

Chapter 3 - RETRAINING THE MIND

All learning involves attention and study at some level. This course is a MIND-TRAINING course. Good students assign study periods for themselves. However, since this obvious step has not occurred to you, and since we are cooperating in this, I will make the obvious assignment now.

Bill is better at understanding the need to study the notes than you are, but neither of you realizes that many of the problems you keep being faced with may ALREADY have been solved there. YOU do not think of the notes in this way at all. Bill DOES from time to time, but he generally says, "Its probably in the notes," and DOESN'T look it up. He believes that, although he reads them over, they cannot REALLY help him until they are complete.

First of all, he cannot be sure of this unless he tries.

Second, they would BE completed if both of you so willed.

You vaguely know that the course is intended for some sort of preparation. I can only say that you are not prepared.

I was amused when you reminded Bill that he, too, was being prepared for something quite unexpected, and he said, he was not at all curious about what it was. This disinterest is very characteristic of him when he is afraid. Interest and fear do NOT go together, as your respective behavior clearly shows.

Mental retardation is a defense which, like the others EXCEPT the Atonement, can be used on behalf of error or truth, as elected. When it occurs in REALITY, it is a temporary device, agreed on beforehand, to check the miscreative abilities of strong but misdirected wills.

It is necessary that this appropriate use of the defense BE considered real, because otherwise it cannot serve. The lesson involves not only the individual himself, but also his parents, siblings, and all of those who come in close relation with him. The VALUE of the experience depends on the need of each particular learner. The person himself is a POOR learner, by definition, only as a step toward changing from a bad to a good one.

Mental retardation can also be used as a maladaptive defense, if the wrong (or attack) side is employed. This produces the "pseudo-retardation syndrome" which is justly classified as a psychiatric (or disturbed-level) symptom. Both of you do this all the time. Bill acts as if he does not understand even his OWN special language, let alone mine, and you cannot read at all.

This represents a joint attack on both yourselves AND me, because it renders YOUR mind weak, and mine incompetent. Remember, this puts you in a truly fearful position. If you cannot understand either your own mind OR mine, you do not KNOW what is really willed. It is thus IMPOSSIBLE to avoid conflict, as defined before, because even if you act ACCORDING TO will, you wouldn't know it.

The next part of this course rests too heavily on the earlier part not to REQUIRE its study. Without this, you will become much too fearful when the unexpected DOES

occur to make constructive use of it. However, as you study the notes, you will see some of the obvious implications, unless you still persist in misusing the defense of mental retardation. Please remember that its constructive use, described above, is hardly a REAL part of your own REAL proper equipment. It is a PARTICULARLY inappropriate defense as you use it, and I can only urge you to avoid it.

3:2 The reason why a solid foundation is necessary at this point is because of the highly likely confusion of "fearful" and "awesome," which most people do make. You will remember that we said once before that awe is inappropriate in connection with the Sons of God, because you should not experience awe in the presence of your own equals. But it WAS emphasized that awe IS a proper reaction of the Soul in the presence of its Creator. So far, this course has had only indirect recourse to God, and rarely even refers to Him directly. I have repeatedly emphasized that awe is not appropriate in connection with me, BECAUSE of our inherent equality. I have been careful to clarify my own role in the Atonement, without either over or understating it. I have tried to do exactly the same things in connection with yours.

3 The next step, however, DOES involve the direct approach to God Himself. It would be most unwise to start on this step at all without very careful preparation, or awe will surely be confused with fear, and the experience will be more traumatic than beatific. Healing is of God in the end. The means are carefully explained in the notes. Revelation has occasionally SHOWN you the end, but to reach it the means are needed.

(The following Introduction dictated by Helen without notes.)

The following is the only detailed description which need be written down as to how error interferes with preparation. The events specifically referred to here could be any events, nor does their particular influence matter. It is the process which is to be noted here, and not its results. The kind of beliefs, and the fallacious premises involved in misthought are as well exemplified here as elsewhere. There is nothing of special interest about the events described below, EXCEPT their typical nature. If this is a true course in mind-training, then the whole value of this section rests ONLY in showing you what NOT to do. The more constructive emphasis is, of course, on the positive approach. Mind-watching would have prevented any of this from occurring, and will do so any time you permit it to.

(Following is from notes)

Tell Bill that the reason why he was so strained yesterday is because he allowed himself a number of fear-producing attitudes. They were fleeting enough to be more will-of-the-wisps than serious will-errors, but unless he watches this kind of thing, he WILL find the notes fearful, and, knowing him well, will mis-distantiate. His unprovoked irritation was unpardonable EXCEPT by himself, and he did not choose to pardon it. YOU did, but I am afraid you were under some strain in doing so. This was unfortunate, and weakened your own ability to behave healingly toward Bill at the time, and later also toward Louis, both of whom DID act stupidly. But one stupidity at a time is usually enough. You are getting too close to the misuse of mental retardation when stupidity sets in all around.

Bill, having already weakened himself, was very un-miracle-minded, first by not asking Dora if she wanted a lift in the cab, which was going her way. Even if she didn't want it, she would have been able to use the thought well. There is probably no human error that is more fear-provoking (in the will/behavior conflict sense) than

countering any form of error with error. The result can be highly inflammable. By reacting to Dora's stupidity with his own, all of the elements which are virtually certain to engender fear have been provided.

Bill should note that this is one of the few times that he had to wait for a cab. He thought he took care of it by holding the door of a cab which did come for that lady, but he was misguided in this belief. Beliefs are THOUGHTS, and thus come under Christ-guidance, NOT control. Actually, by giving this cab to her, he was very unkind to you. It was quite apparent that you were extremely cold, and also very late. The idea that giving her the cab would atone for his previous errors was singularly out of place, and well calculated to lead to further error. If, instead of attempting to atone on his own, he had asked for guidance, there would have been no difficulty whatever in the cab situation. It was not necessary that anyone wait at all.

Bill's original slight to Dora, because of his own need to get home as he perceived it, stopped him from benefiting from the time-saving device of the miracle. He would have gotten home MUCH quicker if he had taken time to use time properly.

YOU were still suffering from strain (see above), and got quite irritated at the girl who stood next to the door on the side which blocked its opening. Her presence there made it necessary each time the door was opened to hold it for a much longer time than was necessary, and you were angry because this made you cold. Actually, the girl was taking care of the younger child who was standing outside, and both of them were really mentally retarded. If you will remember, the older girl asked you very uncertainly about the bus, and you were well aware at the time of her extreme uncertainty.

It would have been much wiser had you built up her confidence, instead of associating with her stupidity. This reduced your own efficiency, and the only thing that saved you then was that you DID remember, in the cab, to ask me about the notes, instead of assuming that you were necessarily to arrange to meet the next day and go over them. Bill had already become so misguided that it did not occur to him that his own will, (which he justified by the contents of the recent notes - a misuse of truth only seemingly on its own behalf) might be questionable. (You took poor notes yourself here, because you got mad at him on remembering this. While you did try to will right in the cab, you did not quite succeed. The error is showing up now.)

Bill thus placed himself in a condition to experience a fear rather than a love reaction. (Helen notes that she was going to write "an excellent position," but did not do so. Answer: You were right about the misuse of "excellent" here, and please do cross it out. You are STILL angry. An excellent position for miscreation is not a meaningful approach to the problem.)

It was ~~indeed~~ discourteous ("indeed" is not necessary; it was your OWN error here; I am NOT saying this with any harsh overtones at all. I am just trying to create better learning conditions for the study periods. We want as little interference as possible, for VERY good reasons.)

Now, go back to Bill; he WAS discourteous when he told you that HE wanted to keep the original copy of the notes, having decided to have them Xeroxed on his OWN will, and then justifying it by a very slight misinterpretation of what I said about "useful for others." In fact, if he will re-read the actual quote, he will see that it REALLY means "useful for HIM." YOU had interpreted that way, and frankly this was

pretty clear to me at the time. But this sort of thing happens all the time. It should, be noted, however, that the result was not only considerable and totally unnecessary planning on Bill's part, but also a failure to utilize what WAS intended for him as a help for HIMSELF. And before YOU get too self-satisfied, I would remind you that you do it all the time, too.

Bill acted inappropriately toward YOU, by saying that he wanted to be SURE that the original was not lost or dirty. It is noticeable that, having already decided what HE wanted to do, it never occurred to him that it IS possible that HE might lose or dirty them himself, especially as he had not entrusted them to me. This is a form of arrogance that he would be much happier without. He should also note that this would probably not have occurred had he not been ALREADY literally "off the beam." Be SURE to tell him that this pun is to reassure him that I am not angry. If he does not get it, or does not like it, I KNOW it is not VERY good. The reason is that HE put me in a position where I can really give him very little at the moment.

But I want him to know that I am VERY well aware of the exceedingly few time he now makes errors of this kind. He has come a VERY long way in this respect. It seems a shame that he should allow himself even this much discomfort from it.

I suggest to YOU that we pray for him, and / pray for your full cooperation in this. This will correct YOUR errors, and help him react better to the work on the bookcase, which may otherwise lend itself for misuse by misprojection. There would have been no problem at all about the bookcase, and perhaps even no bookcase, if the solution of the storage problem had been left to me. I have promised to guide you OUT of problems, and will certainly not create them for you. But this means that you do not undertake to solve them yourselves. A storage problem is hardly more difficult for me to solve than a space problem, (see comments under special principles for miracle workers.)

You started well in your attempt to pray with me for Bill, but ended badly. This is because you had already made a number of earlier errors. You were wrong to be pleased with Bill F's criticism of Rose, and should not have enjoyed Bill F's description of Zanvil's caricaturing of her. You could have laughed WITH Bill, but NOT AT Rose. Real courtesy NEVER does this. You should know that all God's children are fully worthy of COMPLETE courtesy. You should NEVER join with one at the EXPENSE of another.

When you called Bill about joining you, Gene, and Anne at lunch, YOU should have waited to ask ME. In fact, you should not even have told Anne that you would call. Then you could have asked Bill FIRST if HE would want to come, and called ANNE back. It is true that it was better that he came, but this has nothing to do with the real issue. There are ways of treating others in which ONLY consistent courtesy, even in very little things, is offered. This is a VERY HEALING habit to acquire.

Bill's answer to your call was a clear statement of his own sadly conflicted state. He said, "I don't want to join you, but that's ungracious, so I'll go." Whenever ANY invitation to join others in a gracious way is offered, it should ALWAYS be met with respect, although it need not always be accepted. However, if it is MET ungraciously the resulting feeling may well be one of coercion. This is ALWAYS a split-will reaction.

Bill did not solve this by ACTING graciously. The lunch need not have entailed either mental or physical strain for him, and no "need to escape" should have arisen. This was a regression of the unprofitable kind. Bill will continue to experience this need

from time to time, until he is willing to realize that there is nothing he needs or wants to escape from.

It is very hard to get out of the chain of miscreation which can arise out of even the simplest mis-thought. To borrow one of your own phrases, "This kind of human tragedy is far easier to avert than to undo."

You must both learn not to let this kind of chain reaction START. You will NOT be able to control it once it has started, because everything and everyone will be pulled into the misprojection, and misinterpreted accordingly. NOTHING is lovely to the unloving. This is because they are CREATING ugliness.

You, Helen, were definitely not acting right-mindedly by writing these notes right in front of Jonathan. (Note that you wrote his name as "Jonathan" this time, although previously in these same notes you referred to him as "Louis," intentionally using his real name. Actually, of course, it does not matter what you call him, but NOTE that you FELT FREE at that time to CHOOSE the name YOU preferred to use. This time, you were FORCED to call him "Jonathan" because you were ATTACKING him when you took the notes in front of him, and are now falling back on the magical device of "protecting his name."

(Helen had been considering calling Bill rather ambivalently, and had gotten up to do so, but remembered to ask. The answer was: Call him at 8:30. It would be better if HE called, but he may not decide to do so. If he does not, you should try to get through, and if he had decided NOT to be there, just leave a message that it is not important. This is still a kindly gesture, and the message should be put in a gentle way.) (Bill did call Helen)

Without going into further elaboration, and we could devote many hours to this, lets consider all the time that we had to waste today. AND all the notes that could have been devoted to a better purpose than undoing the waste, and thus creating further waste. There IS a better use for time, too. I would have liked to have spent some time on corrections of the past notes, as an important step before reviewing them. A major point of clarification is necessary in connection with the phrase "replacing hatred (or fear) with love."

(No, Helen, do NOT check this against the prayer that Bill very kindly typed for you on the card. That WAS a gracious offering on his part, and YOU also accepted it with grace at the time. Why should you deprive yourself of the value of the offering by referring this correction first to HIM?)

(These notes did not continue at this time, due to the obvious fact that Helen was still clearly not in her right mind. However, Bill later suggested that "correct" or "correct for" should be used instead of "replace". At the time, he was quite sure about this, and he was perfectly right. The reason why it was essential that HE make this correction was that the word "replace" was his choice originally, and reflected a temporary misunderstanding of his own. It was, however, both courteous and necessary that he change this himself, both as a sign of his own better understanding, and of an avoidance of correction by someone else, which would have been discourteous.)