

The Reinterpretation of Defenses

¹⁸ When you are afraid of ANYTHING, you are acknowledging its power to hurt you. Remember that where your heart is, there is your treasure also. This means that you believe in what you VALUE. If you are AFRAID, you are VALUING WRONG. Human understanding will inevitably value wrong, and by endowing all human thoughts with equal power, will inevitably DESTROY peace. This is why the Bible speaks of "The peace of God which PASSETH (human) understanding." THIS peace is totally incapable of being shaken by human errors of any kind. It denies the ability of anything which is not of God to effect you in any way.

¹⁹ This is the PROPER use of denial. It is not used to HIDE anything, but it IS used to correct error. It brings ALL error into the light, and since error and darkness are the same, it abolishes error automatically. True denial is a very powerful protective device. You can and should deny any belief that error can hurt you. This kind of denial is NOT a concealment device, but a correction device. The "Right Mind" of the mentally healthy DEPENDS on it. You can do ANYTHING I ask. I have asked you to perform miracles, and have made it VERY clear that these are NATURAL, CORRECTIVE, HEALING, and UNIVERSAL. There is nothing good they cannot do. But they cannot be performed in the spirit of doubt. Remember my own question, before you ask yours: "Oh ye of little faith, wherefore didst thou DOUBT?" (Reference to Christ and the apostles walking on water.) You have asked YOURSELVES why you cannot really incorporate my words; (the idea of cannibalism in connection with the Sacrament is a reflection of a distorted view of sharing. I told you before that the word "thirst" in connection with the Spirit was used in the Bible because of the limited understanding of those to whom I spoke. I also told you NOT to use it. The same holds for expressions like "feeding on.") Symbiosis is misunderstood by the mentally ill, who use it that way. But I also told you that you must recognize your total dependence on God, a statement which you did not like.

²⁰ God and the Souls He created ARE symbiotically related. They are COMPLETELY dependent on each other. The creation of the Soul itself has already been perfectly accomplished, but the creation BY Souls has not. God created Souls so He could depend on them BECAUSE He created them perfectly. He gave them His peace so they would not be shaken, and would be unable to be deceived. Whenever you are afraid, you ARE deceived. Your mind is NOT serving your Soul. This literally starves the Soul by denying its daily bread. Remember the poem about the Holy Family which crossed your mind last night:

"Where tricks of words are never said, and mercy is as plain as bread."

The reason why that had such a strong impact on you originally was because you knew what it MEANT.

God offers ONLY mercy. Your own words should ALWAYS reflect only mercy, because that is what you have received, and that is what you should GIVE.

²¹ Justice is a temporary expedient, or an attempt to teach man the meaning of mercy. Its JUDGMENTAL side rises only because man is capable of INJUSTICE, if that is what his mind creates. You are afraid of God's will because you have used your own will, which He created in the likeness of His own, to MISCREATE. What you do NOT realize is that the mind can miscreate only when it is NOT free. An imprisoned mind is not free by definition. It is possessed, or held back, by ITSELF. Its will is therefore limited, and not free to assert itself. The three things that crossed your mind, which was comparatively free at the time, are perfectly relevant:

1. It is alright to remember the past, PROVIDED you also remember that ANYTHING you suffer is because of YOUR OWN ERRORS.
2. In this context, your remark that "after the burning, I swore if I ever saw him again, I would (not) ("Not" was written in later) recognize him. Note, by the way, that you did not put in the "not" until afterwards. That is because your inherent correction-device was working properly at the moment. The result is that you are NOT DENYING ME.
3. The story about Hinda. This was an excellent example of misperception which led to a totally unwarranted fear of a PERSON. (Helen's story refers to a very young child who fell down the stairs when Helen had her arms open in a welcoming gesture the at bottom of the stairs. For years afterwards, Hinda screamed upon seeing Helen.) The mis-step which caused her fall had nothing at all to do with you, just as your own mis-steps have nothing at all to do with me.

²² Denial of error is a very powerful defense of truth. We have slowly been shifting the emphasis from the negative to the positive use of denial. Remember, we have already stated that denial is not a purely negative device; it results in positive miscreation. That is the way the mentally ill DO employ it. But remember a very early thought of your own, "Never underestimate the power of denial." In the service of the "Right Mind", the denial of ERROR frees the mind and re-establishes the freedom of the will. When the will is REALLY free, it CANNOT miscreate, because it recognizes ONLY TRUTH.

²³ Projection arises out of FALSE DENIAL. Not out of its proper use. My own role in the Atonement IS one of true projection, e., I can project to YOU the affirmation of truth. If you project error to me (or to yourself) you are interfering with the process. My use of projection, which can also be yours, is NOT based on faulty denial. But it DOES involve the very powerful use of the denial of error. The miracle worker is one who accepts my kind of denial and projection, unites his own inherent abilities to deny and project with mine, and imposes them back on himself and others. This establishes the total lack of threat anywhere. Together we can then work for the real time of peace, which is Eternal.

I inspired Bob (refer to elevator man who took Helen down from her apartment) to make that remark to you, and it is a pity that you heard only the last part. But you

can still use that. His remark ended with: "Every shut eye is not asleep." Since your own vision is much improved at the moment, we will go on a while.

²⁴ The improper use of defenses is quite widely recognised, but their proper use had not been sufficiently understood yet.

Freud's identification of mechanisms was quite correct, as was his recognition of their creative ability. They can INDEED create man's perception, both of himself and his surroundings. They can distort or correct depending on what you use them for.

But Freud's limitations induced inevitable limits on his own perception. He made two kinds of errors.

The first is that he saw only how the mechanisms worked in the mentally ill.

The second is his own denial of the mechanism of the Atonement.

Let us take up the first, because a clear understanding of the second depends on it.

²⁵ Denial should be directed only to error, and projection should be limited to truth. You should truly give as you have truly received. The Golden Rule can work effectively only on this basis.

²⁶ Intellectualization is a poor word, which stems from the brain-mind confusion. "Right-Mindedness" is better. This device defends the RIGHT MIND, and gives it control over the body. "Intellectualization" implies a split, whereas "Right-Mindedness" involves healing.

²⁷ Withdrawal is properly employed in the service of withdrawing from the desert. It is NOT a device for escape, but for consolidation. There IS only One Mind.

²⁸ Dissociation is quite similar. You should split yourself off from error, but only in defense of integration.

²⁹ Detachment is essentially a weaker form of dissociation. This is one of the major areas of withholding that both you and Bill are engaging in.

³⁰ Flight can be undertaken in whatever direction you choose, but note that the concept itself implies flight FROM something. Flight from error is perfectly appropriate.

³¹ Distantiation is a way of putting distance between yourself and what you SHOULD fly from.

³² Regression is a real effort to return to your own original state. In this sense, it is utilized to RESTORE, not to go back to the less mature.

³³ Sublimation should be associated with the SUBLIME.

³⁴ There are many other so-called "dynamic" concepts which are profound errors due essentially to the misuse of defenses. Among them is the concept of different levels of aspiration, which results from real level confusion. However, the main point to be understood from these notes is that you can defend truth as well as error, and in fact, much better. So far we have concentrated on ends rather than means because unless you regard an end as worth achieving, you will not devote yourself to the means by which it can BE achieved. Your own question enabled me to shift the emphasis from end to means. (Question asked was "how can we incorporate this material?") You and Bill HAVE accepted the end as valuable, thus signifying your willingness to use defenses to ensure it.

³⁵ The means are easier to clarify after the true worth of the goal itself is firmly established. Everyone defends his own treasure. You do not have to tell him to do this, because HE will do so automatically. The real question still remains WHAT do you treasure, and HOW MUCH do you treasure it? Once you learn to consider these two points, and bring them into ALL your actions as the true criteria for behavior, I will have little difficulty in clarifying the means. You have not learned to be consistent about this as yet. I have therefore concentrated on showing you that the means ARE available whenever you DO ask. You can save a lot of time, however, if you do not need to extend this step unduly. The correct focus will shorten it immeasurably. Papers will be very easy to write as this time is shortened.

(November 13, 1965)

³⁶ The Atonement is the ONLY defense which cannot be used destructively. That is because, while everyone must eventually join it, it was not a device which was generated by man. The Atonement PRINCIPLE was in effect long before the Atonement itself was begun. The Principle was love, and the Atonement itself, was an ACT of love. Acts were not necessary before the Separation, because the time-space belief did not exist. It was only after the Separation that the defense of Atonement, and the necessary conditions for its fulfillment were planned.

³⁷ It became increasingly apparent that all of the defenses which man can choose to use constructively or destructively were not enough to save him. It was therefore decided that he needed a defense which was so splendid that he could not misuse it, although he COULD refuse it. His will could not turn it into a weapon of attack, which is the inherent characteristic of all other defenses. The Atonement thus becomes the only defense which was NOT a two-edged sword.

³⁸ The Atonement actually began long before the Crucifixion. Many Souls offered their efforts on behalf of the Separated Ones but they could not withstand the strength of the attack, and had to be brought back. Angels came, too, but their protection was not enough, because the Separated ones were not interested in peace. They had already split themselves, and were bent on dividing rather than reintegrating. The levels they introduced into themselves turned against each other, and they, in turn, turned against each other.

They established differences, divisions, cleavages, dispersion, and all the other concepts related to the increasing splits they produced.

³⁹ Not being in their Right Minds, they turned their defenses from protection to assault, and acted literally insanelly. It was essential to introduce a split-proof device which could be used ONLY to heal, if it was used at all. The Atonement was built into the space-time belief in order to set a limit on the need for the belief, and ultimately to make learning complete. The Atonement IS the final lesson. Learning, itself, like the classrooms in which it occurs, is temporary. Let all those who overestimate human intelligence remember this. (Helen questions last sentence, which she perceives as threatening.) The ability to learn has no value when change of understanding is no longer necessary. The eternally creative have nothing to learn. Only after the Separation was it necessary to direct the creative force to learning, because changed behavior had become mandatory.

⁴⁰ Human beings can learn to improve their behavior, and can also learn to become better and better learners. This increase serves (Helen notes that this was written "served") to bring them in closer and closer accord with the Sonship. But the Sonship itself is a perfect creation, and perfection is not a matter of degree. Only while there are different degrees is learning meaningful. The evolution of man is merely a process by which he proceeds from one degree to the next. He corrects his previous missteps by stepping forward. This represents a process which is actually incomprehensible in temporal terms, because he RETURNS as he progresses. (Originally, was "goes forward", rather than "progresses").

⁴¹ The Atonement is the device by which he can free himself from the past as he goes ahead. It UNDOES his past errors, thus making it unnecessary for him to keep retracing his steps without advancing toward his return. In this sense, the Atonement saves time, but, like the miracle which serves it, does not abolish it. As long as there is need for Atonement, there is need for time. But the Atonement, as a completed plan, does have a unique relationship TO time. Until the Atonement is finished, its various phases will proceed IN time, but the whole Atonement stands at its end. At this point, the bridge of the return has been built. (Note to Helen.

⁴² The reason this is upsetting you is because the Atonement is a TOTAL commitment. You still think this is associated with loss. This is the same mistake ALL the Separated ones make, in one way or another. They cannot believe that a defense which CANNOT attack also IS the best defense. Except for this misperception, the angels COULD have helped them. What do you think "the meek shall inherit the earth" MEANS? They will literally take it over because of their strength. A two-way defense is inherently weak, precisely BECAUSE it has two edges it can turn against the self very unexpectedly. This tendency CANNOT be controlled EXCEPT by miracles.)

⁴³ The miracle turns the defense of Atonement to the protection of the inner self, which, as it becomes more and more secure; assumes its natural talent of protecting others. The inner self knows itself as both a brother AND a son.

(The above notes were taken with great difficulty by Helen, and constitute the only series this far that were written very slowly. When Helen asked about this, she was told, "don't worry about the notes. They are right, but YOU are not sufficiently Right-Minded yet to write about the Atonement with comfort. You will write about it yet with joy.)

(Aside from Helen: Last night I felt briefly but intensely depressed, temporarily under the impression that I was abandoned. I tried, but couldn't get through at all. After a while, I decided to give up for the time being, and He said, "don't worry. I will never leave you or forsake you." I did feel a little better, and decided I was really not sick, so I could return to my exercises. While I was exercising, I had some part-vision experiences which I found only mildly frightening at times, and quite reassuring at others.

I am not too sure of the sequence, but it began with a VERY clear assurance of love, and an equally clear emphasis on my own great value, beauty and purity. Things got a little confusing after that. First, the idea of "Bride of Christ" occurred to me with vaguely inappropriate "undertones". Then there was a repetition of "the way of Love", and a restatement of an earlier experience, now as if it were FROM Him TO me: "Behold the Handmaid of the Lord; Be it done unto you according to His Word." (This threw me into panic before, but at that time, it was stated in the more accurate Biblical phrasing: "Be it done unto ME according to HIS Word." This time I was a bit uneasy, but remembered I had misperceived it last time, and was probably still not seeing it right. Actually, it is really just a statement of allegiance to the Divine Service, which can hardly be dangerous.

Then there was a strange sequence, in which Christ seemed to be making very obvious advances, which became quite sexual in my perception of them. I ALMOST thought briefly that he turned into a devil. I got just a LITTLE scared, and the possession idea came in for a while, but I thought it SO silly, that there is no point in taking it seriously.

(As I am writing this, I remember that thing in the book about the demon lover, which once THROUGH me (note spelling, "threw") into a fit. I am upset, but the spelling slip is reassuring.

This morning we reviewed the whole episode. He said he was "VERY pleased at the COMPARATIVE lack of fear, and also the concomitant awareness that it WAS misperception. This showed much greater strength, and a much increased Right-Mindedness. This is because defenses are now being used much better, on behalf of truth MORE than error, though not completely so.

The weaker use of mis-projection is shown by my recognition that it can't REALLY be that way, which became possible as soon as denial was applied against error, NOT truth. This permitted a much greater awareness of alternative interpretations.

It was also explained (the shift to the passive form instead of "He also explained" should be noted. This is an expression of fear.) "Remember the section in "Letters from the Scattered Brotherhood" you read last evening about 'Hold fast', and please do so."

(The following note within the brackets is inserted here in chronological sequence from the Special Messages section of the original Urtext manuscript.)

[(Note made on November 15, 1965 by Helen, re: Bill's remark concerning the text given on November 13, 1965, which immediately follows this note.) Yes, but I doubt if it says this is inevitable. It may entail more mis-will than we think. The above may have been too passively interpreted. Note that Bill did NOT ask MY will re: same. If he had, HE would have felt better.]

You know that when defenses are disrupted there is a period of real disorientation, accompanied by fear, guilt, and usually vacillations between anxiety and depression. This process is different only in that defenses are not being disrupted, but re-interpreted, even though it may be experienced as the same thing.

In the reinterpretation of defenses, they are not disrupted but their use for ATTACK is lost. Since this means they can be used only ONE way, they became MUCH stronger, and much more dependable. They no longer oppose the Atonement, but greatly facilitate it.

⁴⁴ The Atonement can only be accepted within you. You have perceived it largely as EXTERNAL thus far, and that is why your EXPERIENCE of it has been minimal. You have been SHOWN the chalice many times, but have not accepted it "for yourself". Your major improper use of defenses is now largely limited to externalization. Do not fail to appreciate your own remarkable progress in this respect. You perceived it first as a vessel of some sort whose purpose was uncertain but which might be a piss-pot. You DID notice, however, that the INSIDE was gold, while the OUTSIDE, though shiny, was silver. This was a recognition of the fact that the INNER part is more precious than the OUTER side, even though both are resplendent, though with different value. The reinterpretation of defenses is essential to break open the INNER light. Since the Separation, man's defenses have been used almost entirely to defend themselves AGAINST the Atonement, and thus maintain their Separation. They generally see this as a need to protect the body from external intrusion, and this kind of misperception is largely responsible for the homosexual fallacy as well as your own pregnancy fears. The so-called "anal" behavior is a distorted attempt to "steal" the Atonement, and deny its worth by concealing it, and holding onto it with a bodily receptacle, which is regarded as particularly vicious. "Oral" fantasies are rather similar in purpose, except that they stem more from a sense of deprivation, and insatiable thirst which results. "Anal" fallacies are more of a refusal to give, while oral fantasies emphasize a distorted need to take. The main error in both is the belief that the body can be used as a means for attaining Atonement.

45 Perceiving the body as the Temple is only the first step in correcting this kind of distortion. (Helen scalded her hand, and looked for butter to put on it. It occurred to her that the Atonement was the cure. The burn appeared to be minimal, and caused little discomfort.) Seeing the body as the Temple alters part of the misperception, but not all of it. It DOES recognize, however, that the concept of addition or subtraction in PHYSICAL terms is not appropriate. But the next step is to realize that a Temple is not a building at all. Its REAL holiness lies in the INNER altar, around which the building is built. The inappropriate emphasis which men have put on beautiful church BUILDINGS is a sign of their own fear of Atonement, and unwillingness to reach the altar itself. The REAL beauty of the Temple cannot be seen with the physical eye. The spiritual eye, on the other hand, cannot see the building at all, but it perceives the altar within with perfect clarity. This is because the spiritual eye has perfect vision.

46 For perfect effectiveness, the chalice of the Atonement belongs at the center of the inner altar, where it undoes the Separation, and restores the wholeness of the Spirit. Before the Separation, the mind was invulnerable to fear, because fear did not exist. Both the Separation AND the fear were MISCREATIONS of the mind, which have to be undone. This is what the Bible means by the "Restoration of the Temple". It DOES NOT mean the restoration of the building, but it DOES mean the opening of the altar to receive the Atonement. This heals the Separation, and places within man the one defense against all separation-mind errors which can make him perfectly invulnerable.

47 The acceptance of the Atonement by everyone is only a matter of time. In fact, both TIME and MATTER were created for this purpose. This appears to contradict free will, because of the inevitability of this decision. If you review the idea carefully, you will realize that this is not true. Everything is limited in some way by the manner of its creation. Free will can temporize, and is capable of enormous procrastination. But it cannot depart entirely from its Creator, who set the limits on its ability to miscreate by virtue of its own real purpose.

48 The misuse of will engenders a situation which, in the extreme, becomes altogether intolerable. Pain thresholds can be high, but they are not limitless. Eventually, everybody begins to recognize, however dimly, that there MUST be a better way. As this recognition is more firmly established, it becomes a perceptual turning-point. This ultimately reawakens the spiritual eye, simultaneously weakening the investment in physical sight. The alternating investment in the two types or levels of perception is usually experienced as conflict for a long time, and can become very acute. But the outcome is as certain as God.

49 The spiritual eye literally CANNOT SEE error, and merely looks for Atonement. All the solutions which the physical eyes seek, dissolve in its sight. The spiritual eye, which looks within, recognizes immediately that the altar has been defiled, and needs to be repaired and protected. Perfectly aware of the RIGHT defense, it passes over all others, looking past error to truth. Because of the real strength of ITS vision, it pulls the will into its own service, and forces the mind to

concur. This reestablishes the true power of the will, and makes it increasingly unable to tolerate delay. The mind then realizes, with increasing certitude, that delay is only a way of increasing unnecessary pain, which it need not tolerate at all. The pain threshold drops accordingly, and the mind becomes increasingly sensitive to what it would once have regarded as very minor intrusions of discomfort.

⁵⁰The Children of God are entitled to perfect comfort, which comes from a sense of perfect trust. Until they achieve this, they waste themselves and their true creative powers on useless attempts to make themselves more comfortable by inappropriate means. But the real means is ALREADY provided, and does not involve any efforts on their part at all. Their egocentricity usually misperceives this as personally insulting, an interpretation which obviously arises from their misperception of themselves. Egocentricity and communion cannot coexist. Even the terms themselves are contradictory.

⁵¹The Atonement is the only gift which is worthy of being offered to the Altar of God. This is because of the inestimable value of the Altar itself. It was created perfect, and is entirely worthy of receiving perfection. God IS lonely without His SOULS, and THEY are lonely without Him. Remember the "spiritual" (a VERY good term) which begins with "And God stepped down from Heaven and said: I'M lonely - I'll make ME a World." The world WAS a way of healing the Separation, and the Atonement is the GUARANTEE that the device will ultimately do so.