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## Chapter 3.

### THE INNOCENT PERCEPTION

#### I. Atonement without Sacrifice

T-3.I.1. A further point must be perfectly clear before any residual fear still associated with miracles can disappear. 2 The crucifixion did not establish the Atonement; the resurrection did. 3 Many sincere Christians have misunderstood this. 4 No one who is free of the belief in scarcity could possibly make this mistake. 5 If the crucifixion is seen from an upside-down point of view, it does appear as if God permitted and even encouraged one of His Sons to suffer because he was good. 6 This particularly unfortunate interpretation, which arose out of projection, has led many people to be bitterly afraid of God. 7 Such anti-religious concepts enter into many religions. 8 Yet the real Christian should pause and ask, "How could this be?" 9 Is it likely that God Himself would be capable of the kind of thinking which His Own words have clearly stated is unworthy of His Son?

T-3.I.2. The best defense, as always, is not to attack another's position, but rather to protect the truth. 2 It is unwise to accept any concept if you have to invert a whole frame of reference in order to justify it. 3 This procedure is painful in its minor applications and genuinely tragic on a wider scale. 4 Persecution frequently results in an attempt to "justify" the terrible misperception that God Himself persecuted His Own Son on behalf of salvation. 5 The very words are meaningless. 6 It has been particularly difficult to overcome this because, although the error itself is no harder to correct than any other, many have been unwilling to give it up in view of its prominent value as a defense. 7 In milder forms a parent says, "This hurts me more than it hurts you," and feels exonerated in beating a child. 8 Can you believe our Father really thinks this way? 9 It is so essential that all such thinking be dispelled that we must be sure that nothing of this kind remains in your mind. 10 I was not "punished" because *you* were bad. 11 The wholly benign lesson the Atonement teaches is lost if it is tainted with this kind of distortion in any form.

T-3.I.3. The statement "Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord" is a misperception by which one assigns his own "evil" past to God. 6 2 The "evil" past has nothing to do with God. 3 He did not create it and He does not maintain it. 4 God does not believe in retribution. 5 His Mind does not create that way. 6 He does not hold your "evil" deeds against you. 7 Is it likely that He would hold them against me? 8 Be very sure that you recognize how utterly impossible this assumption is, and how entirely it arises from projection. 9 This kind of error is responsible for a host of related errors, including the belief that God rejected Adam and forced him out of the Garden of Eden. 10 It is also

why you may believe from time to time that I am misdirecting you. 11 I have made every effort to use words that are almost impossible to distort, but it is always possible to twist symbols around if you wish.

T-3.I.4. Sacrifice is a notion totally unknown to God. 2 It arises solely from fear, and frightened people can be vicious. 3 Sacrificing in any way is a violation of my injunction that you should be merciful even as your Father in Heaven is merciful. 4 It has been hard for many Christians to realize that this applies to themselves. 5 Good teachers never terrorize their students. 6 To terrorize is to attack, and this results in rejection of what the teacher offers. 7 The result is learning failure.

T-3.I.5. I have been correctly referred to as "the lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world," but those who represent the lamb as blood-stained do not understand the meaning of the symbol. 2 Correctly understood, it is a very simple symbol that speaks of my innocence. 3 The lion and the lamb lying down together symbolize that strength and innocence are not in conflict, but naturally live in peace. 4 "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God" is another way of saying the same thing. 5 A pure mind knows the truth and this is its strength. 6 It does not confuse destruction with innocence because it associates innocence with strength, not with weakness.

T-3.I.6. Innocence is incapable of sacrificing anything, because the innocent mind has everything and strives only to protect its wholeness. 2 It cannot project. 3 It can only honor other minds, because honor is the natural greeting of the truly loved to others who are like them. 4 The lamb "taketh away the sins of the world" in the sense that the state of innocence, or grace, is one in which the meaning of the Atonement is perfectly apparent. 5 The Atonement is entirely unambiguous. 6 It is perfectly clear because it exists in light. 7 Only the attempts to shroud it in darkness have made it inaccessible to those who do not choose to see. 7

T-3.I.7. The Atonement itself radiates nothing but truth. 2 It therefore epitomizes harmlessness and sheds only blessing. 3 It could not do this if it arose from anything but perfect innocence. 4 Innocence is wisdom because it is unaware of evil, and evil does not exist. 5 It is, however, perfectly aware of everything that is true. 6 The resurrection demonstrated that nothing can destroy truth. 7 Good can withstand any form of evil, as light abolishes forms of darkness. 8 The Atonement is therefore the perfect lesson. 9 It is the final demonstration that all the other lessons I taught are true. 10 If you can accept this one generalization now, there will be no need to learn from many smaller lessons. 11 You are released from all errors if you believe this.

T-3.I.8. The innocence of God is the true state of the mind of His Son. 2 In this state your mind knows God, for God is not symbolic; He is Fact. 3 Knowing His Son as he is, you realize that the Atonement, not sacrifice, is the only appropriate gift for God's altar, where nothing except perfection belongs. 4 The understanding of the innocent is truth. 5 That is why their altars are truly radiant.

## II. Miracles as True Perception

T-3.II.1. I have stated that the basic concepts referred to in this course are not matters of degree. 2 Certain fundamental concepts cannot be understood in terms of opposites. 3 It is impossible to conceive of light and darkness or everything and nothing as joint possibilities. 4 They are all true or all false. 5 It is essential that you realize your thinking will be erratic until a firm commitment to one or the other is made. 6 A firm commitment to darkness or nothingness, however, is impossible.

7 No one has ever lived who has not experienced *some* light and *some* thing. 8 No one, therefore, is able to deny truth totally, even if he thinks he can.

T-3.II.2. Innocence is not a partial attribute. 2 It is not real *until* it is total. 3 The partly innocent are apt to be quite foolish at times. 4 It is not until their innocence becomes a viewpoint with universal application that it becomes wisdom. 5 Innocent or true perception means that you never misperceive and always see truly. 6 More simply, it means that you never see what does not exist, and always see what does.

T-3.II.3. When you lack confidence in what someone will do, you are attesting to your belief that he is not in his right mind. 2 This is hardly a miracle-based frame of reference. 8 3 It also has the disastrous effect of denying the power of the miracle. 4 The miracle perceives everything as it is. 5 If nothing but the truth exists, right-minded seeing cannot see anything but perfection. 6 I have said that only what God creates or what you create with the same Will has any real existence. 7 This, then, is all the innocent can see. 8 They do not suffer from distorted perception.

T-3.II.4. You are afraid of God's Will because you have used your own mind, which He created in the likeness of His Own, to miscreate. 2 The mind can miscreate only when it believes it is not free. 3 An "imprisoned" mind is not free because it is possessed, or held back, by itself. 4 It is therefore limited, and the will is not free to assert itself. 5 To be one is to be of one mind or will. 6 When the Will of the Sonship and the Father are One, their perfect accord is Heaven.

T-3.II.5. Nothing can prevail against a Son of God who commends his spirit into the Hands of his Father. 2 By doing this the mind awakens from its sleep and remembers its Creator. 3 All sense of separation disappears. 4 The Son of God is part of the Holy Trinity, but the Trinity Itself is One. 5 There is no confusion within Its Levels, because They are of one Mind and one Will. 6 This single purpose creates perfect integration and establishes the peace of God. 7 Yet this vision can be perceived only by the truly innocent. 8 Because their hearts are pure, the innocent defend true perception instead of defending themselves against it. 9 Understanding the lesson of the Atonement they are without the wish to attack, and therefore they see truly. 10 This is what the Bible means when it says, "When he shall appear (or be perceived) we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

T-3.II.6. The way to correct distortions is to withdraw your faith in them and invest it only in what is true. 2 You cannot make untruth true. 3 If you are willing to accept what is true in everything you perceive, you let it be true for you. 4 Truth overcomes all error, and those who live in error and emptiness can never find lasting solace. 5 If you perceive truly you are cancelling out misperceptions in yourself and in others simultaneously. 6 Because you see them as they are, you offer them your acceptance of their truth so they can accept it for themselves. 7 This is the healing that the miracle induces. 9

### III. Perception versus Knowledge

T-3.III.1. We have been emphasizing perception, and have said very little about knowledge as yet. 2 This is because perception must be straightened out before you can know anything. 3 To know is to be certain. 4 Uncertainty means that you do not know. 5 Knowledge is power because it is certain, and certainty is strength. 6 Perception is temporary. 7 As an attribute of the belief in space and time, it is subject to either fear or love. 8 Misperceptions produce fear and true perceptions foster love, but

neither brings certainty because all perception varies. 9 That is why it is not knowledge. 10 True perception is the basis for knowledge, but knowing is the affirmation of truth and beyond all perceptions.

T-3.III.2. All your difficulties stem from the fact that you do not recognize yourself, your brother or God. 2 To recognize means to "know again," implying that you knew before. 3 You can see in many ways because perception involves interpretation, and this means that it is not whole or consistent. 4 The miracle, being a way of perceiving, is not knowledge. 5 It is the right answer to a question, but you do not question when you know. 6 Questioning illusions is the first step in undoing them. 7 The miracle, or the right answer, corrects them. 8 Since perceptions change, their dependence on time is obvious. 9 How you perceive at any given time determines what you do, and actions must occur in time. 10 Knowledge is timeless, because certainty is not questionable. 11 You know when you have ceased to ask questions.

T-3.III.3. The questioning mind perceives itself in time, and therefore looks for future answers. 2 The closed mind believes the future and the present will be the same. 3 This establishes a seemingly stable state that is usually an attempt to counteract an underlying fear that the future will be worse than the present. 4 This fear inhibits the tendency to question at all.

T-3.III.4. True vision is the natural perception of spiritual sight, but it is still a correction rather than a fact. 2 Spiritual sight is symbolic, and therefore not a device for knowing. 3 It is, however, a means of right perception, which brings it into the proper domain of the miracle. 4 A "vision of God" would be a miracle rather than a revelation. 5 The fact that perception is involved at all removes the experience from the realm of knowledge. 6 That is why visions, however holy, do not last.

T-3.III.5. The Bible tells you to know yourself, or to be certain. 2 Certainty is always of God. 0 3 When you love someone you have perceived him as he is, and this makes it possible for you to know him. 4 Until you first perceive him as he is you cannot know him. 5 While you ask questions about him you are clearly implying that you do not know God. 6 Certainty does not require action. 7 When you say you are acting on the basis of knowledge, you are really confusing knowledge with perception. 8 Knowledge provides the strength for creative thinking, but not for right doing. 9 Perception, miracles and doing are closely related. 10 Knowledge is the result of revelation and induces only thought. 11 Even in its most spiritualized form perception involves the body. 12 Knowledge comes from the altar within and is timeless because it is certain. 13 To perceive the truth is not the same as to know it.

T-3.III.6. Right perception is necessary before God can communicate directly to His altars, which He established in His Sons. 2 There He can communicate His certainty, and His knowledge will bring peace without question. 3 God is not a stranger to His Sons, and His Sons are not strangers to each other. 4 Knowledge preceded both perception and time, and will ultimately replace them. 5 That is the real meaning of "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," and "Before Abraham was I am." 6 Perception can and must be stabilized, but knowledge *is* stable. 7 "Fear God and keep His commandments" becomes "Know God and accept His certainty."

T-3.III.7. If you attack error in another, you will hurt yourself. 2 You cannot know your brother when you attack him. 3 Attack is always made upon a stranger. 4 You are making him a stranger by misperceiving him, and so you cannot know him. 5 It is because you have made him a stranger that

you are afraid of him. 6 Perceive him correctly so that you can know him. 7 There are no strangers in God's creation. 8 To create as He created you can create only what you know, and therefore accept as yours. 9 God knows His children with perfect certainty. 10 He created them by knowing them. 11 He recognizes them perfectly. 12 When they do not recognize each other, they do not recognize Him.

#### IV. Error and the Ego

T-3.IV.1. The abilities you now possess are only shadows of your real strength. 2 All of your present functions are divided and open to question and doubt. 3 This is because you are not certain how you will use them, and are therefore incapable of knowledge. 1 4 You are also incapable of knowledge because you can still perceive lovelessly. 5 Perception did not exist until the separation introduced degrees, aspects and intervals. 6 Spirit has no levels, and all conflict arises from the concept of levels. 7 Only the Levels of the Trinity are capable of unity. 8 The levels created by the separation cannot but conflict. 9 This is because they are meaningless to each other.

T-3.IV.2. Consciousness, the level of perception, was the first split introduced into the mind after the separation, making the mind a perceiver rather than a creator. 2 Consciousness is correctly identified as the domain of the ego. 3 The ego is a wrong-minded attempt to perceive yourself as you wish to be, rather than as you are. 4 Yet you can know yourself only as you are, because that is all you can be sure of. 5 Everything else *is* open to question.

T-3.IV.3. The ego is the questioning aspect of the post-separation self, which was made rather than created. 2 It is capable of asking questions but not of perceiving meaningful answers, because these would involve knowledge and cannot be perceived. 3 The mind is therefore confused, because only One-mindedness can be without confusion. 4 A separated or divided mind *must* be confused. 5 It is necessarily uncertain about what it is. 6 It has to be in conflict because it is out of accord with itself. 7 This makes its aspects strangers to each other, and this is the essence of the fear-prone condition, in which attack is always possible. 8 You have every reason to feel afraid as you perceive yourself. 9 This is why you cannot escape from fear until you realize that you did not and could not create yourself. 10 You can never make your misperceptions true, and your creation is beyond your own error. 11 That is why you must eventually choose to heal the separation.

T-3.IV.4. Right-mindedness is not to be confused with the knowing mind, because it is applicable only to right perception. 2 You can be right-minded or wrong-minded, and even this is subject to degrees, clearly demonstrating that knowledge is not involved. 3 The term "right-mindedness" is properly used as the correction for "wrong-mindedness," and applies to the state of mind that induces accurate perception. 4 It is miracle-minded because it heals misperception, and this is indeed a miracle in view of how you perceive yourself.

T-3.IV.5. Perception always involves some misuse of mind, because it brings the mind into areas of uncertainty. 2 The mind is very active. 3 When it chooses to be separated it chooses to perceive. 4 Until then it wills only to know. 5 Afterwards it can only choose ambiguously, and the only way out of ambiguity is clear perception. 6 The mind returns to its proper function only when it wills to know. 7 This places it in the service of spirit, where perception is changed. 8 The mind chooses to divide itself when it chooses to make its own levels. 9 But it could not entirely separate itself from spirit, because it is from spirit that it derives its whole power to make or create. 10 Even in miscreation the mind is affirming its Source, or it would merely cease to be. 11 This is impossible,

because the mind belongs to spirit which God created and which is therefore eternal.

T-3.IV.6. The ability to perceive made the body possible, because you must perceive *something* and *with* something. 2 That is why perception involves an exchange or translation, which knowledge does not need. 3 The interpretative function of perception, a distorted form of creation, then permits you to interpret the body as yourself in an attempt to escape from the conflict you have induced. 4 Spirit, which knows, could not be reconciled with this loss of power, because it is incapable of darkness. 5 This makes spirit almost inaccessible to the mind and entirely inaccessible to the body. 6 Thereafter, spirit is perceived as a threat, because light abolishes darkness merely by showing you it is not there. 7 Truth will always overcome error in this way. 8 This cannot be an active process of correction because, as I have already emphasized, knowledge does not do anything. 9 It can be perceived as an attacker, but it cannot attack. 10 What you perceive as its attack is your own vague recognition that knowledge can always be remembered, never having been destroyed.

T-3.IV.7. God and His creations remain in surety, and therefore know that no miscreation exists. 2 Truth cannot deal with errors that you want. 3 I was a man who remembered spirit and its knowledge. 4 As a man I did not attempt to counteract error with knowledge, but to correct error from the bottom up. 5 I demonstrated both the powerlessness of the body and the power of the mind. 6 By uniting my will with that of my Creator, I naturally remembered spirit and its real purpose. 7 I cannot unite your will with God's for you, but I can erase all misperceptions from your mind if you will bring it under my guidance. 8 Only your misperceptions stand in your way. 9 Without them your choice is certain. 10 Sane perception induces sane choosing. 11 I cannot choose for you, but I can help you make your own right choice. 12 "Many are called but few are chosen" should be, "All are called but few choose to listen." 13 Therefore, they do not choose right. 14 The "chosen ones" are merely those who choose right sooner. 15 Right minds can do this now, and they will find rest unto their souls. 16 God knows you only in peace, and this *is* your reality.

## V. Beyond Perception

T-3.V.1. I have said that the abilities you possess are only shadows of your real strength, and that perception, which is inherently judgmental, was introduced only after the separation. 2 No one has been sure of anything since. 3 I have also made it clear that the resurrection was the means for the return to knowledge, which was accomplished by the union of my will with the Father's. 4 We can now establish a distinction that will clarify some of our subsequent statements.

T-3.V.2. Since the separation, the words "create" and "make" have become confused. 2 When you make something, you do so out of a specific sense of lack or need. 3 Anything made for a specific purpose has no true generalizability. 4 When you make something to fill a perceived lack, you are tacitly implying that you believe in separation. 5 The ego has invented many ingenious thought systems for this purpose. 6 None of them is creative. 7 Inventiveness is wasted effort even in its most ingenious form. 8 The highly specific nature of invention is not worthy of the abstract creativity of God's creations.

T-3.V.3. Knowing, as we have already observed, does not lead to doing. 2 The confusion between your real creation and what you have made of yourself is so profound that it has become literally impossible for you to know anything. 3 Knowledge is always stable, and it is quite evident that you are not. 4 Nevertheless, you are perfectly stable as God created you. 5 In this sense, when your behavior is unstable, you are disagreeing with God's idea of your creation. 6 You can do this if you

choose, but you would hardly want to do it if you were in your right mind.

T-3.V.4. The fundamental question you continually ask yourself cannot properly be directed to yourself at all. 2 You keep asking what it is you are. 3 This implies that the answer is not only one you know, but is also one that is up to you to supply. 4 Yet you cannot perceive yourself correctly. 4 5 You have no image to be perceived. 6 The word "image" is always perception-related, and not a part of knowledge. 7 Images are symbolic and stand for something else. 8 The idea of "changing your image" recognizes the power of perception, but also implies that there is nothing stable to know.

T-3.V.5. Knowing is not open to interpretation. 2 You may try to "interpret" meaning, but this is always open to error because it refers to the *perception* of meaning. 3 Such incongruities are the result of attempts to regard yourself as separated and unseparated at the same time. 4 It is impossible to make so fundamental a confusion without increasing your overall confusion still further. 5 Your mind may have become very ingenious, but as always happens when method and content are separated, it is utilized in a futile attempt to escape from an inescapable impasse. 6 Ingenuity is totally divorced from knowledge, because knowledge does not require ingenuity. 7 Ingenious thinking is *not* the truth that shall set you free, but you are free of the need to engage in it when you are willing to let it go.

T-3.V.6. Prayer is a way of asking for something. 2 It is the medium of miracles. 3 But the only meaningful prayer is for forgiveness, because those who have been forgiven have everything. 4 Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense becomes utterly meaningless. 5 The prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that you may be able to recognize what you already have. 6 In electing perception instead of knowledge, you placed yourself in a position where you could resemble your Father only by perceiving miraculously. 7 You have lost the knowledge that you yourself are a miracle of God. 8 Creation is your Source and your only real function.

T-3.V.7. The statement "God created man in his own image and likeness" needs reinterpretation. 2 "Image" can be understood as "thought," and "likeness" as "of a like quality." 3 God did create spirit in His Own Thought and of a quality like to His Own. 4 There *is* nothing else. 5 Perception, on the other hand, is impossible without a belief in "more" and "less." 6 At every level it involves selectivity. 7 Perception is a continual process of accepting and rejecting, organizing and reorganizing, shifting and changing. 8 Evaluation is an essential part of perception, because judgments are necessary in order to select.

T-3.V.8. What happens to perceptions if there are no judgments and nothing but perfect equality? 2 Perception becomes impossible 5. 3 Truth can only be known. 4 All of it is equally true, and knowing any part of it is to know all of it. 5 Only perception involves partial awareness. 6 Knowledge transcends the laws governing perception, because partial knowledge is impossible. 7 It is all one and has no separate parts. 8 You who are really one with it need but know yourself and your knowledge is complete. 9 To know God's miracle is to know Him.

T-3.V.9. Forgiveness is the healing of the perception of separation. 2 Correct perception of your brother is necessary, because minds have chosen to see themselves as separate. 3 Spirit knows God completely. 4 That is its miraculous power. 5 The fact that each one has this power completely is a condition entirely alien to the world's thinking. 6 The world believes that if anyone has everything, there is nothing left. 7 But God's miracles are as total as His Thoughts because they *are* His

## Thoughts.

T-3.V.10. As long as perception lasts prayer has a place. 2 Since perception rests on lack, those who perceive have not totally accepted the Atonement and given themselves over to truth. 3 Perception is based on a separated state, so that anyone who perceives at all needs healing. 4 Communion, not prayer, is the natural state of those who know. 5 God and His miracle are inseparable. 6 How beautiful indeed are the Thoughts of God who live in His light! 7 Your worth is beyond perception because it is beyond doubt. 8 Do not perceive yourself in different lights. 9 Know yourself in the One Light where the miracle that is you is perfectly clear.

## VI. Judgment and the Authority Problem

T-3.VI.1. We have already discussed the Last Judgment, but in insufficient detail. 2 After the Last Judgment there will be no more. 3 Judgment is symbolic because beyond perception there is no judgment. 4 When the Bible says "Judge not that ye be not judged," it means that if you judge the reality of others you will be unable to avoid judging your own.

T-3.VI.2. The choice to judge rather than to know is the cause of the loss of peace. 2 Judgment is the process on which perception but not knowledge rests. 3 I have discussed this before in terms of the selectivity of perception, pointing out that evaluation is its obvious prerequisite. 4 Judgment always involves rejection. 5 It never emphasizes only the positive aspects of what is judged, whether in you or in others. 6 What has been perceived and rejected, or judged and found wanting, remains in your mind because it has been perceived. 7 One of the illusions from which you suffer is the belief that what you judged against has no effect. 8 This cannot be true unless you also believe that what you judged against does not exist. 9 You evidently do not believe this, or you would not have judged against it. 10 In the end it does not matter whether your judgment is right or wrong. 11 Either way you are placing your belief in the unreal. 12 This cannot be avoided in any type of judgment, because it implies the belief that reality is yours to select *from*.

T-3.VI.3. You have no idea of the tremendous release and deep peace that comes from meeting yourself and your brothers totally without judgment. 2 When you recognize what you are and what your brothers are, you will realize that judging them in any way is without meaning. 3 In fact, their meaning is lost to you precisely *because* you are judging them. 4 All uncertainty comes from the belief that you are under the coercion of judgment. 5 You do not need judgment to organize your life, and you certainly do not need it to organize yourself. 6 In the presence of knowledge all judgment is automatically suspended, and this is the process that enables recognition to replace perception.

T-3.VI.4. You are very fearful of everything you have perceived but have refused to accept. 2 You believe that, because you have refused to accept it, you have lost control over it. 3 This is why you see it in nightmares, or in pleasant disguises in what seem to be your happier dreams. 4 Nothing that you have refused to accept can be brought into awareness. 5 It is not dangerous in itself, but you have made it seem dangerous to you.

T-3.VI.5. When you feel tired, it is because you have judged yourself as capable of being tired. 2 When you laugh at someone, it is because you have judged him as unworthy. 3 When you laugh at yourself you must laugh at others, if only because you cannot tolerate the idea of being more unworthy than they are. 4 All this makes you feel tired because it is essentially disheartening. 5 You

are not really capable of being tired, but you are very capable of wearying yourself. 6 The strain of constant judgment is virtually intolerable. 7 It is curious that an ability so debilitating would be so deeply cherished. 8 Yet if you wish to be the author of reality, you will insist on holding on to judgment. 9 You will also regard judgment with fear, believing that it will someday be used against you. 7 This belief can exist only to the extent that you believe in the efficacy of judgment as a weapon of defense for your own authority.

T-3.VI.6. God offers only mercy. 2 Your words should reflect only mercy, because that is what you have received and that is what you should give. 3 Justice is a temporary expedient, or an attempt to teach you the meaning of mercy. 4 It is judgmental only because you are capable of injustice.

T-3.VI.7. I have spoken of different symptoms, and at that level there is almost endless variation. 2 There is, however, only one cause for all of them: the authority problem. 3 This *is* "the root of all evil." 4 Every symptom the ego makes involves a contradiction in terms, because the mind is split between the ego and the Holy Spirit, so that whatever the ego makes is incomplete and contradictory. 5 This untenable position is the result of the authority problem which, because it accepts the one inconceivable thought as its premise, can produce only ideas that are inconceivable.

T-3.VI.8. The issue of authority is really a question of authorship. 2 When you have an authority problem, it is always because you believe you are the author of yourself and project your delusion onto others. 3 You then perceive the situation as one in which others are literally fighting you for your authorship. 4 This is the fundamental error of all those who believe they have usurped the power of God. 5 This belief is very frightening to them, but hardly troubles God. 6 He is, however, eager to undo it, not to punish His children, but only because He knows that it makes them unhappy. 7 God's creations are given their true Authorship, but you prefer to be anonymous when you choose to separate yourself from your Author. 8 Being uncertain of your true Authorship, you believe that your creation was anonymous. 9 This leaves you in a position where it sounds meaningful to believe that you created yourself. 10 The dispute over authorship has left such uncertainty in your mind that it may even doubt whether you really exist at all.

T-3.VI.9. Only those who give over all desire to reject can know that their own rejection is impossible. 2 You have not usurped the power of God, but you *have* lost it. 3 Fortunately, to lose something does not mean that it has gone. 4 It merely means that you do not remember where it is. 5 Its existence does not depend on your ability to identify it, or even to place it. 6 It is possible to look on reality without judgment and merely know that it is there. 8

T-3.VI.10. Peace is a natural heritage of spirit. 2 Everyone is free to refuse to accept his inheritance, but he is not free to establish what his inheritance is. 3 The problem everyone must decide is the fundamental question of authorship. 4 All fear comes ultimately, and sometimes by way of very devious routes, from the denial of Authorship. 5 The offense is never to God, but only to those who deny Him. 6 To deny His Authorship is to deny yourself the reason for your peace, so that you see yourself only in segments. 7 This strange perception *is* the authority problem.

T-3.VI.11. There is no one who does not feel that he is imprisoned in some way. 2 If this is the result of his own free will he must regard his will as not free, or the circular reasoning in this position would be quite apparent. 3 Free will must lead to freedom. 4 Judgment always imprisons because it separates segments of reality by the unstable scales of desire. 5 Wishes are not facts. 6 To wish is to imply that willing is not sufficient. 7 Yet no one in his right mind believes that what is

wished is as real as what is willed. 8 Instead of "Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven" say, "*Will* ye first the Kingdom of Heaven," and you have said, "I know what I am and I accept my own inheritance."

## VII. Creating versus the Self-Image

T-3.VII.1. Every system of thought must have a starting point. 2 It begins with either a making or a creating, a difference we have already discussed. 3 Their resemblance lies in their power as foundations. 4 Their difference lies in what rests upon them. 5 Both are cornerstones for systems of belief by which one lives. 6 It is a mistake to believe that a thought system based on lies is weak. 7 Nothing made by a child of God is without power. 8 It is essential to realize this, because otherwise you will be unable to escape from the prison you have made.

T-3.VII.2. You cannot resolve the authority problem by depreciating the power of your mind. 2 To do so is to deceive yourself, and this will hurt you because you really understand the strength of the mind. 3 You also realize that you cannot weaken it, any more than you can weaken God. 4 The "devil" is a frightening concept because he seems to be extremely powerful and extremely active. 5 He is perceived as a force in combat with God, battling Him for possession of His creations. 6 The devil deceives by lies, and builds kingdoms in which everything is in direct opposition to God. 9 7 Yet he attracts men rather than repels them, and they are willing to "sell" him their souls in return for gifts of no real worth. 8 This makes absolutely no sense.

T-3.VII.3. We have discussed the fall or separation before, but its meaning must be clearly understood. 2 The separation is a system of thought real enough in time, though not in eternity. 3 All beliefs are real to the believer. 4 The fruit of only one tree was "forbidden" in the symbolic garden. 5 But God could not have forbidden it, or it could not have *been* eaten. 6 If God knows His children, and I assure you that He does, would He have put them in a position where their own destruction was possible? 7 The "forbidden tree" was named the "tree of knowledge." 8 Yet God created knowledge and gave it freely to His creations. 9 The symbolism here has been given many interpretations, but you may be sure that any interpretation that sees either God or His creations as capable of destroying Their Own purpose is in error.

T-3.VII.4. Eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge is a symbolic expression for usurping the ability for self-creating. 2 This is the only sense in which God and His creations are not co-creators. 3 The belief that they are is implicit in the "self-concept," or the tendency of the self to make an image of itself. 4 Images are perceived, not known. 5 Knowledge cannot deceive, but perception can. 6 You can perceive yourself as self-creating, but you cannot do more than believe it. 7 You cannot make it true. 8 And, as I said before, when you finally perceive correctly you can only be glad that you cannot. 9 Until then, however, the belief that you can is the foundation stone in your thought system, and all your defenses are used to attack ideas that might bring it to light. 10 You still believe you are an image of your own making. 11 Your mind is split with the Holy Spirit on this point, and there is no resolution while you believe the one thing that is literally inconceivable. 12 That is why you cannot create and are filled with fear about what you make.

T-3.VII.5. The mind can make the belief in separation very real and very fearful, and this belief *is* the "devil." 2 It is powerful, active, destructive and clearly in opposition to God, because it literally denies His Fatherhood. 3 Look at your life and see what the devil has made. 4 But realize that this making will surely dissolve in the light of truth, because its foundation is a lie. 5 Your creation by

God is the only Foundation that cannot be shaken, because the light is in it. 0 6 Your starting point is truth, and you must return to your Beginning. 7 Much has been seen since then, but nothing has really happened. 8 Your Self is still in peace, even though your mind is in conflict. 9 You have not yet gone back far enough, and that is why you become so fearful. 10 As you approach the Beginning, you feel the fear of the destruction of your thought system upon you as if it were the fear of death. 11 There is no death, but there *is* a belief in death.

T-3.VII.6. The branch that bears no fruit will be cut off and will wither away. 2 Be glad! 3 The light will shine from the true Foundation of life, and your own thought system will stand corrected. 4 It cannot stand otherwise. 5 You who fear salvation are choosing death. 6 Life and death, light and darkness, knowledge and perception, are irreconcilable. 7 To believe that they can be reconciled is to believe that God and His Son can *not*. 8 Only the oneness of knowledge is free of conflict. 9 Your Kingdom is not of this world because it was given you from beyond this world. 10 Only in this world is the idea of an authority problem meaningful. 11 The world is not left by death but by truth, and truth can be known by all those for whom the Kingdom was created, and for whom it waits. 1

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