

APPENDIX II



The need for this edition and how it was made

The Need for This Edition and How It Was Made

In this appendix, we explain the need for this edition, a need which rests on how *A Course in Miracles* was originally edited by Helen and her collaborators. We also explain the approach we have taken in producing this edition of the Course, along with the specific editing conventions we have adopted.

I. The Original Stages of Writing and Editing the Course

In 1965, Helen Schucman and Bill Thetford were colleagues at Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons in New York City. In June of that year, after years of conflict—between the two of them, within their department, and with other departments and medical centers—they joined together in an unexpected decision to demonstrate “another way,” a way that involved being constructive and cooperative, both outwardly and inwardly.

This joining sparked in Helen a series of inner visions and paranormal experiences, which culminated, in October of that year, in her hearing an inner voice that said, “This is a course in miracles. Please take notes.”¹ Thus began a seven-year process of Helen writing down the words of this inner voice, words which ultimately were published as *A Course in Miracles*. She received first the Text, then the Workbook for Students, and finally the Manual for Teachers.

1. All quotations in this appendix that do not include source references are from Helen's Notes.

In between writing down those words and eventually publishing them, however, there was a long process of editing, which needs to be explained in order to understand the need for the present edition.

First version: the Notes

Helen would take dictation from the inner voice in stenographic notebooks, in a mixture of normal handwriting and shorthand symbols that she was accustomed to using. She was clearly making an enormous effort to faithfully record a voice that was not her own. In a later interview, she said, “I made every effort to keep it without me. I did not want to intrude on it. And I felt that it was a matter of personal integrity not to.”²

One can see the evidence of this in her notebooks, where she would at times write something down and then record her discomfort with it. Early on, the voice would sometimes correct something she wrote down, saying that she hadn’t heard correctly. And she herself would often make two or three attempts at accurately rendering a particular statement. But as the dictation went on, these corrections diminished, and she was increasingly thanked by the voice for taking down its words exactly as she had been given them.

Second version: the Urtext

Helen would then meet on a regular basis with her colleague Bill Thetford and would dictate these same words to him for him to type up on his typewriter. This resulted in what they called the “Urtext,” a word that means “original text” (although, technically speaking, the handwritten Notes were the original text). As she dictated to Bill, Helen would often slightly change the wording from her notebooks. This included correcting obvious errors, making minor improvements in the language, and sometimes putting back in wording that had been crossed out and replaced in the Notes.

On certain occasions, she did not dictate a portion into the Urtext at all, probably because she considered the material to be meant for her alone, though at times the reason seems to be that she was uncomfortable with the material. As a result, there are approximately ten thousand words that

2. *A rare interview in which Dr. Helen Schucman describes the “Voice” that dictated A Course in Miracles* (Foundation for Inner Peace, 1976, 2006 dvd).

are in the notebooks but not in the Urtext. On the other hand, there are six discourses in what are now Chapters 2 and 3 that are in the Urtext alone, not in the Notes, because they were “dictated without notes.” In other words, Helen would dictate these sections to Bill as she herself was hearing them internally (which means that, for these sections, the Urtext version *is* the original). Also, there is some handwritten editing—in Helen’s hand—within the Urtext itself. Overall, however, the Urtext is a *roughly* faithful typescript of the handwritten Notes.

Third version: the second draft

Helen herself then undertook the sizable task of retyping the Urtext. While doing this, according to her later collaborator Ken Wapnick, she “edited as she went along.”³ This, then, effectively produced a new version, which Ken called simply “the second draft.” This edition has not been made available to the public.

Fourth version: the Hugh Lynn Cayce Version (HLC)

Helen and Bill then edited the second draft, producing what they called the “Hugh Lynn Version,” named after Hugh Lynn Cayce, son of famed psychic Edgar Cayce. Hugh Lynn had been very supportive of Helen’s scribing and therefore she and Bill sent him a copy of the completed manuscript in 1972. It has become popularly known as the Hugh Lynn Cayce or HLC.

The HLC was Helen and Bill’s attempt to produce a readable version of the Course. Indeed, their expectation was apparently that this would be the final version of the Course (since, as we discuss below, the idea that more editing was needed came later from Ken Wapnick). In the HLC, chapter and section breaks and titles have been inserted in the Text (in the Notes and Urtext, the Text had many breaks, but these were not titled). Capitalization, punctuation, and paragraphing have been improved. The number of emphasized words has been reduced to be more stylistically appropriate. Most of the personal material has been removed, and all references to Helen and Bill have been removed, so that the manuscript is now addressed to the general reader.

3. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 9, 2004.

Between the Urtext and the HLC, extensive editing has taken place. In the early chapters (roughly, the first four to seven chapters) of the Text, there has been an enormous amount of line-by-line editing. Also, about a thousand words have been moved from their original location. And there has been extensive removal of material, totaling over twenty-three thousand words.

Fifth version: the Foundation for Inner Peace (FIP) First Edition

In 1973, psychologist Ken Wapnick became closely involved with Helen and Bill and with the manuscript of *A Course in Miracles*. After reading it, Ken told them he felt that the manuscript needed some additional editing:

Some of the personal and professional material⁴ still remained, and seemed inappropriate for a published edition. The first four chapters did not read well at all, in large part because the deleted personal material left gaps in the remaining text, and thus required minor word additions to smooth the transition. Also, some of the divisions in the material appeared arbitrary to me, and many of the section and chapter titles did not really coincide with the material. . . . Finally, the paragraphing, punctuation, and capitalization were not only idiosyncratic, but notoriously inconsistent.

Helen and Bill agreed that it did need a final run-through. As Bill lacked the patience and attention to detail that was needed for such a task, we decided that Helen and I should go through it together. . . . I earlier quoted Helen's statement that she had come to think of *A Course in Miracles* as her life's work, and she approached the editing project with a real dedication. She and I meticulously went over every word to be sure that the final manuscript was right.⁵

Helen and Ken, then, were the creators of the FIP First Edition. In it, many of the chapter and section breaks and titles have been changed. The

4. The professional material addressed the relationship between the Course's teachings and psychology, Helen and Bill's profession.

5. *Absence from Felicity*, 347-48.

paragraphing, punctuation, and capitalization have been polished, while the number of emphasized words has been further reduced. On top of the one thousand words that had already been relocated from their original position, an additional five thousand words (mostly in Chapter 1 of the Text) have been relocated. Additional extensive line-by-line editing has been done in the early chapters. A new emphasis on terminology has been introduced, an emphasis that aims to be consistent with the Course's distinction between reality and illusion. For instance, the word "will" has often been changed so that the remaining references apply only to Heaven, many references to "behavior" have been removed, and most references to "soul" have also been removed. And an additional approximately twelve thousand words have been taken out. This is a result of removing blocks of material and of the line-by-line editing, which has compressed the language.

This edition was first published in a small print run in 1975 and then published (with the addition of the Clarification of Terms, which had just been dictated) by the Foundation for Inner Peace in 1976 as the First Edition of *A Course in Miracles*.

The FIP Second Edition

On the way to publication, the evolving Course manuscript had gone through several retypings. Helen herself had retyped the Text twice (to produce the second draft and the HLC) and neither "of these retypings was ever proofread."⁶ Then Helen and Ken's edit of the Text was itself retyped twice before printing, and these retypings were "also not adequately proofread."⁷ As a result, "some material was inadvertently omitted. Furthermore, a fair amount of typographical errors went unnoticed."⁸

In 1992, the Foundation for Inner Peace attempted to remedy this situation by publishing the Second Edition. This was produced by going back and checking the First Edition against the Urtext. Additionally, "All retypings, as well as Helen's original shorthand notebooks, were consulted to

6. *Errata for the Second Edition of A Course in Miracles* (Mill Valley, CA: Foundation for Inner Peace, 1992), 1.

7. *Errata*, 1.

8. *Errata*, 1-2.

trace the errors and omissions that were found.”⁹ The Second Edition, in other words, was needed to clean up the problems that had occurred along the way. Ken was apparently in charge of any editing done; Helen and Bill had since died.

In the Second Edition, 97 sentences and six entire paragraphs that had been removed somewhere in the process have been restored. Most of these are found in the HLC, but some, particularly the full paragraphs, are drawn from the Urtext. Additionally, about 175 changes from a plural “you” to a singular “you” have been made. For instance, “The lamp is lit in both of you for one another” has been changed to “The lamp is lit in you for your brother.” A 30-page errata pamphlet was issued to detail the changes. Finally, in the Second Edition, a numbering system for sections, paragraphs, and sentences has been introduced, a system that was not present in the First Edition.¹⁰

II. How It Was Originally Edited

The need for editing

One may wonder, if the Course was simply dictated by an inner voice, why it needed to be edited at all. In this case, however, editing was an unavoidable necessity. While later chapters of the Text came out virtually ready for publication,¹¹ and while the Workbook and Manual were dictated complete with section divisions and titles, none of this was the case with the Text’s first several chapters. This early material did not come in the form of organized discourses divided into regular paragraphs. Instead, it often jumped around, was interspersed with comments meant only for

9. *Errata*, 2.

10. There is an FIP Third Edition, released in 2007. However, to our knowledge the only difference between it and the Second Edition is that it includes the two supplements to *A Course in Miracles* that Helen received: *Psychotherapy: Purpose, Process and Practice* and *The Song of Prayer: Prayer, Forgiveness, Healing*.

11. The minimal editing needed was limited to things like chapter divisions, chapter and section titles, capitalization and punctuation, some paragraphing issues, and very minor wording issues.

the scribes or comments from Helen herself, and sometimes included stray statements without context. Further, there were occasional “scribal errors,” where either Helen was told that she had not heard correctly or where the terminology or teaching was clearly out of accord with the later Course. And there were a number of grammatical errors. This early material, then, needed a good deal of editing.

Editing instructions

Fortunately, there were explicit and implicit editing instructions given by the author.

First, the most important instruction, reflected in several things that were said, was that the Course needed to be applicable to the general reader, rather than reading like something written just to Bill and Helen. Therefore, material that was specific to them and their lives and relationships needed to come out. The author calls this idea of general applicability “the more generalizable quality which the course is aimed at.” The final Course, in other words, must apply generally to everyone, not just personally to Helen and Bill.

Second, when it came to decisions about whether something “should be included in the written part of the course at all, or whether you should keep these notes separately” (because of their personal nature), Bill was placed “in charge of these decisions.” This was very likely because Helen would not be objective enough to make such decisions.¹² Indeed, she confessed, “I wanted to change just about everything.”¹³

Third, scribal errors needed to be corrected. There are several places where the author explicitly corrects something that Helen took down. This same principle would obviously extend to teachings not identified as scribal errors yet clearly in conflict with later Course teaching. For example, the early dictation states, “The Holy Spirit is the Bringer of Revelations,

12. Ken Wapnick said, “Early in the process of the retyping, Jesus told Helen: ‘Leave decisions about editing to Bill!’ At that point, Bill was reasonably sane about the *Course* and Helen was not—she would have taken out anything that did not ‘read right’ to her.” (Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D., “Editing History: The History of the Manuscripts of *A Course in Miracles*,” retrieved from http://acim-archives.org/Publishing/editing_history.html.)

13. *Absence from Felicity*, 316.

not miracles.” Yet this idea that He is *not* the Bringer of miracles is clearly in conflict with later teaching, in which the Holy Spirit is consistently identified as the Source of miracles, even being called “the Bringer of all miracles” (W-106.7:2). What constitutes a scribal error and exactly how much scribal error is present in the early dictation are not easy questions to resolve. However, there is no doubt that there were at least some scribal errors that needed correcting.

Fourth, the handwritten dictation was to be treated as the touchstone. In what is now Chapter 5, the author said, “Perhaps I can suggest that the first book [of the Urtext] be gone over again from her notes, not all of which she read correctly.” In other words, the Urtext—and by extension any later version—was meant to be checked against the Notes. Despite any errors that the Notes contained, they were praised as “a strong testimony to truth,” and framed as the touchstone that later versions should be checked against.¹⁴

The actual editing

The actual editing did accomplish much of the above. The book is edited to be applicable to the general reader. All personal material is either removed or edited to read in a more general way. Also, scribal errors are (with few exceptions) corrected. Early terminology that is inconsistent with the later Course is changed to harmonize. The editing displays very little ideological bias. And significantly, the editors appear only to *modify* what Helen took down; they do not create new material themselves.

The editing was governed, in other words, by a clear and overriding attempt to be faithful to the teaching as it was received. The desire to get the author’s words right, which is clearly seen in the Notes, carried through into the editing (though Helen’s editing did get out of hand in the early chapters of the Text, as we will see). It was a massive and very delicate job that was done in obvious good faith, with intelligent results. One can only imagine what less faithful and less intelligent hands might have done.

The editing, however, was far from perfect. There were serious drawbacks, which we will see as we look at the editing process in more detail.

14. See Cameo 19 for additional discussion of this.

Helen was clearly the primary editor throughout, even though Bill had been assigned the most important part of that job: deciding what would stay in and what would come out. We say with confidence that Helen was the main editor because one can see the same tendencies, the same hand, in all of the editing processes that led up to the publication of the Course.¹⁵ And Helen is the only candidate for whose hand that is, since she was literally the only one involved in all of the editing processes. We can easily see this by reviewing who was involved in each one: The editing within the notebooks (taking different stabs at rendering the same sentence) was, of course, Helen's. The editing that occurred while reading the Urtext to Bill was Helen's. The handwritten editing on the Urtext pages was Helen's. The editing that happened while typing the second draft was Helen's. The editing of the HLC was Helen and Bill's. And the editing of the FIP First Edition was Helen and Ken's. In every case, Helen was either sole editor or co-editor.

Indeed, in both of those editing processes in which Helen was co-editor, she was actually the lead editor. According to Ken Wapnick, Helen was the main editor with both the HLC (done by her and Bill) and the First Edition (done by her and Ken). In regard to the editing that Helen and Bill did, Ken said, "Helen was the editor on their team. Bill did not have the patience for it."¹⁶ And in regard to the editing she and Ken did, he said:

It has been suggested, I know, that this editing is something I essentially did on my own, or that I influenced Helen's decisions. Anyone who knew Helen would clearly recognize the absurdity of this idea. No one, including Jesus, could ever get her to do anything she did not want to do. To think that I could have had an influence on Helen is most strange.¹⁷

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15. The editing of the HLC to create the FIP First Edition does contain some tendencies not seen in earlier versions: a focus on consistent terminology, a pattern of removing or changing references to behavior, and an emphasis on consistency with the Course's metaphysical foundation. Given that these editing tendencies had not appeared in the editing before this point, it seems likely that they are mainly the product of Ken Wapnick. Yet even if this is accurate, it still only concerns a small part of the total picture of the editing.
16. Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D., "Editing History: The History of the Manuscripts of *A Course in Miracles*," retrieved from http://acim-archives.org/Publishing/editing_history.html.
17. "Editing History."

Ken summarized Helen's role in relation to both Bill's and his own in this way: "You can perhaps think of Bill as her consultant [with the HLC], and me as her secretary [with the FIP], who carried out her wishes."¹⁸

Yet if Helen was the actual main editor, why had the author given the key editorial role to Bill? The reason, as we said earlier, was very likely because of Bill's greater objectivity. As Ken said, "Helen was a compulsive editor,"¹⁹ and this compulsivity apparently went into high gear when she was personally uncomfortable with what she was editing. This was the case, for instance, with her autobiography. In this regard, Ken reported that "Recounting certain events in her life—especially those of a religious nature, and even more specifically, those events surrounding *A Course in Miracles*—aroused tremendous anxiety in Helen, and her discomfort directly led to an almost fierce over-editing."²⁰ Because of this, Ken said that the result of him and Helen editing her autobiography "proved in many [places]...to be even worse than the original."²¹

Another example of this compulsive editing was with Helen's poetry, which was published in *The Gifts of God* and was "scribed" in a manner similar to the Course. Ken Wapnick related that when he and Helen tried to edit the poems, "Helen's compulsive editing took over, often at the expense of the poems." He therefore "realized this editing project was a mistake." He said, "I think Helen realized this as well, and gladly agreed that we stop."²²

So when it came to writings that Helen was uncomfortable with or embarrassed about, her "compulsive editing took over" and became "almost fierce over-editing," which was "often at the expense" of the original material. This is highly relevant for the editing of the early chapters of the Course, where most of the editing took place, because Helen was in fact "very ashamed" of those chapters. Ken Wapnick wrote:

As the text moves on, the writing becomes more and more beautiful, and the last half of the text is filled with passage upon passage in wonderful blank verse. This is not the case in the first four chapters,

18. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 9, 2004.

19. *Absence from Felicity*, 348.

20. *Absence from Felicity*, 1.

21. *Absence from Felicity*, 1.

22. *Absence from Felicity*, 401.

however. And Helen was always very ashamed of them. In fact, when anyone in the early days would want to see the Course—and she would show the Course to very, very, very few people (and she wouldn't show them the whole Course)—she would just show the really beautiful, rhapsodic, ecstatic passages. And she was always rather ashamed of this early part.²³

The idea that Helen was ashamed of the early chapters as compared to the more beautiful later chapters affords an important window onto what happened with the editing. For when one examines in detail the editing changes that were made in the early chapters, a guiding principle becomes very clear: *make the early chapters read more like the later ones*. This is exactly what would be expected if Helen was the main editor, if she was uncomfortable with the early chapters as compared to the later ones, and if such discomfort would tend to propel her into “an almost fierce over-editing.” In short, what is visible in the editing fits known editing tendencies in Helen.

What did this guiding principle mean for the editing? In contrast to the later chapters, the early ones are, in their original state, much less lofty, abstract, and poetic, and instead much more concrete, down to earth, and plainspoken. The attempt to make the early chapters read like the later ones, then, had two main effects:

First, it led to removing almost all references to anything specific or concrete, anything you could actually point to in the world. This went way beyond the instruction to remove things that were specific to Helen's and Bill's lives. For example, this comment from Chapter 12 was removed: “The analysis of the ego's ‘real’ motivation is the modern equivalent of the Inquisition.” This is not at all the kind of specific that the author asked to be removed, as it is indeed entirely applicable to the general reader. It already has that “generalizable quality which the course is aimed at.” How is a comment about the Inquisition applicable only to Helen and Bill?

This bias against anything specific and concrete resulted in the removal of several major topics in the early chapters. These include lengthy discus-

23. Kenneth Wapnick, Ph.D., “The Urtext and the Early Chapters of the Text of *A Course in Miracles*,” retrieved from <http://www.miraclestudies.net/urtext2.html>.

sions of sex, of how the Course’s teaching relates to the teachings of Freud and of Edgar Cayce, and of the Course’s model of the mind (in which the mind is depicted as having a conscious level sandwiched between a super-conscious level and two unconscious levels).

The list of topics removed also includes a host of specific topics mentioned more briefly. These include Carl Jung’s archetypes and collective unconscious, Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Otto Rank’s emphasis on will, the Neo-Freudians, behaviorism, mental retardation, various issues in statistics, psychological tests, negative numbers in mathematics, parallel lines in geometry, homosexuality, selection of romantic partners, parenting, relationship with parents, psychotherapy, astrologer Jeane Dixon, angels, demons, “earthbound” spirits, reincarnation, karma, spirit possession, speaking in tongues, witchcraft, auras, Christian Science, “the record” (similar to the Akashic records), the “celestial speedup,” cryonics, perpetual motion machines, alchemy, the Holocaust, daylight saving time, the CIA, money, voting machines, kleptomania, gambling, alcoholism, ESP, Descartes’ *Cogito, Don Quixote*, quotes from Shakespeare and Chesterton, references to common expressions (such as “think big” and “live and let live”), and more. None of these topics were specific to the lives of Helen and Bill; all were removed.

Second, making the early chapters read like the later ones led to making the early language less informal, emphatic, plainspoken, and down-to-earth. The resulting language is more formal and elegant, and indeed is often an improvement, as can be seen in these examples:

Original dictation	FIP First Edition
<p><i>He</i> does not hold the evil deeds of a man even against <i>himself</i>. Is it likely, then, that He would hold against any man the evil that <i>another</i> did?</p>	<p>He does not hold your “evil” deeds against you. Is it likely that He would hold them against me?</p>
<p>When an individual has a “authority problem,” it is <i>always</i> because he believes he is the author of himself, and resents his own projection that you share his delusion in this respect.</p>	<p>When you have an authority problem, it is always because you believe you are the author of yourself and project your delusion onto others.</p>

The flip side of this, however, is that the language in the edited version also tends to be more vague, often lacking the crispness, color, and vitality of the original. As a result, one can see throughout the early chapters a frequent “flattening” of the language. Note these examples from Chapter 2:

Original dictation	FIP First Edition
Before it is safe to let miracle workers loose in this world...	Before miracle workers are ready to undertake their function in this world...
Because of the real strength of <i>its</i> vision, it pulls the will into its own service, and forces the mind to concur.	Because of the strength of its vision, it brings the mind into its service.
If they are inappropriately exposed to a straight and undiluted miracle...	If they are prematurely exposed to a miracle...
It is certainly much more useful for me to remind you that you do not guard your thoughts at all carefully, except for a relatively small part of the day, and somewhat inconsistently even then.	It is much more helpful to remind you that you do not guard your thoughts carefully enough.

In addition to this flattening, the language is also more compressed, so that the reader is often taken through a series of ideas much more quickly and abruptly, without the time to take in each new turn of thought. For example, in Chapter 1, a discussion billed as “the only one which deals with the concept of ‘lack,’” is cut in half, from 530 words to 270. In Chapter 2, a discussion of the power of the mind is reduced from 1200 words to 500.

Whereas the principle of removing specifics resulted in taking out large volumes of teaching, the principle of changing the character of the early language resulted in massive line-by-line editing. As a result, by our count only twenty-one percent of the sentences in the FIP version of the first four chapters retain the original wording.

Another problem with the editing is that it often was just not careful enough—there was insufficient attention to detail. This is not to say that an immense amount of care and attention was not given to it. The attention given would probably have been more than enough for another project, but not for this one. This lack of attention to detail shows up in several ways. Specific instructions are on occasion ignored, wording changes at times appear hasty, and there are many places where the meaning of a passage has been changed. One such place can be seen here:

Original dictation	FIP First Edition
<p>All material means which man accepts as remedies for bodily ills are simply restatements of magic principles. It was the first level of the error to believe that the body created its own illness. Thereafter, it is a second mis-step to attempt to heal it through non-creative agents.</p>	<p>All material means that you accept as remedies for bodily ills are restatements of magic principles. This is the first step in believing that the body makes its own illness. It is a second misstep to attempt to heal it through non-creative agents.</p>

In the original version of this passage, there is a natural progression from the first error, which is believing “the body created its own illness,” to the second error, which is attempting to heal the body through “material means”/“non-creative agents” (medicine and surgery). This progression makes sense: If illness can be caused by physical factors (first error), then of course it can be removed by physical agents (second error). However, in the final version, the first error has been changed. Now the first error is using “material means...as remedies for bodily ills.” The problem, of course, is that this was originally the *second* error. So now in the edited version, the first error and the second error are *both* the attempt to heal illness through material means. Whereas the original contains a logical progression from a first error to a second, the edited version has only a single error, which now is simply *called* two different errors.

This lack of sufficient care is probably responsible for one of the biggest problems with the editing. This is that with each new editing process (we are speaking of the editing processes that Helen led, the ones prior to the

Second Edition), the editors only consulted the very latest edition, the one immediately preceding the one they were working on, rather than going back to earlier editions or to the original Notes. This can be readily seen when you compare the versions side by side. What you see is that wording removed from earlier versions is never put back in later versions. Ken Wapnick confirmed this in regard to the First Edition, saying that in producing it he and Helen only consulted the most recent edition, the HLC. In fact, he said, “I had not looked at the notebooks or urtext until after Helen and I completed the editing.”²⁴

This means that a kind of telephone game took place, in which each new version of a particular passage only drew from the immediately preceding version. Earlier versions of that passage were not consulted. As a result, imperfect editing choices were not corrected, and instead simply compounded as the chain grew longer. The original wording was often increasingly buried under multiple layers of changes.

This is very similar to what we already saw with the need for the Second Edition. There, a similar kind of telephone game occurred, due to the fact that four retypings of the manuscript were either inadequately proofread or not proofread. As a result, typographical errors and inadvertent omissions of material (in one case, of an entire page), rather than being corrected, simply accumulated, eventually requiring a thirty-page errata pamphlet. The point is that the very same accumulation of error that happened on a *typographic* level also occurred on an *editorial* level, and while the first was corrected, the second was not.

An example

The following table will allow you to see a representative example of the editing across four versions (only four because we don’t have the second draft).

24. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 9, 2004: “You are correct that all the editing was done without consulting the earlier editions. In fact, I had not looked at the notebooks or urtext until after Helen and I completed the editing.”

The Notes	Urtext	HLC	FIP (First and Second Editions)
<p>Q— Are there any corrections you want me to make in this?</p> <p>A— Yes—change the word “sin” to “absence of love.” Sin is a man-made word with threat connotations he made up himself. No <i>real</i> threat is involved anywhere.</p> <p>Just because “Nature abhors a vacuum,” which is true enough, it does <i>not</i> follow that a vacuum is filled with hell-fire. Nothing is gained by frightening yourself, and it’s very destructive.</p> <p>Miracles need freedom from fear. Part of their atonement value involves just that.</p> <p>(The word “atone” really means “undo.”)</p>	<p>SPECIAL EXPLANATION: (In response to HS request re possible corrections.)</p> <p>Change the word “sin” to “absence of love”. Sin is a manmade word with threat connotations which he made up himself. No <i>real</i> threat is involved anywhere. Just because “nature abhors a vacuum,” which is true enough, it does <i>not</i> follow that “a vacuum is filled with hellfire.” Nothing is gained by frightening yourself, and it is very destructive. Miracles need freedom from fear. Part of their Atonement value involves just that. Note that the word “atone” really means “undo.”</p>	<p>The word “sin” should be changed to “lack of love,” because “sin” is a man-made word with threat connotations which he made up himself. No <i>real</i> threat is involved anywhere. Nothing is gained by frightening yourselves, and it is very destructive to do so.</p> <p>26. Miracles represent <i>freedom</i> from fear. “Atoning” really means “undoing.” The undoing of fear is an essential part of the Atonement value of miracles.</p>	<p>26. Miracles represent freedom from fear. “Atoning” means “undoing.” The undoing of fear is an essential part of the Atonement value of miracles.</p>

The first thing to note is that, as we said above, each version appears to be based only on the version immediately preceding it. This is suggested by the overall pattern of the material getting consistently shorter, and confirmed by the fact that once wording is changed or removed, the original wording never comes back in.

Let's look at what the changes do to the actual teaching conveyed. The versions in the Notes and Urtext are nearly identical; they do not differ in any important respects. Their point is that what we call "sin" is not an actual presence that demands punishment. Rather, it is merely an absence, an absence of love. It is a *vacuum*, and reality naturally wants to fill vacuums. But a vacuum of love should be filled with *love*. It makes no sense to fill it with hellfire. Thus, the connotations of threat and punishment that we associate with sin are illogical; they are our own invention. By inventing them, we are merely frightening ourselves, which serves no purpose whatsoever. Indeed, a preoccupation with our sinfulness actually keeps us from being miracle workers. The statement "Miracles need freedom from fear" means that in order to *give* miracles, we need to be free from fear. Yet feelings of sinfulness, rather than freeing us from fear, *fill* us with fear, thus blocking our ability to channel miracles.

How do we know this is what "Miracles need freedom from fear" means? We might assume that miracles are an inner shift that *results* in our freedom from fear. But "Miracles need freedom from fear" does not describe freedom from fear as a *result* of miracles. Rather, it portrays freedom from fear as a *prerequisite* for miracles. The natural interpretation is that we need to be free from fear ourselves as a prerequisite for giving miracles to others. This fits the meaning of the word "miracle" at this very early stage in the dictation, where it always means an expression of love *to others*. The idea of the miracle as an internal shift has not yet been introduced.

The meaning of the final three sentences, then, is something like this: To give miracles, you need to be free from fear. After all, part of their Atonement value involves freeing others from fear (and how can you free them from fear if you are filled with it yourself?). These sentences are thus nearly identical in meaning to this passage from Chapter 2: "Essentially, *all* healing is the release from fear. But to undertake this [to give healing to others, via miracles] you cannot be fearful yourself" (T-2.VII.2:3-4).

When we come to the HLC, the passage has changed significantly. It has gone down from ninety words to sixty-eight. The quotation from Aristotle (“Nature abhors a vacuum”)—the kind of specific that is routinely removed—has predictably been taken out. Along with it has gone all reference to “vacuum,” even though the vacuum concept is important enough to get repeated later on:

Remember, I said before that just because “nature abhors a vacuum,” it *does not* follow that the vacuum is filled with hellfire. The emptiness [i.e., vacuum] engendered by fear should be replaced by love, because love and its absence are in the same dimension. (T-1.42.6:1-2)

Most importantly, in the HLC, the final three sentences have been significantly reworked, with the last two sentences being reversed in order, and the new final sentence being heavily changed in wording. This reworking changes the original meaning, altering the relationship between miracles and freedom from fear. Now it sounds like miracles *result* in freedom from fear, rather than *require* freedom from fear. The word “represent” (“Miracles represent *freedom* from fear”) could be taken in different ways, but when you read all three sentences together, they clearly convey that miracles *undo* fear—i.e., they *result* in lack of fear. This meaning was arguably implied in the original, but was at most a mere implication. Now it has been made overt and has eclipsed the primary meaning (“Miracles need freedom from fear”). This new idea (“Miracles represent freedom from fear”) is even given extra emphasis as it is now labeled one of the miracle principles, which it was not originally.

When we come to the FIP version, the word count—originally ninety—is reduced still further, from sixty-eight words to twenty-two. The discussion of “sin” as a man-made word is gone altogether. Also gone is the implication that frightening oneself with notions of sin blocks miracle giving. What is left is a miracle principle without clarifying context, whose meaning—and designation *as* a miracle principle—is to a significant degree a product of editorial activity rather than authorial intent.

If we look at the entire sweep of changes in this passage, from the Notes to the FIP version, we see that a very rich discussion, with multiple impor-

tant and helpful ideas, has been reduced to a short and very simple idea, one in which the original main thrust (giving miracles requires freedom from fear) is gone. Such changes in meaning are not the norm, though they are frequent. What *is* the norm is the progressive shortening of the material as well as the removal of specifics.

But wasn't all of this editing guided?

Many students assume that all of this editorial activity *must* have been guided by the same voice that dictated the original words of the Course. That, however, is extremely difficult to maintain, for the following reasons:

First, the guiding principle that the author gave for the editing was to make the Course applicable to the general reader and correct scribal errors. However, as we have seen, the editors went far beyond this instruction by instituting their own guiding principle: make the early chapters read more like the later ones, especially by removing specifics. It is telling that this new guiding principle is exactly what we would expect from Helen's personal discomfort with the early chapters, given her tendency to over-edit when she was uncomfortable with what she was editing.

Second, there were explicit editing instructions from the author that were disregarded. This includes the global instruction that Bill should be the one in charge of what got removed, as well as more specific instructions. For instance, in miracle principle 19, Helen was told to correct the statement "Miracles make souls one in God" to read "Miracles make souls one in Christ." This, however, was not done. (The final FIP version reads "Miracles make minds one in God.")

In that same principle, she was told to "Leave in the next part about cooperation," which refers to this line: "Industry depends on cooperation, and cooperation depends on miracles." This was done only partially, and inaccurately at that. The final version reads, "They [miracles] depend on cooperation." This leaves out "Industry depends on cooperation," and it actually reverses "cooperation depends on miracles," resulting in a mystifying statement. How exactly do miracles *depend* on cooperation between different "souls" or "minds"? Yet the original makes complete sense: If miracles are expressions of love, then of course cooperation would depend on them. It's not hard to see that cooperation depends on love.

Third, as we have seen, there were quite a number of rewordings that changed the meaning, rewordings that have every appearance of being errors. We have seen a few of these above: “[Miracles] depend on cooperation,” “Miracles represent freedom from fear,” and “This is the first step in believing that the body makes its own illness.” The original wording of each of these statements made perfect sense and was entirely consistent with overall Course teaching. Changing them was unnecessary and, in two of the cases above, resulted in garbled passages.

These changes in meaning at times extend beyond the early chapters. In Chapter 18, right after a section which tells us, “You have been wrong in thinking that it is needful to prepare yourself for Him,” we were originally told, “Prepare you *not* for the undoing of what never was.” This statement, however, was changed (in the Urtext) to its opposite: “Prepare you *now* for the undoing of what never was.”

Fourth, if the editing was guided, it seems very odd that the same material had to be edited so many times. For instance, in the material on sin as “a man-made word,” we saw how many versions a single passage went through. That kind of repeated reworking of the same passage is naturally suggestive of human editing, not divine guidance.

In addition to these distinct reasons for not thinking the editing was guided, there are no truly compelling reasons for thinking it *was*. We may assume that Helen frequently asked about what changes to make, yet according to Ken Wapnick, this specific asking was actually “relatively infrequent.” Ken said, “Helen’s experience was that she was guided all the way through the editing. When she felt she was not clear about the guidance, she would ask specifically, and this specific asking was relatively infrequent.”²⁵ We, then, are being asked to trust not Helen’s specific guidance, but her subjective sense—and this in the midst of her stated desire to “change just about everything,”²⁶ a desire she often gave in to, to the point where she herself said, “Any changes I made were always wrong in the long run, and had to be put back.”²⁷

25. Personal communication from Ken Wapnick, August 17, 2004.

26. *Absence from Felicity*, 316.

27. *Absence from Felicity*, 316.

But wasn't the material removed because it was in error?

Another assumption is that the material that was taken out was removed for what we might call “doctrinal reasons”—in other words, because it was a product of “scribal error” and did not fit with the later teaching of the Course. This, too, is extremely difficult to maintain, for these reasons:

First, most of the material that was removed is obviously consistent with overall Course teaching. For example, if you look at the original version of the passage above about “sin” as man-made, it is impossible to see anything out of keeping with Course teaching there. In fact, we believe that all the major topics that were removed have definite echoes in the later teaching of the Course. The later Course, in other words, appears to express the same themes; it just does so in language that is less plainspoken and more poetic.

Second, if what was taken out was removed because it was “scribal error,” that implies that a huge amount of the first four chapters was in error. Almost sixty percent of their original content was removed and much, if not most, of this was spiritual teaching, not personal material. However, the author of the Course did not characterize the early dictation as full of error. Rather, as we saw, he praised it as “a strong testimony to truth.” He did describe the dictation as gradually ascending “upward” and evolving “toward unity” as it went,²⁸ but this clearly implies that the beginning contained truth, truth that merely got *higher* and more *unified* as the dictation progressed. This is definitely not a picture of pervasive early *error* being *replaced* with later truth.

The author of the Course characterized the early part of the Course not as deeply flawed, but as *foundational*. At the beginning of what is now Chapter 3, he assigned study periods to Helen and Bill, asking them to review the Notes up until that point and providing this rationale: “The next part of this course rests too heavily on the earlier part not to *require* its study.” This instruction frames the early material as a crucial foundation, one that needs to be treated as such.

Third, Helen was very clear that her editing was not concerned with doctrinal purity. She said, “I assumed the attitude of an editor whose role is

28. Again, see Cameo 19 for more discussion of this.

to consider only form and disregard content as much as possible.”²⁹ And this is what we see in the editing itself, where the concerns displayed appear consistently stylistic. In particular, the stylistic bias against specifics ends up being sufficient to explain any topics that were removed. There is no need to invoke an explanation of doctrinal purity. Thus, Helen’s own statement and what can be observed in the editing itself point to the same conclusion: Helen removed things for stylistic reasons.

For all these reasons, the notion that the material was removed because it was “scribal error” is unsupported by the facts.

Overall, the editing has every appearance of being a very human product. It is intelligent and sincere, yet error-prone and sometimes lacking in attention to detail. It also shows evidence of a global bias: a bias against the concrete, down-to-earth style of the early chapters. In many ways, then, the mind of the editor is clearly distinguishable from the mind of the author, just as the two minds were so clearly distinct as they dialogued in the early Notes.

Why does this matter?

Does this really matter? In one way it doesn’t. The editors’ overriding intent to honor the teaching of the Course as Helen received it meant that *the Course’s thought system was not changed*. This is why, at the Circle of Atonement, we continued to use the FIP version of the Course right up until the publication of the Complete and Annotated Edition.

On the other hand, forty-five thousand words have been removed from the original dictation, which is equal in length to a small book. And our experience is that this additional material has made, and continues to make, an immense contribution to our understanding, appreciation, and application of the Course’s teaching. It does not conflict with the teachings in the FIP version. Rather, it fills out, specifies, and clarifies those teachings.

The importance of this material lies not just in it being additional, but in its unique character and foundational role. After he and Helen received the miracle principles, Bill Thetford said he “realized that if this material was

29. *Absence from Felicity*, 316. We do know of one exception to this principle: Ken Wapnick wrote that, during their editing of the Course, Helen asked him to change instances of the word “know” in the popular sense to alternative words, so that “know” was reserved for the Course’s technical sense (*Absence from Felicity*, 353).

true then absolutely everything I believed would have to be challenged.”³⁰ When people encounter ideas like this, ideas that are new and unfamiliar, that challenge “absolutely everything” they believe, they need those ideas stated clearly and plainly. And they especially need to see those ideas related to what *is* familiar. They need examples, illustrations, and analogies. They need to understand how these new ideas compare to ideas already known to them. And they need to observe the ideas in action; they need to see how they look when applied.

The early chapters, as they were originally received, did all of this for Helen and Bill. They were more plainspoken than the later Course. And they constantly tacked these new ideas down with examples, illustrations, and analogies. They related these ideas to the teachings of known thinkers, and they showed these ideas in action.

As a result, the clarifying power of this early material can hardly be overstated. What Course student struggling to understand its teachings would not want to know what the Course would say about the myriad of topics this early material covers? Who would not want to see the Course practically applied to topics such as feeling vulnerable to your parents’ low perception of your worth; gaining insight into yourself by exploring your childhood in therapy; sexual fantasies; the cause of overeating; visiting your mother-in-law when you had planned to stay home for the evening; how to raise children; the real meaning of *Don Quixote*; resentfully rewriting someone’s report because you don’t want it to harm an organization you care about; accepting a lunch invitation because you feel obligated; Freud’s concepts of the id, ego, and superego; Jung’s archetypes; the idea of karma? All of these discussions—and much more—are in the original dictation.

Also relevant here is the Course’s style of introducing an idea with lengthy and explicit explanation, and then referring to that idea more and more briefly and poetically, in the assumption that the reader is now familiar with it. We can see this, for instance, with meditation in the Workbook. Meditation is introduced in Lesson 41, which gives detailed instruction in exactly what to do (e.g., “From time to time, you may repeat today’s idea

30. James Bolen, “A New Realities Interview with William N. Thetford, Ph.D., retrieved from <http://acim-archives.org/Scribes/interviews/Bill-Apr1984.html>.

if you find it helpful. But most of all, try to sink down and inward” [W-41.6:1-2]). However, after additional instruction follows in the next several lessons, the instructions for meditation become increasingly brief and poetic. Thus, Lesson 102 tells you to simply “reach the happiness God’s will has placed in you” (W-102.3:1). By this point, you are expected to understand this shorthand.

This is relevant for the early chapters because the same thing happens with the topic of miracles, which is obviously *the* central topic, given that this is a *course* in miracles. In the original dictation, much of the first two chapters—originally totaling thirty-five thousand words—is devoted to the topic of miracles. Not only are miracles discussed and described at length, but examples of miracles are given from the lives of Helen and Bill. All of this makes it very difficult to get the wrong impression about what a miracle is. Having laid in place this sure foundation, the Course then builds on top of it the towering edifice of the rest of its thought system.

Unfortunately, this foundation has been severely compromised by the editing. In the FIP versions, the first two chapters are about thirty-five percent of their original length. The specifics are gone. The language is more vague. And the miracle principles—originally found scattered throughout Chapter 1—have been lifted out of their context and presented as a series of bare, cryptic statements in the opening section. The result has been ongoing, fundamental misunderstanding of what a miracle is, with the main meaning of “miracle” in the Course—an expression of love to others—dropping almost completely from the collective understanding of students of the Course. And this misunderstanding of the miracle has meant a fundamental misunderstanding of what *A Course in Miracles* is.

In other words, the early material constituted a much-needed bridge into the unfamiliar world of the Course’s ideas, the kind of bridge that Helen and Bill needed, the kind of bridge that *every* student needs. Yet this bridge was more or less dismantled. New students have therefore faced a swift-flowing river of alien ideas wrapped in abstract and cryptic language. It is no wonder that many students never get across this river, or even try, and that those who do have often emerged not where the Course intended, but instead far downstream.

III. The Complete and Annotated Edition

It became clear to us that a new edition of the Course was needed, one that was based on reaching back to the original dictation before any editing had taken place and approaching the editing afresh; one that also included a maximum number of the original words that Helen took down. The material that had been removed was so invaluable that we came to believe that, in one form or another, all of it had to be present. Further, the words that Helen took down had to be treated with the lightest editing touch possible. The author at one point told Helen, “As long as you take accurate notes, every word is meaningful.” That was the spirit, we became convinced, in which the editing had to be undertaken.

In working on this edition for over ten years, our approach has been virtually identical to what Helen herself reported:

Bill was adamant in opposing any changes at all, except for deleting the too personal early references and correcting actual typing errors. I wanted to change just about everything, but I knew that Bill was right. Any changes I made were always wrong in the long run, and had to be put back....[The material] had a way of knowing what it was doing, and was much better left exactly as it was.³¹

This has been our experience as well: The material does have a way of knowing what it is doing, *and is much better left exactly as it is*.

In creating the Complete and Annotated Edition, then, we started with Helen’s handwritten Notes and from them attempted to produce a readable, user-friendly edition, while changing the original as little as possible. We tried, in other words, to honor the purity of the original dictation while at the same time honoring the needs of the student. One historian described the guiding rule behind the translation of the King James Bible as “Total fidelity to the original, total transmission to the people.”³² That sums up our approach as well.

31. *Absence from Felicity*, 316.

32. Adam Nicholson, *When God Spoke English: The Making of the King James Bible*, television program directed by Gillian Bancroft (London: BBC, 2011).

This, however, was not a simple task, as there is a distance between “total fidelity to the original” and “total transmission to the people.” We therefore instituted a number of practices in our attempt to honor both sides of the equation. We will explain these now.

Transcription

As stated above, our starting point was Helen’s Notes, of which we have digital photocopies, and which we have carefully transcribed. This meant producing a key to Helen’s roughly eighty shorthand symbols. It also meant solving a great many unclear words—she was, after all, writing at top speed—in a way that fit their immediate context, fit Course vocabulary, and most especially fit other instances of Helen’s handwriting, including her abbreviation practices. As a result, there remains only a handful of truly unsolved words throughout Helen’s original dictation of the Course. Our transcription, while undoubtedly not perfect, has been meticulously checked and rechecked. We are grateful for Doug Thompson’s online transcription of the Notes,³³ which gave us something to check ours against.

Also, when we found more than one version of a sentence on Helen’s notebook page, we tried to read beneath the strikeouts and reconstruct all versions if possible, before selecting which one to use. This is important, as she herself often restored original versions that she had crossed out in her notebooks, suggesting that those versions were the author’s intended version.

In some cases, those original versions are much more likely to be correct than later versions. For instance, in Lesson 50 there is this sentence in the Urtext (the second version of the sentence): “It will transport you into a state of mind which nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and where nothing can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God.” Though beautiful, the sentence is also awkward. We have three repetitions of “nothing can,” yet the first two refer to “a state of mind,” while the third refers to “the eternal calm of the Son of God.”

This awkwardness, however, is resolved if we peer beneath a strikethrough in the original Notes. Here is that version: “It will transport you into a state of mind in which nothing can threaten, nothing can disturb, and nothing

33. This document can be found at the following URL: <http://tinyurl.com/cf9wp3a>.

can intrude upon the eternal calm of the Son of God.” We now can see that all three occurrences of “nothing can” originally referred to the same thing: the “eternal calm” of God’s Son. The very first thing Helen wrote—before the strikeout—was most likely the correct version.

Role of the Urtext

We also allowed the wording in the Urtext, where different from the Notes, to influence our editing at times, since Helen dictated the Urtext material to Bill while the original dictation was still fresh in her mind. Therefore, we treated unique wording in the Urtext as *possibly* flowing from the inspiration she had initially received (though many Urtext changes are clearly in error, one example being the line we saw earlier: “Prepare you *now* for the undoing of what never was”). Where we do use wording from the Urtext that differs from the Notes, we have documented this as a change from the original.

One of the things we paid particularly close attention to was where Helen crossed out a word in the Notes and replaced it with something else, only to then restore the original word in the Urtext. In those cases we usually did the same thing she did: we treated the original word as the correct one and included it in our edition.

We also made use of material that is found only in the Urtext, not in the Notes. This includes six lengthy discussions in Text Chapters 2 and 3 that were dictated directly into the Urtext (and thus constitute the original wording), stray paragraphs here and there that are for no known reason found only in the Urtext, and approximately two chapters running from Chapter 19 into Chapter 21 for which the original notes appear to be missing.

Maximum inclusion of material

We have, in one form or another, included *all* of the original material. However, the author of the Course was clear that the Course needed to be applicable to the general reader, and some material is simply too specific to Helen and Bill to have “the more generalizable quality which the course is aimed at.” With this material, then, we did one of three things:

First, we edited much of it to read as applicable to the general reader, so that it is suitable to appear in the Course itself. This was a practice that Helen and Bill used widely in their own editing. We included such material if 1) we felt that it would be *helpful to the reader*, and 2) it required a minimum of editing.

Second, for longer blocks of personal material that are not suitable to appear in the Course even in edited form, we made them the focus of cameo essays. See below for a more complete description of the cameos.

Third, for brief passages of personal material that are too short for a cameo, we included them in Appendix IV (the appendix devoted to tracking our editing decisions), where we usually comment on them to help draw out their meaning.³⁴

Minimum of word changes

In regard to changing wording, our policy was to only make really necessary changes—for instance, where there were grammatical errors—not to change wording just so that it sounded better. It is very tempting to try to improve the language, which is much of what Helen’s editing aimed to do. We did our best, however, to resist this temptation. As a result, the language in the Complete and Annotated Edition is sometimes not as graceful as the language in the FIP version. Helen was a truly gifted writer and her editing often adds an elegance to the language. However, as she said, the material “had a way of knowing what it was doing,” and we chose to respect that. Further, we wanted readers to feel secure in knowing that they are, with minor changes, truly in contact with the original words as Helen received them. That security is so important that we feel it almost always outweighs the gains made by more graceful language.

Our changes, therefore, were designed to alter as few words as possible. They were carefully selected to honor the meaning of any passage in which they appear, and also to be consistent with the Course’s vocabulary, as opposed to introducing words the Course does not use.

At times there are grammatical errors in the original dictation, and the wording choices can be unusual, especially in the early chapters. We correct-

34. See below for more information about Appendix IV.

ed many instances of wrong grammar and slightly reworded some confusing phrases, but in our desire to adhere to the original wording as much as reasonably possible, we let some questionable grammar and odd wordings stand.

Retaining original order except with “orphans”

As noted above, the FIP version ends up relocating about six thousand words from their original context, thus depriving these passages of that important context. We retained the original order of the material except in the case of what we call “orphans”—isolated passages that have no context and either need to be placed in a suitable context or not be included. Here is one, for instance, from Chapter 11: “Love him steadily, whatever he does, whatever he says, and *he* will see the miracle of God and *you* will learn of salvation.”

We also relocated isolated bits of general teaching that are embedded in material that is otherwise too personal to go into the Course itself (and therefore is included in the cameos). Here is one example: “You should know that all God’s children are fully worthy of *complete* courtesy.” Such lines are so valuable that it seemed important to include them in the Course itself, even if it meant relocating them from their original context.

All changes documented

In Appendix IV,³⁵ we document all of the changes in wording we made to the original dictation. We don’t want there to be any mystery in the reader’s mind regarding what is original and what we have introduced. The only exceptions to this documentation are changes to capitalization and within-sentence punctuation. We used Helen’s original capitalization and within-sentence punctuation as helpful guides, but they are ultimately too inconsistent and idiosyncratic to be considered authoritative.

For the first four chapters of the Text, where the editing is by necessity the most extensive, we provide a side-by-side comparison. On the left is our transcription of Helen’s notebooks, including words she struck out and, in footnotes, any noteworthy changes made in the Urtext. This allows you to read the original dictation exactly as it was received. On the right is

35. Appendix IV can be found online at <http://www.acim.circleofa.org/editing-notes/>.

the text of the Complete and Annotated Edition, with any words that are not the same as in the Notes highlighted in gray. By comparing the two columns, you can literally see every change we made (including, for these chapters, all capitalization and punctuation changes).

We have also explained many of our editing decisions, so you can know the reasoning behind them and evaluate the changes for yourself. We welcome your feedback on those decisions and in subsequent editions will include changes prompted by reader feedback.

Footnotes

We have used extensive footnotes to support what is on the page. Whenever a passage references something beyond itself, we include a footnote to clarify that reference. The types of things our footnotes clarify include:

- *Bible verses.* In this case, we include the original verse and, where applicable, try to draw out any implied commentary on that verse by the Course's allusion to it. We primarily use the King James Version and the Revised Standard Version, but occasionally use other versions if they more closely fit the language in the Course's allusion.
- *Psychological terms and concepts.* The early chapters are replete with psychological references. These are often immensely helpful in clarifying the Course's teaching, but that clarification is lost unless one understands the term or concept being referenced.
- *Other Course passages.* As an important part of its teaching method, the Course very frequently refers to its own previous statements. When the references are overt (e.g., "I said before that...") or nearly so (e.g., "Remember that..."), we include those previous statements in footnotes. We have not cited more implicit references, because that would have vastly multiplied the number of footnotes, given that there are countless thousands of implicit references.
- *Other cultural references.* This includes songs, poems, sayings, historical personages, and anything else from the general culture that is alluded to in the Course.

Our footnotes have two additional purposes:

- *To clarify particularly difficult passages.* Occasionally, we offer our best understanding of the meaning of specific passages that are difficult to interpret.
- *To clarify difficult pronouns.* Pronouns in the Course can be notoriously hard to figure out. In such places, we have offered our understanding of what those pronouns refer to.

As you can see, many of the footnotes contain our interpretation of a given passage, which is necessarily subjective and should obviously not be taken as “gospel.” We see the footnotes as vital, however, since without them, a great deal of material would probably need to be removed, as for one reason or another it would be too impenetrable to be helpful. The footnotes, then, are important to our strategy of maximum inclusion.

The footnotes are there to support your reading experience, not detract from it. If you find that they get in the way for you, feel free to ignore them.

Emphasis

In the Text, Helen underlined all words that were emphasized by the voice she heard, resulting in a much greater number of emphasized words than is found in typical writing. She clearly took care to get this right, at times underlining a word, then crossing out that underline, and then putting that emphasis back, either in her Notes or when dictating the Urtext to Bill. This emphasis can be extremely clarifying. Because of how frequent it is, it is almost like a vocal performance by the author. As such, it is able to convey nuances of meaning over and above that conveyed by the words alone. At times, it is even the key for unlocking the meaning of a passage.

We therefore retained *all emphasis*. This includes emphasis that was crossed out by Helen in the Notes but then restored by her in the Urtext (in keeping with our approach of favoring original dictation that Helen crossed out but then restored in the Urtext). However, we felt it would be inappropriate to italicize all the emphasized words, because their frequency so exceeds what we are used to in conventional writing. Therefore, with words

where the emphasis seemed especially important and helpful, we placed those in italics. The rest we underlined with a gray underline, designed to be visible but not distracting. This way, the emphasis still registers, but not as strongly as with italics. Just be aware that the decisions regarding which emphases to make gray underlines and which to grant full italics were based on our own subjective evaluation. Our distinction between gray underlines and italics does not come from the original dictation itself.

Cameo essays

As mentioned above, we have included thirty-three cameo essays, which are found in Appendix I. These are typically organized around longer blocks of material that is too personal to include in the Course proper. This material contains crucial clarification of what living the Course actually means. A few of the later cameos feature visionary experiences of Helen's that are subtly alluded to in a particular Text section or Workbook lesson. In all cases, we provide commentary to aid your appreciation and understanding of the material. Footnotes in the Course proper identify where a particular cameo essay falls in the flow of the material.

The cameos do include information about Helen's and Bill's personal lives, including references to several of their relationships. While Helen and Bill, when alive, would no doubt have wished that this information remain confidential, we decided to include it for several reasons. First, this information is already available, since the Urtext and the Notes are now publicly available. Second, a full fifty years has passed since this information was written, which means that the other people named in this material (Wally and Jack, for instance) are likely no longer living, and at any rate cannot be easily identified, given that they are generally referred to only by their first names. Third, this information is so helpful in clarifying how the teachings of the Course apply in everyday life that it provides an invaluable aid to the student.

Chapter and section divisions

The Text originally came without formal section breaks. There were breaks in the material, though, where Helen would stop writing before the end of

the page, leaving a portion of the page blank, often because a given discourse was clearly finished. Many of these breaks were reproduced in the Urtext. However, it was left to the editors (Helen and her colleagues—Bill and Ken) to decide where to place the section breaks in the published version.

This was obviously a subjective process. We saw earlier that when Ken Wapnick read the HLC, he felt that “some of the divisions in the material appeared arbitrary.” This led to changing many of those divisions in the FIP version. We believe, however, that many of the FIP divisions are still not ideal, although the majority of them seem entirely appropriate to us.

We therefore chose to start from scratch with the section divisions. Our method was to pay careful attention to seams in the original material. This includes the breaks on the pages of the notebooks (breaks which had sometimes been removed even by the time of the Urtext), as well as breaks in the content. In our attempt to honor natural breaks in the material, we did our utmost to avoid inserting a section break into the middle of a paragraph (though we did that once). The majority of our section divisions are the same as in the FIP version, but a great many of them are new.

The original editors also inserted chapter breaks. We retained the FIP chapter divisions for convenience. Whereas section breaks have a basis in the material itself (at times, a certain discourse is even called a “section” by the author), the chapters have no such basis. They are purely a convenience introduced by the editors. They are, however, a very useful convenience, and since long-time students of the Course are used to the chapter divisions in the FIP version, we kept those same divisions with only occasional minor alterations.

We did choose, however, to not have any chapter introductions, as are found in the HLC and FIP versions. Our reason is that the material in those introductions is not really introductory—it does not serve the purpose of introducing the chapter and its main themes (which makes sense, since the chapter divisions were not part of the original dictation). In this edition, that material is merely the beginning (or in some cases the entirety) of the first section of the chapter.

Chapter and section titles

We also revisited the issue of chapter and section titles. These too had been chosen by the editors. Indeed, the FIP changed a great many of the titles from the HLC because, as Ken Wapnick said, “many of the section and chapter titles did not really coincide with the material.” We believe that the section titles are important, because when a title truly captures a section, it serves as a useful handle that allows one to mentally pick up and carry that section, so to speak. When a title does not capture the section well, our experience is that it is actually harder to retain the content of that section in one’s mind.

In choosing section titles, then, we tried to take from the section itself a vivid image or memorable phrase, especially a repeating one, that captures the section’s main themes. Alternately, we collected key words and phrases from the section and tried to fashion from them a title that reflects the section’s main thrust. We used essentially the same approach when selecting chapter titles, though this was more difficult because the chapters were not originally written as unified wholes. Roughly three quarters of our chapter and section titles are new.

Terminology

The Course’s eventual terminology is not always reflected in the very early dictation. We therefore changed some of the early terminology, much as the editors of the FIP version did. The following are some of the terms we have changed, at least some of the time:

“*Soul*”: The term “Soul” is important early on in the original dictation, but begins to fade out after Chapter 5 and disappears after Chapter 12. It was almost entirely removed from the FIP version. The Clarification of Terms (which was dictated after the original editing was finished) originally said, “The term ‘soul’ is not used except in direct quotations because of its highly controversial nature.” This, combined with the fact that the term disappears after the early chapters, indicated to us that the author wanted to limit its use. We therefore replaced most of the references to “soul” with a variety of Course terms (spirit, mind, brother, Son), depending on what

seemed most appropriate in a given instance. But we have also been more flexible about this than the FIP version, retaining the term (though changing it to lowercase) when its usage reflects normal cultural usage or when replacing it would change the meaning of the sentence.

“Create”: The word “create” is one of the more prominent words in the Course. In the early dictation it is often used in a relatively conventional way, but it then acquires a more narrow technical meaning in Chapter 3, one that applies only to Heaven. We therefore changed most of the earlier occurrences of “create” (usually to “make”). However, we retained the word “creative” unchanged, since its usage in the Course lacks adequate synonyms.

“Projection”: In the first seven chapters of the Text, “projection” is an umbrella term that includes what will later be called either “projection” or “extension.” We changed most of the instances of “projection” that actually mean “extension,” but we found it unfeasible to change all of them. Some, therefore, are accompanied by footnotes explaining what the term means in that particular context.

“Man”: After the advent of gender-inclusive language in the 1970s, the word “man” used to signify “human beings” now sounds increasingly inappropriate. Indeed, most references to “man” and “men” were removed from the FIP version. We too removed most such references, except where they refer to a Bible verse or a recognized phrase such as “all men are brothers” (the title of a classic Chinese novel which the Course alludes to three times). We decided to retain the masculine pronouns and other masculine terms like “Father,” “Son,” “Sonship,” “brothers,” etc., because the redefinition of these Christian terms is essential to the Course.

Plural “you”: The Course was originally addressed to two people. As a result, it frequently addresses them both together, making the original dictation an inconsistent mixture of plural and singular references, often right next to each other. In keeping with the central rule of making the material applicable to the general reader, we changed most of the plural references to singular. However, where the meaning of a passage depends on the plural—

which is especially the case in the holy relationship discussions in Chapters 17-22—we retained the plural language.

There are two important terms that we chose not to change:

“Will”: The word “will” as a noun (e.g., “Ask me if your will is in accord with mine”) and as a transitive verb (e.g., “I *will* to decide otherwise”) is also prominent in the original dictation. It too is often changed in the FIP version, where it becomes a technical term that applies only to Heaven (similar to the unequivocal “create”). This more technical meaning is reflected in the Clarification of Terms, which says, “Will is not involved in perception at any level and has nothing to do with choice” (C-1.5:2). Unlike “Soul,” however, the original, more general usage of “will” does not pass away in the early part of the Course, but continues to some extent throughout. Lesson 73, for instance, is “I will there be light.” Further, it is often impossible to substitute another word for it without introducing too much change into the meaning of the sentence. For these reasons, we retained unchanged all instances of the word “will.”

“Know”: “Knowledge” becomes a technical term in the Course in Chapter 3. Before that, the term is used in the ordinary sense. We did not change these earlier references to harmonize with the later technical meaning, as the change seemed unnecessary and too invasive.

Capitalization

We adopted a slightly new system of capitalization, to bring the Course a little closer to the more minimal capitalization that is conventional in our time. With rare exceptions, we capitalized only words that function as names for Persons of the Trinity—“God,” “Christ,” and the “Holy Spirit”—and the pronouns relating to Them. We did not capitalize God’s attributes. This means that God’s “love,” “will,” “arms,” and “hands” are not capitalized. This rule has one exception: we capitalized “Mind” when it refers to the Mind of God, of Christ, or of the Holy Spirit (as mentioned in Clarifi-

cation of Terms—C-1.1:2). We also capitalized Christian words that have traditionally often been capitalized, such as “Atonement.”

Since capitalization can govern the meaning of a passage, we paid close attention to that issue throughout. There are a number of cases where we believe that our capitalization allows the real meaning of a passage—or even of an entire section—to come out. For example, with the sentence “But God has given you a better friend, in whom all power in earth and Heaven rests” (T-26.VI.2:3), the fact that “friend” is not capitalized reveals our contention that it properly refers to your brother, not the Holy Spirit or Christ (our collective true Self). This is important, because the identity of this “friend” is really the key issue in the section in which this sentence is found.

Punctuation

As already mentioned, we considered the punctuation in the Notes to be suggestive but not authoritative. Helen’s commas, for instance, are over-used and inconsistent, but we paid close attention to them as suggestive of where commas might be needed to fully convey the author’s intended meaning. We freely used colons in place of Helen’s practice of using semicolons that actually function as colons. And we also dispensed with the “comma dash” (a comma followed directly by a dash), which we have never seen outside of Helen’s writing. We have not documented changes of within-sentence punctuation. However, we have noted any changes made to end-of-sentence punctuation—for instance, if we joined two sentences into one, which is something we often did, just as the FIP version does.

Paragraphing

In the first six chapters, we freely changed (without documenting the change) the original paragraphing from Helen’s notebooks, in which a single sentence is often a paragraph. However, after Chapter 6, we usually used the paragraphing as it appears in Helen’s notebooks. On those occasions after Chapter 6 where we changed it, we document the change.

Conclusion

In producing this edition, our single intent has been to do full justice to the words that Helen Schucman took down. We believe they are immortal words, which will increasingly be recognized as such. These are words for the ages. It is imperative that they be given the best presentation possible.

The Course has become for many their scripture, their authoritative sacred book. And when it comes to scripture, everyone wants to be as close to the source as possible. No one wants to be separated from that source by a long chain of editing. For instance, as historians have revealed that the words ascribed to Jesus in the New Testament are the end result of decades of oral tradition and earlier written collections, the very basis of Christianity seems to have been rendered shaky and uncertain. Here, with *A Course in Miracles*, we have what no ancient scripture has and what any religious scholar would die for: the very words—the *ipsissima verba*, as New Testament scholars put it. How can we not bring those words out into the full light of day?

We realize that many students of *A Course in Miracles* will not agree that there is a need for this edition. That is all right. It is merely one option. What matters is not what edition of the Course you use, but that you use it. The crucial thing is to take its words to heart and put them into practice. The right edition is the one that helps *you* do that. Our attitude about this edition, then, is very similar to what Helen wrote about the Course itself in one of her drafts of the preface to the FIP edition. If we simply replace the word “path” with “edition,” her words are fully applicable here:

It may be the right path for you or it may not be. There are many paths. If it is for you, I am sure you will know it. And if it is not, perhaps you might still want to glance over parts of it before you go on.

We offer this edition of *A Course in Miracles* to you in all humility and sincerity. We hope it will enable you to feel more directly in touch with the inspiration that gave birth to the Course, to more fully grasp the Course’s incomparable message, and above all, to more truly realize its teachings in your mind and in your life.