

Lesson 269 • September 26

“My sight goes forth to look upon Christ’s face.”

Practice instructions

See complete instructions in separate document. 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: You may want to apply this idea specifically to people in your life. Say, “*My sight goes forth to look upon Christ’s face in [name].*” You might then imagine a giant luminous face of Christ looming behind the body of this person as a symbol of what true perception will show you.

Commentary

Today’s lesson is about forgiveness; about choosing in advance to see innocence in others. Let’s recall a few things that earlier lessons have taught us about forgiveness.

Lesson 126: *Giving forgiveness is how I receive it.*

How is this lesson on “giving is receiving” related to forgiveness? It discusses how, in the world’s understanding of forgiveness, there is no room for us to receive anything from forgiveness. “When you ‘forgive’ a sin, there is no gain to you directly” (W-pI.126.3:1). If I believe in the reality of someone’s sin but “forgive” it, it is just an act of charity to someone unworthy of it. I am giving him a gift he does not deserve. It could easily appear that I in fact am losing something, not gaining anything. There is no release for me in doing something like this.

Only when I have truly received forgiveness for myself can I give it; and only in giving it do I recognize I have received it. I don’t even know what it is! How could I recognize it? So in order to know what forgiveness is, and to know that I have it, I have to give it away. I have to see it “out there” to recognize it “in here.” When I do I will also begin to understand that there is no difference between out there and in here.

The idea that giving is receiving, that the “giver and receiver are the same” (W-pI.126.8:1), is a necessary preparation for releasing our minds from every bar to what forgiveness really is. Judgment is based on separation and differences: the sin is in someone else and not in me. He is bad, I am better. Forgiveness is based on unity and sameness: there is no “other” to be done to or to do it to me. We are both innocent. There never was any sin. We are all part of the same Heart of Love.

Lesson 134: *True forgiveness forgives illusions, not real sins.*

Here we learn that the major obstacle to learning true forgiveness is the belief that we must forgive something real. We believe that sin really exists, that injury has really been done. It is impossible to forgive a sin that we believe is real. “It is impossible to think of sin as true and not believe forgiveness is a lie” (W-pI.134.4:2). “Guilt cannot be forgiven” (W-pI.134.5:3).

This is really a major obstacle. I can testify that it is possible for something you once thought of as sin to be seen as no more than a mistake, a call for love. I’ve experienced that. I didn’t make the shift myself. We can’t do it ourselves. But we do need to be willing to have the shift occur. I know there are many things that, consciously or unconsciously, I still judge and condemn as sin, as evil. Every time I encounter judgment in my mind, I need do nothing but recognize that it is

there and believe that there is another way to perceive it. I affirm I am willing to see it differently. I ask for help in understanding forgiveness through this experience. And I wait.

I allow myself to look at the anger, the fear, the resentment I may be feeling. I don't hide it; that just perpetuates the wrong-mindedness. I am willing to see my own feelings differently as well. I recognize that perhaps I am judging myself for feeling them. So, as I did with the external judgment, I do with the internal: I affirm I am willing to see it differently and ask for help. And I wait.

What happens then is of God. A shift occurs in my mind. It may occur first in regard to the other, the "sinner"; it may occur first in regard to myself. Since the other and myself are one and the same it doesn't matter how it is experienced, or in what order. In the shift, I come to see something I am judging, in the other or in myself, as a call for love. I come to see that regardless of the appearance it takes, innocence lay behind the act. I may see that I was angry because I wanted to be close to the other person and they pushed me away; I wanted joining, oneness. There is nothing to be guilty of there. I thought I saw attack and attacked back. Now I see there was no attack; we both want the same thing, so I let go of my attack and respond with love. Or I may see how the other person was fearful, felt threatened by me somehow (and I know I am not a threat), and so flipped out. My return attack was just the same mistake. I see there was no sin in what happened, and the whole thing can simply be dropped from my mind.

Today's lesson: *We see innocence when we choose to see it.*

"My sight goes forth to look upon Christ's face." "Today I choose to see a world forgiven" (1:5). Seeing the "face of Christ" is a symbolic way of saying we see innocence, we see a world forgiven.

In this lesson we see that forgiveness is a choice. When we decide that what we want to see is innocence, we will see innocence. The Holy Spirit will give us the gift of that sight. "What I look on belongs to me" (1:5). If I see mistakes out there, they are my mistakes. If I see innocence, it too is my own. If I can see innocence—and I will if I choose to, I will if I ask to—it is the proof of my own innocence. Only the innocent can perceive innocence. Only those who perceive innocence in others know their own innocence. The guilty will always perceive guilt. Perceiving innocence in others is the means God has given us to discover our own innocence. We can't find it if we look directly. It's like trying to see your own face; you must have a mirror. The world is my mirror; it shows me the state of my own mind. The image in the glass is only an image, only an illusion, but in this world it is a necessary illusion, and will be until there is a knowing that exists without perception.