Once again, we are doing it to ourselves. We file "the history of all the body's past" in memory, hidden away that, when needed to "keep the past alive" and to keep "the present dead," we can call it all forth so we can relive it (5:5–6). The effects of these items from our history seem to increase over time, despite the fact that their cause has been more and more obscured by time (5:7). Have you ever noticed that about the past hurts that you find yourself mulling over, over and over again? A small hurt can mushroom to seemingly enormous proportions the more you bring it up and chew on it.

Paragraph 6

6 Yet time is but another phase of what does nothing. ²It works hand in hand with all the other attributes with which you sought to keep concealed the truth about yourself. ³Time neither takes away nor can restore. ⁴And yet you make strange use of it, as if the past had caused the present, which is but a consequence in which no change can be made possible, because its cause has gone.⁶ ⁵And change must have a cause that will endure, or else it cannot last. ⁶No change can be made in the present if its cause is *past*. ⁷Only the past is held in memory as you make use of it, and so it is a way to hold the past against the now.

There is no reason things like that should grow over time. Time actually does nothing; it just works as one more part of the system we've devised in the attempt to "keep concealed the truth about yourself" (6:1–2). So the apparent growth in the severity of the hurt is just something our minds manufacture, painting another layer of darkness to obscure our True Self. Time does not do this. It can't take away anything, nor can it restore what we think we've lost. We think that it has to take time to find enlightenment; it doesn't (6:3). We cannot change the present by attempting to use a past cause, but we surely do try to do it anyhow (6:4).

Real, lasting change requires a lasting cause (6:5). A bridge cannot remain standing by piers that were there *yesterday* but not today. If a cause is past, it can't effect any change in the present (6:6). And in the way we typically use memory, all it holds is the past! We are trying to "hold the past against the now" (6:7). We are blaming present pain on causes long gone in the past.

⁶ In other words, when you believe the past caused the present, then the present becomes a mere consequence in which no change can be made, because to introduce change you would have to change the cause, which no longer exists because it is in the past.

Paragraph 7

7 Remember nothing that you taught yourself, for you were badly taught. ²And who would keep a senseless lesson in his mind when he can learn and can preserve a better one? ³When ancient memories of hate appear, remember that their cause is gone, and so you cannot understand what they are for. ⁴Let not the cause that you would give them now be what it was that made them what they were, or seemed to be. ⁵Be glad that it is gone, for this is what you would be pardoned from. ⁶And see instead the new effects of cause accepted now, with consequences here.

I've always liked the first sentence and the words "badly taught," referring to what we've taught ourselves. They are almost funny; I expect a comic drum rimshot after the sentence: "Ba-doom ching!" The content of what we've taught ourselves is the whole ego thought system, with its conviction that time and place are real things, that our feelings and reactions are *caused* by things outside of us and not part of us at all. In other words, everything that is the opposite of, "I am doing this to myself" (7:1).

We have indeed been badly taught! So Jesus advises us not to remember any of it, to forget it. He asks us why on earth we would hold on to these senseless lessons when a better lesson is freely available for us to learn and to preserve in memory (7:2). He goes on to give us some practical advice.

Whenever you realize that you have resurrected "Ancient memories of hate," which refers to any grievance about something someone did in the past that is still bugging you, try to "remember that their cause is gone," which refers *not* to what the person did or did not do, but rather to *your guilt* that you projected onto them, causing you to perceive their actions as some kind of attack. If you can realize that *you are innocent*, that the separation never happened, that you have never offended God and have absolutely nothing to fear from God, it will become immediately clear to you that these ancient memories of hate no longer have any purpose. You won't understand what they are for (7:3) because there *is* no guilt that you need to dump on them!

Do not accept the guilt! It isn't real. It is gone. Don't allow those hateful memories continue to be fueled by the same cause, the same guilt, "that made them what they were, or seemed to be" (7:4). They never really *were* what they only *seemed to be*. Their cause is gone: Rejoice (7:5)! You have already been pardoned from your imagined sin.

Then, having welcomed the Truth of your innocence, this will become the present cause of "new effects" *here and now*, no longer in the past. This is memory used to remember the present (7:6).

Paragraph 8

8 They will surprise you with their loveliness. ²The ancient new ideas they bring will be the happy consequences of a Cause so ancient that It far exceeds the span of memory that your perception sees.⁷ ³This is the Cause the Holy Spirit has remembered for you when you would forget. ⁴It is not past, because He let It not be unremembered. ⁵It has never changed, because there never was a time in which He did not keep It safely in your mind. ⁶Its consequences will indeed seem new, because you thought that you remembered not their Cause. ⁷Yet was It never absent from your mind, for it was not your Father's will that He be unremembered by His only Son.

These “new effects of cause accepted *now*” “will surprise you with their loveliness” (8:1). This is the vision of the real world, the world seen with the vision of Christ, with eyes of forgiveness. Remember what has been said about what forgiveness will show you:

Can you imagine how beautiful those you forgive will look to you? In no fantasy have you ever seen anything so lovely. Nothing you see here, sleeping or waking, comes near such loveliness, and nothing will you value like unto this, nor hold so dear. Nothing that you remember that made your heart seem to sing with joy has ever brought you even a little part of the happiness this sight will bring you. For you will see the Son of God. You will behold the beauty that the Holy Spirit loves to look upon, and that He thanks the Father for. He was created to see this for you, until you learned to see it for yourself. And all His teaching leads to seeing it and giving thanks with Him.

2 This loveliness is not a fantasy. It is the real world, bright and clean and new, with everything sparkling under the open sun. (T-17.II.1:1-2:2 (CE), T-17.II.1:1-2:2 (FIP))

The Christian philosopher and author of the Narnia series of children's books wrote an autobiography titled, “Surprised by Joy.” I think he had a vision of the real world, realizing his total acceptance by his Creator. This is really something to look forward to! To look at the world and be surprised by its loveliness. To look on your brother or sister and find yourself barely able to refrain from falling down in worship at the sight of their radiant being. To look into the depths of someone's being and feel you've just seen proof that God exists.

All this which arises to your redeemed perception is nothing new. They are “*ancient* new ideas,” caused by “a Cause so ancient” that it is beyond any memory you've ever seen with your poor perception (8:2). We are talking here of the original explosion of creative energy with which God launched the Universes, which science sees as the Big Bang but which was far more than some mysterious explosion of everything from nothing. It is the creative impulse that set everything in motion, and which is expanding

⁷ This “Cause,” as will become clear below, is God.

into the fullness of life, forever *now*. When you forgive, when you forget the lessons you've taught yourself, that Ancient Energy is what you've tapped into. "This is the Cause He has remembered for you when you would forget" (8:3). It is present and unchanging, not past, because the Holy Spirit never let it escape His memory (8:4), keeping it in *your mind* (8:5).

The effects of this Ancient Eternal Cause *will* seem as if they were new, but only "because you thought that you remembered not their Cause" (8:6). In fact, it has been there in your mind forever. You only *thought* you didn't remember it, but you were blocking it from your awareness with all your "tiny, mad ideas." "It was never absent from your mind." God did not will that His Son (you) would forget Him, so you did not (8:7). Again, this is the use of memory to remember what is always Present.

Paragraph 9

9 What you remember never was. ²It came from causelessness which you confused with cause. ³It can deserve but laughter, when you learn you have remembered consequences which were causeless and could never *be* effects. ⁴The miracle reminds you of a Cause forever present, perfectly untouched by time and interference, never changed from what It *is*. ⁵And you are Its effect, as changeless and as perfect as Itself. ⁶Its memory does not lie in the past, nor waits a future. ⁷It is not revealed in miracles. ⁸They but remind you that It has not gone. ⁹When you forgive It for your sins,⁸ It will no longer be denied.

What, then, are these things we remember now? Our memories are things that have never truly existed (9:1). Fantasies, I guess you'd call them. Our memories arose from what we thought was a cause (our separation from Oneness and the guilt that fostered in us), but which was nothing but causelessness which could have no real effects, only fantasies (9:2).

When we have learned what we've been doing we are going to laugh at ourselves (9:3). We have been remembering the consequences of our supposed sin, sin that never existed and could not possibly cause any effects whatsoever. So we've been "remembering" things that never existed.

When the miracle enters our minds, it reminds us of God's eternal creative Cause, "forever present, perfectly untouched by time and interference, never changed from what it *is*" (9:4). This is God Whose name is "I AM THAT I AM." "We say 'God is,' and then we cease to speak" (W-169.5:4). God simply *is*, and is this eternal Cause we remember. You and I are the Effects of this Cause. We are as changeless and as perfect as God Himself (9:5).

I am forever an Effect of God.

⁸ The next paragraph explains that we believe that God has judged and condemned us for leaving Him, and as a result has been punishing us down through the ages. Yet all of this is just our projection onto Him. We therefore need to forgive Him, not for His sins, but for what we have projected onto Him.

1. *Father, I was created in Your Mind, a holy Thought that never left its home. I am forever Your Effect, and You forever and forever are my Cause. As You created me I have remained. Where You established me I still abide. And all Your attributes abide in me, because it is Your Will to have a Son so like his Cause that Cause and Its Effect are indistinguishable. Let me know that I am an Effect of God, and so I have the power to create like You. And as it is in Heaven, so on earth. Your plan I follow here, and at the end I know that You will gather Your effects into the tranquil Heaven of Your Love, where earth will vanish, and all separate thoughts unite in glory as the Son of God. (W-326.1)*

The memory of this Cause is not in the past, nor is it absent, waiting for a future appearance. No! It is *now*. Miracles do not “reveal” it, as if it were not already here (9:7). Miracles just remind us that this Cause is always here, as it always has been and always will be (9:8).

The Course then makes a startling statement that begins with the words, “When you forgive it for your sins” (9:9). What? Wait—this Cause is God, right? How can we be forgiving God? And why? Are we somehow *blaming God* for our sins?

In fact we are. We think we brought about the separation, which led to this world full of pain and suffering. But in doing that, we are accusing God of creating us as imperfect beings who were capable of destroying the perfection of Oneness. We wanted to be special, and *God let us do it!* So we may be guilty, but it’s ultimately His fault.

When we forgive this Cause by realizing that we are still Its Effects, remaining as It created us, we have ceased to deny Its “Cause-hood.” We have acknowledged that God’s creation, us, was perfect, is perfect, and will forever be perfect (9:9). “I am forever Your Effect, and You forever and forever are my Cause.”

Paragraph 10

10 You who have sought to lay a judgment on your own Creator cannot understand it is not He Who laid a judgment on His Son. ²You would deny Him His effects, yet have they never *been* denied. ³There was no time in which His Son could be condemned for what was causeless and against His will. ⁴What your remembering would witness to is but the fear of God. ⁵He has not done the thing you fear. ⁶No more have *you*. ⁷And so your innocence has not been lost. ⁸You need no healing to be healed. ⁹In quietness, see in the miracle a lesson in allowing Cause to have Its Own effects, and doing nothing that would interfere.

We have judged God as judging us. Projection again! We have been projecting our own self-judgment onto God and perceiving Him as judging us (10:1). All those biblical passages about God’s judgment came from that misguided understanding. Spiral Dynamics shows the evolution of consciousness over the centuries, with recent levels of the spiral seeing God as a loving, forgiving Father rather than a wrathful judge. Yes; there

are judgmental words put in Jesus's mouth in the gospels, but many scholars believe they were added by later, less enlightened writers.

Our judgment of God attempts to rob Him of His creations, His Effects, but they have never been denied to Him. We are His Effects "forever and forever" (10:2). How could God have ever condemned us for a "sin" that is impossible, without any cause and against His will (10:3)?

Our way of remembering does not bear testimony to our sin, as we believe it does; rather it bears witness to our "fear of God" (10:4). And our fear of God is wholly unjustified; God has never judged us (10:5)! And we have never done the thing we think He is judging us *for* (10:6). We have not lost our innocence (10:7):

"You have not lost your innocence. It is for this you yearn. This is your heart's desire. This is the voice you hear, and this the call which cannot be denied" (W-pl.182.12:1-4).

We don't need to be healed to be healed (10:8)! No change of state in us is necessary. We are already healed, and we will know that the instant we "in quietness, see in the miracle a lesson in allowing Cause to have Its Own effects, and doing nothing that would interfere" (10:9). Do nothing except to stop interfering with the awareness of what God has already done, and done once and forever.

Paragraph 11

11 The miracle comes quietly into the mind that stops an instant and is still. ²It reaches gently from that quiet time, and from the mind it healed in quiet then, to other minds to share its quietness. ³And they will join in doing nothing to prevent its radiant extension back into the Mind That caused all minds to be. ⁴Born out of sharing, there can be no pause in time to cause the miracle delay in hastening to all unquiet minds and bringing them an instant's stillness where the memory of God returns to them. ⁵Their *own* remembering is quiet now, and what has come to take its place will not be wholly unremembered afterwards.

The opening lines of the paragraph are reminiscent of T-27..1:1: "In quietness are all things answered and is every problem quietly resolved." There is a clear emphasis on quietness and peace, because the ego mind is a cacophony of conflict. Beginning meditators are often appalled at how noisy their minds are when they simply try to sit in quiet. Meditation is probably the most effective way of learning to be quiet. What I notice is that if I deliberately replace whatever the ego is obsessing about with a thought from the Course, such as the title of a Workbook lesson, such thoughts engender peace and quiet, not noise. Ken Wilber claims that if a person seriously meditates for about 2 years they will move up at least one stage on the evolutionary scale of Spiral Dynamics, and possibly two stages. He says it is the most effective and most accessible method of accelerating the evolution of consciousness. (I am summarizing here from having listened to multiple talks and read multiple books by Ken.)

What has to happen is that our mind “stops an instant and is still” (11:1). That stopping, as I understand the Course, depends on our conscious choice. The Course asserts that we, and we alone, rule our minds. We must choose quietness despite our fear of it and deep-seated aversion to it. We must declare, “Peace to my mind. Let all my thoughts be still” (W-221). To desist from the constant barrage of thoughts is threatening; the ego depends on it, and it seems that to cease thinking is to lose our self. It is! But the self we lose is the ego, and what is revealed is the Self we have always been.

When we choose to allow that stillness the miracle quietly enters. With it comes its ability to extend that quietness to other minds (11:2). Touched by quietness, those other minds will end *their* interference to quietness and will allow it to extend “back into the Mind That caused all minds to be” (11:3). I believe this extension reaches many more people than we usually think. We’ve read recently, in T-27.VI.9:4, that:

Your brother first among them will be seen, but thousands stand behind him, and beyond each one of them there are a thousand more.

I pointed out in my comments that $1000 \times 1000 = 1,000,000$. So a million minds are affected, and that’s really just a symbolic number meaning “more than you can even imagine.” Lesson 137 terms it “legions upon legions” (a Roman legion was 3000 to 6000 men, so I believe the phrase means something like “thousands of thousands” or multiple millions). None of us come close to actually knowing a million people! So it isn’t just people we know. All minds are One Mind, so this behind-the-scenes extension makes perfect sense. I do not doubt that much of the reason we have bursts of insight is that we are experiencing the extension of stillness from other minds who have experienced holy instants, minds of people all over the world.

What’s more, the extension even reaches back to God, “the Mind That caused all minds to be.”

This extension takes no time at all. It is “born out of sharing,” that is, we all share in one mind, so there is no delay in the effect of our reception of the miracle. In fact, the effect reaches “all unquiet minds.” Not all are receptive, but all that are experience “an instant’s stillness where the memory of God returns to them” (11:4). That stillness is constantly knocking at the door of every mind, asking to be admitted. As Jesus is reputed to have said, in the biblical book of Revelation: “Listen! I am standing at the door, knocking; if you hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to you and eat with you, and you with me.” (Revelation 3:20 NRSV) It’s happening for all of us constantly, as minds around the planet pause and find the stillness, but we have to *listen* and *open the door*.

Each mind that opens the door has a moment’s experience of that quiet remembering, and the memory of it lingers at least in part afterwards (11:5). I believe these lingering moments and memories build until “life becomes a holy instant, set in time but heeding only immortality” (W-135.20:1)

Paragraph 12

12 He to Whom time is given offers thanks for every quiet instant given Him.⁹ ²For in that instant is God's memory allowed to offer all its treasures to the Son of God, for whom they have been kept. ³How gladly does He offer them unto the one for whom He has been given them! ⁴And His Creator shares His thanks, because He would not be deprived of His effects. ⁵The instant's silence that His Son accepts gives welcome to eternity and Him, and lets them enter where they would abide. ⁶For in that instant does the Son of God do nothing that would make himself afraid.

“He to Whom time is given” refers to the Holy Spirit. When we enter the stillness, He gives us thanks for the gift (12:1), because it allows Him, as God's memory, to offer us all the treasures that memory contains (12:2). He has been keeping them for us in His divine storehouse in our minds. He has been given these treasures to give to us, and He rejoices to do so (12:3). God, who created the Holy Spirit for us, also gives thanks, because our receptivity means that He is no longer deprived of His effects (12:4).

This is what is happening when we accept an instant's silence! It gives welcome to eternity and to “Him,” which might refer to the Holy Spirit but I think refers to the Creator, who comes to enjoy His effects (us). We become his dwelling place; we are where God and eternity want to abide (11:5).

"I am the holy home of God Himself. I am the Heaven where His Love resides" (W-p11.14.1:4-5).

This all happens because just for an instant, we stop projecting our guilt and being afraid when we see it coming back at us. We are creating the things we fear, and when we stop, we have welcomed eternity and God Himself; we become aware that we are the dwelling place of God.

“Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?” (1 Corinthians 3:16 ESV)

“Do you not know that your body is a temple of the indwelling Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is God's gift to you? You do not belong to yourselves.” (1 Corinthians 6:19 REB)

⁹. “He” and “Him” refer to the Holy Spirit.

Paragraph 13

13 How instantly the memory of God arises in the mind that has no fear to keep the memory away! ²Its own remembering has gone. ³There is no past to keep its fearful image in the way of glad awakening to present peace. ⁴The trumpets of eternity resound throughout the stillness, yet disturb it not. ⁵And what is now remembered is not fear, but rather is the Cause that fear was made to render unremembered and undone. ⁶The stillness speaks in gentle sounds of love the Son of God remembers from before his own remembering came in between the present and the past to shut them out.¹⁰

What's keeping the memory of God from arising in *your* mind? Fear! Fear is what keeps the memory away, and the instant fear is gone, the memory is there (13:1). Our self-produced memories are the cause of our fear. When we allow our minds to stop their churning and ruminating on past grievances, the fear goes, and the memory of God appears, no longer hidden, bringing present peace with it (13:2–3).

I love the image of the “trumpets of eternity” resounding “throughout the stillness” without disturbing that stillness (13:4). It is an attempt to describe an indescribable experience. To have trumpets resounding, yet remain in stillness, seems impossible. But there is a glory, a celebration, an awareness of a brilliant announcement that comes with the experience of this holy stillness. The stillness itself is like a fanfare of holiness, a joy and bliss that is *so* still it seems like a trumpet fanfare.

What we remember in that moment is the deep, eternal Cause of all things. This is what our fears have been drowning out with their raucous screeching (13:5). They are silenced by the stillness of God's Being. It “speaks in gentle sounds of love,” love that we remember from the eternal moment we knew before *our* remembering arose to shut it out (13:6). The section titled “The Forgotten Song” speaks beautifully of that remembrance of love:

Listen, and try to think if you remember what we will speak of now. Listen—perhaps you catch a hint of an ancient state not quite forgotten; dim, perhaps, and yet not altogether unfamiliar. Like a song whose name is long forgotten, and the circumstances in which you heard it completely unremembered. Not the whole song has stayed with you, but just a little wisp of melody, attached not to a person or a place or anything particular. But you remember, from just this little part, how lovely was the song, how wonderful the setting where you heard it, and how you loved those who were there and listened with you.

The notes are nothing; yet you have kept them with you, not for themselves, but as a soft reminder of what would make you weep if you remembered how dear it was to you. You could remember, yet you are afraid, believing you would lose the world you learned since then. And yet

¹⁰. “Them” refers to “gentle sounds of love.”

you know that nothing in the world you learned is half so dear as this. Listen, and see if you remember an ancient song you knew so long ago, and held more dear than any melody you taught yourself to cherish since. (T-21.I.8:1-9:4 (CE), T-21.I.5:5-7:5 (FIP))

Paragraph 14

14 Now is the Son of God at last aware of *present* Cause and Its benign effects. ²Now does he understand what he had made is causeless, making no effects at all. ³He has done nothing. ⁴And in seeing this, he understands he never had a *need* for doing anything, and never did. ⁵His Cause is Its effects. ⁶There never was a cause besides It that could generate a different past or future. ⁷Its effects are changelessly eternal, beyond fear, and past the world of sin entirely. ⁸What has been lost to see the causeless not? ⁹And where is sacrifice, when memory of God has come to take the place of loss?

We have put aside any idea of the past causing the present, and have become aware of “*present* Cause and Its benign effects” (14:1). Now, we realize that the world we made up has absolutely no cause. Therefore, the effects are not real (14:2). We have *not* made ourselves separate from God. We have not split off from our brothers and sisters. We have not shattered the Oneness of Heaven. *We have done nothing!* (14:3)

When we see that we haven’t done anything, that there is nothing to be guilty about, in addition we realize that doing *anything* was never necessary (14:4). All we ever need has flowed out of that eternal Cause. There has never been any *other* cause, a cause that could “generate a different past or future” (14:5). We are effects of that Cause. Everything that is, is an effect of that Cause. This is why our doing has never been needed (14:6).

This eternal Cause, which is God, generates eternally changeless effects (and this includes *us*). Fear becomes unthinkable because what we are *cannot change*, and cannot be lost in the smallest degree. We remain just as God created us and always will; how could we be afraid? We were created holy; how could we sin? As God’s Effects we are “past the world of sin entirely” (14:7).

The world never was; is this a loss? Our bodies disappear and decay; is this a loss? How could it be, when we realize there is no *cause* for its existence (14:8)? We may think we are being asked to sacrifice something in giving up the world or dis-identifying with our bodies. When the memory of Good comes, it replaces all sense and all possibility of loss, and the concept of sacrifice has become without any meaning (14:8).

Paragraph 15

15 What better way to close the little gap between illusions and reality than to allow the memory of God to flow across it, making it a bridge an instant will suffice to reach beyond? ²For God has closed it with Himself. ³His memory has not gone by and left a stranded Son forever on a shore where he can glimpse another shore which he can never reach. ⁴His Father wills that he be lifted up and gently carried over. ⁵He has built the bridge, and it is He Who will transport His Son across it. ⁶Have no fear that He will fail in what He wills, nor that you be excluded from the will that is for you.

What we need most, then, is the memory of God. It closes “the little gap between illusions and reality.” That memory bridges what seems to be an impassible gulf so that we see it was never more than a tiny gap, and it shows that it is enough to reach beyond that gap in an instant (15:1). God Himself is the bridge (15:2)!

In traditional religions it often seems as if God has abandoned us, stranding us on a shore without a boat, and with an ocean between us and Heaven. We can catch glimpses of Heaven at times through the clouds, but we seem never able to reach it. It isn't like that! There is no unbridgeable gap between us and Heaven. It isn't elsewhere. It isn't in the future. It is here and now, and always has been.

Heaven is here. There is nowhere else. Heaven is now. There is no other time (M-24.6:4-7).

Why wait for Heaven? Those who seek the light are merely covering their eyes. The light is in you now. Enlightenment is but a recognition, not a change at all. (W-188.1:1-4)

Our Father wills that we be “lifted up and gently carried over” that seeming gap (15:4). He built the bridge and He will transport us across it (15:5). We need do nothing! There is no chance that God will fail in this, no chance that you might be excluded from that will. That will is *for you* (15:6)!

What aim can supersede the will of God and of His Son that Heaven be restored to him for whom it was created as his only home—nothing before and nothing after it, no other place, no other state or time, nothing beyond or nearer, nothing else in any form? (T-25.IV.6:1 (CE))

This whole section has been an attempt to describe the indescribable. Most of us, to be honest, have little or no experience that compares to it. Those who *have* experienced it all agree that words cannot do it justice. Still, their testimonies give us some sense of what lies ahead for every one of us. Here are just a few examples:

I went beyond the light into pure radiant consciousness. I became omnipresent. My individuality had merged into pure absolute bliss. I expanded. I became the universe. The feeling is indescribable. It was total bliss, total joy.” **Robert Adams**

“You can have, or rather you will yourself be, the highest imaginable kind of happiness. All other kinds of happiness which you have spoken of as ‘pleasure’, ‘joy’, ‘happiness’, ‘bliss’, are only reflections of the Ananda which, in your true nature, you are. It is impossible to describe samadhi since it transcends the mind. It can only be experienced.” **Ramana Maharshi**

“The treasure I have found cannot be described in words, the mind cannot conceive of it” **Shankara**

“... an indescribable feeling of elevation, elation and joyousness ... a sense of immortality, a consciousness of eternal life” **Richard Maurice Bucke**

The joy of Eternity ...words cannot describe the joy of the soul ... Only those who experience this joy know what it is.” **from the Maitri Upanishad**

When we are talking about enlightenment, we are not talking about a distinct experience but a way of experiencing reality.

How can I explain how it feels like to not to have a sense of separate self to a person who is not experiencing the reality that way?

How can I explain how it feels like to be out of psychological time, to a person who is still trapped in psychological time?

How can I explain how it feels like to live with an unaltered state of consciousness to a person whose consciousness is altered by duality?

I can only give some clues. It feels more authentic than the regular way of experiencing reality; it feels as if a huge load has been lifted off of your shoulders; it feels as if you are weightless; it feels pure, innocent, conflict-less and it really is indescribable simply because most of the people are not experiencing life this way.

But even if you understand all this, it would be only an intellectual understanding. It is self-realization which gives you a direct perception of the truth. Only then you really see it, just like how a person who was blind from birth suddenly sees the world one day after his eyesight has been cured. Whatever he has heard by verbal testimony is now confirmed by his direct experience. **Shanmugam**

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.