

Commentary

ACIM[®] Manual for Teachers

18. How Is Correction Made?

19. What Is Justice?

Explanation of underlining, italics and footnote formats can be found at the end of the commentary. See also the note there on the effects of switching from the FIP edition to the Complete and Annotated Edition. Please note that the FIP and CE versions may differ in where paragraph breaks occur.

Overview, Chapter 18

This section continues the topic of the previous one. In that section, we considered the mistake a teacher of God might make when the person they are trying to help ignores their help and tries to solve their own problem with “magic thoughts,” that is, self-directed solutions through external means rather than through God. If a teacher responds to such behavior with anger he merely reinforces the error, and needs to have his own mind corrected.

This section discusses how the teacher of God can find correction for his own mistaken thought, and also for the mistake of the pupil.

Paragraph 1

Correction of a lasting nature—and only this is true correction—cannot be made until the teacher of God has ceased to confuse interpretation with fact,¹ or illusion with truth. ²If he argues with his pupil about a magic thought, attacks it, or tries to establish its error or demonstrate its falsity, he is but witnessing to its reality.² ³Depression is then inevitable, for

¹ To cease “to confuse interpretation with fact” means to realize that anger at magic thoughts comes from an interpretation, not a fact. See 4:1-2 and 8:6 in the previous section.

² The impression given here is that the teacher, because of his hidden anger, is trying to knock down the pupil’s resistance by sheer force of argument. Instead, as the previous section describes (M-17.3:5), he needs to release his anger and unify his mind behind the single wish to help, so that the pupil can unify his mind behind the single wish to *be* helped. Once that has happened, the teacher may indeed try to demonstrate the falsity of the pupil’s errors, as the Course so often does with our own errors, but the difference is that the pupil will *want* this and that the teacher will now do it without any trace of anger.

he has “proved” both to his pupil and himself that it is their task to escape from what is real. ⁴And this can only be impossible. ⁵Reality is changeless. ⁶Magic thoughts are but illusions. ⁷Otherwise, salvation would be only the same age-old impossible dream in but another form.³ ⁸Yet the dream of salvation has new content; it is not the form alone in which the difference lies.

Correction has to begin with the teacher of God herself or himself. He must stop confusing his *interpretation* of the student's behavior with *fact* (1:1). Recall that the teacher has become angry. They must now realize that they are never angry at a fact, but always at an interpretation they have made, as was pointed out in 4:1-2 and 8:6 in the previous section. To argue with the pupil about their magic thought, trying to prove the pupil is wrong, accomplishes nothing but to demonstrate to the pupil that their magic thought is real (1:2). That description of anger is disturbing because it pictures so accurately exactly what most of us usually do when someone is stubbornly refusing our “inspired” advice. We try to show them how wrong they are. All we accomplish is to make their error seem real to both of us. The result is that we both end up feeling depressed. Having made the illusion real we now think we must escape from it (1:3). Escaping from something real is just impossible (1:4). By getting angry at magic thoughts we get stuck. We can't escape from something that is real. Real is real; it won't go away.

Magic thoughts are transitory things. They come and go, and transitory things are “by definition false” according to W-152.5:1. They are illusions (1:6). Reality, on the other hand, is changeless (1:5). No changeable thing can be the solution. If we look for help there we are just Don Quixote chasing another impossible dream (1:7). We do not need some other form of solution; we need new content (1:8)–9). We must learn to escape from illusions, from what is false, and wake up to what is real. So when someone offers up a magic thought, a fruitless solution, some “new” way of avoiding the truth, we as teachers must learn to react, not with anger, but without any upset at all, as if those thoughts were not even there—just illusions. That teaches them that the reality we have found is completely unthreatened by the impossible dreams of the world.

³ This appears to be a reference to the song “The Impossible Dream” from the 1965 Broadway musical *Man of La Mancha*, inspired by *Don Quixote* by Miguel de Cervantes. The song became a standard, being recorded by various popular artists in the mid-1960s to early 1970s (this section was dictated in 1972). Here, however, it is cast in negative terms: it is the dream “to escape from what is real.” This parallels the earlier remarks about Don Quixote in the Text, which depict him as someone who tries to escape from the inherent unworthiness of his ego by using egotistical behavior to inflate his ego (T-4.I.5:3-5)—which would indeed be an “impossible dream.”

Paragraph 2

2 God's teachers' major lesson is to learn how to react to magic thoughts wholly without anger. ²Only in this way can they proclaim the truth about themselves. ³Through them the Holy Spirit can now speak of the reality of the Son of God. ⁴Now He can remind the world of sinlessness, the one unchanged, unchangeable condition of all that God created. ⁵Now He can speak the Word of God to listening ears and bring Christ's vision to eyes that see. ⁶Now is He free to teach all minds the truth of what they are, so they will gladly be returned to Him. ⁷And now is guilt forgiven, overlooked completely in His sight and in God's Word.

Learning to react *wholly* without anger is the major lesson we, as teachers of God, must learn (2:1). Calling it a *major* lesson implies not only the central importance of this lesson, but means it will come up over and over until we learn it. When encountering a magic thought we need to remind ourselves that magic thoughts are mere illusions, nothing to be feared. That's how we proclaim the truth about ourselves (2:2). The Course appears to be saying that *we* are the lesson we are trying to teach! If we are unshaken, unconcerned by the magic thought, we can effectively speak of "the reality of the Son of God" (2:3)

I'm reminded of my friend, Paul. One afternoon, I spent a lot of time explaining to him why I was really discouraged about my spiritual practice and the bad habits I seemed unable to break. After I finished regaling him with my self-pity, he paused a moment then then said something like, "So. Want to go see a good movie?" He was unmoved and unconcerned about all my self-judgment, and it allowed me to look on myself with a lot less judgment.

If we are to serve as witnesses to the truth we are going to be in situations like that all the time, faced with the craziness of the people we are attempting to help. That's our job. Psychotherapists are, in their own way, spiritual teachers, trying to help people find peace of mind. The *Psychotherapy Pamphlet* describes their task in much the same way as that of God's teachers:

"Let us remember that the ones who come to us for help are bitterly afraid. What they believe will help can only harm; what they believe will harm alone can help. Progress becomes impossible until the patient is persuaded to reverse his twisted way of looking at the world; his twisted way of looking at himself. The truth is simple. Yet it must be taught to those who think it will endanger them. It must be taught to those who will attack because they feel endangered, and to those who need the lesson of [our] defenselessness [in the face of their attacks] above all else, to show them what is strength" (P-2.V.2).

"Defenselessness in the face of their attacks." That is the attitude we, as teachers of God, must display when the truth we offer is contested and refused. When the forgiveness of Christ shines through us in this way, the pupils will start to listen to us, and we can speak God's Word to them. We can bring Christ's vision to *their* eyes because we are seeing with it ourselves. (2:5). We can teach them the truth of what they are in reality

(something that judging them will never do). They will reflect that truth back to us (2:6). Guilt will be forgiven and overlooked in both directions, both in the words we speak and the way we see one another (2:7).

Paragraph 3

3 Anger but screeches “Guilt is real!”⁴ 2Reality is blotted out as this insane belief is taken as replacement for God’s Word. 3The body’s eyes now “see.” 4Its ears alone are thought to hear. 5Its little space and tiny breath become the measure of reality. 6And truth becomes diminutive and meaningless. 7Correction has one answer to all this, and to the world that rests on this:

8You but mistake interpretation for the truth. 9And you are wrong. 10But a mistake is not a sin, nor has reality been taken from its throne by your mistakes. 11God reigns forever, and His laws alone prevail upon you and upon the world. 12His love remains the only thing there is. 13Fear is illusion, for you are like Him.

If we get angry at those we are trying to help we are teaching them loud and clear that “guilt is real” (3:1). That isn't what we want to teach, because if we teach it, we are learning it about ourselves. Always bear in mind those lines from the Introduction to the Manual:

“The purpose of the course might be said to be to provide you with a means of choosing what you want to teach on the basis of what you want to learn. You cannot give to someone else, but only to yourself.” (M-In.2:1–2 (CE))

When we make guilt real we are insane. “The idea that the guiltless Son of God can attack himself and make himself guilty is insane” (T-13.X.13:3 (FIP)). We make guilt the replacement for God's Word (which is, “The Son of God is guiltless” (M-1.3:4-5 (FIP))) we are blotting out the reality of Who we are (3:2). You may be speaking softly, but your belief in their magic thought and its reality is *screeching* that “guilt is real.” It demotes the other person from Son of God to sinner-in-a-body. Now, communication is limited to the completely unreliable, physical eyes and ears (3:3–4), senses made by the ego to *not* see⁵ or hear. You have limited yourself and your brother to the physical limits of the body in time and space (3:5). The grandeur and profundity of the truth disappears (3:6). Teach your pupil guilt and you have undetermined your efforts to be of help. You've made things worse.

There is only one way out of such a mess: You have mistaken an your interpretation of your pupil for the truth, and you are wrong (3:7–9). You've made a mistake. But mistakes aren't sins, and mistakes have no effect whatsoever on reality (3:10). You made a mistake; you took your interpretation as the truth. Don't now make a second mistake, and take your interpretation of your mistake as a consequential sin! God still reigns. His

⁴ This is what the teacher's anger screeches at the pupil because of his magic thoughts.

⁵ “These eyes, made not to see, will never see.” (T-22.III.6:1 (FIP)).

laws are still the only laws for you and the world (3:11). God's love is still *all there is* (3:12). You do not need to be afraid of what either of you have done or of what you think God may do in response; you are as immortal and invulnerable as God, unchanged since the day God created you, and He still loves you both (3:13).

Paragraph 4

4 In order to heal, it thus becomes essential for the teacher of God to let all his own mistakes be corrected. ²If he senses even the faintest hint of irritation in himself as he responds to anyone, let him instantly realize that he has made an interpretation that is not true. ³Then let him turn within to his Eternal Guide and let Him judge what the response should be. ⁴So is he healed, and in his healing is his pupil healed with him. ⁵The sole responsibility of God's teacher is to accept the Atonement for himself.⁶ ⁶Atonement means correction, or the undoing of errors. ⁷When this has been accomplished, the teacher of God becomes a miracle worker by definition. ⁸His sins have been forgiven him, and he no longer condemns himself. ⁹How can he then condemn anyone? ¹⁰And who is there whom his forgiveness can fail to heal?

To offer healing to another you must let your own mistakes be corrected first (4:1). That is a restatement of the message of this and the previous chapters: When attempting to respond to the errors of someone else, you *first* have to correct your *own* errors. "The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept the Atonement for himself" (T-2.V.5:1 (FIP), T-2.VIII.5:1 (CE)). These words are repeated almost verbatim in Sentence 4:5. It's worth noting that this teaching isn't new; it's about 2000 years old:

"Do not judge, or you too will be judged. For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

"Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." (Matthew 7:1-5, NIV)

Stop laying judgment on what seems like the other's stubborn resistance, stupidity, or blind faith in bogus answers to their problems. *Watch yourself* as you interact with someone you feel led to help or heal. Are you *even slightly* irritated by them? If so, you

⁶ T-2.VIII.5:1: "The sole responsibility of the miracle worker is to accept Atonement himself." In the above context, this means that the teacher of God needs to instantly accept the correction of even the mildest anger on his part, *so that* he can then be a miracle worker whose forgiveness has power to heal anyone.

need to “*instantly* realize” (my emphasis) that you have made a mistaken interpretation, one that is not true (4:2).

Avoiding all irritation, even a minor twinge, may seem like asking too much. We have to realize that,, while that anger lasts, healing cannot happen. I would say that if you cannot let go of the irritation, you need to stop trying to help the other person. Until you are healed you cannot give healing; you can't see clearly enough with a plank in your eye!

As soon as you recognize your irritation, “turn within to [your] Eternal Guide.” Ask Him what response you should offer to the other person (4:3) In opening to the Holy Spirit in this way your mind will be healed, and your healing will precipitate that of the other person (4:4). Turning to the Holy Spirit is your only responsibility (4:5). Since the Holy Spirit always correctly interprets calls for love, when you follow His guidance you will offer love to the person *in some form*.

When you accept the Atonement (allow your error to be undone) you have become a Miracle Worker by definition (4:6–7). Your “sins” have been forgiven; you no longer condemn yourself (4:6–8). In that frame of mind you are incapable of condemning anyone else, including the person you're trying to help (4:9). You spontaneously offer forgiveness, and forgiveness always heals (4:10).

It is possible you still may be directed to speak sternly to the other person, for instance, to steer them away from some mistaken, ineffectual solution to their problem. But you will do it without condemnation, without anger or irritation. You will speak and act with love. And if they persist, you let them go without making them feel guilty. When their supposed solution fails, they'll remember what you said, and may seek you out again, this time ready to listen.

This paragraph gives an actual step-by-step process to follow:

- If you sense even the faintest irritation in yourself as you respond to someone,
- Instantly realize that you have made an interpretation that is not true.
- Then turn within to your Eternal Guide.
- Let Him dictate what your response should be—always some form of love and forgiveness.
- So will you be healed.
- And *your* healing will heal your pupil.

Learning to do this is the “major lesson” for a teacher of God.

19. *What Is Justice?*

Overview, Chapter 19

The previous sections have spoken about how anger is always a response to an interpretation, not to a fact. The previous section then spoke about how such false interpretations can be corrected only by the truth, a true interpretation. False interpretations always project guilt, while the true interpretation sees only innocence.

The section that follows is about justice. It may at first seem out of place, since it says nothing directly about the teacher of God. Consider, however, that our ego-based false interpretations of guilt are *unjust*, while forgiveness, which sees the truth of innocence, is always *just*. This section explores the true understanding of justice, which is the correction for injustice. Although the teacher of God is not mentioned by name, this section is still talking about the major lesson of teachers, which is learning always to respond with *justice*. As we read in T-30.VII.1:1 & 2:1 (CE), “Anger is *never* justified” and “Pardon is *always* justified.”

Paragraph 1

Justice is the divine correction for injustice.⁷ ²Injustice is the basis for all the judgments of the world. ³Justice corrects the interpretations to which injustice gives rise and cancels them out. ⁴Neither justice nor injustice exists in Heaven, for error is impossible and correction meaningless. ⁵In this world, however, forgiveness depends on justice, since all attack can only be unjust. ⁶Justice is the Holy Spirit's verdict upon the world. ⁷Except in His judgment justice is impossible, for no one in the world is capable of making only just interpretations and laying all injustices aside. ⁸If God's Son were fairly judged, there would be no need for salvation. ⁹The thought of separation would have been forever inconceivable.

The correction the Holy Spirit always offers to our anger with others is *justice (1:1)*. All judgments in this world are based on injustice, including yours and mine **(1:2)**. That is why we must learn always to turn within to ask the Holy Spirit for His judgment to take the place of our own. When we connect with the mind of Christ within, it corrects our false interpretations and cancels them out **(1:3)**. Justice and injustice are purely worldly concepts. They have no meaning in Heaven because no errors exist there that need correction **(1:4)**. This is another example of the three states of mind described by the Course:

- * Injustice, attack: wrong-mindedness
- * Justice, forgiveness: right-mindedness
- * Error impossible: one-mindedness

When we have been gathered again into the heart of God, no part of mind will attack any other part of mind, and forgiveness will no longer be necessary. Forgiveness depends on justice because all attack is unjust **(1:5)**. Justice is the consistent judgment of the Holy Spirit on everything and everyone in the world **(1:6)**. He always sees innocence and a call for love, and He is the *only* one capable of just judgment **(1:7)**.

“No one in the world is capable of making only just interpretations and laying all injustices aside” **(1:7)**. That could seem insulting to some of us. The inclusion of the

⁷The term “justice” is being used in this section in the same sense as in Chapter 25 in the Text (see **T-25.VIII-X**): It means giving the Son of God what he really deserves. Because he is sinless, what he deserves is forgiveness, never attack (see **1:5**). Real justice, then, is not punishment, but forgiveness.

word “only” implies that, at least some of the time, we can make just interpretations. Even so, I think we'd all admit that we can't trust ourselves to *always* do so. Therefore we need to learn to *always* turn within and ask the Holy Spirit for His just judgment.

What is “just judgment,” though? Jesus tells us that if God's Son were fairly judged, there would be no need for salvation (1:8)! He's talking about the One Son here, not individuals in this world, because in the next sentence he says that if the Son had been fairly judged, “the thought of separation would have been forever inconceivable” (1:9). In other words, the idea that the Son could exist in separate pieces, as separate people, would never have entered our Mind. Alas, we made a different judgment.

Let's not get caught up here with unanswerable questions, such as: “If the Son of God was one, united mind, how *did* the thought of separation enter?” The only answer I've ever found is, “We don't know.” From the perspective of Heaven, that error was instantly corrected and no longer exists. We are only reliving that dream of terror in nightmares. In reality, it never happened. The Course puts it like this:

“Everything God wills is not only possible, but has already happened. And that is why the past has gone. It never happened in reality. Only in your own mind, which thought it did, is its undoing needful.” (T-18.IV.9:5-8 (CE), T-18.IV.8:4-7 (FIP)).

Paragraph 2

² Justice, like its opposite, is an interpretation. ²It is, however, the one interpretation that leads to truth. ³This becomes possible because, while it is not true in itself, justice includes nothing that opposes truth. ⁴There is no inherent conflict between justice and truth; one is but the first small step in the direction of the other. ⁵The path becomes quite different as one goes along. ⁶Nor could all the magnificence, the grandeur of the scene, and the enormous opening vistas that rise to meet one as he travels on be foretold from the outset. ⁷Yet even these, whose splendor reaches indescribable heights as one proceeds,⁸ fall short indeed of all that finally awaits one when the pathway ceases and time ends with it. ⁸But somewhere one must start. ⁹Justice is the beginning.

Injustice is a false interpretation, one that imputes guilt to an innocent person. Since we are all innocent as God's creations, any perception of guilt is an injustice. Justice is also nothing more than an interpretation, but it is an interpretation that leads to truth (2:1–2). Justice is similar to forgiveness. There is nothing to forgive in reality, but overlooking our perceptions of sin lifts the veil from our eyes so we can see the true holiness of our brother or sister. Similarly, justice sweeps away everything that opposes truth, leaving only truth (2:3). The truth of our being is much greater and higher than mere justice, but because “there is no inherent conflict between truth and justice,” justice can serve as “the first small step in the direction of ” truth (2:4).

⁸. The spiritual journey here is being likened to climbing a mountain and seeing ever more magnificent vistas as one ascends.

Think of it this way: Seeing one another without sin, without guilt, is only the beginning. It opens our minds to a much more profound vision of our holiness, which is so pure that we are indistinguishable from God (**W-326.1:5**)!

Jesus says that our path “becomes quite different as one goes along” (**2:5**). He is speaking from experience here, I'm sure. We may think we are dealing with deep spiritual values as we learn to forgive, but we are really only in Kindergarten. There is so much more to learn! There is reading, writing, and arithmetic; there is literature, algebra, geometry, trig, calculus, history, languages, all the higher learning and advanced degrees...or their spiritual equivalents. So much more that we have forgotten! Our place is to play a part in the very process of creation (**T-12.X.5:2 (CE), T-12.VII.4:7 (FIP)**). Starting out on our journey home we could never imagine “all the magnificence, the grandeur of the scene, and the enormous opening vistas that rise” to meet us as we travel on (**4:6**). Justice is only “the first small step” on the path, with magnificence, grandeur, and enormous opening vistas yet to come! But wait! What follows and awaits us at the end is even greater: “Yet even these, whose splendor reaches indescribable heights as one proceeds, fall short indeed of all that finally awaits one when the pathway ceases and time ends with it” (**2:7**).⁹

Fabulous stuff, isn't it? “But somewhere one must start. Justice is the beginning” (**2:8–9**). Our first step is to deal with our ingrained sense of injustice. We must forgive.

Paragraph 3

3 All concepts of your brothers and yourself, all fears of future states, and all concerns about the past stem from injustice. ²Here is the lens which, held before the body's eyes, distorts perception and brings witness of the distorted world back to the mind that made the lens and holds it very dear. ³Selectively and arbitrarily is every concept of the world built up in just this way. ⁴“Sins” are perceived and justified by careful selectivity, in which all thought of wholeness must be lost. ⁵Forgiveness has no place in such a scheme, for not one “sin” but seems forever true.

In 3:1 the Course places a lot of blame on injustice. A lot! Let's itemize the list and expand on it a bit:

THINGS RESULTING FROM OUR INJUSTICE

⁹ I have not personally experienced much of what Jesus refers to here. That's why I enjoy so much reading the mystics, like Meister Eckhart, Hildegard of Bingen, Walter Lanyon, Teilhard de Chardin, Aldous Huxley, Huston Smith, St. Teresa, and Ken Wilber (in scattered parts of his books). For a great introduction, get a copy of , For a good introduction to mysticism, get a copy of Jon Mundy's book, What is Mysticism? See his website: www.miraclesmagazine.org.

1. *Your concept of your self.* If you think of yourself as anything less than wholly lovable and wholly loving, anything other than holy, your thinking is controlled by injustice toward yourself. If you think of yourself as a victim in any way, affected by things outside yourself, you are thinking unjustly.
2. *Your concept of your brothers and sisters, people close to you or strangers.* If you judge others as less than expressions of God, if you see guilt in anyone, you are practicing injustice.
3. *All fears of the future.* If you fear the future in any way you are being unjust with yourself, others, and God. There is nothing to fear. Nothing real can be threatened. You are invulnerable.
4. *All concerns about the past.* Again, injustice. Concerns about the past are forms of judgment and condemnation. You are not accepting the past. As the Workbook says:

“What could you not accept, if you but knew that everything that happens, all events, past, present and to come, are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is your good? Perhaps you have misunderstood His plan, for He would never offer pain to you” (W-pl. 135.18:1-2).

When you misunderstand the plan of the Holy Spirit about your past, you are being unjust toward Him; ”He would never offer pain to you.“

Injustice in your mind is like wearing a pair of glasses with distorted lenses. It distorts all your perception of the world and the people in it. Your mind perceives that distorted picture and believes that it is reality. *Yet your mind made the lens!* And your mind cherishes that distortion lens (3:2). You want to see the world that way because it upholds your concept of yourself as separate, as good within an evil world. The lens of injustice selects what you see and how you see it, and does so arbitrarily. That is, unfairly, without reference to the facts. Your every concept of this world is built up in this arbitrary way (3:3).

How is it we justify seeing other people as sinful or guilty? Only ”by careful selectivity,“ arbitrarily rejecting any thought of wholeness, any notion that what we are seeing is, in fact, a part of yourself (3:4). The ”sin“ we see through the distorting lens appears immutable, ineradicable, and therefore unforgivable (3:5).

Paragraph 4

4 Salvation is God's justice. ²It restores to your awareness the wholeness of the fragments you perceive as broken off. ³And it is this that overcomes the fear of death, for separate fragments must decay and die, but wholeness is immortal. ⁴It remains forever and forever like its Creator, being one with Him. ⁵God's Judgment is His justice. ⁶Onto this—a Judgment wholly lacking in condemnation, an evaluation based entirely on love—you have projected your own injustice, giving God the lens of warped perception through which you look. ⁷Now it belongs to Him and not to you. ⁸You are afraid of Him, and do not see you hate and fear your Self as enemy.

God's justice is our salvation (4:1). It doesn't focus on our faults. It accepts everything about us. In love, it completely embraces us. When we open our minds to it, laying aside the distorted lens of injustice, we become aware of "the wholeness of the fragments" we have perceived "as broken off," not part of us (4:2). The view of injustice is one of separated fragments in conflict with one another. The view of justice is of a fully unified Whole. Wholeness is the key here.

Consider: Justice is forgiveness. The Text says, "Pardon is *always* justified" (T-30.VI.2:1 (FIP), T-30.VII.2:1 (CE)) and pardon is a synonym for forgiveness. To forgive, therefore, is just. To offer justice is to forgive. It is to judge in accordance with the Truth of our being.

Wholeness is immortal. "It remains forever and forever like its Creator, being one with Him" (4:3-4). Separate fragments (you apart from all the rest, and life broken up in billions of pieces) "must decay and die" (4:3). This fragmented view is the cause of our fear of death. God's judgment sees us as one with the Whole, not as separate beings. In the Whole there is no death; there is no sin. This judgment of God is God's justice (4:5). It alone is the Truth of all Reality. It is "a Judgment wholly lacking in condemnation, an evaluation based entirely on love" (4:6). "God is but love," says the Workbook.

In our current state, blinded by injustice, we have projected our injustice onto God (4:6). We think God sees the world the way we do, and sees us as sinful, deserving of punishment and retribution. We've made God in our image! Our injustice is now God's injustice (4:7). And so of course we are afraid of God! We don't realize that what we are afraid of is our Self. It is my own injustice, reflected back at me, that is so terrifying (4:8).

Paragraph 5

5 Pray for God's justice, and do not confuse His mercy with your own insanity. ²Perception can make whatever picture the mind desires to see. ³Remember this. ⁴In this lies either Heaven or hell, as you elect. ⁵God's justice points to Heaven just because it is entirely impartial. ⁶It accepts all evidence that is brought before it, omitting nothing and assessing nothing as separate and apart from all the rest. ⁷From this one standpoint does it judge, and this alone. ⁸Here all attack and condemnation become meaningless and indefensible. ⁹Perception rests, the mind is still, and light returns again. ¹⁰Vision is now restored. ¹¹What had been lost has now been found. ¹²The peace of God descends on all the world and we can see.¹⁰ ¹³And we can see!

¹⁰. This sentence and the previous one appear to be a reference to lyrics from the hymn "Amazing Grace": "I once was lost, but now am found; Was blind, but now I see." In the above passage, the finding of what was lost and the restoration of sight is accomplished by *justice*, whereas in the hymn it is accomplished by *grace*. This is in keeping with the Course's interpretation that true justice is *mercy* (see 5:1).

Our concept of justice is the complete opposite of God's justice. We think justice means that evil-doers get the punishment that is coming to them. God's justice is 100% forgiveness. The Manual here asks us to "pray for God's justice" (5:1). I believe this means praying that God's justice would become ours, filling our minds, shifting our perception of everyone we see to perceive them as the innocent Son of God. Instead of praying that sinners be "justly" punished, we pray that we would be able to see their innocence. Praying for punishment would be to "confuse His mercy with your own insanity" (5:1).

If that seems like an impossible shift of your perception, consider the fact that "Perception can make whatever picture the mind desires to see" (5:2). We need to *remember* this fact (5:3), because remembering is essential to turn our lives from hell to Heaven (5:4). Our choice of what we *want* to see determines *what* we see.

"Your question should not be "How can I see my brother without the body?" Ask only, "Do I really wish to see him sinless?" (T-20.VII.20:1-2).

The Course teaches that we want to see others as sinful to justify our insane need to attack "There is nothing to prevent you from recognizing all calls for help as exactly what they are except your own imagined need to attack" (T-12.I.4:1). We project our own (imagined) guilt onto others, and we need to attack them to achieve some kind of false innocence. We must choose. We must realize that our own peace of mind, our own salvation, depends on choosing to see others as sinless.

"My sinless brother is my guide to peace. My sinful brother is my guide to pain. And which I choose to see I will behold." (W-351)

The justice of God (expressed in our forgiveness) leads to Heaven (peace)) because of its nature:

- *It is entirely impartial* : God has no axe to grind. God's judgment is dispassionate, and unbiased (5:5).
- *It assesses all available evidence comprehensibly*. Nothing is left out; every piece of evidence is evaluated in relation to every other piece (5:6). It does not focus on some particular action. It takes in the totality of a person's being, especially their unity with all creation.

What is truly amazing is that this in-depth, penetrating judgment of us always results in the same unequivocal verdict: sinless! When we are judged in this way—the only way God ever judges (5:7)—"all attack and condemnation become meaningless and indefensible" (5:8).

The only way we can justify attack and condemnation is by using judgment that is partial, selecting only the pieces of evidence that support our condemnation. When everything is taken into consideration, everyone is always innocent. Everyone is part of the Whole, part of everything. This is the perception we are asked to pray for.

When we allow the Holy Spirit to judge for us, our eyes rest gently on everyone, our mind becomes still, and we rediscover the light (5:9). Our vision has been restored (5:10): "Once I was blind, but now I see." We see God everywhere, in everyone and everything, and everyone and everything in God. The bliss of Heaven we thought we lost

has been found again **(5:11)**. "The peace of God descends on all the world and we can see. And we can see!" **(5:12–13)**

This true sight has been called "the beatific vision," the sight that makes one happy.

"In Christian theology, the beatific vision is the ultimate direct self-communication of God to the individual person. A person possessing the beatific vision reaches, as a member of redeemed humanity in the communion of saints, perfect salvation in its entirety, i.e. heaven. [Wikipedia] (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beatific_vision)"

Let us do as asked. Let us pray for this beatific vision, God's judgment of perfect innocence and Wholeness. Let us pray to see the world through eyes of love.¹¹

¹¹. You might find the song in this YouTube video expresses something akin to such a prayer. It's written about a romantic relationship, but if you think "God" every time the song says "you," you'll find it to be a beautiful expression of what it means to look at the world, or another person, "through the eyes of love." https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mUJ_pnAn1-s

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 Foundation for Inner Peace (**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. 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.

Effects of Differing Editions of the Course

There were significant changes made in the CE, although for the most part there was no alteration in the meaning of the text, and the *Manual for Teachers* had far fewer changes. There are some changes in section and paragraph breaks and sentence structure that result in different numbering in references to the same text in the two editions. When there is a major difference I will indicate it with a footnote.

I have attempted for all references to add a separate FIP reference if it differs from the CE reference, but I may have missed some. If so, I apologize. Please let me know of any referencing problems you find.

I have also tried to edit my commentary so as to reflect any wording changes in the CE. For instance, the CE Text restored the plural use of "you" where the FIP had substituted the phrase "you and your brother." One such instance will illustrate the kind of change, significant in actual words but nearly identical in overall meaning:

FIP: Thus you and your brother but shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point you both agreed to keep intact.

CE: You shared a qualified entente, in which a clause of separation was a point which you had both agreed to keep intact.