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VI. The Secret Vows

1. Who punishes the body is insane. ² For here the little gap is seen, and yet it is not here. ³ It has not judged itself, nor made itself to be what it is not. ⁴ It does not seek to make of pain a joy and look for lasting pleasure in the dust. ⁵ It does not tell you what its purpose is and cannot understand what it is for. ⁶ It does not victimize, because it has no will, no preferences and no doubts. ⁷ It does not wonder what it is. ⁸ And so it has no need to be competitive. ⁹ It can be victimized, but cannot feel itself as victim. ¹⁰ It accepts no role, but does what it is told, without attack.
2. It is indeed a senseless point of view to hold responsible for sight a thing that cannot see, and blame it for the sounds you do not like, although it cannot hear. ² It suffers not the punishment you give because it has no feeling. ³ It behaves in ways you want, but never makes the choice. ⁴ It is not born and does not die. ⁵ It can but follow aimlessly the path on which it has been set. ⁶ And if that path is changed, it walks as easily another way. ⁷ It takes no sides and judges not the road it travels. ⁸ It perceives no gap, because it does not hate. ⁹ It can be used for hate, but it cannot be hateful made thereby.
3. The thing you hate and fear and loathe and want, the body does not know. ² You send it forth to seek for separation and be separate. ³ And then you hate it, not for what it is, but for the uses you have made of it. ⁴ You shrink from what it sees and what it hears, and hate its frailty and littleness. ⁵ And you despise its acts, but not your own. ⁶ It sees and acts for *you*. ⁷ It hears your voice. ⁸ And it is frail and little by your wish. ⁹ It seems to punish you, and thus deserve your hatred for the limitations that it brings to you. ¹⁰ Yet you have made of it a symbol for the limitations that you want your mind to have and see and keep.
4. The body represents the gap between the little bit of mind you call your own and all the rest of what is really yours. ² You hate it, yet you think it is your self, and that, without it, would your self be lost. ³ This is the secret vow that you have made with every brother who would walk apart. ⁴ This is the secret oath you take again, whenever you perceive yourself attacked. ⁵ No one can suffer if he does not see himself attacked, and losing by attack. ⁶ Unstated and unheard in consciousness is every pledge to sickness. ⁷ Yet it is a promise to another to be hurt by him, and to attack him in return.
5. Sickness is anger taken out upon the body, so that it will suffer pain. ² It is the obvious effect of what was made in secret, in agreement with another's secret wish to be apart from you, as you would be apart from him. ³ Unless you both agree that is your wish, it can have no effects. ⁴ Whoever says, "There is no gap between my mind and yours" has kept God's promise, not his tiny oath to be forever faithful unto death. ⁵ And by his healing is his brother healed.
6. Let this be your agreement with each one; that you be one with him and not apart. ² And he will keep the promise that you make with him, because it is the one that he has made to God, as God has made to him. ³ God keeps His promises; His Son keeps his. ⁴ In his creation did his Father say, "You are beloved of Me and I of you forever. ⁵ Be you perfect as Myself, for you can never be apart from Me." ⁶ His Son remembers not that he replied "I will," though in that promise he was born. ⁷ Yet God reminds him of it every time he does not share a promise to be sick, but lets his mind be healed and unified. ⁸ His secret vows are powerless before the Will of God, Whose promises he shares. ⁹ And what he substitutes is not his will, who has made promise of himself to God.

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IX. The Forgiving Dream

1. The slave of idols is a willing slave. ² For willing he must be to let himself bow down in worship to what has no life, and seek for power in the powerless. ³ What happened to the holy Son of God that this could be his wish; to let himself fall lower than the stones upon the ground, and look to idols that they raise him up? ⁴ Hear, then, your story in the dream you made, and ask yourself if it be not the truth that you believe that it is not a dream.
2. A dream of judgment came into the mind that God created perfect as Himself. ² And in that dream was Heaven changed to hell, and God made enemy unto His Son. ³ How can God's Son awaken from the dream? ⁴ It is a dream of judgment. ⁵ So must he judge not, and he will waken. ⁶ For the dream will seem to last while he is part of it. ⁷ Judge not, for he who judges will have need of idols, which will hold the judgment off from resting on himself. ⁸ Nor can he know the Self he has condemned. ⁹ Judge not, because you make yourself a part of evil dreams, where idols are your "true" identity, and your salvation from the judgment laid in terror and in guilt upon yourself.
3. All figures in the dream are idols, made to save you from the dream. ² Yet they are part of what they have been made to save you *from*. ³ Thus does an idol keep the dream alive and terrible, for who could wish for one unless he were in terror and despair? ⁴ And this the idol represents, and so its worship is the worship of despair and terror, and the dream from which they come. ⁵ Judgment is an injustice to God's Son, and it *is* justice that who judges him will not escape the penalty he laid upon himself within the dream he made. ⁶ God knows of justice, not of penalty. ⁷ But in the dream of judgment you attack and are condemned; and wish to be the slave of idols, which are interposed between your judgment and the penalty it brings.
4. There can be no salvation in the dream as you are dreaming it. ² For idols must be part of it, to save you from what you believe you have accomplished, and have done to make you sinful and put out the light within you. ³ Little child, the light is there. ⁴ You do but dream, and idols are the toys you dream you play with. ⁵ Who has need of toys but children? ⁶ They pretend they rule the world, and give their toys the power to move about, and talk and think and feel and speak for them. ⁷ Yet everything their toys appear to do is in the minds of those who play with them. ⁸ But they are eager to forget that they made up the dream in which their toys are real, nor recognize their wishes are their own.
5. Nightmares are childish dreams. ² The toys have turned against the child who thought he made them real. ³ Yet can a dream attack? ⁴ Or can a toy grow large and dangerous and fierce and wild? ⁵ This does the child believe, because he fears his thoughts and gives them to the toys instead. ⁶ And their reality becomes his own, because they seem to save him from his thoughts. ⁷ Yet do they keep his thoughts alive and real, but seen outside himself, where they can turn against him for his treachery to them. ⁸ He thinks he needs them that he may escape his thoughts, because he thinks the thoughts are real. ⁹ And so he makes of anything a toy, to make his world remain outside himself, and play that he is but a part of it.
6. There is a time when childhood should be passed and gone forever. ² Seek not to retain the toys of children. ³ Put them all away, for you have need of them no more. ⁴ The dream of judgment is a children's game, in which the child becomes the father, powerful, but with the little wisdom of a child. ⁵ What hurts him is destroyed; what helps him, blessed. ⁶ Except he judges this as does a

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child, who does not know what hurts and what will heal. ⁷ And bad things seem to happen, and he is afraid of all the chaos in a world he thinks is governed by the laws he made. ⁸ Yet is the real world unaffected by the world he thinks is real. ⁹ Nor have its laws been changed because he does not understand.

7. The real world still is but a dream. ² Except the figures have been changed. ³ They are not seen as idols which betray. ⁴ It is a dream in which no one is used to substitute for something else, nor interposed between the thoughts the mind conceives and what it sees. ⁵ No one is used for something he is not, for childish things have all been put away. ⁶ And what was once a dream of judgment now has changed into a dream where all is joy, because that is the purpose that it has. ⁷ Only forgiving dreams can enter here, for time is almost over. ⁸ And the forms that enter in the dream are now perceived as brothers, not in judgment, but in love.
8. Forgiving dreams have little need to last. ² They are not made to separate the mind from what it thinks. ³ They do not seek to prove the dream is being dreamed by someone else. ⁴ And in these dreams a melody is heard that everyone remembers, though he has not heard it since before all time began. ⁵ Forgiveness, once complete, brings timelessness so close the song of Heaven can be heard, not with the ears, but with the holiness that never left the altar that abides forever deep within the Son of God. ⁶ And when he hears this song again, he knows he never heard it not. ⁷ And where is time, when dreams of judgment have been put away?
9. Whenever you feel fear in any form,—and you *are* fearful if you do not feel a deep content, a certainty of help, a calm assurance Heaven goes with you,—be sure you made an idol, and believe it will betray you. ² For beneath your hope that it will save you lie the guilt and pain of self-betrayal and uncertainty, so deep and bitter that the dream cannot conceal completely all your sense of doom. ³ Your self-betrayal must result in fear, for fear *is* judgment, leading surely to the frantic search for idols and for death.
10. Forgiving dreams remind you that you live in safety and have not attacked yourself. ² So do your childish terrors melt away, and dreams become a sign that you have made a new beginning, not another try to worship idols and to keep attack. ³ Forgiving dreams are kind to everyone who figures in the dream. ⁴ And so they bring the dreamer full release from dreams of fear. ⁵ He does not fear his judgment for he has judged no one, nor has sought to be released through judgment from what judgment must impose. ⁶ And all the while he is remembering what he forgot, when judgment seemed to be the way to save him from its penalty.

Introduction

1. The new beginning now becomes the focus of the curriculum. ² The goal is clear, but now you need specific methods for attaining it. ³ The speed by which it can be reached depends on this one thing alone; your willingness to practice every step. ⁴ Each one will help a little, every time it is attempted. ⁵ And together will these steps lead you from dreams of judgment to forgiving dreams and out of pain and fear. ⁶ They are not new to you, but they are more ideas than rules of thought to you as yet. ⁷ So now we need to practice them awhile, until they are the rules by which you live. ⁸ We seek to make them habits now, so you will have them ready for whatever need.

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I. Rules for Decision

1. Decisions are continuous. ² You do not always know when you are making them. ³ But with a little practice with the ones you recognize, a set begins to form which sees you through the rest. ⁴ It is not wise to let yourself become preoccupied with every step you take. ⁵ The proper set, adopted consciously each time you wake, will put you well ahead. ⁶ And if you find resistance strong and dedication weak, you are not ready. ⁷ *Do not fight yourself.* ⁸ But think about the kind of day you want, and tell yourself there is a way in which this very day can happen just like that. ⁹ Then try again to have the day you want.

2. (1) The outlook starts with this:

² *Today I will make no decisions by myself.*

³ This means that you are choosing not to be the judge of what to do. ⁴ But it must also mean you will not judge the situations where you will be called upon to make response. ⁵ For if you judge them, you have set the rules for how you should react to them. ⁶ And then another answer cannot but produce confusion and uncertainty and fear.

3. This is your major problem now. ² You still make up your mind, and *then* decide to ask what you should do. ³ And what you hear may not resolve the problem as you saw it first. ⁴ This leads to fear, because it contradicts what you perceive and so you feel attacked. ⁵ And therefore angry. ⁶ There are rules by which this will not happen. ⁷ But it does occur at first, while you are learning how to hear.

4. (2) Throughout the day, at any time you think of it and have a quiet moment for reflection, tell yourself again the kind of day you want; the feelings you would have, the things you want to happen to you, and the things you would experience, and say:

² *If I make no decisions by myself, this is the day that will be given me.*

³ These two procedures, practiced well, will serve to let you be directed without fear, for opposition will not first arise and then become a problem in itself.

5. But there will still be times when you have judged already. ² Now the answer will provoke attack, unless you quickly straighten out your mind to want an answer that will work. ³ Be certain this has happened if you feel yourself unwilling to sit by and ask to have the answer given you. ⁴ This means you have decided by yourself, and can not see the question. ⁵ Now you need a quick restorative before you ask again.

6. (3) Remember once again the day you want, and recognize that something has occurred that is not part of it. ² Then realize that you have asked a question by yourself, and must have set an answer in your terms. ³ Then say:

⁴ *I have no question. ⁵ I forgot what to decide.*

⁶ This cancels out the terms that you have set, and lets the answer show you what the question must have really been.

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7. Try to observe this rule without delay, despite your opposition. ² For you have already gotten angry. ³ And your fear of being answered in a different way from what your version of the question asks will gain momentum, until you believe the day you want is one in which you get *your* answer to *your* question. ⁴ And you will not get it, for it would destroy the day by robbing you of what you really want. ⁵ This can be very hard to realize, when once you have decided by yourself the rules that promise you a happy day. ⁶ Yet this decision still can be undone, by simple methods that you can accept.

8. (4) If you are so unwilling to receive you cannot even let your question go, you can begin to change your mind with this:

² At least I can decide I do not like what I feel now.

³ This much is obvious, and paves the way for the next easy step.

9. (5) Having decided that you do not like the way you feel, what could be easier than to continue with:

² And so I hope I have been wrong.

³ This works against the sense of opposition, and reminds you that help is not being thrust upon you but is something that you want and that you need, because you do not like the way you feel. ⁴ This tiny opening will be enough to let you go ahead with just a few more steps you need to let yourself be helped.

10. Now you have reached the turning point, because it has occurred to you that you will gain if what you have decided is not so. ² Until this point is reached, you will believe your happiness depends on being right. ³ But this much reason have you now attained; you would be better off if you were wrong.

11. (6) This tiny grain of wisdom will suffice to take you further. ² You are not coerced, but merely hope to get a thing you want. ³ And you can say in perfect honesty:

⁴ I want another way to look at this.

⁵ Now you have changed your mind about the day, and have remembered what you really want. ⁶ Its purpose has no longer been obscured by the insane belief you want it for the goal of being right when you are wrong. ⁷ Thus is the readiness for asking brought to your awareness, for you cannot be in conflict when you ask for what you want, and see that it is this for which you ask.

12. (7) This final step is but acknowledgment of lack of opposition to be helped. ² It is a statement of an open mind, not certain yet, but willing to be shown:

³ Perhaps there is another way to look at this.

⁴ What can I lose by asking?

⁵ Thus you now can ask a question that makes sense, and so the answer will make sense as well. ⁶

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Nor will you fight against it, for you see that it is you who will be helped by it.

13. It must be clear that it is easier to have a happy day if you prevent unhappiness from entering at all. ² But this takes practice in the rules that will protect you from the ravages of fear. ³ When this has been achieved, the sorry dream of judgment has forever been undone. ⁴ But meanwhile, you have need for practicing the rules for its undoing. ⁵ Let us, then, consider once again the very first of the decisions which are offered here.
14. We said you can begin a happy day with the determination not to make decisions by yourself. ² This seems to be a real decision in itself. ³ And yet, you *cannot* make decisions by yourself. ⁴ The only question really is with what you choose to make them. ⁵ That is really all. ⁶ The first rule, then, is not coercion, but a simple statement of a simple fact. ⁷ You will not make decisions by yourself whatever you decide. ⁸ For they are made with idols or with God. ⁹ And you ask help of anti-Christ or Christ, and which you choose will join with you and tell you what to do.
15. Your day is not at random. ² It is set by what you choose to live it with, and how the friend whose counsel you have sought perceives your happiness. ³ You always ask advice before you can decide on anything. ⁴ Let this be understood, and you can see there cannot be coercion here, nor grounds for opposition that you may be free. ⁵ There is no freedom from what must occur. ⁶ And if you think there is, you must be wrong.
16. The second rule as well is but a fact. ² For you and your adviser must agree on what you want before it can occur. ³ It is but this agreement that permits all things to happen. ⁴ Nothing can be caused without some form of union, be it with a dream of judgment or the Voice for God. ⁵ Decisions cause results *because* they are not made in isolation. ⁶ They are made by you and your adviser, for yourself and for the world as well. ⁷ The day you want you offer to the world, for it will be what you have asked for, and will reinforce the rule of your adviser in the world. ⁸ Whose kingdom is the world for you today? ⁹ What kind of day will you decide to have?
17. It needs but two who would have happiness this day to promise it to all the world. ² It needs but two to understand that they cannot decide alone, to guarantee the joy they asked for will be wholly shared. ³ For they have understood the basic law that makes decision powerful, and gives it all effects that it will ever have. ⁴ It needs but two. ⁵ These two are joined before there can be a decision. ⁶ Let this be the one reminder that you keep in mind, and you will have the day you want, and give it to the world by having it yourself. ⁷ Your judgment has been lifted from the world by your decision for a happy day. ⁸ And as you have received, so must you give.

LESSON 72.

Holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation.

1. While we have recognized that the ego's plan for salvation is the opposite of God's, we have not yet emphasized that it is an active attack on His plan, and a deliberate attempt to destroy it. ² In the attack, God is assigned the attributes which are actually associated with the ego, while the ego appears to take on the attributes of God.

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2. The ego's fundamental wish is to replace God. ² In fact, the ego is the physical embodiment of that wish. ³ For it is that wish that seems to surround the mind with a body, keeping it separate and alone, and unable to reach other minds except through the body that was made to imprison it. ⁴ The limit on communication cannot be the best means to expand communication. ⁵ Yet the ego would have you believe that it is.
3. Although the attempt to keep the limitations that a body would impose is obvious here, it is perhaps not so apparent why holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation. ² But let us consider the kinds of things you are apt to hold grievances for. ³ Are they not always associated with something a body does? ⁴ A person says something you do not like. ⁵ He does something that displeases you. ⁶ He "betrays" his hostile thoughts in his behavior.
4. You are not dealing here with what the person is. ² On the contrary, you are exclusively concerned with what he does in a body. ³ You are doing more than failing to help in freeing him from the body's limitations. ⁴ You are actively trying to hold him to it by confusing it with him, and judging them as one. ⁵ Herein is God attacked, for if His Son is only a body, so must He be as well. ⁶ A creator wholly unlike his creation is inconceivable.
5. If God is a body, what must His plan for salvation be? ² What could it be but death? ³ In trying to present Himself as the Author of life and not of death, He is a liar and a deceiver, full of false promises and offering illusions in place of truth. ⁴ The body's apparent reality makes this view of God quite convincing. ⁵ In fact, if the body were real, it would be difficult indeed to escape this conclusion. ⁶ And every grievance that you hold insists that the body is real. ⁷ It overlooks entirely what your brother is. ⁸ It reinforces your belief that he is a body, and condemns him for it. ⁹ And it asserts that his salvation must be death, projecting this attack onto God, and holding Him responsible for it.
6. To this carefully prepared arena, where angry animals seek for prey and mercy cannot enter, the ego comes to save you. ² God made you a body. ³ Very well. ⁴ Let us accept this and be glad. ⁵ As a body, do not let yourself be deprived of what the body offers. ⁶ Take the little you can get. ⁷ God gave you nothing. ⁸ The body is your only savior. ⁹ It is the death of God and your salvation.
7. This is the universal belief of the world you see. ² Some hate the body, and try to hurt and humiliate it. ³ Others love the body, and try to glorify and exalt it. ⁴ But while the body stands at the center of your concept of yourself, you are attacking God's plan for salvation, and holding your grievances against Him and His creation, that you may not hear the Voice of truth and welcome It as Friend. ⁵ Your chosen savior takes His place instead. ⁶ It is your friend; He is your enemy.
8. We will try today to stop these senseless attacks on salvation. ² We will try to welcome it instead. ³ Your upside-down perception has been ruinous to your peace of mind. ⁴ You have seen yourself in a body and the truth outside you, locked away from your awareness by the body's limitations. ⁵ Now we are going to try to see this differently.
9. The light of truth is in us, where it was placed by God. ² It is the body that is outside us, and is not our concern. ³ To be without a body is to be in our natural state. ⁴ To recognize the light of truth in us is to recognize ourselves as we are. ⁵ To see our Self as separate from the body is to end the attack on God's plan for salvation, and to accept it instead. ⁶ And wherever His plan is accepted, it is

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accomplished already.

10. Our goal in the longer practice periods today is to become aware that God's plan for salvation has already been accomplished in us. ² To achieve this goal, we must replace attack with acceptance. ³ As long as we attack it, we cannot understand what God's plan for us is. ⁴ We are therefore attacking what we do not recognize. ⁵ Now we are going to try to lay judgment aside, and ask what God's plan for us is:

⁶ What is salvation, Father? ⁷ I do not know. ⁸ Tell me, that I may understand.

⁹ Then we will wait in quiet for His answer. ¹⁰ We have attacked God's plan for salvation without waiting to hear what it is. ¹¹ We have shouted our grievances so loudly that we have not listened to His Voice. ¹² We have used our grievances to close our eyes and stop our ears.

11. Now we would see and hear and learn. ² "What is salvation, Father?" ³ Ask and you will be answered. ⁴ Seek and you will find. ⁵ We are no longer asking the ego what salvation is and where to find it. ⁶ We are asking it of truth. ⁷ Be certain, then, that the answer will be true because of Whom you ask.

12. Whenever you feel your confidence wane and your hope of success flicker and go out, repeat your question and your request, remembering that you are asking of the infinite Creator of infinity, Who created you like Himself:

² What is salvation, Father? ³ I do not know. ⁴ Tell me, that I may understand.

⁵ He will answer. ⁶ Be determined to hear.

13. One or perhaps two shorter practice periods an hour will be enough for today, since they will be somewhat longer than usual. ² These exercises should begin with this:

³ Holding grievances is an attack on God's plan for salvation. ⁴ Let me accept it instead. ⁵ What is salvation, Father?

⁶ Then wait a minute or so in silence, preferably with your eyes closed, and listen for His answer.

LESSON 73.

I will there be light.

1. Today we are considering the will you share with God. ² This is not the same as the ego's idle wishes, out of which darkness and nothingness arise. ³ The will you share with God has all the power of creation in it. ⁴ The ego's idle wishes are unshared, and therefore have no power at all. ⁵ Its wishes are not idle in the sense that they can make a world of illusions in which your belief can be very strong. ⁶ But they are idle indeed in terms of creation. ⁷ They make nothing that is real.

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2. Idle wishes and grievances are partners or co-makers in picturing the world you see. ² The wishes of the ego gave rise to it, and the ego's need for grievances, which are necessary to maintain it, peoples it with figures that seem to attack you and call for "righteous" judgment. ³ These figures become the middlemen the ego employs to traffic in grievances. ⁴ They stand between your awareness and your brothers' reality. ⁵ Beholding them, you do not know your brothers or your Self.
3. Your will is lost to you in this strange bartering, in which guilt is traded back and forth, and grievances increase with each exchange. ² Can such a world have been created by the Will the Son of God shares with his Father? ³ Did God create disaster for His Son? ⁴ Creation is the Will of Both together. ⁵ Would God create a world that kills Himself?
4. Today we will try once more to reach the world that is in accordance with your will. ² The light is in it because it does not oppose the Will of God. ³ It is not Heaven, but the light of Heaven shines on it. ⁴ Darkness has vanished. ⁵ The ego's idle wishes have been withdrawn. ⁶ Yet the light that shines upon this world reflects your will, and so it must be in you that we will look for it.
5. Your picture of the world can only mirror what is within. ² The source of neither light nor darkness can be found without. ³ Grievances darken your mind, and you look out on a darkened world. ⁴ Forgiveness lifts the darkness, reasserts your will, and lets you look upon a world of light. ⁵ We have repeatedly emphasized that the barrier of grievances is easily passed, and cannot stand between you and your salvation. ⁶ The reason is very simple. ⁷ Do you really want to be in hell? ⁸ Do you really want to weep and suffer and die?
6. Forget the ego's arguments which seek to prove all this is really Heaven. ² You know it is not so. ³ You cannot want this for yourself. ⁴ There is a point beyond which illusions cannot go. ⁵ Suffering is not happiness, and it is happiness you really want. ⁶ Such is your will in truth. ⁷ And so salvation is your will as well. ⁸ You want to succeed in what we are trying to do today. ⁹ We undertake it with your blessing and your glad accord.
7. We will succeed today if you remember that you want salvation for yourself. ² You want to accept God's plan because you share in it. ³ You have no will that can really oppose it, and you do not want to do so. ⁴ Salvation is for you. ⁵ Above all else, you want the freedom to remember Who you really are. ⁶ Today it is the ego that stands powerless before your will. ⁷ Your will is free, and nothing can prevail against it.
8. Therefore, we undertake the exercises for today in happy confidence, certain that we will find what it is your will to find, and remember what it is your will to remember. ² No idle wishes can detain us, nor deceive us with an illusion of strength. ³ Today let your will be done, and end forever the insane belief that it is hell in place of Heaven that you choose.
9. We will begin our longer practice periods with the recognition that God's plan for salvation, and only His, is wholly in accord with your will. ² It is not the purpose of an alien power, thrust upon you unwillingly. ³ It is the one purpose here on which you and your Father are in perfect accord. ⁴ You will succeed today, the time appointed for the release of the Son of God from hell and from all idle wishes. ⁵ His will is now restored to his awareness. ⁶ He is willing this very day to look upon the light in him and be saved.
10. After reminding yourself of this, and determining to keep your will clearly in mind, tell yourself

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with gentle firmness and quiet certainty:

² *I will there be light.* ³ *Let me behold the light that reflects God's Will and mine.*

⁴ Then let your will assert itself, joined with the power of God and united with your Self. ⁵ Put the rest of the practice period under Their guidance. ⁶ Join with Them as They lead the way.

11. In the shorter practice periods, again make a declaration of what you really want. ² Say:

³ *I will there be light.* ⁴ *Darkness is not my will.*

⁵ This should be repeated several times an hour. ⁶ It is most important, however, to apply today's idea in this form immediately you are tempted to hold a grievance of any kind. ⁷ This will help you let your grievances go, instead of cherishing them and hiding them in darkness.

LESSON 136.

Sickness is a defense against the truth.

1. No one can heal unless he understands what purpose sickness seems to serve. ² For then he understands as well its purpose has no meaning. ³ Being causeless and without a meaningful intent of any kind, it cannot be at all. ⁴ When this is seen, healing is automatic. ⁵ It dispels this meaningless illusion by the same approach that carries all of them to truth, and merely leaves them there to disappear.
2. Sickness is not an accident. ² Like all defenses, it is an insane device for self-deception. ³ And like all the rest, its purpose is to hide reality, attack it, change it, render it inept, distort it, twist it, or reduce it to a little pile of unassembled parts. ⁴ The aim of all defenses is to keep the truth from being whole. ⁵ The parts are seen as if each one were whole within itself.
3. Defenses are not unintentional, nor are they made without awareness. ² They are secret, magic wands you wave when truth appears to threaten what you would believe. ³ They seem to be unconscious but because of the rapidity with which you choose to use them. ⁴ In that second, even less, in which the choice is made, you recognize exactly what you would attempt to do, and then proceed to think that it is done.
4. Who but yourself evaluates a threat, decides escape is necessary, and sets up a series of defenses to reduce the threat that has been judged as real? ² All this cannot be done unconsciously. ³ But afterwards, your plan requires that you must forget you made it, so it seems to be external to your own intent; a happening beyond your state of mind, an outcome with a real effect on you, instead of one effected by yourself.
5. It is this quick forgetting of the part you play in making your "reality" that makes defenses seem to be beyond your own control. ² But what you have forgot can be remembered, given willingness to reconsider the decision which is doubly shielded by oblivion. ³ Your not remembering is but the sign

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that this decision still remains in force, as far as your desires are concerned. ⁴ Mistake not this for fact. ⁵ Defenses must make facts unrecognizable. ⁶ They aim at doing this, and it is this they do.

6. Every defense takes fragments of the whole, assembles them without regard to all their true relationships, and thus constructs illusions of a whole that is not there. ² It is this process that imposes threat, and not whatever outcome may result. ³ When parts are wrested from the whole and seen as separate and wholes within themselves, they become symbols standing for attack upon the whole; successful in effect, and never to be seen as whole again. ⁴ And yet you have forgotten that they stand but for your own decision of what should be real, to take the place of what is real.
7. Sickness is a decision. ² It is not a thing that happens to you, quite unsought, which makes you weak and brings you suffering. ³ It is a choice you make, a plan you lay, when for an instant truth arises in your own deluded mind, and all your world appears to totter and prepare to fall. ⁴ Now are you sick, that truth may go away and threaten your establishments no more.
8. How do you think that sickness can succeed in shielding you from truth? ² Because it proves the body is not separate from you, and so you must be separate from the truth. ³ You suffer pain because the body does, and in this pain are you made one with it. ⁴ Thus is your "true" identity preserved, and the strange, haunting thought that you might be something beyond this little pile of dust silenced and stilled. ⁵ For see, this dust can make you suffer, twist your limbs and stop your heart, commanding you to die and cease to be.
9. Thus is the body stronger than the truth, which asks you live, but cannot overcome your choice to die. ² And so the body is more powerful than everlasting life, Heaven more frail than hell, and God's design for the salvation of His Son opposed by a decision stronger than His Will. ³ His Son is dust, the Father incomplete, and chaos sits in triumph on His throne.
10. Such is your planning for your own defense. ² And you believe that Heaven quails before such mad attacks as these, with God made blind by your illusions, truth turned into lies, and all the universe made slave to laws which your defenses would impose on it. ³ Yet who believes illusions but the one who made them up? ⁴ Who else can see them and react to them as if they were the truth?
11. God knows not of your plans to change His Will. ² The universe remains unheeding of the laws by which you thought to govern it. ³ And Heaven has not bowed to hell, nor life to death. ⁴ You can but choose to think you die, or suffer sickness or distort the truth in any way. ⁵ What is created is apart from all of this. ⁶ Defenses are plans to defeat what cannot be attacked. ⁷ What is unalterable cannot change. ⁸ And what is wholly sinless cannot sin.
12. Such is the simple truth. ² It does not make appeal to might nor triumph. ³ It does not command obedience, nor seek to prove how pitiful and futile your attempts to plan defenses that would alter it. ⁴ Truth merely wants to give you happiness, for such its purpose is. ⁵ Perhaps it sighs a little when you throw away its gifts, and yet it knows, with perfect certainty, that what God wills for you must be received.
13. It is this fact that demonstrates that time is an illusion. ² For time lets you think what God has given you is not the truth right now, as it must be. ³ The Thoughts of God are quite apart from time. ⁴ For time is but another meaningless defense you made against the truth. ⁵ Yet what He wills is here, and you remain as He created you.

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14. Truth has a power far beyond defense, for no illusions can remain where truth has been allowed to enter. ² And it comes to any mind that would lay down its arms, and cease to play with folly. ³ It is found at any time; today, if you will choose to practice giving welcome to the truth.

15. This is our aim today. ² And we will give a quarter of an hour twice to ask the truth to come to us and set us free. ³ And truth will come, for it has never been apart from us. ⁴ It merely waits for just this invitation which we give today. ⁵ We introduce it with a healing prayer, to help us rise above defensiveness, and let truth be as it has always been:

⁶ Sickness is a defense against the truth. ⁷ I will accept the truth of what I am, and let my mind be wholly healed today.

16. Healing will flash across your open mind, as peace and truth arise to take the place of war and vain imaginings. ² There will be no dark corners sickness can conceal, and keep defended from the light of truth. ³ There will be no dim figures from your dreams, nor their obscure and meaningless pursuits with double purposes insanely sought, remaining in your mind. ⁴ It will be healed of all the sickly wishes that it tried to authorize the body to obey.

17. Now is the body healed, because the source of sickness has been opened to relief. ² And you will recognize you practiced well by this: The body should not feel at all. ³ If you have been successful, there will be no sense of feeling ill or feeling well, of pain or pleasure. ⁴ No response at all is in the mind to what the body does. ⁵ Its usefulness remains and nothing more.

18. Perhaps you do not realize that this removes the limits you had placed upon the body by the purposes you gave to it. ² As these are laid aside, the strength the body has will always be enough to serve all truly useful purposes. ³ The body's health is fully guaranteed, because it is not limited by time, by weather or fatigue, by food and drink, or any laws you made it serve before. ⁴ You need do nothing now to make it well, for sickness has become impossible.

19. Yet this protection needs to be preserved by careful watching. ² If you let your mind harbor attack thoughts, yield to judgment or make plans against uncertainties to come, you have again misplaced yourself, and made a bodily identity which will attack the body, for the mind is sick.

20. Give instant remedy, should this occur, by not allowing your defensiveness to hurt you longer. ² Do not be confused about what must be healed, but tell yourself:

³ I have forgotten what I really am, for I mistook my body for myself. ⁴ Sickness is a defense against the truth. ⁵ But I am not a body. ⁶ And my mind cannot attack. ⁷ So I can not be sick.

LESSON 190.

I choose the joy of God instead of pain.

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1. Pain is a wrong perspective. ² When it is experienced in any form, it is a proof of self-deception. ³ It is not a fact at all. ⁴ There is no form it takes that will not disappear if seen aright. ⁵ For pain proclaims God cruel. ⁶ How could it be real in any form? ⁷ It witnesses to God the Father's hatred of His Son, the sinfulness He sees in him, and His insane desire for revenge and death.
2. Can such projections be attested to? ² Can they be anything but wholly false? ³ Pain is but witness to the Son's mistakes in what he thinks he is. ⁴ It is a dream of fierce retaliation for a crime that could not be committed; for attack on what is wholly unassailable. ⁵ It is a nightmare of abandonment by an Eternal Love, which could not leave the Son whom It created out of love.
3. Pain is a sign illusions reign in place of truth. ² It demonstrates God is denied, confused with fear, perceived as mad, and seen as traitor to Himself. ³ If God is real, there is no pain. ⁴ If pain is real, there is no God. ⁵ For vengeance is not part of love. ⁶ And fear, denying love and using pain to prove that God is dead, has shown that death is victor over life. ⁷ The body is the Son of God, corruptible in death, as mortal as the Father he has slain.
4. Peace to such foolishness! ² The time has come to laugh at such insane ideas. ³ There is no need to think of them as savage crimes, or secret sins with weighty consequence. ⁴ Who but a madman could conceive of them as cause of anything? ⁵ Their witness, pain, is mad as they, and no more to be feared than the insane illusions which it shields, and tries to demonstrate must still be true.
5. It is your thoughts alone that cause you pain. ² Nothing external to your mind can hurt or injure you in any way. ³ There is no cause beyond yourself that can reach down and bring oppression. ⁴ No one but yourself affects you. ⁵ There is nothing in the world that has the power to make you ill or sad, or weak or frail. ⁶ But it is you who have the power to dominate all things you see by merely recognizing what you are. ⁷ As you perceive the harmlessness in them, they will accept your holy will as theirs. ⁸ And what was seen as fearful now becomes a source of innocence and holiness.
6. My holy brother, think of this awhile: The world you see does nothing. ² It has no effects at all. ³ It merely represents your thoughts. ⁴ And it will change entirely as you elect to change your mind, and choose the joy of God as what you really want. ⁵ Your Self is radiant in this holy joy, unchanged, unchanging and unchangeable, forever and forever. ⁶ And would you deny a little corner of your mind its own inheritance, and keep it as a hospital for pain; a sickly place where living things must come at last to die?
7. The world may seem to cause you pain. ² And yet the world, as causeless, has no power to cause. ³ As an effect, it cannot make effects. ⁴ As an illusion, it is what you wish. ⁵ Your idle wishes represent its pains. ⁶ Your strange desires bring it evil dreams. ⁷ Your thoughts of death envelop it in fear, while in your kind forgiveness does it live.
8. Pain is the thought of evil taking form, and working havoc in your holy mind. ² Pain is the ransom you have gladly paid not to be free. ³ In pain is God denied the Son He loves. ⁴ In pain does fear appear to triumph over love, and time replace eternity and Heaven. ⁵ And the world becomes a cruel and a bitter place, where sorrow rules and little joys give way before the onslaught of the savage pain that waits to end all joy in misery.
9. Lay down your arms, and come without defense into the quiet place where Heaven's peace holds all things still at last. ² Lay down all thoughts of danger and of fear. ³ Let no attack enter with you. ⁴

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Lay down the cruel sword of judgment that you hold against your throat, and put aside the withering assaults with which you seek to hide your holiness.

10. Here will you understand there is no pain. ² Here does the joy of God belong to you. ³ This is the day when it is given you to realize the lesson that contains all of salvation's power. ⁴ It is this: Pain is illusion; joy, reality. ⁵ Pain is but sleep; joy is awakening. ⁶ Pain is deception; joy alone is truth.
11. And so again we make the only choice that ever can be made; we choose between illusions and the truth, or pain and joy, or hell and Heaven. ² Let our gratitude unto our Teacher fill our hearts, as we are free to choose our joy instead of pain, our holiness in place of sin, the peace of God instead of conflict, and the light of Heaven for the darkness of the world.

8. What Is the Real World?

1. The real world is a symbol, like the rest of what perception offers. ² Yet it stands for what is opposite to what you made. ³ Your world is seen through eyes of fear, and brings the witnesses of terror to your mind. ⁴ The real world cannot be perceived except through eyes forgiveness blesses, so they see a world where terror is impossible, and witnesses to fear can not be found.
2. The real world holds a counterpart for each unhappy thought reflected in your world; a sure correction for the sights of fear and sounds of battle which your world contains. ² The real world shows a world seen differently, through quiet eyes and with a mind at peace. ³ Nothing but rest is there. ⁴ There are no cries of pain and sorrow heard, for nothing there remains outside forgiveness. ⁵ And the sights are gentle. ⁶ Only happy sights and sounds can reach the mind that has forgiven itself.
3. What need has such a mind for thoughts of death, attack and murder? ² What can it perceive surrounding it but safety, love and joy? ³ What is there it would choose to be condemned, and what is there that it would judge against? ⁴ The world it sees arises from a mind at peace within itself. ⁵ No danger lurks in anything it sees, for it is kind, and only kindness does it look upon.
4. The real world is the symbol that the dream of sin and guilt is over, and God's Son no longer sleeps. ² His waking eyes perceive the sure reflection of his Father's Love; the certain promise that he is redeemed. ³ The real world signifies the end of time, for its perception makes time purposeless.
5. The Holy Spirit has no need of time when it has served His purpose. ² Now He waits but that one instant more for God to take His final step, and time has disappeared, taking perception with it as it goes, and leaving but the truth to be itself. ³ That instant is our goal, for it contains the memory of God. ⁴ And as we look upon a world forgiven, it is He Who calls to us and comes to take us home, reminding us of our Identity which our forgiveness has restored to us.

19. WHAT IS JUSTICE?

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1. Justice is the divine correction for injustice. ² Injustice is the basis for all the judgments of the world. ³ Justice corrects the interpretations to which injustice gives rise, and cancels them out. ⁴ Neither justice nor injustice exists in Heaven, for error is impossible and correction meaningless. ⁵ In this world, however, forgiveness depends on justice, since all attack can only be unjust. ⁶ Justice is the Holy Spirit's verdict upon the world. ⁷ Except in His judgment justice is impossible, for no one in the world is capable of making only just interpretations and laying all injustices aside. ⁸ If God's Son were fairly judged, there would be no need for salvation. ⁹ The thought of separation would have been forever inconceivable.
2. Justice, like its opposite, is an interpretation. ² It is, however, the one interpretation that leads to truth. ³ This becomes possible because, while it is not true in itself, justice includes nothing that opposes truth. ⁴ There is no inherent conflict between justice and truth; one is but the first small step in the direction of the other. ⁵ The path becomes quite different as one goes along. ⁶ Nor could all the magnificence, the grandeur of the scene and the enormous opening vistas that rise to meet one as the journey continues, be foretold from the outset. ⁷ Yet even these, whose splendor reaches indescribable heights as one proceeds, fall short indeed of all that wait when the pathway ceases and time ends with it. ⁸ But somewhere one must start. ⁹ Justice is the beginning.
3. All concepts of your brothers and yourself; all fears of future states and all concerns about the past, stem from injustice. ² Here 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. ³ Selectively 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. ⁵ Forgiveness has no place in such a scheme, for not one "sin" but seems forever true.
4. Salvation is God's justice. ² It restores to your awareness the wholeness of the fragments you perceive as broken off and separate. ³ And it is this that overcomes the fear of death. ⁴ For separate fragments must decay and die, but wholeness is immortal. ⁵ It remains forever and forever like its Creator, being one with Him. ⁶ God's Judgment is His justice. ⁷ Onto this,—a Judgment wholly lacking in condemnation; an evaluation based entirely on love,—you have projected your injustice, giving God the lens of warped perception through which you look. ⁸ Now it belongs to Him and not to you. ⁹ You are afraid of Him, and do not see you hate and fear your Self as enemy.
5. Pray for God's justice, and do not confuse His mercy with your own insanity. ² Perception can make whatever picture the mind desires to see. ³ Remember this. ⁴ In this lies either Heaven or hell, as you elect. ⁵ God's justice points to Heaven just because it is entirely impartial. ⁶ It accepts all evidence that is brought before it, omitting nothing and assessing nothing as separate and apart from all the rest. ⁷ From this one standpoint does it judge, and this alone. ⁸ Here all attack and condemnation becomes meaningless and indefensible. ⁹ Perception rests, the mind is still, and light returns again. ¹⁰ Vision is now restored. ¹¹ What had been lost has now been found. ¹² The peace of God descends on all the world, and we can see. ¹³ And we can see!