

III. The Forgiveness of Specialness

1. Forgiveness is the end of specialness. ² Only illusions can be forgiven, and then they disappear. ³ Forgiveness is release from all illusions, and that is why it is impossible but partly to forgive. ⁴ No one who clings to one illusion can see himself as sinless, for he holds one error to himself as lovely still. ⁵ And so he calls it "unforgivable," and makes it sin. ⁶ How can he then give his forgiveness wholly, when he would not receive it for himself? ⁷ For it is sure he would receive it wholly the instant that he gave it so. ⁸ And thus his secret guilt would disappear, forgiven by himself.
5. Here, where the laws of God do not prevail in perfect form, can he yet do *one* perfect thing and make *one* perfect choice. ² And by this act of special faithfulness to one perceived as other than himself, he learns the gift was given to himself, and so they must be one. ³ Forgiveness is the only function meaningful in time. ⁴ It is the means the Holy Spirit uses to translate specialness from sin into salvation. ⁵ Forgiveness is for all. ⁶ But when it rests on all it is complete, and every function of this world completed with it. ⁷ Then is time no more. ⁸ Yet while in time, there is still much to do. ⁹ And each must do what is allotted him, for on his part does all the plan depend. ¹⁰ He *has* a special part in time for so he chose, and choosing it, he made it for himself. ¹¹ His wish was not denied but changed in form, to let it serve his brother and himself, and thus become a means to save instead of lose.

VI. Forgiveness and the End of Time

1. How willing are you to forgive your brother? ² How much do you desire peace instead of endless strife and misery and pain? ³ These questions are the same, in different form. ⁴ Forgiveness is your peace, for herein lies the end of separation and the dream of danger and destruction, sin and death; of madness and of murder, grief and loss. ⁵ This is the "sacrifice" salvation asks, and gladly offers peace instead of this.

VI. The Justification for Forgiveness

1. Anger is *never* justified. ² Attack has *no* foundation. ³ It is here escape from fear begins, and will be made complete. ⁴ Here is the real world given in exchange for dreams of terror. ⁵ For it is on this forgiveness rests, and is but natural. ⁶ You are not asked to offer pardon where attack is due, and would be justified. ⁷ For that would mean that you forgive a sin by overlooking what is really there. ⁸ This is not pardon. ⁹ For it would assume that, by responding in a way which is not justified, your pardon will become the answer to attack that has been made. ¹⁰ And thus is pardon inappropriate, by being granted where it is not due.
 2. Pardon is *always* justified. ² It has a sure foundation. ³ You do not forgive the unforgivable, nor overlook a real attack that calls for punishment. ⁴ Salvation does not lie in being asked to make unnatural responses which are inappropriate to what is real. ⁵ Instead, it merely asks that you respond appropriately to what is not real by not perceiving what has not occurred. ⁶ If pardon were unjustified, you would be asked to sacrifice your rights when you return forgiveness for attack. ⁷ But you are merely asked to see forgiveness as the natural reaction to distress that rests on error, and thus calls for help. ⁸ Forgiveness is the only sane response. ⁹ It *keeps* your rights from being sacrificed.
 3. This understanding is the only change that lets the real world rise to take the place of dreams of
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terror. ² Fear cannot arise unless attack is justified, and if it had a real foundation pardon would have none. ³ The real world is achieved when you perceive the basis of forgiveness is quite real and fully justified. ⁴ While you regard it as a gift unwarranted, it must uphold the guilt you would "forgive." ⁵ Unjustified forgiveness is attack. ⁶ And this is all the world can ever give. ⁷ It pardons "sinners" sometimes, but remains aware that they have sinned. ⁸ And so they do not merit the forgiveness that it gives.

4. This is the false forgiveness which the world employs to keep the sense of sin alive. ² And recognizing God is just, it seems impossible His pardon could be real. ³ Thus is the fear of God the sure result of seeing pardon as unmerited. ⁴ No one who sees himself as guilty can avoid the fear of God. ⁵ But he is saved from this dilemma if he can forgive. ⁶ The mind must think of its Creator as it looks upon itself. ⁷ If you can see your brother merits pardon, you have learned forgiveness is your right as much as his. ⁸ Nor will you think that God intends for you a fearful judgment that your brother does not merit. ⁹ For it is the truth that you can merit neither more nor less than he.
5. Forgiveness recognized as merited will heal. ² It gives the miracle its strength to overlook illusions. ³ This is how you learn that you must be forgiven too. ⁴ There can be no appearance that can not be overlooked. ⁵ For if there were, it would be necessary first there be some sin that stands beyond forgiveness. ⁶ There would be an error that is more than a mistake; a special form of error that remains unchangeable, eternal, and beyond correction or escape. ⁷ There would be one mistake that had the power to undo creation, and to make a world that could replace it and destroy the Will of God. ⁸ Only if this were possible could there be some appearances that could withstand the miracle, and not be healed by it.
6. There is no surer proof idolatry is what you wish than a belief there are some forms of sickness and of joylessness forgiveness cannot heal. ² This means that you prefer to keep some idols, and are not prepared, as yet, to let all idols go. ³ And thus you think that some appearances are real and not appearances at all. ⁴ Be not deceived about the meaning of a fixed belief that some appearances are harder to look past than others are. ⁵ It always means you think forgiveness must be limited. ⁶ And you have set a goal of partial pardon and a limited escape from guilt for you. ⁷ What can this be except a false forgiveness of yourself, and everyone who seems apart from you?

VII. The New Interpretation

1. Would God have left the meaning of the world to your interpretation? ² If He had, it *has* no meaning. ³ For it cannot be that meaning changes constantly, and yet is true. ⁴ The Holy Spirit looks upon the world as with one purpose, changelessly established. ⁵ And no situation can affect its aim, but must be in accord with it. ⁶ For only if its aim could change with every situation could each one be open to interpretation which is different every time you think of it. ⁷ You add an element into the script you write for every minute in the day, and all that happens now means something else. ⁸ You take away another element, and every meaning shifts accordingly.
2. What do your scripts reflect except your plans for what the day *should* be? ² And thus you judge disaster and success, advance, retreat, and gain and loss. ³ These judgments all are made according to the roles the script assigns. ⁴ The fact they have no meaning in themselves is demonstrated by the ease with which these labels change with other judgments, made on different aspects of experience. ⁵ And then, in looking back, you think you see another meaning in what went before. ⁶ What have you really done, except to show there was no meaning there? ⁷ But you assigned a meaning in the

light of goals that change, with every meaning shifting as they change.

3. Only a constant purpose can endow events with stable meaning. ² But it must accord *one* meaning to them all. ³ If they are given different meanings, it must be that they reflect but different purposes. ⁴ And this is all the meaning that they have. ⁵ Can this be meaning? ⁶ Can confusion be what meaning means? ⁷ Perception cannot be in constant flux, and make allowance for stability of meaning anywhere. ⁸ Fear is a judgment never justified. ⁹ Its presence has no meaning but to show you wrote a fearful script, and are afraid accordingly. ¹⁰ But not because the thing you fear has fearful meaning in itself.
4. A common purpose is the only means whereby perception can be stabilized, and one interpretation given to the world and all experiences here. ² In this shared purpose is one judgment shared by everyone and everything you see. ³ You do not have to judge, for you have learned one meaning has been given everything, and you are glad to see it everywhere. ⁴ It cannot change *because* you would perceive it everywhere, unchanged by circumstance. ⁵ And so you offer it to all events, and let them offer you stability.
5. Escape from judgment simply lies in this; all things have but one purpose, which you share with all the world. ² And nothing in the world can be opposed to it, for it belongs to everything, as it belongs to you. ³ In single purpose is the end of all ideas of sacrifice, which must assume a different purpose for the one who gains and him who loses. ⁴ There could be no thought of sacrifice apart from this idea. ⁵ And it is this idea of different goals that makes perception shift and meaning change. ⁶ In one united goal does this become impossible, for your agreement makes interpretation stabilize and last.
6. How can communication really be established while the symbols that are used mean different things? ² The Holy Spirit's goal gives one interpretation, meaningful to you and to your brother. ³ Thus can you communicate with him, and he with you. ⁴ In symbols that you both can understand the sacrifice of meaning is undone. ⁵ All sacrifice entails the loss of your ability to see relationships among events. ⁶ And looked at separately they have no meaning. ⁷ For there is no light by which they can be seen and understood. ⁸ They have no purpose. ⁹ And what they are for cannot be seen. ¹⁰ In any thought of loss there is no meaning. ¹¹ No one has agreed with you on what it means. ¹² It is a part of a distorted script, which cannot be interpreted with meaning. ¹³ It must be forever unintelligible. ¹⁴ This is not communication. ¹⁵ Your dark dreams are but the senseless, isolated scripts you write in sleep. ¹⁶ Look not to separate dreams for meaning. ¹⁷ Only dreams of pardon can be shared. ¹⁸ They mean the same to both of you.
7. Do not interpret out of solitude, for what you see means nothing. ² It will shift in what it stands for, and you will believe the world is an uncertain place, in which you walk in danger and uncertainty. ³ It is but your interpretations which are lacking in stability, for they are not in line with what you really are. ⁴ This is a state so seemingly unsafe that fear must rise. ⁵ Do not continue thus, my brother. ⁶ We have one Interpreter. ⁷ And through His use of symbols are we joined, so that they mean the same to all of us. ⁸ Our common language lets us speak to all our brothers, and to understand with them forgiveness has been given to us all, and thus we can communicate again.

4. WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF GOD'S TEACHERS?

1. The surface traits of God's teachers are not at all alike. ² They do not look alike to the body's eyes, they come from vastly different backgrounds, their experiences of the world vary greatly, and their superficial "personalities" are quite distinct. ³ Nor, at the beginning stages of their functioning as teachers of God, have they as yet acquired the deeper characteristics that will establish them as what they are. ⁴ God gives special gifts to His teachers, because they have a special role in His plan for Atonement. ⁵ Their specialness is, of course, only temporary; set in time as a means of leading out of time. ⁶ These special gifts, born in the holy relationship toward which the teaching-learning situation is geared, become characteristic of all teachers of God who have advanced in their own learning. ⁷ In this respect they are all alike.
2. All differences among the Sons of God are temporary. ² Nevertheless, in time it can be said that the advanced teachers of God have the following characteristics:

X. Open-Mindedness

1. The centrality of open-mindedness, perhaps the last of the attributes the teacher of God acquires, is easily understood when its relation to forgiveness is recognized. ² Open-mindedness comes with lack of judgment. ³ As judgment shuts the mind against God's Teacher, so open-mindedness invites Him to come in. ⁴ As condemnation judges the Son of God as evil, so open-mindedness permits him to be judged by the Voice for God on His behalf. ⁵ As the projection of guilt upon him would send him to hell, so open-mindedness lets Christ's image be extended to him. ⁶ Only the open-minded can be at peace, for they alone see reason for it.
2. How do the open-minded forgive? ² They have let go all things that would prevent forgiveness. ³ They have in truth abandoned the world, and let it be restored to them in newness and in joy so glorious they could never have conceived of such a change. ⁴ Nothing is now as it was formerly. ⁵ Nothing but sparkles now which seemed so dull and lifeless before. ⁶ And above all are all things welcoming, for threat is gone. ⁷ No clouds remain to hide the face of Christ. ⁸ Now is the goal achieved. ⁹ Forgiveness is the final goal of the curriculum. ¹⁰ It paves the way for what goes far beyond all learning. ¹¹ The curriculum makes no effort to exceed its legitimate goal. ¹² Forgiveness is its single aim, at which all learning ultimately converges. ¹³ It is indeed enough.
3. You may have noticed that the list of attributes of God's teachers does not include things that are the Son of God's inheritance. ² Terms like love, sinlessness, perfection, knowledge and eternal truth do not appear in this context. ³ They would be most inappropriate here. ⁴ What God has given is so far beyond our curriculum that learning but disappears in its presence. ⁵ Yet while its presence is obscured, the focus properly belongs on the curriculum. ⁶ It is the function of God's teachers to bring true learning to the world. ⁷ Properly speaking it is unlearning that they bring, for that is "true learning" in the world. ⁸ It is given to the teachers of God to bring the glad tidings of complete forgiveness to the world. ⁹ Blessed indeed are they, for they are the bringers of salvation.