

Workbook Lesson Support Notes

by Allen Watson

Lesson 325 • November 21

“All things I think I see reflect ideas.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

Practice suggestion: I find it helpful to make this idea more specific. Think of a situation you are seeing that is causing you discomfort. Then say:

This thing I think I see reflects ideas.

I am seeing only the projection of my judgmental thoughts.

Father, let me see the reflection of Your Thoughts.

Commentary

This lesson is probably the best single summary of the Course’s theory of perception:

What I see reflects a process in my mind, which starts with my idea of what I want. From there, the mind makes up an image of the thing the mind desires, judges valuable, and therefore seeks to find. These images are then projected outward, looked upon, esteemed as real and guarded as one’s own. (1:1–3)

Everything I see is a projection. By this analysis of perception, we see absolutely nothing real with our physical eyes. All of it “reflects a process in my mind” and nothing more than that. What we see are all projected images. As an early lesson in the Workbook says, “I have given everything I see...all the meaning that it has for me” (W-pI.2.Heading).

As we choose what we want to see, the world arises in our sight. If we choose judgment we see a world condemned; if we choose forgiveness we see “a gentle world” (1:5–6). This is why the Course focuses entirely on healing the mind and not on changing the world. To change the world is not necessary; it will change with our thoughts. As Ken Wapnick points out, trying to fix things in the world is like trying to fix things in a movie by doing things to the screen. The only way you can change the movie is to change what is in the projector (or to fix the projector). The mind is the projector of the world.

When we accept forgiving thoughts in our minds, the world becomes “a kindly home where [we] can rest a while before [we journey] on” (1:6). It becomes a place where we can “help [our] brothers walk ahead with [us], and find the way to Heaven and to God” (1:6). That is what we do in this world when we have had our minds healed: help others do the same.

What we want is the ideas of God reflected in the world, rather than our own ideas. Apart from God’s ideas, our ideas only “make up dreams” (2:1).

Today I do not want dreams; I want reality reflected in my world. It all starts from my idea of what I want. Therefore, Father, I ask help in wanting only the truth, only peace, and only what is loving. I want union, not separation. I want healing, not conflict. I want peace, not war. Help me to recognize it whenever I think I want anything else, or anything besides the truth; to recognize it, bring it into Your light for healing, and let it go.

What Is Creation?

Part 5: W-pII.11.3:1-2

Creation is the opposite of all illusions, for creation is the truth. (3:1)

The Course's general theory about creation holds certain facts as fundamental: only what is created by God is real or true; all that God creates is real, true, and eternal. Therefore, anything that is not eternal and changeless is not real, and not true. Based on these assumptions, the Course concludes that all things of this world—the earth itself, the entire physical universe, and especially our bodies and our apparent “life” here on earth, cannot be God's creations because they are not eternal and changeless. Everything we can see with our eyes, even the seemingly ageless stars, has an end. What ends is simply not real, in the Course's sense of the word. All of it, every bit of it, falls into the category of “illusions.”

Furthermore, God's creation is holographic: “every part container of the Whole” (3:2). This is a concept that defies matter-based logic. The nearest analog I know of is the hologram. Once a holographic image has been captured on a photographic plate, light shined on the plate will produce a three-dimensional image of the hologram. If it is a picture of an apple, it will be a 3-D apple, and you can view different angles of the apple by moving the angle of light shining into the image. Now, if that holographic plate is broken into four pieces, you do not end up with four images of *parts* of an apple; instead, you have four *smaller* images of the entire apple. The whole is in every part.

That is what God's creation is like. Fragment it as you will, and the Whole of creation is still reflected in every tiny part. All of creation is in you, and in me. The “wholly whole” creation is what the Course refers to as “the holy Son of God” (3:2). God's Will is complete in every aspect (another word for “part”; the Course will often use different words for “part” such as “aspect” or “fragment,” but the unspoken assumption is always that every aspect contains the Whole. The word refers to what we think of as “individuals” or “persons”). You are an *aspect* or *part* of the Son of God, and yet somehow, at the same time, you are also the Whole.

One symptom of our mistaken belief in separation is that we have over-identified with our “partness,” and have lost touch with our Wholeness. For instance, I tend to think of myself primarily as Allen Watson. You tend to think of yourself as your individuality. In fact, our primary reality is a shared Self, a Wholeness. Much of the learning process through which the Course is leading us is to change that primary sense of identification from “partness” to Wholeness. The learning environment of the holy relationship is designed to break down our sense of isolation, or “partness,” and to strengthen our identification with the Whole by demonstrating to us that what we think of as “the other person” in the relationship is, in fact, a part of our shared Self. We experience the same thoughts. What affects one affects the other. What I think affects you, and vice versa. What I give to you is given to myself. When I forgive you, I am released. As this breakdown of “partness” and realization of Wholeness is learned in the holy relationship, it begins to be generalized and transferred to all the other “aspects” of creation, all that we have thought of as “not me.”

Lesson 326 • November 22

“I am forever an Effect of God.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

Practice suggestion: Today’s prayer is another favorite of mine. Do yourself a favor and spend some time with it today.

Commentary

Any effect is made what it is by its cause. The cause *determines* what the effect is. If I strike a billiard ball with my cue stick, the ball has no say in where it goes. The effect of the ball’s motion is entirely determined by the stroke of the cue (plus other causative things like the state of the table surface, etc.). So if I am “an Effect of God” I don’t really have any say in determining what I am; that is determined by my Cause, God. This is why it must be true that “as You created me I have remained” (1:3). I cannot change what I am; God “forever and forever [is] my Cause” (1:2). Does this seem to preclude free will? Yes, it does, insofar as actually determining what my nature is. And *thank God* it does! Otherwise, we would have irretrievably damaged ourselves and made sin and hell into realities. Free will, as the Course says in its introduction, does not grant us the right to “establish the curriculum” (T-In.1:4), that is, to decide *what* we must learn; it only grants us the freedom to choose *when* we learn it. And what we are learning is what we are, as God created us. That cannot change.

God’s Will is “to have a Son so like his Cause that Cause and Its Effect are indistinguishable” (1:5). What an amazing statement! Indistinguishable from God! Wow! That borders on heresy or incredible hubris, doesn’t it? And yet that is what the Course is telling us about ourselves; that what we are is the same stuff of which God is made. If God is Love, so is His Son. “God is but Love, and therefore, so am I” (Lessons 171 to 180).

What Is Creation?

Part 6: W-pII.11.3:3

Its [creation’s] oneness is forever guaranteed inviolate; forever held within His holy Will, beyond all possibility of harm, of separation, imperfection and of any spot upon its sinlessness.

To put this in a short, simple sentence: Separation is impossible. What God created One cannot ever become separate parts; only in mad illusions can this seem to occur. The Wholeness or Oneness is the expression of God’s Will, and that cannot be opposed because there is nothing to oppose it. Everything that exists is part of this Oneness, part of this single expression of God’s Will. There is no other, no opponent, no enemy, no contrary will. God would not and did not create something opposite to Himself.

How could God will something opposite to His own will? All that is truly real, therefore, must be an expression of His Will.

The Wholeness is “beyond all possibility of harm” because nothing outside it exists to oppose it. This is one of the characteristics of what is referred to as “nondual” cosmology. “Nondual” means, simply, not two; only one. There is no opposite to God, and no opposite to God’s one creation.

The Course often says that if an opposite to God exists, if sin (opposing God’s Will) is truly possible, then God must have created His own opposite, which makes Him insane. If we think that, we must be insane. Either God is insane, or we are. And of the two, which is more likely?

did not create something opposite to Himself.

Lesson 327 • November 23

“I need but call and You will answer me.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and thoughtfully.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

Practice suggestion: Today’s lesson urges us to test out God’s promises; specifically, the promise that He will answer our calls. This is an invitation we should not refuse. Think of some question or request for which you really need a response. Put your question or request to God, with all the desire you can muster, and expect a response. Try to open your mind about what the response ought to be. Realize that it may come now, and it may need to work its way past some obstacles in you before it comes. It may even show up initially in a form which does not look like a response to your question, but which makes way for a more direct response later on.

Commentary

This reminds me of a Bible verse in the Old Testament book of Jeremiah (33:3): “Call unto me, and I will answer thee.”

The basic thought of the lesson seems to be: “Here are God’s promises; try them, and prove to yourself that He means what He says.” It tells us we can “learn from...experience that this is true” (1:3). It suggests that we take God’s promises and “test them out” (2:1).

I know that my confidence in the Course has increased over the years and continues to increase as I continue to test out its promises. It gives us pretty explicit instructions for Workbook practice, and promises that it will change the way we think about everyone and everything in the world. It promises peace of mind. It promises release from guilt. And what I am finding is that as I make a sincere effort to *do* what it tells me to do, I experience what it says I will experience. In short: it works.

We can sit around judging the propositions of the Course until we are blue in the face, discussing whether or not the Course will work as it says, and we will learn nothing. But if we try it, if we test it out, if we practice what it says to practice, we will inevitably find out that it *does* work, and our conviction of its truth will grow unshakable.

What Is Creation?

Part 7: W-pII.11.4:1–3

We are creation; we the Sons of God. (4:1)

We exist. Therefore, since all that exists is God’s creation, and creation is the Son of God (3:2), we must be creation. We must be aspects of the Whole, “Sons” who are aspects of the Son.

“We seem to be discrete, and unaware of our eternal unity with Him” (4:2). All of our experience in

this world has taught us that we are “discrete,” separate beings, distinct from and unconnected to one another. We are aware of our partness to the exclusion of our Wholeness, “our eternal unity with Him.” Yet we only “seem” to be separate beings; in reality we are not. Our struggle with the Course, our struggle with all true spirituality, is the struggle of insanely trying to preserve this wholly illusory sense of separateness. We are trying to make “partness” the only truth about ourselves, by excluding the awareness of Wholeness. And in so doing we have cut ourselves off from our Self.

“Yet back of all our doubts, past all our fears, there still is certainty” (4:3). We doubt the Wholeness because we have made up circumstances (this whole world) in which “partness” seems to be the only reality. We fear the Wholeness because it seems to threaten our partness. (It does not, really, because in the Wholeness there is some kind of partness, but it is a partness in which every part *contains* the Whole, rather than *excludes* it.) Despite this insanity of identification only with partness, we are still the Whole. The Whole is “inviolable.” It cannot be divided nor damaged in any way. So the Wholeness still exists, and still calls to us.

In every part, no matter how strong the illusion of separation, the Whole is still there. And the Whole, our true Self, is still certain of Itself. It is only the part, falsely imagined to be separate from the Whole, that doubts and fears. The Whole has no doubts, and no fears. What I am and what you are (which is the same) knows Itself with unshakable knowledge. That certainty which lies in our Wholeness is what we are trying to reconnect with. The memory of God and of what we are lies within us, in the Wholeness we have denied and excluded in our mad attempt to be completely separate parts. Through reconnecting with one another, we reconnect with that Wholeness, and in so doing, we remember God.

nity with Him” (4:2). All of our experience in

Lesson 328 • November 24

“I choose the second place to gain the first.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

Practice suggestion: Ask for guidance about some situation facing you today. Listen with a quiet, receptive, open mind. You may find that what you hear feels different from your will, from what you want in this situation. If so, try to consider that perhaps what you heard *is* your will. Consider that this is your true will, which you have lost touch with, coming to you in a particular form.

Commentary

The lesson is saying that when we consider choosing to join our will to God’s Will (1:5), it seems like some kind of loss, a submission to something outside of ourselves. It seems like taking “second place.” It seems subservient, or submissive. And in our mistaken identity as egos, we feel that the only way to have autonomy is to make ourselves independent from God and from the rest of His creation.

We are seeing things upside down (1:1). All that we find by asserting our independence is “sickness, suffering and loss and death” (1:3). We are like a branch trying to become independent of the vine. If we are cut off from the vine, we die. Our identity is not lost by joining with the vine; it is found, because we are not something separate. We are part of God and part of His creation, and only in joining with that willingly can we discover our true Identity. “Our will is His” (1:6).

We choose to “submit” to God’s Will (which seems like taking second place) because, in joining with Him, we arrive in first place: one with the Will of the Creator of all things.

What Is Creation?

Part 8: W-pII.4:4–6

Love created us like Itself. As parts, each of which contains the Whole, we are Thoughts of Love. And “Love remains with all Its Thoughts, Its sureness being theirs” (4:4). The certainty of God is our certainty. It was given us in creation and is still there within us; it has never left us, although we have obscured it. God’s memory is in our minds (4:5). Although we seem to be separate parts we are not; we are parts, but not separate, like droplets of water in the ocean. So we still contain all that was in the original creation. What belongs to the ocean belongs to each drop. Each of us still retains our oneness and our unity with our Creator (4:5).

Let our function be only to let this memory return, only to let God’s Will be done on earth,
only to be restored to sanity, and to be but as God created us. (4:6)

Our whole purpose in life is to be nothing but this, nothing but the restoration to our awareness of our Wholeness, and our partness-in-Wholeness. This is why we are here. This is the purpose behind every direction taken by the Holy Spirit's guidance in our lives. We are not here to bolster our partness, to meet goals belonging only to the part. We are here to let the memory of God return to our conscious minds, and to fulfill our purpose as the extensions of the Will of Love.

Lesson 329 • November 25

“I have already chosen what You will.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

Commentary

It is difficult for us to realize that we have already chosen God’s Will. Not only is choosing His Will the only way to find our true autonomy (yesterday’s lesson), *we have already made that choice*. We may *think* we have wandered away from God’s Will, defied it, and broken its laws (1:1), but we have not. We cannot. Because *we are* the Will of God, “extended and extending” (1:2).

When did we make this choice that we seem so unaware of? In the very instant of our creation (1:5). God created us by extending His Will; when we came into being we were the extension of His Will. Our choice was already made, and “made for all eternity” (1:6). We cannot change that. We can make up an illusion in which we appear to have a separate will from God’s, but we cannot make it real. Illusion is all we can make if what we make contradicts God’s Will.

This fact is our safety. It is our salvation as well, for it means that we have not done what we thought we did; we have not defied God’s Will, we have only *imagined* it, only dreamed about it. The oneness of God and His creation is unbroken, and it is this we can celebrate today.

What Is Creation?

Part 9: W-pII.11.5:1

Our Father calls to us.

“Father” is a personal synonym for “Creator,” the One Who gave us being. Perhaps, after this time thinking about what creation is, the word “Father” may have a little more meaning for us. Our Father is the One Who thought us into existence. “Only Love creates” (1:2), and so our Father is Love Itself, Which has created us like Itself. This One desired to add to Love by Its extension, and so, out of that desire, we were created, to be held forever in His holy Will.

That immortal desire of God still stands! With all that infinite desire of His Will, He calls to us to be what He created us to be: the extension of His Love, creating as He does through extending love, forever one with His holy Will, sharing in it, glorying in it, exuding it from every pore of our being. God’s Love remains with us. Our minds remember Him, remember our function. From within our minds He calls to us, drawing us with His Love to be the very Love that draws us.

He is our Father, our Creator. We cannot escape that fact, nor can we escape the fact of what we are. “I am as God created me” (W-pI.110.Heading). He calls to us constantly, continually, patiently, unceasingly, and until we end our mad attempt to be “something else,” something other than Love, and respond to His

call, we can only delay our happiness and postpone our joy.
Father, let me hear Your call today, and answer.

Lesson 330 • November 26

“I will not hurt myself again today.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

Practice suggestion: Think of your judgments toward another person. Realize that these judgments hurt *you*. Then say:

I will not hurt myself again today.

I will not teach myself that I am a sinner.

Let my forgiveness teach me that I am God’s Son.

Commentary

Whenever I think I am less than what God created, I hurt myself. And only myself. I do no real damage, but I have the entirely realistic illusion of pain, sacrifice, and suffering. All my physical and emotional senses confirm its reality; only the vision of Christ sees past the illusion.

There is a strong passage in the Text that tells how important it is not to depend on what our eyes and ears tell us, to know that it is only the projection of our own thoughts:

The secret of salvation is but this: That you are doing this unto yourself. No matter what the form of the attack, this still is true. Whoever takes the role of enemy and of attacker, still is this the truth. Whatever seems to be the cause of any pain and suffering you feel, this is still true...Let them be as hateful and as vicious as they may, they could have no effect on you unless you failed to recognize it is your dream. (T-27.VIII.10:1–6)

The evil dream results from a false picture of myself as something less than the Self which God created. I still believe myself to be capable of sin and capable of suffering. Because I believe that of myself, I believe it of others, and I project my belief onto them. I project my sin and my guilt onto them. Every time I see sin or weakness in a brother, it is only a reflection of my own thoughts about myself. “It is your dream” that you are seeing. You are not seeing something real, but a masterful, near-perfect illusion, projected from your incredibly powerful mind. It is the projected image of your own thoughts about yourself that is “hurting” you.

If I think I am weak, if I think my life is in a mess, I am not seeing my true Identity. None of this is really happening. I am living a bad dream, a dream about myself. From a metaphysical standpoint, nothing happening in my life really matters at all. It is just a bad dream. (It *does* matter as a reflection of my state of mind, however.)

We are being “saved from what we thought we were” (2:3), and the way toward that deliverance is to understand that “life is but a dream,” as the old round says. The way of deliverance is to forgive. To understand when I think I see something worthy of my judgment and condemnation that somehow, in some twisted way, all I am seeing is my own thoughts projected outward. And to choose, in that moment, to think differently. To see the situation which I thought justified my anger turned into a situation that justifies my love. “Here is a poor, confused brother, just like me, who has lost track of his true Identity

with God. I am seeing him as guilty only because I am projecting my own guilt. I choose not to add to his illusion by broadcasting guilt onto him. I choose instead to direct my love to him that he may begin to awaken, as I have begun.” And I know, in so doing, that I am giving that love to myself, I am contributing to my own awakening.

More to the point for me personally are these lines:

Why should we attack our minds, and give them images of pain? Why should we teach them they are powerless? (1:2–3)

What am I teaching my mind by the thoughts I am thinking? What am I teaching my mind by feeling guilty? I’m a man under reconstruction, I’m not finished yet. If I didn’t need rehabilitation I wouldn’t be here! Let me observe my thoughts today and see how they attack me if I choose to listen to the ego, and how they build me up when I listen to the Holy Spirit.

What Is Creation?

Part 10: W-pII.11.5:2

We hear His Voice, and we forgive creation in the Name of its Creator, Holiness Itself, Whose holiness His Own creation shares; Whose holiness is still a part of us.

His Voice is calling us to “forgive creation.” We have looked on God’s creation—ourselves, our brothers and sisters, and all the rest that makes up creation—and we have pronounced judgment on it. We have seen guilt and ugliness where God created only beauty and holiness. In this world, we cannot truly create nor extend love in the purity that belongs only to Heaven, but we can forgive. We can end our fault-finding, and lift our judgment and condemnation from everything we see. Every moment offers us an opportunity to do this; every encounter is a chance to practice forgiveness.

Whatever we look upon without seeing the holiness of God in it, we need to forgive. To see anything other than God’s holiness reflected everywhere is an act of unforgiveness, a condemnation of God’s creation. When something appears unholy, we need to ask the help of the Holy Spirit to see past appearances to the truth of God’s holiness those appearances are hiding. Sin is an illusion, and only holiness is true.

In a sense, then, all that the Course is teaching us is to acknowledge God’s creation everywhere, in everything, and above all, in ourselves. Our Creator’s “holiness is still a part of us.” Let us say to everyone we meet (in our thoughts, our words, and our actions):

I would behold you with the eyes of Christ, and see my perfect sinlessness in you. (W - pI.161.11:8)

Lesson 331 • November 27

“There is no conflict, for my will is Yours.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions on page XXX. A short summary:

- **Read** the commentary paragraph slowly and personally.
- **Pray** the prayer, perhaps several times.
- **Morning and evening:** Repeat the idea and then spend time in Open Mind Meditation.
- **Hourly remembrance:** Repeat the idea and then spend a quiet moment in meditation.
- **Frequent reminders:** Repeat the idea often within each hour.
- **Response to temptation:** Repeat the idea whenever upset, to restore peace.
- **Read the “What Is” section** slowly and thoughtfully once during the day.

Commentary

In a study group recently, I said that our fundamental problem is that we really believe that we are terrible people. We don't trust our own love. A fellow was expressing his concern that the material of the Course could be used to justify just about any behavior. “I could go rob a liquor store because the world is just illusion and nobody would really be hurt except in the illusion. Nothing I do affects my relationship to God negatively.”

The direct answer to that question is that you only do such things in the world when you believe the world is real. If you *truly* believed that the world is an illusion, you could not be doing such things and would have no desire to do them.

The fear that he would do terrible things if he believed no one would really be hurt belied a belief that he could not be trusted with the truth. The Course is saying that we don't believe that what we truly want is good. The truth is, we can trust ourselves. Even if we are still confused and bemused by illusion, we are not going to make terrible mistakes. It is safe to let go of the constraints of guilt because we truly are extensions of God. We think we need the guilt to restrain the monster within us; *A Course in Miracles* is saying guilt serves no useful function (see T-14.III.1:4), and in fact keeps us locked into the illusion of our sinfulness. That illusion about ourselves is the fundamental error. And it goes on to say that thinking the self has usurped the throne of God is nothing to be guilty about:

Seek not to appraise the worth of God's Son whom He created holy, for to do so is to evaluate his Father and judge against Him. And you *will* feel guilty for this imagined crime, which no one in this world or Heaven could possibly commit. The Holy Spirit teaches only that the “sin” of self-replacement on the throne of God is not a source of guilt.
(T-14.III.15:1–3)

It is just a “trivial mistake” (W-pI.138.11:5). Love has not left Itself. I share God's nature as Love. I could not leave Him, nor He me (1:5).

It is “foolish” (1:1) to believe that I could *in reality* oppose the Will of God, and corrupt myself. Any apparent corruption or conflict between me and God must be an illusion, evidence of nothing except that I am asleep and dreaming of the impossible (1:7–8).

“To know reality is not to see the ego” (W-pII.12.4:1). Yet paradoxically we must see the ego first in order to overlook it. It operates in a hidden fashion, secretly, stealthily. It hides behind all kinds of cover. We must unmask it, see it for what it is, and then overlook it, ignore it. As long as we don't know what our imagined enemy is we will be run by fear. We have to get to the place where we can see clearly, “Oh! It's just the ego, it's just me thinking I'm separate.” Then we can let it go.

When you have at last looked at the ego's foundation without shrinking, you will have also

looked upon ours. (T-11.In.4:2)

Let us look at our ego, then, without shrinking, without being afraid of it, able to see that it is just a “trivial mistake.”

What Is the Ego?

Part 1: W-pII.12.1:1–2

“The ego is idolatry” (1:1). Idolatry is the worship of an idol, a false god. That is what the ego is; the insane attempt to make real an identity that is apart from God, and intended to replace Him in our awareness. The ego is “the sign of limited and separated self, born in a body, doomed to suffer and to end its life in death” (1:1).

Let’s pay attention here. The ego is not some “thing” inside of us, some sort of evil twin, the dark side of our soul. The ego *is* the whole concept of a separated self that is set apart from “other selves.” Isn’t that exactly what we think we are? A distinct soul, born in a body, struggling through this life and sure to end this life in death? Doesn’t that describe what we think we are? In other words, the “me” that I think I am, a thing separate from and different from you, *that* is the ego! Changing our self-concept from ego to spirit doesn’t just mean that this separate self, which was black, becomes white. It means that this separated self is completely replaced by something far more inclusive, in fact, by something all-inclusive. I cease to be “I” in the way I thought I was.

The ego “is the ‘will’ that sees the Will of God as enemy, and takes a form in which it is denied” (1:2). If what I think of as “I” is to be separate and independent, it cannot be united with the Will of God. The ego *must* see God’s Will as enemy because, to the ego, God is “other,” something different from and separate from itself. Since God is a very powerful “other,” His Will represents a threat, a challenge to the ego’s “will.” Therefore, the form the “will” of the ego takes will always be some form of denial of God’s Will. For instance, you know that a child is beginning to develop a psychological ego when he or she begins to say “no” every time you say “yes” (otherwise known as “the terrible two’s”). The ego is a big “no” to God and His Will.

This ego is precisely what we are *not*. “You are not an ego” (T-14.X.5:5). As we look at what the ego is (or appears to be), let us not be discouraged or depressed by the picture. What we are looking at is not what we are; in fact, it is what we are *not*. This imagined self is the source of all our guilt—and it is unreal, and does not exist.